Postmodern Family Therapy: Counseling LGBT Couples

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Objectives

• Gain intellectual competency by acquiring accurate information about LGBT persons.
• Raise awareness of attitudes and feelings about LGBT persons including an examination of one’s own biases and prejudices.
• Understand the dynamics inherent when working with LGBT couples.
• Have knowledge of institutionalized homophobia.
Cultural Competency Includes...

...Five essential elements:

- Valuing diversity
- Having the capacity for cultural self-assessment
- Being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact
- Having institutionalized culture knowledge
- Having developed adaptations to service delivery reflecting an understanding of cultural diversity
Sexual Identity
Diagram of Sex, Gender, & Sexuality

“Normative Man”

Biological Sex (anatomy, chromosomes, hormones)

male  intersex  female

“Normative Woman”

Gender Identity (psychological sense of self)

man  two-spirit/third gender  woman

Gender Expression (communication of gender)

masculine  androgynous  feminine

Sexual Orientation (identity of erotic response)

attracted to women  bisexual/asexual  attracted to men

Sexual Behavior (sexual behavior)

sex with women  sex with men & women  sex with men

Adapted from “Diagram of Sex & Gender,” Center for Gender Sanity, http://www.gendersanity.com/diagram.shtml
The Genderbread Person v3.3
by: its pronounced METROsexual.com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don’t. Like Inception. Gender isn’t binary. It’s not either/or. In many cases it’s both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It’s okay if you’re hungry for more. In fact, that’s the idea.

Gender Identity
- Woman-ness
- Man-ness

How you, in your head, define your gender, based on how much you align (or don’t align) with what you understand to be the options for gender.

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine

The ways you present gender, through your actions, dress, and demeanor, and how those presentations are interpreted based on gender norms.

Biological Sex
- Female-ness
- Male-ness

The physical sex characteristics you’re born with and develop, including genitalia, body shape, voice pitch, body hair, hormones, chromosomes, etc.

Sexually Attracted to
- Nobody
- (Women/Females/Femininity)
- (Men/Males/Masculinity)

Romantically Attracted to
- Nobody
- (Women/Females/Femininity)
- (Men/Males/Masculinity)

For a bigger bite, read more at http://bit.ly/genderbread

In each grouping, circle all that apply to you and plot a point, depicting the aspects of gender toward which you experience attraction.
Homo-

Hetero-

Homo-
- phobia
- negativity
- prejudice
- ignorant
- avoidant

Hetero-
- sexism
- normativity
Sources of External Homophobia

rejudice

[Diagram with blank boxes branching out]
Havens Corners Church
Finding and Feeding His Sheep

I KISSED A GIRL
AND I LIKED IT
THEN I WENT TO HELL

Senior Pastor: David M. Allison
Family Bible Study & Youth Group - Wed. 6:00 P.M.  Sunday Worship Service - 10:30 A.M.
GOD HATES YOU

YOU'RE GOING TO HELL

GOD HATES FAGS.COM
"The Bible contains six admonishments to homosexuals and 362 admonishments to heterosexuals. That doesn't mean that God doesn't love heterosexuals. It's just that they need more supervision."

Lynn Lavner
OUR WORK

We work to defend marriage and the faith communities that sustain it at the local, state, and national levels. We do this by working with legislators, by informing voters when they head to the ballot box, and by giving marriage a voice in courts of law as well as in the court of public opinion. [Read More]
AG Jeff Sessions is under fire for a closed-door speech to the Alliance Defending Freedom. The Alliance Defending Freedom group is representing a Colorado baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple, claiming that to do so would violate his right to religious liberty under the Constitution.
State Nondiscrimination Laws in the U.S.
This map was last updated on May 21, 2014

- **States banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (18 states and the District of Columbia):**
  - Minnesota (1993)
  - Rhode Island (1995, 2001)
  - New Mexico (2003)
  - District of Columbia (1977, 2005)
  - Illinois (2005)
  - Maine (2005)
  - New Jersey (1992, 2006)
  - Iowa (2007)
  - Oregon (2007)
  - Vermont (1992, 2007)
  - Colorado (2007)
  - Nevada (1999, 2011)
  - Massachusetts (1988, 2011)
  - Delaware (2009, 2013)
  - Maryland (2001, 2014)

- **Laws banning discrimination based on sexual orientation (3 states):**
  - Wisconsin (1982)
  - New Hampshire (1997)

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1 Calendar, Connecticut, Delaware, DC, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Nevada, Rhode Island and Vermont first passed sexual orientation nondiscrimination laws, then later passed gender identity/expression laws.

McDonalds
One pill a day to help prevent HIV

Learn about PrEP
we see you.
THE ALLIANCE FOR THERAPEUTIC CHOICE AND SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY

ALLIANCE

Principled advocates for persons experiencing unwanted homosexual attractions.
If homosexuality is a disease, let's all call in queer to work: "Hello. Can't work today, still queer."

Robin Tyler
“When I was in the military they gave me a medal for killing two men and a discharge for loving one.”

Epitaph of Leonard P. Matlovich, 1988
Internalized Prejudice
Fear/Guilt/Shame/Anger/Depression

Realistic Perception of Feelings

Adequate Coping Mechanisms
Support system

Increased Self Concept
Increased Self Worth
Psychological Growth

Tendency to Come Out

Distorted Perception of Feelings

Inadequate Coping Mechanisms
Support System

Lowering of Self Concept
Decreased Self Worth
Self-Hatred/Self-Destructive Behavior

Tendency to Remain Closeted
Internalized Prejudice

Fear/Shame/Guilt

Realistic Perception of Feelings

- Adequate Coping Mechanisms
  - Increased Self Concept
  - Increased Self Worth
  - Psychological Growth

- Tendency to Come Out

Distorted Perception Of Feelings

- Inadequate Coping Mechanisms
  - Lowering of Self Concept
  - Decreased Self Worth
  - Self-Hatred
  - Self-Destructive Behavior

- Tendency to Remain Closeted
HANDY TIPS for GUYS
MEN'S ROOM ETIQUETTE:

1. CORRECT

2. ONLY IN EMERGENCY

3. NEVER!
Everyone's WELCOME
even straight people
LasVegas
LasVegas.com/gaytravel
Freedom and commitment
go hand in hand.

With same-sex marriage in Florida now as welcomed and natural as your devotion to each other, there's nothing to stop you from walking down the isle of Key West. Truth is, from barefoot beach weddings to more formal affairs, Key West is more open than ever.

fka-keys.com/keywest/weddings
305.294.4603
LGBT Relationships

• Gays and lesbians report as much satisfaction with their relationships as heterosexuals.

• Lesbians report a higher degree of equality in their relationships and gay men report slightly less than heterosexuals.

• Gender does not divide roles and division of labor is seen as more equal.

• Psychological health is associated with openness about sexuality.
Differences Between Homo and Hetero Couples


Studied for 42 hetero, 21 lesbian, 21 gay for 12 years

• Less jealous
• More comfortable talking about sex
• More optimistic in the face of adversity
Coming Out and Homophobia

- Different stages of coming out
- Coming out, relationally
- Couples’ Internalized homophobia
Domestic Violence

- Incidence reported at about the same rate for lesbians as heterosexual women
- Incidence reported as higher for gay men than heterosexual men
- Threats can include “outing”
- How an individual identifies is used to justify the behavior
- Abuse is minimized
Domestic Violence

- Difficulty finding support
- Isolation is compounded
- Using services is tantamount to coming out
- Fear of further victimization through service providers
- Few, if any, shelters for men
Therapist Response

• Assess and address safety issues
• Create a no violence contract
• Provide education on kinds of abuse and the cycle of violence
• Consider the efficacy of couples therapy
• Pursue additional resources and supports
Lesbian Couples

- Excessive mutual dependency/fewer emotional boundaries
- Struggle to balance intimacy and autonomy
The Therapist Response

• Assess the couples level of fusion/differentiation and determine how it serves them.
• View differences as valuable
• Support individuation
Lesbians
Sexuality

• Experience less genital sex

*Lesbian Bed Death*

– Don’t learn to initiate sex and see initiation as the masculine role
– Internalized homophobia
– Aversion to certain sexual acts
– Struggle with low desire
The Therapist Response

- Ask about the couple’s sex life and whether they find it satisfactory
- Recognize that it is not necessarily a problem. If it is...
- ...Provide interventions that move them towards increased physical intimacy
BE HIV SURE

ONE NIGHT CAN CHANGE YOUR HIV STATUS
BE SAFE, BE SURE, AND GET TESTED FREQUENTLY

FOR FREE TESTING
Call 311, text “TESTNYC” to 877877
or search “HIV” on nyc.gov
Gay Men

- Competition
- Higher degree of independence
- Alternative structure to relationship
Gay Men
Sexuality

• Safe Sex
  – Needs to be directly addressed
  – Needs to be negotiated and agreed upon

• Explore if Prep is an option
The Therapist Response

- Understand how the couple has defined their relationship
- Teach them interdependence
- Teach them to be more comfortable being vulnerable
- Emphasize cooperativeness over competitiveness
- Do not impose your values
KNOW

you’re ready for this chapter
and the next.

At PNC Bank, we understand everyone’s financial goals are unique. Whether you’re focusing on today or planning for the years to come, we’re dedicated to providing tools, services and guidance that can give you the insight you need to achieve the goals you want through every stage of life.

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Families

• Choosing to have children
  – How
  – Supports
  – Legalities

• Children from prior marriages/unions

• LGBT couples having children
  – Surrogacy
  – Insemination
  – Adoption
  – Foster Care
Families

The Therapist Response

• Traditions and Celebrations
• Connection with other families
• Examine the oppressive influences on the family
Children of LGBT

• Often targets of ridicule and stigmatization

• Some children report their upbringing makes them psychologically stronger.

• Interviews with children of LGBT parents showed that those children tend to be more empathetic and unafraid to take unpopular stands.
Social Support

- Families of origin
- Heterosexual friends
- Validation
- Inclusion

- Assess isolation and link with resources
for strengthening the pride in our communities.

At PNC Bank, diversity is one of our core values. From our hiring practices and employee programs to the communities and sponsorships we invest in, we’ve developed a keen appreciation for our collective strengths. But it’s not just deeply ingrained in our corporate culture; we’re helping the communities we serve achieve great things. See how we’re doing this at pnc.com/lgbt

for the achiever in you PNC BANK
The Competent Therapist…

• …is emotionally competent

• …is intellectually competent

• …is an advocate for LGBT individuals
Resources

• www.lgbtcampus.org/resources/
• NGLTF  www.thetaskforce.org
• www.HRC.org
• www.glaad.org
• www.glsen.org
• www.aclu.org

• www.pflag.org

• “Gay Affirmative Therapy for the Straight Clinician,” Joe Kort
• Sharapy@cox.net
Find Your Understanding
Identity Development and Disclosure

Coming Out
great to see you out.

Miller Lite

GREAT TASTE...LESS FILLING.

GREAT PILSNER TASTE  TRIPLE HOPS BREWED
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<td>Identity Integration</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Internalization</td>
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Coming Out

• To oneself
• To others: Friends, family, co-workers
• In adolescence
• Later in life
• In a racial or ethnic context
• As a bisexual
• As a transgender person
Coming Out to Family
Typical Patterns

• Maintaining rigid distance from Family
• Adopting the “I know you know” pattern
• Selective sharing, “Don’t tell your father”
A “How to” on Coming Out at Work

- **Coming Out at Work**
- Being open at work can be a daunting challenge. But it can also relieve the daily stress of hiding who you are. At the same time, however, no one wants to put their job security or opportunity for advancement in jeopardy. So here are some things to think about as you consider whether or not to come out at work:

- **Questions to Ask**
- Does your employer have a written non-discrimination policy? Does it specifically cover sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression? Does insurance cover domestic partner benefits? Does health coverage cover transitioning costs?
- Is there a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employee resource group at your workplace?
- What’s the overall climate in your workplace? Do people tend to make derogatory comments or jokes? Are any of your co-workers openly LGBT?
- What are your work relationships like? Do people discuss their personal lives? Are they asking questions about yours? Is the atmosphere friendly or guarded?
- Does your state or locality have a [non-discrimination law](#) including sexual orientation and gender identity/expression?
- Is your company ranked on the Human Rights Campaign [Corporate Equality Index](#)? If so, what rating has it earned?

- **Moving Forward**
- Once you’ve assessed your workplace atmosphere, here are some practical steps to take:
- Identify someone who is LGBT or LGBT-supportive, and talk to them first.
- Take a breath. People will often take their cues from you on how to talk and feel about LGBT issues. The more casual you are, the more likely they are to follow your lead.
- Make a plan.
- Talk about LGBT-related news stories, movies, TV shows or other topics as a way to signal your views or start the conversation.
- Bring a partner or date to company functions, or have them meet you at work one day.
- Put an HRC sticker and/or a picture of your partner on your desk.

- **Benefits of Being Open at Work**
- Eliminates the need to hide or mislead.
- Makes deeper friendships possible.
- Breaks down barriers to understanding.
- Builds trusting working relationships.
- Lets us bring our “whole selves” to work.
- Being open can make you more productive, and can even benefit your career because your peers will see you in a new, perhaps even courageous, light.
Coming Out Relationally

• Differing levels of disclosure/imbalance of power

• Disclosure does not equate with love
Foreclosure

- Alcohol and drugs
- Heterosexual Marriage
- Suicide
- Becoming asexual
- Becoming hyper-sexual (with other gender)
- Convent, monastery
- Seeking a “cure”
• Assess each individual’s level of disclosure

“How out are you in your daily life?”
“Are you out as a couple?”
Discussion Questions

• Why come out? Why not?
• How out is out?
• What feelings might accompany coming out?
• What can you say to someone who comes out to you?
• How does a family come out?
• When should a therapist come out?
No matter how far in or out of the closet you are, you still have a next step.

Author Unknown
A Glimpse at Definitions

- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Drag Queen
- Intersex
- Transgender
- Transsexual
- Transvestite
Sources of Oppression

• Gender Discrimination/Sexism

• Homophobia/Homo-Prejudice/Heterosexism
<table>
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<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
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Gender Identity Continuum
Gender Identity Continuum

Feminine

soft  vulnerable  dependent  gentle  bold  practical  efficient  assertive

Masculine
Effect of Gender Discrimination on LGBT Persons

- Butch-Femme Stereotype for Lesbians
- Effeminate Gay men stereotyped and discriminated against
Gender Stereotyping in the Media
TRENDS
PICKS » PRODUCTS » PEOPLE »

Anita Dolce Vita
Meet the high femme behind butch blog, diapperQ. PHOTO BY LUZ MARINA SERRANO

ON HER HIGH FEMME STYLE: Growing up in New Mexico, I read fashion magazines but never had the money to purchase the clothes I wanted, and didn’t really have anywhere to wear super stylish attire. When I moved to NYC, I had to step up my style game. This week alone I had to dress for a research conference at work, the Pride parade; dinner and a flamenco performance at a tapas restaurant; two lesbian parties thrown by international DJ Whitney Day; a hip-hop party and a chic rooftop pool party at the Dream Hotel. My style was completely different for each event.


ON WORK: By day I’m an oncology clinical research nurse. This week I have assumed the responsibility of editor in chief of diapperQ. Through fashion editorials, advice columns, interviews, and events, we increase visibility for masculine presenting women, gender non-conformists, and transgender individuals. Our site serves as a vehicle to explore fashion as a social construct, providing our readers and writers with a safe space to document and discuss the ways in which gender role expectations in fashion shape who we are as individuals and as a community.

ON HER STYLE ICONS: Carrie Bradshaw on Sex and the City. Minus the fur. I also really dig Ari Fitz’s style (see MTV’s The Real World season 29). My fiancé, who dresses more on the androgynous side of the feminine-masculine spectrum, and then there’s my ultimate style icon: Aja Augustine of Fit for a Femme.

ON THE NEXT BIG LESBIAN FASHION TREND: Focusing through Queer B.O.I.S., an Atlanta-based blog, I’ve seen modern Southern dandy style. Jack Tar 207 fashion blog celebrates queer Maine style, like plaids on plaids, nautical touches, and argyle socks peeking out of L.L. Bean boots. Boston-based queer blogs Fit for a Femme and Queer that showcase regional preppy influences that I do not often see on the streets in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. And, speaking of Williamsburg, I am seeing a lot of hipster-femme fashion and street Goth style (think Bike New York).

ON THE FIVE ITEMS IN HER CLOSET SHE'D BE LOST WITHOUT: Heels, disco tops, jean jacket, my little black dress, and scarves. (diapperQ.com)
As far as I’m concerned being any gender is a drag.

Patti Smith

June 26

October 11
"Congress should support the reauthorization of the Ryan White Care Act only after completion of an audit to ensure that federal dollars were no longer being given to organizations that celebrate and encourage the types of behaviors that facilitate the spreading of the HIV virus. Resources should be directed toward those institutions which provide assistance to those seeking to change their sexual behavior." Mike Pence
NASW supports ban on ‘reparative therapy’ practices

By Rene Melo, News Staff

Leelah Alcorn — assigned the male gender and the name Joshua Alcorn at birth — came out as transgender at 14 years old. Alcorn’s parents refused to accept her female gender identity and sent her to conversion therapy when she was 15.

In December, the 17-year-old Alcorn committed suicide. She sent a suicide note to be posted on social media to raise awareness about discrimination against, and lack of support for, transgender people.

Alcorn’s suicide drew international attention, and — along with an online worldwide grass-roots petition against reparative therapy — President Barack Obama in April called for an end to psychiatric therapies that seek to change the sexual orientation of gay, lesbian and transgender youth.

Sexual orientation change efforts, conversion therapy, reparative therapy, and ex-gay therapy are all terms used in the practice of trying to change a person’s sexual orientation.

Jane Acosta, immediate past president of NASW, said the most current terms for reparative or conversion therapy is sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE).

“There is a therapy to ‘heal’ suggests a defect,” Acosta said. “The other terms (SOCE) suggest converting someone in their sexual orientation.”

See REPARATIVE THERAPY, PAGE 4
How might homophobia hurt Heterosexuals?
Homophobia: The Impact on Heterosexuals

- Rigid definitions of sex-roles and relationships.
- Fear of being thought as homosexual inhibits same gender closeness/relationships.
- Destructive to families who have a gay, lesbian, or bisexual child.
- Distorted view of reality through the invisibility of gay, lesbian and bisexual contributions.
Homophobia in the LGBT Community

• Claim bisexuality as their orientation (when it is not).
• Settle for no rights.
• Claim that it is no ones business and or they are just “private people.”
• Hold positions of power or visibility and claim not to be a spokesperson or activist, or stay closeted
Homophobia in the LGBT Community

- Insist on befriending straight acting and straight looking friends.
- Code names or brown packaging.
- Stay closeted and live a secret life.
- How “out” is the G&L organization? The level of outness will influence who comes.
The Therapist Response

• Assist clients in overcoming internalized homophobia
• Empower clients, building on their existing strengths and resiliency
• Listens to and affirm the LGBT person’s experience
Heterosexism can affect every aspect of practice from referral, history taking, assessment, to the intervention.

- Pity
- Tolerance
- Acceptance
TELL ME AGAIN: EXACTLY HOW IS MY MARRIAGE AFFECTING YOU?
LOUD. PROUD. EQUAL.

Stolichnaya® Premium Vodka stands with the LGBT community against discrimination and in pursuit of justice and equality. In January 2014, we pledged $300,000 to the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center’s Leadership LAB, which trains and empowers the future generation of leaders within the LGBT community, both in the US and in other countries around the world.
Technology

• Growing up in a virtual world

• Sex is accessible, affordable, anonymous

• Grindr, Tinder, and Ashley Madison
Sexuality - Gay Men

- Men are oriented towards a more visual approach to sex
- Monogamy vs. Non-Monogamy
Families

• Stressors faced by LGB Parents
  – Heterosexism/Homophobia
  – Dilemmas about Pregnancy, Donor, and Surrogates
  – Fear of losing custody/no custodial rights
  – “Stepparent” struggles exaggerated
  – Lack of support