



Working Intentionally with International and Queer Student Survivors

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Who We Are

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Who's in the room?

Goals:

- Demonstrate the need for
 - informed direct services
 - targeted primary prevention programming for international and queer student populations
- Offer some strategies for creating intentional programming and response services

What is “LGBTQIA+”

A standard acronym:

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- *Queer*
- Intersex
- Asexual
- +

This acronym has expanded over the years and includes far more identities than are represented here. What are some that you would like to include?

“queer”

Many queer activists see “queer” as an umbrella term for folk who are outside of the mainstream: both the heterosexual/cisgender mainstream and the conventional LG(BT)* mainstream.

They point out that being “equal” is not always “equally good” and question the gay rights movement’s focus on things like marriage, consumer culture, and serving in the military.

Maybe the focus should also be on the groups under the queer umbrella who are most marginalized, such as those who are at everyday risk of violence, suicide, poverty and homelessness.



“Queer: A Graphic History”
Meg-John Barker & Julia Scheele

Gender Identity vs. Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation is about who you are sexually, romantically, emotionally, and/or spiritually attracted to

Gender Identity is about how you understand your own gender and how you express that.

NOT A MONOLITHIC POPULATION

Understand Your Populations

- Social consequences are a genuine and significant concern for students
- Role of social media
- Lack of trust in institutions
- Punishment of trauma responses

Name your role & positionality

“High-risk” and “Under-served”



DIRECT SERVICES



What is ‘Trauma-Informed’?

Understanding behavior not as good or bad
– but as regulated / dysregulated

What is Trauma-Informed Work?

We recognize that LGBTQIA+ survivors:

- Have likely experienced intersecting forms of bias, discrimination, & violence that may create complex trauma histories, which impacts their development and coping strategies.
- Are experts in their own lives and we work from their point of view, without judgement or condescension.
- Are our guide in the process of healing from their trauma. Survivors of trauma know what they have been through, what they need, and where they want to go.



Why is this important?







Why Targeted Services and Resources for International Student Survivors?



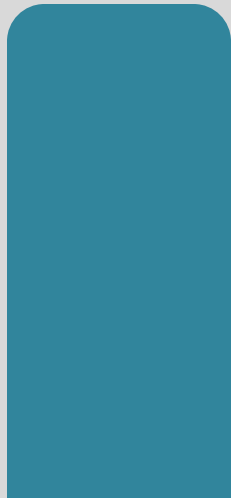


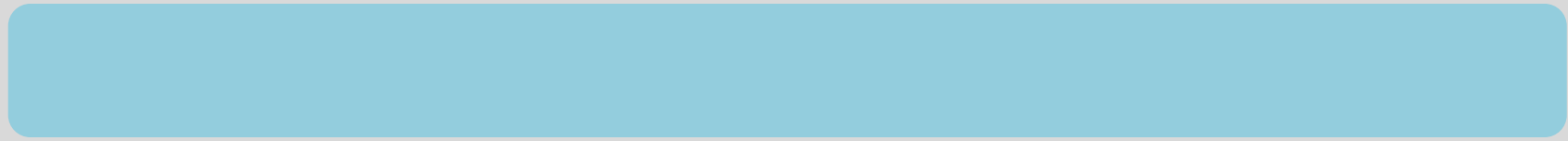
- Isolation
- Cultural/ communication differences
- Knowledge/ understanding of systems
- Distance
 - Harder to go home
 - Financial burden
 - Communication more difficult
 - Potential mandatory disclosure to family

Legal Barriers for International Student Survivors

- Visa restrictions
 - Leaves of absence / reduced course load
 - Uninformed staff
- Employment & loan restrictions
 - Financial instability/ dependence



Why Targeted Services and Resources for Queer Student Survivors?



- Challenge accessing affirming healthcare
 - Medical forms
 - Gendered SAFE exam
- Lack informed mental health care
- Outing
 - Legal documentation
 - Class roster
- Specific mental health challenges
- Safety concerns

Examples of Discrimination

Racism Among Service Providers and Authorities:

- **Stereotypes and assumptions about the survivor:**
 - The partner of color in a racially mixed relationship is likely to be the abuser
 - People of color are more aggressive and more likely to fight back than white victims
- **Reluctance of survivors of color to report their partners to the criminal legal system:**
 - Law enforcement and courts respond much more strongly to violence by people of color than violence against them
 - Survivor may not want their partner to be exposed to racist attacks in jail



Structural Barriers Are Real!



Barriers for Queer Student Survivors

- No federal law against LGBTQIA+ housing or employment discrimination
- Support systems often don't serve LGBTQIA+ folx
- Lack informed providers and services
- Title IX challenged

Barriers to Reporting

- Identity matters
 - Dual arrests
- Re-traumatizing process
- 97% of perpetrators do not spend a single day in jail
- Distrust in the criminal legal system
 - Documentation status, race, LGBTQIA+ communities, mental health concerns
- Community pressure to keep quiet
- Shame
- Fear



SAFETY PLANNING

**The Unique Needs of LGBTQIA+
Student Populations**



- Respect preferences around identity & disclosure
- Respect confidentiality
- Consider social location & context
- Race, class, religion, education, ability, etc.
- Discuss the potential benefits and risks of disclosures and interactions with police, medical system, criminal justice system, service providers
- Include resilience/strengths
 - What has worked for you in the past?
 - What are the tools you use to cope/survive?

- Have they worked with other (outside) service providers in the past?
 - If so, what was that experience like?
- Who knows about their relationship?
- Who are they out to? – Family, friends, work, school, children, etc.
- Plan for routinely running into their partner (if they have chosen to leave)
- Are they comfortable with you disclosing their identity to another provider?

Safety Planning: If Leaving Isn't An Option

- If the student/client/patient indicates that they wants to break up with their partner:
- What is their plan?
- When do they think they will do it?
- Who else knows about the break up plan?
- Break up with partner in a public place
- Arrange to call a friend, family member, etc. for support

How to Achieve Targeted Response Services

- Identify stakeholders & partners
- Involve students
- Develop list of vetted, informed healthcare and mental health care providers
- Include information about marginalized populations in all resources/ programming
- Collaborate with local legal services organizations to employ a holistic approach
- Train staff who interact with students on cultural humility & key information

Individual Action Steps

- Assess your own values/beliefs regarding sexual orientation & gender identity
- Address your internal biases
- Educate yourself
- Acknowledge what you don't know and apologize if you make a mistake*
- Know your personal limits
- Seek support/supervision

Interpersonal Action Steps

- Use inclusive language (such as partner, folx, y'all, friends)
- Respect self-identification & self-determination
- Avoid assuming sexual orientation
- Be cautious of stereotypes
- Allow space for clients to build trust with you
- Confront discrimination & prejudice (jokes, comments)
- Avoid centering yourself in the conversation

Institutional Action Steps

- Ensure **all** forms, materials, procedures are inclusive
- Train **all** staff in LGBTQIA+ and immigrant sensitivity and anti-oppression work
- Develop resources – create connections with immigration & LGBTQIA+ service providers & programs
- Review employment policies procedures and hire staff reflective of community diversity
- Create all-gender, non-segregated restrooms
- Post “safe space” symbols in organizational spaces
- Offer inclusive LGBTQIA+ insurance options for all staff



PRIMARY PREVENTION



Why Targeted Prevention Programming for International Students?

- *Potentially* different assumptions about sex, violence, & boundaries
- Tools for expectations management & coping with unfamiliar cultural norms
- Knowledge of services/ resources off campus
- Background basics

Be careful about othering international student populations

Why Targeted Prevention Programming for LGBTQIA+ Students?

- Experience higher rates of sexual and intimate partner violence
- Specific risks and challenges
 - Outing
 - Withholding hormones
- Barriers to informed healthcare
- Lack of experienced mental health services

**Students will all be at
different phases of
exploring their identities**

Creating Targeted Prevention Programs

- Engage students
 - E.g. focus groups
- One-off workshop not enough
 - Peer-to-peer model
- Accessible & inclusive language
 - Titles
 - Inclusive scenarios and role-plays

Creating Targeted Prevention Programs

- Strengths-based approach
 - Avoid terms at outset
 - Myth-bust U.S stereotypes & expectations
- Embed programing into existing structures
 - Partner with International student office/
Queer Alliance
 - Collaborate in existing training spaces
- Use your data – climate surveys!

Thank You & Questions

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