SAFE ZONE TRAINING MANUAL

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Why Should You Care

The issue of sexual orientation is one of personal importance to a great number of children. Researchers and social scientists suggest that one to three of every ten students is either gay or lesbian, or has an immediate family member who is. Thus, between three and nine kids in every class of thirty has had some direct experience with the issues of homosexuality and homophobia. Homophobia interferes with the healthy development of every adolescent, particularly one who may be dealing personally with issues of sexual orientation. One of the many places gay and lesbian youth are impacted by homophobia is within their very own schools.

Hostile School Climate

Schools nationwide are spaces for hostile environments that distress a number of LGBTQA students. The vast majority are surrounded by homophobic remarks and expletives on a casual basis. In addition, many are personally harassed or assaulted due to their sexual orientation or gender expression.

Absenteeism

Many LGBTQA students avoid classes or miss entire days of school rather than face a hostile school climate. An unsafe school environment denies these students their right to an education.

Lowered Educational Aspirations and Academic Achievement

School safety affects student success. Experiencing victimization in school hinders LGBTQA students’ academic success and educational aspirations. Students who were more frequently harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender expression had lower grade point averages than students who were less often harassed.

Students who experienced victimization in school because of their sexual orientation or gender expression were more than twice as likely to report that they did not plan to pursue any post-secondary education (e.g., college or trade school) than those who experienced lower levels.

Psychological Well-Being

Harassment and assault in school are directly related to poorer psychological well-being for LGBTQA students. Students who experienced higher levels of victimization based on their sexual orientation or gender expression had higher levels of depression than those who reported lower levels of those types of victimization and lower levels of self-esteem than those who reported lower levels of those types of victimization.

The high incidence of harassment and assault is exacerbated by school staff who rarely, if ever, intervene on behalf of LGBTQA students.

Colleges and universities are failing to provide the LGBTQA community with an environment that is necessary for learning and scholarship—less than eight percent of accredited U.S. institutions of higher education offer protective policies inclusive of sexual identity; and approximately three percent include gender identity and expression. While the availability of LGBTQA services and programs have improved, far fewer institutions offer them - safe space/ally programming, LGBTQA faculty advisors and staff positions and LGBTQA student centers or facilities.

AWARENESS

Schools have an obligation to support and enhance the self-esteem of all students regardless of their sexual orientation. They are also a logical place to provide accurate information. Perhaps the most compelling reason for schools to address sexual orientation straightforwardly is that young people are asking. Silence on these issues communicates values just as loudly as responding would. The values that should be taught are ones that encompass respect for one another and caring about one another’s feelings, regardless of differences.

*Why should the public schools teach about sexual orientation?*

*Beth Reis, 1989, as presented to the annual meeting of the Association for Sexuality Education and Training*
Confidential Environment

Please do not repeat the stories you hear outside of this room, at least not in such a way as to reveal the identity of the person who shared it.

Supportive Environment

Please respect each person's point of view, even if you strongly disagree. Express your point of views in a respectful manner and take ownership of your statements and values/beliefs.

Use / statements – Speak from your own perspective and take care not to generalize others’ beliefs or communities.

Step outside your comfort zone – Seize this training as an opportunity to learn. Engage new people and ideas with an open mind.

Active Listening

Don’t just hear what someone is saying – listen. Practice good listening skills such as pausing to listen and maintaining a friendly posture.

It’s Okay to Pass

Please feel free to decline answering any question in discussion.

Accept Others Where They Are

No two individuals have the exact same background or experience. Understand that a person’s perspective is legitimate in their eyes and backed by a lifetime of personal events.

I understand that it is okay to be imperfect with regards to homophobia and heterosexism. It is okay if I don’t have an answer or if at times I am unaware, misunderstand, or become uncomfortable.
1. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people cannot be identified by certain mannerisms or physical characteristics. People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual come in many different shapes, sizes, and colors — as do people who are heterosexual.

2. Sexual experiences as a child are not necessarily indicative of one's sexual orientation as an adult. Many lesbian, gay, and bisexual people have early heterosexual experiences, but are still lesbian, gay, or bisexual; many avowed heterosexuals have had sexual contact with members of their own sex, but are still heterosexual.

3. No one knows what causes sexual orientation. Many lesbian, gay and bisexual people know that they are attracted to members of their own sex at an early age, sometimes as young as 6 or 7 years old. Others learn much later in life, in their thirties, forties, or fifties. Some research indicates that sexual orientation is determined between birth and age 3, but no one is yet sure what causes any particular orientation.

4. Many people accuse lesbian, gay and bisexual people of flaunting their sexuality when they talk about their partner, hold hands or kiss one another in public. These are activities that heterosexual couples do all the time. Due to homophobic reactions, some lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are actually forced to hide their sexuality in public, not flaunt it.

5. People who are lesbian, gay and bisexual work in all types of jobs and they live in all types of situations. They belong to all ethnic and racial groups. They are members of all religious communities. They exhibit a range of mental and physical capabilities. They are young, middle aged, or old.

6. Sometimes oppression based on sexual orientation escalates into acts of physical violence. In surveys of lesbian, gay and bisexual people, fifty-two to eighty-seven percent have been verbally harassed, twenty-one to twenty-seven percent have been pelted with objects, thirteen to thirty-eight percent have been chased or followed, and nine to twenty-four percent have been physically assaulted.

7. Most lesbian, gay and bisexual people are comfortable with their own biological sex; they don’t regard themselves as members of the opposite sex. Being lesbian, gay or bisexual is not the same as being transgender.

8. The majority of child molesters are heterosexual men, not lesbian, gay or bisexual people. Almost all studies show that over 90% of child molestation is committed by heterosexual men.

9. Homosexuality is not a type of mental illness and cannot be cured by psychotherapy. Although homosexuality was once thought to be a mental illness, the American Psychiatric and Psychological Associations no longer consider it to be one. Psychiatric and psychological attempts to cure lesbians and gay men have failed to change the sexual orientation of the patient. These treatments may help change sexual behavior temporarily but can also create severe emotional trauma.

10. There is no definable gay lifestyle. Similarly, there is no standard heterosexual lifestyle. Some people might like to think that a normal adult lifestyle is a heterosexual marriage with two children. The most accurate generalization just might be the most apparent - lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are as different from one another in the exact same ways that heterosexual people are different from one another.

Compiled by Youth Pride, Inc. with the help of The Campaign to End Homophobia.

Adapted from Denise Johnson, Barrington High School
COMING OUT – GAY IS OK!
The term coming out (of the closet) refers to the life-long developmental process of a positive gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or Queer identity. It is a very long and difficult struggle for many people because they often have to confront many homophobic attitudes and discriminatory practices along the way. Many individuals first need to struggle with their own negative stereotypes and feelings of homophobia that they learned growing up.

Before these people can feel good about who they are, they will need to challenge their own attitudes and move from the lower end of the homophobic continuum (repulsion, pity, tolerance) to feelings of appreciation and admiration. But it often takes years of painful work to develop a positive gay or gender identity. Then, many individuals begin to make decisions about who to tell that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Many of these people are afraid to come out to their friends and family.

What might gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgender individuals be afraid of?
- Rejection—loss of relationships
- Gossip
- Harassment/abuse
- Being thrown out of family/house
- Having their lover arrested
- Loss of financial support
- Losing their job
- Physical violence

How might gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgender individuals feel about their coming out to someone?
- Scared
- Vulnerable
- Relieved
- Wondering how the person will react
- Proud

Why might gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgender individuals want to come out to friends/relatives?
- End the hiding game
- Feel closer to those people
- Be able to be whole around them
- Stop wasting energy by hiding all the time
- Feel like they have integrity
- To make a statement that gay is ok

How might someone feel after a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender person comes out to them?
- Scared
- Supportive
- Shocked
- Flattered
- Disbelieving
- Honored
- Uncomfortable
- Angry
- Not sure what to say
- Disgusted
- Not sure what to do next
- Wondering why the person came out

Adapted from works by Cheryl Hetherington, Jamie Washington, Vernon Wall, and Lesbians; A Conscious Raising Kit, by the Boston NOW Lesbian Task Force I Orientation, Gender, Sex, Gender Expression

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

Language is dynamic; it grows, changes, and develops.

Language creates and expresses meaning, sometimes causing severe damage, while at other times providing extreme dignity. This is particularly true with the language of diversity and the terms (labels) we use to identify ourselves.

Language must not demean, exclude, or offend. It must include, heal, and nurture. We must allow others to self-identify—definitions of terms vary for everyone. The definitions provided in our glossary are given to provide a starting point for discussion and understanding.
REDUCING HOMOPHOBIA & STATISTICS

1. Make no assumption about sexuality. If a student has not used a pronoun when discussing a relationship, don’t assume one. Use neutral language such as are you seeing anyone instead of do you have a boyfriend. Additionally, do not assume that a female student who confides a crush on another girl is a lesbian. Labels are often too scary and sometimes not accurate. Let students label themselves.

2. Have something gay-related visible in your office. A sticker, a poster, a flyer, a brochure, a book, a button... This will identify you as a safe person to talk to and will hopefully allow a gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning youth to break his/her silence. SAFE ZONE campaign stickers and resources can provide this visibility.

3. Support, normalize and validate students' feelings about their sexuality. Let them know that you are there for them. If you cannot be supportive, please refer to someone who can be. Then work on your own biases by reading, learning and talking to people comfortable with this issue. And always remember, the problem is homophobia not homosexuality.

4. Do not advise youth to come out to parents, family and friends as they need to come out at their own safe pace. Studies show as many as 26% of gay youth are forced to leave their home after they tell their parents. It is their decision and they have to live with the consequences. Help them figure out what makes sense for them.

5. Guarantee confidentiality with students. Students need to know their privacy will be respected or they will not be honest about this important issue. If you cannot maintain confidentiality for legal reasons, let students know this in advance.

6. Challenge homophobia. As a role model for your students, respond to homophobia immediately and sincerely. Encourage in-service trainings for staff and students on homophobia and its impact on gay and lesbian youth.

7. Combat heterosexism on campus. Include visibly gay and lesbian role models in your classroom, events and workshops.

8. Learn about and refer to community organizations. Familiarize yourself with resources and call them before you refer to make sure they are ongoing. Also, become aware of gay-themed bibliographies and refer to gay-positive books.

9. Encourage school administrators to adopt and enforce anti-discrimination policies for their schools or school systems which include sexual orientation. The language should be included in all written materials next to race, sex, religion, etc.

10. Provide role models. Gay and straight students benefit from having openly gay teachers, coaches and administration. Straight students are given an alternative to the inaccurate stereotypes they have received and gay students are provided with the opportunity to see healthy gay adults. You, as teachers, can help by making gay and lesbian students feel more welcome.

STATISTICS

- 55.5% of LGBTQA students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, and 37.8% because of their gender expression
- 30.3% of LGBTQA students missed at least one day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable, and 10.6% missed four or more days in the past month.
- 71.4% of LGBTQA students heard gay used in a negative way (e.g., that’s so gay) frequently or often at school, and 90.8% reported that they felt distressed because of this language
- 64.5% heard other homophobic remarks (e.g., dyke or faggot) frequently
- 74.1% of LGBTQA students were verbally harassed (e.g., called names or threatened) in the past year because of their sexual orientation and 55.2% because of their gender expression
- 36.2% were physically harassed in the past year because of their sexual orientation and 22.7% because of their gender expression
- 49.6% of LGBTQA students experienced electronic harassment in the past year (e.g., via text messages or postings on Facebook), often known as cyberbullying

LGBTQA students who experienced LGBTQA-related discrimination at school were more than three times as likely to have missed school in the past month as those who had not-- 42.3% vs. 13.8%. They also had lower GPAs than their peers (3.0 vs. 3.3)

Compiled from GLSEN’s--the gay, lesbian, straight educators network's 2013 National School Climate Survey
ALLY DEVELOPMENT

Awareness: It is Important to become more aware of who you are and how you are different from and similar to lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.

Strategies for developing awareness:
1. Conversation with LGBTQA individuals.
2. Attending awareness building workshops.
3. Reading about LGBTQA lifestyles, issues, and by self-examination.

Knowledge/Education: You must begin to acquire knowledge about sexual orientation and what the experience is for LGBTQA persons in society and your campus community.

Knowledge and education can be gained by:
1. Learning about laws, policies, and practices and how they affect LGBTQA persons.
2. Educating yourself about the gay and lesbian culture and norms of this community.
3. Contacting local and national LGBTQA organizations for information.

Skills: You must develop skills in communicating the knowledge that you have learned.

Your knowledge can be communicated by:
1. Attending workshops.
2. Role playing situations with friends.
3. Developing supportive relationship.
4. Practicing interventions or awareness raising.

Action: Action is, without a doubt, the only way that we can affect change in the society as a whole; for, if we keep our awareness, knowledge, and skills to ourselves, we deprive the rest of the world of what we have learned, thus keeping them from having the fullest possible life.

Benefits of Being an Ally
1. You open yourself up to the possibility of close relationships with an additional ten percent of the world.
2. You may become less likely to stereotype according to sex roles.
3. You may increase your ability to have close and loving relationships with same-sex friends.
4. You have opportunities to learn from, teach, and have an impact on a population with whom you might not otherwise interact.
5. You may be the reason an individual finally decides that his or her life is worth something.

Things that discourage people from becoming allies:
1. Being labeled a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender by the heterosexual population (by association). The label is not negative in itself, but can cause difficulties for the heterosexual when looking for a significant other.
2. Allies are often mocked and ridiculed by heterosexuals that view the issue as unimportant or unpopular.
3. Friends and colleagues that are not comfortable with the topic may alienate Allies. These people may noticeably distance themselves from the ally in order to avoid conflict or labels.
4. Allies may become victim of overt or subtle discrimination such as getting appointed to a committee, a negative reaction on an evaluation, or needing to look for a position that is more supportive of their views.
5. The gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community may not accept the ally, and believe that the person is just not ready to admit they are really a member of the homosexual community.
6. Learning the culture and language may be difficult if not impossible without the assistance of a member of the oppressed group.
7. Due to some past experiences with heterosexuals, the LGBTQA population may question an ally’s motivation.

Adapted from Evans, N. J. & Wall, V.A. (1991). Beyond Tolerance: Gay, Lesbians, and Bisexuals on Campus. USA. ACPA.

Sex
Biological genitalia at birth.

Gender Presentation
How you present your gender.

Do take the time to continue educating yourself about the issues sexual minorities face
Do expect to make mistakes
Do further developed the skills in communicating what you have learned
Do promote the community and do outreach
Don’t deny or ignore homophobic and heterosexist actions. Speak up!
Do always use the pronouns and name the person wants you to use. If unsure, ask. If you make a mistake, correct yourself, and politely (subtly, if possible) correct others if they use the wrong pronoun.
Do recognize the diversity of trans and genderqueer lives. Remember that these identities are part of other identities, and intersect with race, class, sexual preference, age, etc.
Do listen if a transperson chooses to talk to you about their gender identity. Be honest about things you don’t understand—don’t try to fake it!
Do be aware of places transpeople may not be able to go (pun intended). Be understanding if a transperson doesn’t feel safe using a gendered bathroom or locker room. If your organization is holding an event, designate a gender-neutral bathroom in the building.
Do recognize that transwomen deal with sexism in a very real way (on top of transphobia).
Do recognize that transwomen deserve access to women-only spaces/programs/shelters/etc.
Do recognize your privilege and prejudices as a normatively gendered person.
Do talk about trans issues/rights. Engage people in discussions and share your knowledge. The majority of information people have about trans issues is based on stereotypes and assumptions. To most people, trans folks are the freaks from Jerry Springer.
Do be aware of the vital role you play as a non-trans person. Remember that the way you talk about transpeople (e.g., using the right pronouns) influences how others perceive us and can make a difference in whether we pass, and whether we feel safe/comfortable. Always remember that people may be more likely to listen to and take cues from non-trans people than from transpeople. What you say and do matters!
Do ask when and where it’s safe to use their chosen name and pronouns (e.g., if a transperson is not out at home, ask them how you should refer to them around their family, etc).
Don’t ask transpeople what their real name is (i.e., the one they were born with). If you know their birth name, do not divulge it to others.
Don’t use prefixes like bio- or real- to designate that someone is not trans. Instead use non-trans or the prefix cis-. Two reasons for this: one, using real or bio sets up a dichotomy in which transpeople are not considered real or biological. Two, using the terms trans and non-trans or cis-alters the framework so that transpeople are the default rather than the Other. Setting up trans as the norm can help make transphobia and gender privilege more obvious.
Don’t say someone was born a boy (or a girl). Instead try saying they were assigned male at birth (or were female-assigned). These terms recognize the difference between sex and gender, and emphasize the ways in which sex and gender are assigned to individuals at birth, rather than being innate, binary or immutable qualities.
Don’t confuse gender with sexual preference. Transpeople, like non-trans people, are straight, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, etc. Gender is not tied to sexual preference, and there are a million ways to express desire.
Don’t ask transpeople about their bodies, how they have sex, what their genitals are like, etc. It’s rude and one would ask these questions of a non-trans person.
Don’t ask about surgery or hormone status; don’t ask when are you going to have the surgery? or are you on hormones? Like non-trans people, our medical histories and bodies can be intensely personal and private. Allow transpeople to share these details with you on their own terms.
Don’t ever out a transperson. This is dangerous to their safety and can invalidate their identity. Likewise, be aware of your surroundings when discussing trans issues with a transperson. For their safety and comfort, they may prefer not to discuss these topics in public places or among strangers.
Don’t assume the only way to transition is through hormones/surgery, and understand that medical transition is very often based on economic status. Recognize the classism inherent in associating medical transition with authentic trans identities.
Don’t assume all transpeople want hormones and/or surgery, or to transition at all.
Don't assume all transpeople feel *trapped in the wrong body*. This is an oversimplification and not the way (all) transpeople feel.

Don't tokenize. Simply adding the T to LGB doesn't make you or your organization hip, progressive, or an ally. Make sure you have the resources, information and understanding to deserve that T.

Don't assume all transpeople identify as *men* or *women*. Many transpeople and genderqueer people identify as both, neither, or something altogether different.

Don't tell transpeople what is appropriate to their gender (e.g., transwomen should grow their hair out and wear dresses). Like non-trans people, we have varying forms of gender expression.

Don't ask transpeople to educate you. Do your own homework and research. Understand that there is a difference between talking to individuals about their preferences/perspectives and forcing someone to be your educator. Try not to view individuals as spokespeople; the trans communities are diverse, not one monolithic voice or viewpoint.

Don't assume transmen are exempt from male privilege, misogyny, sexism, etc, just because of a so-called girl past.

Don't let transphobia slide. Confront it as you would all other forms of oppression. Trans issues are rarely discussed and when they are it is often in a negative light. Transphobia is equally oppressive as (and works in conjunction with) sexism, homophobia, racism, classism, etc.

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**All young people, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, deserve a safe and supportive environment in which to achieve their full potential. - Harvey Milk**

**Allies**

Show support and provide non-judgmental listening.

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**Key Issues Facing Trans People Today:**

- Social
- Sex-Segregated Facilities
- Dating/ Relationships
- Disclosure & Support Networks
- Medical/Healthcare
- General Access
- Transphobia in Medical Establishment
- Insurance
- Legal
- Housing
- Employment
- Identity Documents
- Violence, Policing, Prison System
- Immigration
Basic Listening Modes

**Competitive or Combative Listening**
Individual is more interested in promoting their own point of view than in understanding or exploring someone else's view.

**Passive or Attentive Listening**
Individual is genuinely interested in hearing and understanding the other person. They are attentive and passively listen. It is assumed that they heard and understand correctly, but stay passive and do not verify it.

**Active or Reflective Listening**
Individual is genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting and what the message means. The individual is active in checking out our understanding before they respond with their own new message. Restating or paraphrasing their understanding of the message and reflect it back to the sender for verification.

Establishing Two-Way Communication

One of the most important factors in mentoring is good communication. Talking and communicating are not the same. Communicating involves:

**Listening for Understanding, Facts, and Feelings**
Create a positive, comfortable environment for listening. Listen until it is your turn to speak.

**Making Eye Contact**
Pay attention to the whole person. Is the speaker smiling, frowning or neither? Watch the speaker's body language. Show interest by leaning forward and moving closer with respect for personal space.

**Leveling—Being Genuine About Own Feelings**
Use I statements when responding. Accept the speaker's feelings. Don't try to change the feelings or give advice without being asked.

Types of Questions to Ask:

**Close-Ended Questions**
Yes no questions. Good for getting data. Difficult to get others to expand answers. Who, where, when?

**Open-Ended Questions**
Designed to encourage longer answers. Good for getting responses in their own words. How, what, why?

Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality in this relationship is extremely important. Key to the relationship is a sense of trust. This relationship is to support your mentee through their developmental growth, not to evaluate. Maintain two-way communication throughout the mentoring year.

There will not be a magic day when we wake up and it's now okay to express ourselves publicly. We make that day by doing things publicly until it's simply the way things are.

Tammy Baldwin

Nature gave human 2 ears, but only one month, which is a gentle reminder that one should listen more than one speaks.

*Adapted from Keith Harris*

Much listening is autobiographical—perceived and interpreted through the listener's own experiences and beliefs, their own story.
Multi-Identity Sexual Minorities

For most gay and lesbian members of ethnic minority groups, their ties to their ethnic communities are of great practical and emotional significance (Green, 1994). The individuals may be encountering multiple levels of oppression and discrimination that accompany each such status (Green, 1994).

Multiple identity students may experience exclusion and discrimination from each individual community. Fear of being pushed out of a group and risking isolation may make an individual feel like removed and not part of a community. When our students wear the additional hat of at least one more identity that may be marginalized, priorities and outlined and values may be compromised for the sake of securing a more important identity.

Different identity which can often overlap for sexual minorities:
- Race
- Cultural
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Gender
- Ability

Things to Consider

Multi-ethnic and Multi-racial possibilities can be extensive; traditional and cultural norms regarding gender and religious viewpoints also interact. Individuals experiencing conflicts with multiple identities can result in:
- Uncertainty as to how they should identify
- Feeling the need to choose one identity over the other
- Rejection of one identity
- Their sexual orientation often being under-emphasized when compared to ethnic and racial identities

Do’s & Don’ts of Working with Multi-Identity Sexual Minorities

Do Be vocal and open to learner from students’ circumstances

Do Ensure that you are inclusive and can help find or provide support

Do Support actions that demonstrate that intolerance is unacceptable

Do Create visibility on campus (publications, flyers, event announcements, etc.) that reflect differences within multiple identities

Do Ask yourself if your language is inclusive

Do Create policies that protect multiple identities from discrimination

Don’t Ignore oppression of one identity for the benefit of another

Don’t Allow multiple oppression issues

Don’t Allow assumptions of sexual orientation to cloud conflicts with racial identities or vice versa

Don’t Allow a multicultural services office to serve one identity over another

Don’t Assume that faculty and staff are immune to these challenges like some of our students.

Thoughts and Reactions:

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Demonstrate Institutional Commitment
Integrating LGBTQ+ concerns into all aspects of the institution acknowledges the existence of sexual minority members of the community.

Integrate Sexual Minorities Issues and Concerns in Curricular and Co-Curricular Education
As individuals are socialized into a homophobic and heterosexist society, campus community members need the space to question and examine unfounded attitudes and beliefs. Exposure to new ideas and sources of knowledge, along with a rich and dynamic dialogue concerning a range of issues, is precisely what the university/college should encourage in the campus community. Acknowledging the contributions of sexual minority individuals to all areas of scholarship, in addition to creating the space for gender/sexuality-specific studies, is important to the full integration of LGBTQ+ concerns and experiences into the academic community.

Respond Appropriately to Incidents of Bias
As long as anti-LGBTQ+ bias persists on campus, sexual minorities will need to feel safe and supported by their institutions when acts of intolerance occur. Sexual minorities should be able to speak and act without fear of homophobic reprisal. Create Brave Spaces for Student Dialogues in On-Campus Housing in order to encourage greater understanding across differences and model such interactions for the larger campus community, brave spaces should be created for civil dialogue between all people.

Offer Comprehensive Counseling & Healthcare
While this growing population has unique needs related to physical and mental health care, most colleges and universities offer little or no support for this population (Beemyn et al., 2005). It is suggested that institutions offer best practices on their campus for addressing the counseling and health care needs.

Best Practices in Higher Education
The following best practices were adapted from the 2010 State of Higher Education For Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender People.

The current literature on sexual minorities suggests that campus climate influences student success. It has been suggested that a supportive campus climates impacts sexual minorities positively, which leads to a healthy identity development. The following broad categories provide a starting point for institutions to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ students.

Develop Inclusive Policies
Policies that explicitly welcome sexual minorities express institutional commitment. Individuals will be more likely to be open about their sexual identity or gender identity knowing that the institution is supportive. When individuals do not have to expend energy hiding aspects of their identity, they, in turn, tend to be more satisfied and productive.

Improve Recruitment and Retention Efforts
As critical members of the campus community, sexual minorities, help shape the campus climate. For example, a diverse student body and student groups that form around social identities facilitate inter- and intra-group relationships, which promote learning and the development of multicultural skills (Rankin & Reason, 2008). Interpersonal learning and multicultural skills continue to positively impact the lives of students beyond their collegiate experience. Furthermore, faculty scholarship that includes diverse perspectives, methodologies, and centers around issues of social justice and advocacy not only supports the mission of higher education, but also sends an important message to students about the importance of these constructs (Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 266). As a result of these actions, students and faculty members effect change on personal, interpersonal, and institutional levels, thus impacting the campus climate.

GLSEN’s Top Recommendations in Creating Inclusive Environments for Sexual Minorities
Advocate for comprehensive bullying/harassment legislation at the state and federal levels that specifically enumerates sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as protected categories alongside others such as race, religion, and disability; adopt and implement comprehensive bullying/harassment policies that specifically enumerate sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in individual schools, with clear and effective systems for reporting and addressing incidents that students experience; ensure that school policies and practices, such as those related to dress codes and school dances, do not discriminate against LGBTQ+ students; support student clubs, such as Gay-Straight Alliances, that provide support for LGBTQ+ students and address their issues in education; provide training for school staff to improve rates of intervention and increase the number of supportive teachers and other staff available to students; and increase student access to appropriate and accurate information regarding LGBTQ+ people, history, and events through inclusive curricula and library and Internet resources.
**SCENARIOS**

**Scenario One**

- 17 year-old white, female, transgender, first year, undergraduate, biochemistry major
- Has difficulty making friends
- Feels isolated

You are a faculty in the Biochemistry Department. A student in one of your classes has a scheduled meeting in your office. During the meeting, she mentions that she noticed the SafeZone sign on your office door and wants to know more about it. She then explains that she is struggling with her gender identity. What do you do?

Cris: I’ve been doing a lot of reading about gender roles in our society; male vs. female.

Faculty member: Sounds like you may want to talk more about gender and gender roles.

Cris: Yeah. I guess I really question the way we think about gender in our society and how those roles aren’t relevant to me.

Faculty member: I appreciate you sharing that with me.

Cris: I’ve wanted to talk about this with someone for a while.

Discussion Questions:
How would you describe the stage (approximate) of gender identity development Cris is describing?

How would you respond?

**Scenario Two**

- 19 year-old African-American male, undergraduate sophomore
- Member of African-American fraternity
- Socially connected – lots of friends
- From an affluent family

You are an administrator in Student Affairs. During a meeting with this student about student leadership issues, he indicates his support of your SafeZone membership. He shares with you his discomfort with hearing his fraternity brothers make derogatory remarks regarding LGBTQ&A people.

Brian: The other day I overheard one of my fraternity brothers make a derogatory remark towards one of the other brothers.

Staff: What was that like for you?

Brian: I knew it wasn’t the best thing for them to be saying to each other. Frankly, it made me uncomfortable because my biological brother is gay.

Discussion Questions:
What stage of ally development is Brian describing? How would you describe it?

How would you respond?

**Scenario Three**

- Korean-American male
- 22 years old
- No LGBTQ&A friends, only child
- Beginning to acknowledge same sex attraction

What resources are available on campus for Cris? Off campus?

Scenario One Example Response:

Faculty member: I realize that I am not an expert on gender and gender role concerns, but I’m wondering if you would want to talk to someone with more knowledge about this topic?

Cris: Yes, that would be very helpful. Do you know someone?

Faculty member: I can provide you with a couple options on and off campus and you can decide which you are comfortable pursuing first. If you feel comfortable to pursue it on your own, great. If you’d like me to help you get started that is great too. You are welcome to come back to talk to me and let me know how it’s going.

Scenario Two Example Response:

Staff: Have you ever considered confronting your fraternity brothers?

Brian: Yes, but I wouldn’t know what to say.

Staff: Well it sounds like you are uncomfortable and upset. Would you be able to express that to them?

Brian: It’s possible, yes.

Staff: Next time why don’t you try it. Just simply tell them how you are uncomfortable with the negative language. Don’t be afraid to share about your brother if that is okay.

Brian: Oh geez, I think I’ll be very nervous when it happens.

Staff: That’s okay. You will be great. I’m more than happy to talk to you some more about it and help you think of some other ways to talk to your brothers.

Scenario Three Example Response:

Staff: What resources are available on campus for Brian? Off campus?

Example Response:

Staff: What was that like for you?
You are a senior student working with an Asian male on a group project for one of your classes. You always have your Safe On Campus button on your backpack. After working together for a while he comes out to you and inquires about ways to meet other LGBTQA individuals.

Ally student: I’m so relieved that this group project is almost completed.

Asian Student: Yeah. I think we’ll get an A after spending so much time working on it. [After a pause] I have something I’d like to ask you about.

Ally student: Okay.

Asian Student: Your Safe button. That’s really awesome that you display it all the time on your backpack.

Ally student: Thanks! I unfortunately don’t get tons of people that mention anything about it.

Asian student: It says you are an ally. What does that mean?

Ally student: It means that I try to be supportive of many different people on campus regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Asian student: Well I’m really glad I met you in class. I’ve been wondering if I might be gay or bi. However, I haven’t really told anyone.

Discussion Questions:
What stage of ally development is the Asian student describing? How would you describe it?
As the Ally student, how would you respond?
What resources are available on campus for both of you? Off campus?

Example Responses:
1 – The ally explains that they have friends who are gay but that they aren’t gay themselves. They explain that there are not only student groups and email lists to find more information, but also CAPS counselors who would be great to talk to.

2 – The ally explains that they have some gay friends and asks the Asian student how many people he has told about his feelings. The ally realizes that he is in an early stage of development and needs some very basic information and someone to talk to. The ally explains that while they aren’t a counselor or fully knowledgeable about LGBTQA issues, they know where he can find people that are in CAPS LGBTQA allies on campus. The ally remembers to let him know that he can still talk to them anytime as well.

Scenario Four

Latina female Ph.D. student in Philosophy
Member of the rowing team
23 years old from a traditional Latin family

You are the rowing team coach. One of your athletes approaches you and comes out. She remembers you mentioning being a member of the SafeZone program. She is conflicted over how to balance both her athletics life and personal life.

Student: Coach. Can I talk to you privately for a few moments?
Coach: Sure. What’s up?
Student: Well. A while ago I noticed your name on a poster that you are part of SafeZone. I’ve been meaning to talk to you about it for some time.

Coach: Many staff, faculty, and students are part of SafeZone. We all believe in making our campus a safe and supportive environment for everyone regardless of their sexual orientation.

Student: Okay, I think that is great. I’m not sure how I fit into that environment.

Coach: How so?
Student: I have been dating a woman for about a year now. I don’t ever talk about her to anyone else on the team. I’m afraid that they will think less of me or that it will affect them negatively. I want to tell people about my partner when they are talking about their boyfriends or dates they had, but I’m always too scared.

Discussion Questions:
How would you describe the stage (approximate) of development the student is describing?
As the Ally, how would you respond?
What resources are available on campus for both of you? Off campus?

Scenario Four Example Responses:
1 – Coach says she is happy she has told her this information. She would like to have a conversation with the team to insure that everyone is respectful of the diversity on the team even if someone is not heterosexual. She thanks the student for confiding in her and lets her know that she is always available if she wants to talk some more.

2 – Coach says she is happy she has confided in her and is happy for her and her partner thus showing her support and affirmation. She asks about the team and her experiences and asserts that she would not tolerate any harassment or intolerance on the team. She asks how she could be helpful. She asks if she would like the team to know about her partner and if so, how she would like them to learn this information.
Scenario Five

During lunch you overhear colleagues make a derogatory remark about someone on staff being gay.

Colleague #1: I heard that Susan is doing research about lesbian sexual identity.

Colleague #2: Well if she is she certainly is taking a risky move by doing it.

Colleague #1: How so?

Colleague #2: She is trying to get tenure and doing research about LGBTQA people isn’t always the safest thing.

Colleague #1: Oh that’s for sure. I just don’t understand why Susan would want to hurt her reputation by doing research on such a small number and, quite frankly, insignificant group of people.

Colleague #2: Well that may be so, but she can do what she wants.

Discussion Questions:
What are the issues with this conversation from your perspective?
As the Ally, how would you respond?
What resources are available on campus for you? Off campus? For your colleagues?

Scenario Five Example Responses:

Confront them when you hear the conversation in the cafeteria:
You: Hi, how are you? I couldn't help but to overhear your conversation about Susan.

Colleague #1: Yeah, we were just talking about her research.

You: Yes. I heard. Queer studies is becoming a well-established scholarly and academic discipline.

Colleague #2: That is true. I am aware of other schools that have established queer studies programs.

You: We should be fortunate that we have a faculty member on staff that is pursuing research in this area. It might even help to put our department on the map!

Colleague #1: I suppose that may be true. She can do what she wants.

You: I whole heartedly support her because she is doing something groundbreaking while taking a risk that most people wouldn't do.

Confront one-on-one
You: Hi. I overheard your conversation at lunch today about Susan and her current research.

Colleague: Oh.

You: I wasn't going to say anything, but when I thought about it again I decided that I should talk to you.

Colleague: What specifically?

You: Your remarks made me feel uncomfortable.

Colleague: Really, how so?

You: I heard you say that research on LGBTQA folks is studying an insignificant community; however, I feel that Susan's research may provide more information about that. Isn't that why we investigate such issues as researchers?

Colleague: That's still a big risk to take considering she is up for tenure.

You: Maybe so, but if this department wants to be known as a groundbreaking place to do research and a primer department, maybe we should support her. Also, there are lesbians and bisexual women here on our campus, making her research vital in helping us understand the students we teach and inform.

Colleague: I respect your opinion. Thank you for letting me know that you were feeling this way.

Adapted from Duke University ‘SafeZone’ training manual for University Miami training facilitated by Florida International University SafeZone Committee on January, 2013.
GLOSSARY

Please keep in mind that this glossary is rudimentary, and that what comes with language is its ability to adapt, transform, and change. The terms are presented for the purpose of facilitating communication—it is not an authoritative source.

For additional terminology, please refer to our website: studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-involved/lgbtqa/
Some definitions adapted from - Outfront Minnesota, 320 38th Street East, Suite 204, Minneapolis, MN 55409
Cooper Thompson and the Campaign to End Homophobia - A Guide to Leading Introductory Workshops on Homophobia
The Gender Education Center, and The Intersex Society of North America
North Dakota State University, Safe Zone Training, LGBTQA Programs

Definitions

Ally - A person who confronts heterosexism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, heterosexual privilege, and so on, in themselves and others out of self-interest and a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other queer-related people, and who believes that heterosexism is a social injustice.

Asexuality - A sexual orientation generally characterized by not feeling sexual attraction or a desire for partnered sexuality. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity. Some asexual individuals do have sex. There are many diverse ways of being asexual.

Bigender - Having two genders; exhibiting cultural characteristics of male and female roles.

Bisexual - Someone whose primary sexual and emotional orientation is toward people of the same or other genders.

Cisgender - A term used by some to describe people who are not transgender or those who agree with their gender assigned at birth. Cis- is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," and is therefore an antonym of trans-. A more widely understood way to describe people who are not transgender is simply to say non-transgender people.

Coming Out (of the closet) - Being closeted refers to not disclosing one's sexual orientation. Coming out is the process of first recognizing and acknowledging a non-heterosexual orientation and then disclosing it to others. This usually occurs in stages and is a non-linear process. An individual may be out in some situations or to certain family members or associates and not others. Some may never come out to anyone beside themselves.

Crossdresser (CD) - The most neutral word to describe a person who dresses, at least partially or part of the time, and for any number of reasons, in clothing associated with another gender within a particular society. It carries no implications of usual gender appearance, or sexual orientation. It has replaced transvestite, which is outdated, problematic, and generally offensive, since it was historically used to diagnose medical/mental health disorders.

Domestic Partners - Adults who are not legally married, but who share resources and responsibilities for decisions, share values and goals, and have commitments to one another over a period of time. Definitions may vary among city ordinances, corporate policies, and even among those who identify themselves as domestic partners.

Faggot - A pejorative term and common homophobic slur against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. The word has been used in English since the late 16th century to mean old or unpleasant woman, and the modern use may derive from this.

Family - Two or more persons who share resources, responsibility for decisions, values and goals, and have commitments to one another over a period of time. The family is that climate that one comes home to; and it is that network of sharing and commitments that most accurately describes the family unit, regardless of blood, or adoption, or marriage. (American Home Economics Association).

FTM (F2M) - Female-to-male transsexual or transgender person. Someone assigned female at birth that identifies on the male spectrum.

Gay - A person whose primary sexual and emotional orientation is toward people of the same gender; a commonly-used word for male homosexuals.
Gender - A social construct used to classify a person as a man, woman, or some other identity. Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth.

Gender Expression/Presentation - How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress and/or behaviors that society characterizes as masculine or feminine. May also be androgynous or something else altogether. Some people differentiate between the two terms.

Gender Identity - An individual’s basic self-conviction of being male or female. This conviction is not contingent upon the individual’s biological sex. This also has no bearing on the individual’s sexual orientation.

Gender Identity Disorder (GID) - The psychological classification in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV) is used to diagnose trans people and children. GID is overwhelmingly abusively and inappropriately used with children to cure homosexuality and enforce gender conformity. There is a current movement to have this diagnosis removed from the DSM-IV as the diagnosis is primarily used to shame individuals who are gender nonconforming.

Gender Non-Conforming (GNC) - A person who does not subscribe to gender expressions or roles expected of their by society.

Gender Variant - A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression varies from the culturally-expected characteristics of their assigned sex.

Genderfluid - Being fluid in motion between two or more genders; shifting naturally in gender identity and/or gender expression/presentation. May be a gender identity itself. Refers to the fluidity of identity.

Genderqueer - A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression falls outside of the dominant societal norm for their assigned sex, is beyond genders, or is some combination thereof.

Heteronormativity - An (often subconscious) assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and the attitudes associated with that assumption. Heterosexual privilege allows individuals to ignore gay, lesbian and bisexual persons and issues.

Heterosexism - The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and other non-monosexual people as well as asexual, transgender, and intersex people, while it gives advantages to heterosexual people. It is often a form of oppression which reinforces realities of silence and invisibility.

Heterosexuality - A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the opposite gender.

Heterosexual Privilege - The basic civil rights and social privileges that a heterosexual individual automatically receives, but are systematically denied to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons on the sole basis of their sexual or gender identity.

Homophobia - The irrational fear of, hatred of, aversion to, or discrimination against gay, lesbian or bisexual persons. Biphobia and transphobia are more specific terms when discussing prejudice toward bisexual and transgender persons, respectively.

Homosexuality - A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same gender. This term originated within the psychiatric community to label people with a mental illness, and still appears within the current discourse, but is generally thought to be outdated.

Internalized Homophobia - The fear and self-hate of one’s own homosexuality or non-monosexuality that occurs for many individuals who have learned negative ideas about homosexuality throughout childhood. One form of internalized oppression is the acceptance of the myths and stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.

Intersex - Formerly known as hermaphrodites (a term that is now considered offensive), this term refers to people who have traits of both male and female sexual organs and/or have ambiguous genitalia. Often times these individuals are subjected to surgical procedures, in their childhood and without consent, that alter their lives possibly forever. Intersex people are
relatively common, although society’s denial of their existence has allowed very little room for intersex issues to be discussed publicly. Has replaced hermaphrodite, which is inaccurate, outdated, problematic, and generally offensive, since it means having both sexes and this is not necessarily true, as there are at least 16 different ways to be intersex.

**Lesbian** - A woman whose primary sexual and emotional orientation is toward other females.

**LGBTQIA** - Sometimes referred to as *alphabet soup*, this acronym stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and ally. Some people will change the order of the letters in this acronym and some will only use some of the letters. Recently, people have moved to putting the *L* at the front of the acronym as a way of addressing multiple areas of oppression that lesbians face as both a woman and a lesbian.

**MTF (M2F)** - Male-to-female transsexual or transgender person. Someone assigned male at birth that identifies on the female spectrum.

**Outing** - Outing refers to revealing someone else’s sexual orientation or gender identity to others without the consent of the person.

**Partner or Significant Other** - Primary domestic partner or spousal relationship(s). May be referred to as *girlfriend/boyfriend, lover, roommate, life partner, wife/husband,* or other terms.

**Queer** - Used by some within the LGBTQIA community to refer to a person who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex or transgender, or someone who is supportive of LGBTQIA issues. This term is often as much a political statement as a label. Once used as a derogatory term to refer to a gay, lesbian, or bisexual person, the word has been *reclaimed* by some individuals to positively refer to LGBTQIA persons as *non-conforming*.

**Same Gender Loving** - A term used by some African-American people who love, date, and/or have attraction to people of the same gender. Often used by those who prefer to distance themselves from the terms they see as associated with the *white-dominated* queer communities.

**Sex** - A categorization based on the appearance of genitalia at birth. Refers to the biological characteristics chosen to assign humans as male, female, or intersex.

**Sexuality** - The components of a person that includes their biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.

**Sexual Identity** - The self-perceived identification of one’s sex biologically. This is different from gender and gender identity. Sex is biological, although social views and experiences of sex are societal.

**Sexual Minorities** - A subset of the population that experiences prejudice, social oppression, and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender expression (Chung, 2001).

**Sexual Orientation** - An enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, and/or affectional attraction. Terms include homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, pansexual, non-monosexual, queer, and asexual, and may apply to varying degrees. Sexual orientation is fluid, and people use a variety of labels to describe their own. Sometimes sexual preference is used but can be problematic as it implies choice.

**Straight** - An individual whose primary sexual orientation is toward people of the *opposite* gender.

**Trans Woman** - Also referred to as MTF, trans man - Also referred to as FTM

**Transgender** - A broad term used to encompass all manifestations of crossing gender barriers. It describes a wide range of identities and experiences of people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from conventional expectations based on their assigned biological birth sex. It includes all who cross-dress or otherwise transgress gender norms. Inclusive also of a person whose self-identification challenges traditional notions of gender and sexuality (e.g., transsexuals) and who does not conform to traditional understandings of labels like male and female. Some commonly held definitions include:

1. Someone whose behavior or expression does not *match* their assigned sex according to society.
2. A gender outside of the man/woman binary.
3. Having no gender or multiple genders.
4. Some definitions also include people who perform gender or play with it.
5. Historically, the term was coined to designate a transperson who was not undergoing medical transition (surgery or hormones).

Transition - The time period when a transgender individual shifts from expressing one gender to another in her/his personal life and workplace; involves several elements such as alternate dress, hormone therapy, voice training, and possibly surgery. For most individuals, the workplace transition is carefully planned; the planning will often include appropriate levels of management in the discussion, and the transition process may be weeks or months in length.

Transphobia - A reaction of fear, loathing, and discriminatory treatment of people whose identity or gender presentation (or perceived gender or gender identity) does not match, in the societally accepted way, the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgendered people, intersex people, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and other non-monosexuals are typically the target of transphobia.

Transsexual (TS) - A person who perceives themselves as a member of a gender that does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Many pursue hormones and/or surgery. Sometimes used to specifically refer to trans* people pursuing gender or sex reassignment.

Two Spirit - These terms describe indigenous people who fulfill one of many mixed gender roles found traditionally among many Native Americans and Canadian First Nations indigenous groups. These roles included wearing the clothing and performing the work that is traditional for both men and women. They are seen without stigma and are considered emissaries from the creator, treated with reverence and respect, even considered sacred, in some cases.

Notes:

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SAFE ZONE PLEDGE OF COMMITMENT

As a Safe Zone Participant at FIU, I recognize my responsibilities to:

- Promote an atmosphere of confidentiality and inform the person coming into my office of the limitations to that confidentiality
- Support the student’s sexual orientation and/or viewpoint
- Support the religious beliefs and social ideas of students
- Be a contact person and positive listener to all who request my services as a Safe Zone contact person
- Provide reference materials and other resources about sexual identity and support services for GLBTQ in the area
- Provide support to any person who questions his/her sexuality, comes out, or struggles with homophobia so s/he will not feel alone
- Provide support and information to people who are having difficulty understanding or dealing with the sexual orientation of others (e.g., roommate, sibling, friend, etc.)
- Accept that I do not have every answer and sometimes I will struggle to understand and to reply
- Offer support and referral to legal assistance for anyone who has been harassed because of her/his sexual orientation, including but not limited to an appropriate campus office or program and to provide assistance for the community whenever necessary
- Work to treat all people with respect and educate myself and others about issues relevant to the GLBTQ community rights

I recognize that I have rights as a Safe Zone Leader. These are:

- I can, at any time, refer the person seeking assistance to CAPS if I do not feel comfortable with a particular situation
- I can, at any time, call upon other Safe Zone contact persons to answer questions or receive support
- I can, at any time, call upon any other resources I find helpful that are consistent with the mission and purposes of the FIU Safe Zone

If necessary, I can, at any time, remove myself from the program, without any fear of embarrassment or harassment. I understand that I will need to inform the Safe Zone program coordinator and remove any and all Safe Zone publicity, stickers and items from my office space.

By signing this form I hereby formally declare my office/room to be a Safe Zone at FIU, that I agree with my rights and responsibilities as a Safe Zone Contact Person, and that I agree to support each student, staff, or faculty person in her/his perceived sexual orientation and/or need for related support, information, or referral.

Name – Please Print: ___________________________________________________________

Signature: ________________________________ Date (MMDDYY): _______________________

Sources: The Safe Zone Foundation; Human Rights Campaign (HRC); National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education; Campus PrideNet; OUT for Work Conference, National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, Gay-Straight Alliance Network and Safe Zone Participants at Century.