Stopping It Where It Starts: Disrupting the LGBTQ Polyvictimization Pathway in Childhood

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Thank you OVC!

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Welcome & Housekeeping

• Take care of yourself
• Participation is TOTALLY optional
• PPTs
FORGE webinar leads

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FORGE’s Role in Resource Center

• One of eight population groups
• FORGE leads the LGBTQ working group
• National transgender anti-violence group
• Headquartered in Milwaukee, WI

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Agenda

• Lifelong violence & health disparities
• ACES
• School-based bullying
• Family-based bullying
• What you can do!
The Problem is Lifelong

• LGBTQ adults experience higher rates:
  • Sexual assault
  • Intimate partner violence
  • Hate crimes
  • Mental health problems (esp. depression, anxiety, and suicidality)
  • Substance use issues
And It Starts in Childhood

• LGBTQ youth more likely to experience...
  • 3.8 times: childhood sexual abuse
  • 1.2 times: parental physical abuse

• LGBTQ youth experience higher rates...
  • Emotional abuse (47.9% vs. 29.6%)
  • Exposure to domestic violence (24.1% vs. 15.4%)
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
Relationship between ACEs and Health

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for negative health outcomes

0 ACEs  1 ACE  2 ACEs  3 ACEs  4+ ACEs

Centers for Disease Control, Kaiser – ACE
Possible Risk Outcomes:

- Lack of physical activity
- Smoking
- Alcoholism
- Drug use
- Missed work
- Severe obesity
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Suicide attempts
- STDs
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Stroke
- COPD
- Broken bones

Centers for Disease Control, Kaiser – ACE
One example: ACE score & risk

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**Centers for Disease Control, Kaiser – ACE**
How Does That Work?

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Social, Emotional, & Cognitive Impairment

Adoption of Health-risk Behaviors

Disease, Disability and social problems

Early Death

Death

Birth

Centers for Disease Control, Kaiser – ACE
“Everyone” Experiences ACEs

• “...between 55 and 62 percent of the population have experienced at least one category of ACE, and between 13 and 17 percent of the population have an ACE score of four or more.”

The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity
LGBTQ-Specific ACEs

• There may be common LGBTQ-specific ACEs that aren’t being measured but help increase disparities

• Today we’re going to focus on two:
  • School-based bullying
  • Family-based bullying
Types and Disparities

• 20% to 33% all US students bullied
• LGBTQ students: 65% to 85%
  • Physically assaulted or harassed
  • Sexually harassed or assaulted
  • Cyberbullied
  • Relational aggression
  • Threatened/injured by weapons
• 57% to 71% heard slurs from teachers
Aftereffects of Bullying

• 44% to 60% felt unsafe at school
• Negatively affected...
  • Self-esteem
  • Relationships with friends or family
  • Schoolwork (GPAs)
  • School attendance and aspirations
• Increased depression and suicidality
Bullying and Discipline Issues

- 20% who reported bullying were blamed
- LGBTQ students are in more physical fights
- Up to 3X more likely to experience harsh disciplinary treatment at school
Family-Based Bullying
Even Well-Meaning Parents...

• Remember: Childhood abuse rates higher
• >50% try to change child’s sexual orientation
• Most parents “ambivalent” about LGBTQ children (at least at first)
• May not want to condone or encourage LGBTQ identity
• Want to help their children have a “good life” and be accepted
Common Parental Responses

• Denying or minimizing an adolescent’s LGBT identity: “It’s just a phase” or “He’ll grow out of it” or “How could she possibly know?” or “He’s just confused”

• Not talking about/discouraging the adolescent from talking about their LGBT identity

• Not allowing child to attend family events
Children/Youth Feel It Differently

Youth perceive these as *rejecting* behaviors.
“Rejection” Leads to...

Family Acceptance Project

WELL-BEING & PARENTAL REJECTION

LGBTQ youth with high parental rejection (as compared to LGBTQ youth with moderate to low parental rejection) are:

8x more likely to attempt suicide

6x more likely to report high levels of depression

3x more likely to use illegal drugs

3x more likely to be at high risk for HIV and STDs
One story

Homosexuality took over the whole framework of my relationship with my parents. There was no more parenting. No more looking at a report card or calling a teacher or figuring out a bank account or teaching me how to become a functioning adult. All of that stopped and it became about conversion and religion and gayness and damnation versus salvation.
Conversion Therapy

- Used to include institutionalization, castration, and electroconvulsive shock therapy
- Now includes:
  - Training to conform to gender norms
  - Teaching heterosexual dating norms
  - Using hypnosis to redirect desires
  - Sometimes, family rejection
Conversion Therapy Effects

- Decreased self-esteem and authenticity to others
- Increased self-hatred and negative perceptions of homosexuality
- Confusion, depression, guilt, helplessness, hopelessness, shame, social withdrawal and suicidality
- Anger at and a sense of betrayal by conversion therapy providers
- An increase in substance abuse and high-risk sexual behaviors
Conversion Therapy Effects (2 of 2)

- A feeling of being dehumanized and untrue to self
- A loss of faith
- A sense of having wasted time and resources
- Self-blame, including feelings of weakness and lack of effort, commitment, faith or worthiness in God’s eyes
- Intrusive images and sexual dysfunction
Conversion Therapy Bans

• “Every major medical, psychiatric, psychological, and professional mental health organization” opposes conversion therapy

• 18 states, 1 territory, D.C., and multiple cities have outlawed conversion therapy on minors

• Some have exempted religious therapy
Summing Up
TOP THREE REASONS FOR LGBT HOMELESSNESS:
— REPORTED BY LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE (AKT 2014)

- Parental rejection: 69%
- Abuse within the family (physical, emotional, sexual): 69%
- Aggression / violence in the family: 62%
Pathways to increased violence

• Mental health issues
• Lack of high school diploma
• LGBTQ 15% of juvenile justice population
• Homelessness
• 20% trans people have engaged in underground economy (sex work, etc.)
  • Results: >exposure to police/CJ, sexual assault, IPV, public harassment, attacked with a gun
What Individuals Can Do
Neighbor-

Thank you for having a trans flag waving in your yard.
I am a 15 year old trans boy living in an unsupportive household, but every time I see your flag, I feel better. I appreciate your existence and pride.
Prevention Strategies (1 of 2)

• Talk about LGBT identity
• Express affection
• Support LGBT identity
• Advocate when mistreated
• Require others to respect child

• Connect youth with LGBT adult role models
• Help faith community become inclusive
• Welcome LGBT friends to home
• Believe in happy future
Prevention Strategies

- Support parents, connect them to Family Acceptance Project information
- Advocate for explicit, enforceable school inclusion/non-bullying policies
- Promote accurate information about LGBTQ people, especially youth
- Connect youth with LGBTQ resources
Questions
Thank you!

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