Challenges LGBTQ+ people face in academia

EIJC Summer Session (07/27/2020)
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Land acknowledgement: Let’s pause to think about the longstanding history that has brought us to reside on the land of Wampanoag, and to seek to understand our place within that history. Colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation.

Adapted by B.H. from a Northwestern University article
What does LGBTQ+ mean?

LGBTQIA+

Lesbian
A woman who is primarily attracted to women.

Gay
A man who is primarily attracted to men; sometimes a broad term for individuals primarily attracted to the same sex.

Bisexual
An individual attracted to people of their own and opposite gender.

Transgender
A person whose gender identity differs from their assigned sex at birth.

Transexual
An outdated term that originated in the medical and psychological communities for people who have permanently changed their gender identity through surgery and hormones.

Queer
An umbrella term to be more inclusive of the many identities and variations that make up the LGBTQ+ community.

Questioning
The process of exploring and discovering one's own sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

Intersex
An individual whose sexual anatomy or chromosomes do not fit with the traditional markers of "female" and "male."

Ally
Typically a non-queer person who supports and advocates for the queer community; an individual within the LGBTQ+ community can be an ally for another member that identifies differently than them.

Asexual
An individual who generally does not feel sexual desire or attraction to any group of people. It is not the same as celibacy and has many subgroups.

Pansexual
A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical and/or spiritual attraction to members of all gender identities/expressions, not just people who fit into the standard gender binary.
What does it mean to be LGBTQ+?

**Same-sex intercourse illegal.** Penalties:
- **Death**
- **Prison**
- **Death under militias**
- **Detention w/o prosecution**

**Same-sex intercourse legal.** Recognition of unions:
- **Marriage**
- **Civil unions**
- **Limited foreign**
- **Limited domestic**
- **Optional certification**
- **Extraterritorial marriage**
- **Restrictions of expression**
The school environment

Factors at school affecting LGBTQ+ youth:
- Bullying, harassment, verbal abuse by classmates
- Sexual assault
- Lack of acceptance, punishments by teachers
- Lack of funding

Consequences for LGBTQ+ youth:
- Suicidal thoughts and attempts
- Physical and emotional harm
- Homelessness, sex work
- School-to-prison pipeline
# Mental Health

## Risk of Depression, Suicide and Substance Abuse

**LGB YOUTH ARE**

- **3X** as likely to consider suicide as straight youth.
- **4 1/2X** more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth.
- **>2X** as likely to feel sad or hopeless every day for 2 or more weeks in a row as straight youth.
- **>4 1/2X** more likely to make a suicide attempt resulting in injury, poisoning or overdose that has to be treated by a doctor.

## Risks for Transgender Youth

Transgender youths who are rejected by their families are more than 8X more likely to attempt suicide.

- **78%** of transgender students in grades K-12 report harsh harassment, with 35% reporting physical assault and 12% reporting sexual violence.
- **15%** of transgender students leave school in K-12 settings or higher education due to the extremity of harassment.
- **1/2** of those who leave school report experiencing homelessness.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/pdfs/mm6509.pdf


USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work
Abuse and Homelessness

Threat of Violence, Physical Assault and Bullying

**LGB YOUTH ARE**

- ~2X more likely to be bullied than heterosexual youth.
- >3X more likely to be forced to have sexual intercourse than heterosexual youth.
- 2.5X more likely to experience sexual dating violence than heterosexual youth.
- 2X more likely to be threatened or injured with a weapon on school property than heterosexual youth.

Risk of Homelessness

**MORE THAN 1 IN 4**

gay teens are THROWN OUT OF THEIR HOMES.

**ABOUT 62%**
of LGBT homeless youth have ATTEMPTED SUICIDE.

LGBT homeless youth are 7X more likely than their heterosexual peers to be VICTIMS OF A CRIME.

54% of homeless LGBT youth say ABUSE IN THEIR FAMILY is a contributing factor to homelessness.

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/ss/ss16600.pdf


USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work
Short stories from my high school days

Boryana at her high school (2010)
“My girlfriend’s mother found out she was dating a girl and sent me a message on social media saying: If you don’t leave my daughter alone, I will call the police and ask for you to be arrested.”

“School children at the cafeteria came to me one day and told me I looked like a boy and asked me whether I was intersex. Then they called me a freak of nature.”

“My parents told me to not come home until I have changed my mind about who I am dating.”

“I was sent to a psychologist to work on my personality issues and my unhealthy obsession with people I look up to.”

“My girlfriend’s parents called my mother and told her she had raised a crazy freak and that it was all her fault that I was queer because she was divorced.”

“When one of the teachers found out I was dating another student of the same gender, they decided to tell my parents so they can take care of this disgusting behavior.”
Funding for LGBTQ education & safe schools has fluctuated over the past five years, never exceeding $9 million in a given year.

As such, for every $100 that foundations in the United States awarded for education, only 15 cents were devoted funding for LGBTQ education and safe schools.7

Between 2016-2017, funding for criminalization and criminal justice reform focusing on LGBTQ youth totaled $3,975,171, just 0.003 percent of all philanthropic dollars. The majority of this funding was awarded to a handful of organizations working on the school-to-prison pipeline, including BreakOUT!, FIERCE, Providence Youth and Student Movement (PrYSM), and TGIJP.
Systemic LGBTQ+ Issues

- Overpolicing
- Poverty, food insecurity, lack of health insurance
- Gun violence
- Lack of discrimination protection at schools and universities
- HIV, sex work, syringe use laws
- The current government

The burden of these issues disproportionately falls on the most vulnerable communities such as black and brown people and indigenous peoples.
Tips for allies and educators

Dear educators, please:

● Ask students what their preferred pronouns are
● Be a visible ally (e.g. hang a rainbow flag on your office door)
● Make yourself open and available to LGBTQ+ students
● Avoid making assumptions about people’s gender and sexual identity (e.g. dividing students into boys and girls)

Dear allies, please:

● Actively support anti-gun lawmakers in your districts
● Actively support affordable healthcare and raising minimum wages
● Advocate for trans rights and in particular for people of color
● Advocate on both state- as well as university-level for protection against discrimination on the basis of sexuality and gender identity
● Support initiatives aimed at transfiguring the prison system
Sources of inspiration:
1. National Center for Transgender Equality
2. GLSEN
3. Trevor Project
4. Philanthropy OUTlook
5. My incredible partner, for giving me a number of great ideas
6. Kelly, for sharing a bunch of awesome resources with me
7. You all, for being willing to listen

Donation sites:
1. Pride Fund to End Gun Violence
2. BreakOUT!
3. FIERCE
4. TGIJP
5. Black and Pink