



# LGBTQ & Intellectual Disability

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# Objectives



- Describe therapeutic interventions for supporting individuals that have an intellectual disability and identify as a sexual minority (LGBTQ).
- State evidence-based practices related to supporting individuals that have an intellectual disability and identify as a sexual minority (LGBTQ).
- Respond to the needs of LGBTQ individuals that have an intellectual disability by identifying community resources.



# Terms



- ▶ LGBTQ = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning &/or Queer
- ▶ Sexual Orientation = sexual attraction + potential for loving (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual) or affectional orientation
- ▶ Homosexual = sexual orientation toward own gender (Lesbian & Gay)
- ▶ Heterosexual = sexual orientation toward other gender (Straight)
- ▶ Bisexual = sexual orientation toward both genders
- ▶ Transgender = gender identity does not match their gender assigned at birth (natal gender) - includes genderqueer or genderfluid – gender nonconforming – transsexuals
- ▶ Queer = self-label used by some LGBs & some heterosexuals who prefer unusual sexual practices

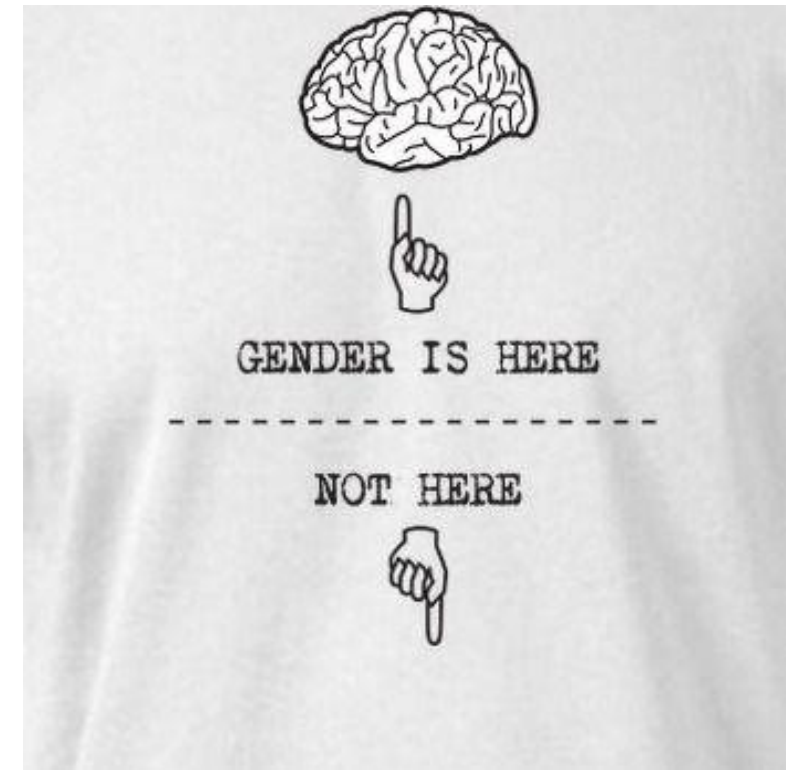
# Intellectual Disability

- Difficulties in:
  - Intellectual functions such as reasoning, judgement, & academic learning
  - Daily living with deficits in communication, social participation, & independent living
  - Onset in childhood



# Gender Dysphoria (APA, 2013)

- ▶ Psychological distress about a mismatch between person's gender identity & natal gender
  - ▶ Can appear in childhood – characterized as strong desire to be other gender – substantial distress – resistance to wearing clothing typical for natal gender – preference for toys & games typical of other gender – desire for genitals to match their gender identity
  - ▶ Can also appear in adolescence or adulthood







# Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (LGB)

- ▶ More than 100 studies results indicated:
  - ▶ 55% verbally harassed
  - ▶ 14% assaulted with weapon
  - ▶ 41% experienced discrimination
  - ▶ 19% experienced victimization from police
  - ▶ 28% verbally harassed by family members
  - ▶ 45% sexually harassed (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012)
- ▶ Child abuse – physical, emotional, or sexual – by family may have serious mental health consequences (Balsam, et. al., 2010)

# Transgender



- Trans people face high rates of discrimination
  - African American transgender fare worse than all others
  - Live in extreme poverty
  - 41% report attempting suicide compared to 1.6% of general population
  - 55% lost job due to bias
  - 51% report harassed/bullied in school
  - 61% victim of physical assault
  - 64% victim of sexual assault

(Grant et al., 2011)

# Concurrent Identities: Intellectual Disability + LGBTQ

- Ashamed, confused, frightened, and the most invisible of all sexual minorities





# Current Issues...



- The local day center found a couple having sex in the shed
- ...and guess what the day center did to deal with the issue?

## Current Solutions...

- They took down the shed
- I think that says it all, doesn't it?





# Therapeutic Interventions



- Sexuality education – Contraceptives; Relationship Dynamics, etc...
- Need opportunities to practice social skills during actual interactions with nondisabled peers, rather than through isolated instruction
- Use positive LGBTQ themed novels
  - Levithan's (2004) *The Realm of Possibility*, in which Daniel states, "My parents are okay with me being gay but they would kill me if they saw me with a cigarette" (p. 5).
  - Peter's (2010) *Rage: A Love Story*.
- Be familiar with diagnosis of gender dysphoria
- Cognitive behavioral strategies - help identify coping skills
- Identify social support networks, i.e., (open) religious communities, LGBTQ gatherings

# Continued: Therapeutic Interventions

- ▶ Use open-ended questions about sexuality & ask whether this is something the LGBTQ + client would like to discuss (e.g., what concerns you about your sexuality?) (Miracle & Miracle, 2009)
- ▶ Use gender-neutral non-heteronormative language (humankind – chair person – flight attendant) that will communicate acceptance (Rosendale & Josephson, 2015)
- ▶ Important to provide emotional support to the family & caregivers of LGBTQ
- ▶ Have materials displayed in the waiting room that communicate an atmosphere of acceptance and inclusion





# Sex Research Studies



- ▶ 24% boys – 8% girls with intellectual disabilities engaged in intercourse by 16 years old (Cheng & Udry, 2003)
- ▶ 10% of the population LGBTQ (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948/1998) remains confirmed by the Gallup Poll (2002)
  - ▶ United States Census Bureau (2007) reported that approximately 20% receive special education services





# Evidence-Based Practices



- ▶ Provide opportunities for individuals with IDD/LGBTQ to actively participate in research
  - ▶ To decrease risk of coercion, staff members or advocates – not members of the research team should conduct recruitment
  - ▶ Researchers should work towards more accessible approaches for obtaining informed consent
  - ▶ Take into account marginalization of LGBTQ people labeled with IDD & compensated for time and participation
  - ▶ Practitioner-researchers be aware of professional & institutional guidelines that affect research participation
  - ▶ Engage people labeled with IDD in research process that meet the needs and interests of potential participants (Marshall, et.al., 2012)

# Community Resources



- Local Libraries for various forms of literature
- Specifically for transgender become aware of public spaces, i.e., gender neutral restrooms, gyms with private areas, state laws related to driver's license, medical services
- Learn about state & federal laws related to discrimination, i.e., employment, foster/adoption services, housing, human services
- Association of LGBT Issues in Counseling (<http://www.algbtic.org/l-g-b-t-resources.html>)
- Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network (<https://www.glsen.org/>)
- Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (<http://www.pflag.org/>)



# Summary



- ▶ “Finally, and most importantly, we need to really listen to what LGB people with developmental disabilities are saying” (Thompson, Bryson, & De Castell, 2001, p. 63).
- ▶ Provide opportunities for individuals with IDD/LGBTQ to actively participate in research
- ▶ Help find “safe space” LGBT persons with ID to engage in consensual sexual activity
  - ▶ Need to explore and change attitudes of staff & clients to develop culture “that respects diverse sexualities” (Tallentire et al., 2016, p. 9)



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