PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT OF LGB INDIVIDUALS: UNDERSTANDING PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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Guidelines for Psychological Practice With Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients

- Originally adopted in 2000
- Both the original and revision LGB Guidelines Task Force chaired by Kris Hancock, Ph.D. and Doug Haldeman, Ph.D.
- This presentation is based on this publication.
The LGB Practice Guidelines were of such high caliber that they were used as a template in APA for all other guidelines.
Why do we need guidelines?

- Provide a frame of reference for treatment.
- Provide basic information/references in the various areas.
Guidelines assist psychologists conducting lesbian, gay, and bisexual affirmative practice, education, and research.
LGB Guidelines were developed in collaboration between Division 44 and the Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns (CLGBTC).
Division 44 and APA recognize that there are idiosyncratic issues in working with transgendered individuals in psychotherapy and that these issues warrant their own guidelines. The Transgender Guidelines are currently being worked on. The Transgender Guidelines Task Force has met once in February of 2012 in Atlanta, GA. The Taskforce is chaired by lore dickey, Ph.D. and Anneliese Singh, Ph.D.
What are guidelines?

- Guidelines are:
  - Pronouncements, statements, or declarations that suggest or recommend specific professional behavior, endeavors, or conduct for psychologists.
  - Aspirational in intent.
  - Facilitate the continued structured and systematic development of the profession.

- Guidelines are NOT:
  - Mandatory/exhaustive.
  - Definitive.
  - Superseded by judgment of psychologist.
  - Superseded by federal and state law.
Guidelines are to be consistent with APA Code of Ethics and Conduct.
What happened in 1975??
Did you know?

- In 1975, APA adopted a resolution stating that “homosexuality per se implies NO impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capabilities” AND urging “all mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientations.”

  - Conger, 1975
Sexual Orientation

The sex of those to whom one is sexually and romantically attracted.

- Gay men/lesbians
- Heterosexuals
- Bisexuals
- Sexual orientation is not always in such neat, categories and instead is a continuum
So, what’s the problem?

Everything should be okay now, right???
In 16 years following APA’s 1975 resolution, there is documentation of a gap between policy and actual practice.
Did you know?

- In 2009, APA affirmed that “same-sex sexual and romantic attractions, feelings, and behaviors are NORMAL and positive variations of human sexuality regardless of sexual orientation identity.”
  - APA, 2009
How do guidelines differ from standards?
Standards are mandatory and may be accompanied by an enforcement mechanism. You will be held to the STANDARDS of your profession in a court of law.
Terms
Sex

Biological status.

Typically categorized as male, female, or intersexed.
Gender

Attitudes, feelings, & behaviors that a given culture associates with a person’s biological sex.

**Gender Normative**—Behavior = cultural expectations

**Gender Nonconformity**—Behavior ≠ cultural expectations
Gender Identity

One’s sense of oneself as male, female, or transgender (APA, 2006).

When one’s gender identity and biological sex are not congruent, the person may consider themselves transgender/transsexual.
Cisgender

- The opposite of transgendered

- Someone who is cisgendered has a **gender identity** that agrees with their socially recognized **sex**.
Gender Expression

“Way in which a person acts to communicate gender within a given culture. For ex., clothing, communication patterns, interests, etc. APA, 2008
Gender expression not consistent with socially prescribed gender roles
Queer

Queer is an umbrella term to describe sexual orientation for sexual minorities that are not heterosexual, heteronormative, or gender-binary. Only identifier that does not specify the sex/gender of partner.
Coming Out

The process in which one acknowledges and accepts one’s own sexual orientation. Includes the process by which one discloses one’s sexual orientation to others.
Levels of Coming Out

Use of Bronfenbrenner’s Socioecological Model to describe the varying levels of “coming out.”

If different contexts influence development, could we influence various contexts??
Overview of Guidelines

ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMOSEXUALITY AND BISEXUALITY
• Guideline 1 through Guideline 6

RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILIES
• Guideline 7 through Guideline 10

ISSUES OF DIVERSITY
• Guideline 11 through Guideline 16

ECONOMIC AND WORKPLACE ISSUES
• Guideline 17 through Guideline 18

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
• Guideline 19 through Guideline 20

RESEARCH
• Guideline 21
ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMOSEXUALITY AND BISEXUALITY
Guideline 1

Psychologists strive to understand the effects of stigma and various contextual manifestations in the lives of LGB people.
Yes on 8

If there’s anything that threatens everything that is good and beautiful, it’s love, happiness and commitment!

...Yours!
More Terms
Social Stigma

a negative social attitude or social disapproval directed toward a characteristic of a person that can lead to prejudice and discrimination.

VandenBos, 2007
Heterosexism

“The ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any NONHETEROSEXIST form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community.”

Herek, 1995
Minority Stress

The concept of minority stress is based on the premise that gay people in a heterosexist society are subjected to chronic stress related to their stigmatization.
Example of a Microaggression

"YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED? WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE, LET'S MEET THE LUCKY GIRL!"
Sexual Minority

Term used to refer to people who are nonheterosexual particularly when comparing their experiences with those of ethnic minority individuals. (Dworkin, 2000).
LGB Affirmative

The view that LGB people and issues are “central and self-defining as opposed to marginal and defined by a heterosexual norm.

Morrow, 2000
Guideline 2

Psychologists understand that lesbian, gay, and bisexual orientations are NOT mental illnesses.
Practical Applications

The practical application is that clients who have been exposed to notions of homosexuality and bisexuality as mental illnesses may present with internalized prejudicial attitudes.

1. Consider the effects of internalized stigma
2. Collaborate with client on establishing therapeutic goals
3. Disseminate accurate scientific and professional information about sexual orientation to counteract the bias.
Guideline 3

Psychologists understand that same-sex attractions, feelings, and behavior are normal variants of human sexuality and that efforts to change sexual orientation have not been shown to be effective or safe.
S–Sexual
O–Orientation
C–Change
E–Efforts

Therapeutic interventions intended to change, modify, or manage unwanted nonheterosexual orientations.
Guideline 4

Psychologists are encouraged to recognize how their attitudes and knowledge about LGB issues may be relevant to assessment and treatment and seek consultation or make appropriate referrals when indicated.
A Georgia student studying counseling says her university went too far in requiring her to change her Christian beliefs on homosexuality before she's allowed to graduate. Backed by the Alliance Defense Fund, Jennifer Keeton has filed suit against Augusta State University after, she said, school officials threatened to dismiss her from its counseling program when she refused to participate in a "remediation" plan to increase her tolerance of gays and lesbians after she made it known that she believed homosexuality was a personal choice.

According to the lawsuit, filed earlier this month in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia, school officials told Keeton that she was failing to conform to professional standards because of her views on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.
• This is also an ineffective approach.
• It is similar to Color Blindness.
• Ignores or denies the culturally unique life experiences of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations. Instead of eliminating heterosexist bias, it perpetuates heterosexism in a manner that is not helpful to clients.
Guideline 5

Psychologists strive to recognize the unique experiences of bisexual individuals.
Are You Bi?

Decisions
Making Up Your Fucking Mind
"I'm trying to figure out if having sex twice a year means we're bi-sexual."
Guideline 6

Psychologists strive to distinguish issues of sexual orientation from those of gender identity when working with LGB clients.
The L Word
RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILIES
Guideline 7

Psychologists strive to be knowledgeable about and respect the importance of lesbian, gay, and bisexual relationships.
Whoa... that's actually kinda hot...

I knew this would threaten our marriage!
LONG CEREMONY.

...AND AFTER A THOROUGH REVIEW OF ALL THE EVIDENCE AND TESTIMONY, I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU HUSBAND AND HUSBAND!

IT NOW GOES ON TO APPEAL...

...A ROMANTIC CEREMONY OF BALLS AND STRIKES.
Guideline 8

Psychologists strive to understand the experiences and challenges faced by lesbian, gay, and bisexual parents.
I’m very confused... I never had a father. I was raised by two mummies.
DADDY, PAPA, and ME
Guideline 9

Psychologists recognize that the families of LGB people may include people who are not legally or biologically related.
Guideline 10

Psychologists strive to understand the ways in which a person’s LGB orientation may have an impact on his/her family of origin and the relationship with that family of origin.
“Mum, Dad... I know you’ll find this hard to accept, but I’m afraid I’m straight!”
"Mommy, why are we not allowed to talk about uncle Bruce and his roommate Frank?"
What influences the lives of LGB people?
Guideline 11

Psychologists strive to recognize the challenges related to multiple and often conflicting norms, values, and beliefs faced by LGB members of racial and ethnic minority groups.
Guideline 12

Psychologists are encouraged to consider the influences of religion and spirituality in the lives of LGB persons.
Psychologists strive to recognize cohort and age differences among LGB individuals.
Guideline 14

Psychologists strive to understand the unique problems and risks that exist for LGB youth.
Lifetime Suicide Attempts for Highly Rejected LGBT Young People

(One or more times)

Level of Family Rejection

LOW rejection  MODERATE rejection  HIGH rejection
Youth reject labels

Opt for broad terms like Queer or reject them altogether.
Social Support is Crucial

Importance of GSAs
Guideline 15

Psychologists are encouraged to recognize the particular challenges that LGB individuals with physical, sensory, and cognitive-emotional disabilities experience.
Guideline 16

Psychologists strive to understand the impact of HIV/AIDS on the lives of LGB individuals and communities.
ECONOMIC AND WORKPLACE ISSUES
Guideline 17

Psychologists are encouraged to consider the impact of socioeconomic status on the psychological well-being of LGB clients.
Guideline 18

Psychologists strive to understand the unique workplace issues that exist for LGB individuals.
Revenge of the GAYS!

Following the passage of a variety of family-valuing legislation, our nation has been swept by a RASH of hateful gay financial attacks!

Reporting to you live from Hank’s Anti-Homosexual Hardware, the latest target of a vicious REDUCTION IN SHOPPERS by the gay agenda!

ZNN VICTIMS OF GAY RAGE!!!

I was just exercising my freedom to give money to keep those deviants from adopting, marrying or working—and now they’re hurting my LIVELIHOOD!

And as Americans sit down to dinner tonight they can only quake in fear and wonder: “Will I be the next casualty of LIMITED LESBIAN PURCHASES?!”

ZNN VICTIMS OF GAY RAGE!!!
EDUCATION AND TRAINING
Guideline 19

Psychologists strive to include LGB issues in professional education and training.
Guideline 20

Psychologists are encouraged to increase their knowledge and understanding of homosexuality and bisexuality through continuing education, training, supervision, and consultation.
Watch what I can make Pavlov do. As soon as I drool, he'll smile and write in his little book.
Guideline 21

In the use and dissemination of research on sexual orientation & related issues, psychologists strive to represent results fully & accurately & to be mindful of the potential misuse or misrepresentation of research findings.
Cartoonland legalizes gay marriage.

Will this take much longer, sir?
"Here's the thing about rights. They're not supposed to be voted on. That's why they call them rights."
Thank You!

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