

Supervising Culturally Sensitive Practice with Older Foster Youth

Preparing for the Transition to Adulthood

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Identity Development

- Major developmental task of adolescence
- Developing:
 - Personal identity – maintaining a core sense of self – who I am?
 - Social and cultural identity – where do I fit in? what does it mean to be a member of my group?
- Erikson's Moratorium
 - Experimentation, "trying on" roles

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Identity Development and Culture

- For youth in oppressed cultural groups, choices may be proscribed/ascribed by society

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Foster Youth . . .

- experience the additional challenge of developing their personal, social and cultural identities outside of their original:
 - families
 - communities
 - cultures

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Nurturing Youth's Possible Selves (Markus et al)

The selves:

- we imagine ourselves becoming in the future
- we hope to become
- we are afraid we may become
- we fully expect we will become

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Possible Selves

Can be rooted in:

- one's own experience and past behavior or accomplishments.**
- what important others believe one should become**

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Possible selves shaped by:

- Consensual stereotypes about what “people like me” (a girl, a rural kid, a foster kid, a Native American) can become.
- Significant others (parents, role models, teachers)
- Media images
- Group norms and standards: when we identify with a group – we fear disappointing them if we don’t meet group norms and standards

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Negative (feared selves)

- Youths with balanced possible selves have both
 - Expectations for success
 - Fear of failure and consequences
- Balance may enhance motivation and increase attempts to achieve positive expected self
- Lack of balance may lead to acts with consideration of possible (-) consequences

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Where We Want Our Youth to Be

Positive, Stable Sense of Self

Positive View of One’s Possibilities

Racial and Ethnic Pride

- Identifies with a particular racial/ethnic group OR groups
- Has a generally positive attitude about being a member of this group

Multicultural Competence

- Affiliates with members of his/her own group but is also generally accepting of people from other groups

Preparation for Racism and Discrimination

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Video and Discussion

“Knowing Who You Are: Helping youth in care develop their racial and ethnic identity” from Casey Family Programs

Available as a streaming video online at:
<http://www.casey.org/Resources/Projects/REI/KnowingWhoYouAreVideo.htm>

Downloadable Facilitator and Viewer Guides available

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Practice Implications

- Being “colorblind” is not good practice
- Diligent attempts to keep youth at home; relative placements; same neighborhood
- MEPA constraints; ICWA
- Professionals (including worker) need to *talk to youth of color* about their experiences, challenges, and needs
- Youth of color need opportunities for mentors, role models, peer contact, support groups

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Supervising Culturally Competent Practice with LGBTQ Youth

- LGBTQ = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- Glossary of Terms

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Video

- ❏ Breaking the Silence: LGBTQ Foster Youth Tell Their Stories, by National Center for Lesbian Rights
- ❏ NRC has one copy for each service area
- ❏ Free copies may be available by contacting the Center
- ❏ see website at <http://www.nclrights.org/>

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Risks for LGBTQ Youth

- ❏ Four risks lead to more involvement (more placements, longer times in care, less permanency, more running away) for LGBTQ youth in child welfare and juvenile justice systems:
- ❏ **Family rejection**
- ❏ **School victimization**
- ❏ **Homelessness**
- ❏ **Improper criminal charges**

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Family Rejection

- ❏ In one study, 42% of LGBT youth in out of home settings were either removed or ejected from their homes because of conflict related to LGBT identity.

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Family Rejection

- ❏ Youth are self-identifying at a young age
- ❏ Parents may feel responsible for suppressing or delaying the child's sexuality, and they may be distressed if they view it as morally repugnant or deviant.
- ❏ Ryan and Diaz 2005– family and caregiver rejection has serious negative health outcomes: higher rates of depression, suicidality, substance abuse, and risk for HIV infection than among peers who experienced acceptance.

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School victimization

- ❏ The more open youth are about sexual orientation, more likely to be victimized
- ❏ Two kinds of negative effects:
- ❏ Victims of teasing and bullying in schools – and teachers don't help
- ❏ Loss of the protective factor of school in preventing health risks and promoting health development

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Family Centered Approaches

- ❏ Families, including the overtly rejecting ones, report concern for their child's safety and well being.
- ❏ Families expressed an urgent need for information and contact with other families experiencing same issues
- ❏ Families desired to resolve the family conflict.

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- ❏ “The agency’s basic approach should be to validate a young person’s core gender identity, as defined by the youth.”

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Recommended agency practices

Policies and practices that permit youth to:

- ❏ Disclose their sexual orientation to other youth, caregivers and agency personnel
- ❏ Discuss feelings of attraction to youth of the same sex without being penalized or shamed (consistent with discussion of same among heterosexual youth)
- ❏ Participate in social activities geared toward or inclusive of LBG youth

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Policies and practices continued

- ❏ Permit LGBTQ youth to express sexual orientation through choice of clothing, jewelry, hairstyle
- ❏ Have access to LGBT inclusive, supportive books and material
- ❏ Post LGBT-friendly posters or stickers in their room.

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Facility and Caregiver Guidelines

- ❏ Allow clothing consistent with individual gender identity
- ❏ Use name and pronoun preferred by youth in conversation and documents
- ❏ Avoid unnecessary segregation of activities according to gender

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- ❏ Provide positive social, spiritual and recreational opportunities:
 - ❏ Finding them, making them available, keeping lists and letting people know
- ❏ Ensure that own services and programs are LGBT inclusive, e.g., information about sexuality, legal rights, health care, etc.

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Workers and staff

- ❏ In conversation, keep in mind that not all youth are heterosexual (e.g., refer to “significant others”, not girlfriends or boyfriends)
- ❏ Display symbols of inclusion (see handout)
- ❏ Self-disclosure when appropriate

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Symbols of Inclusion

Pink (or Black) Triangle
Nazi Holocaust



Rainbow for
diversity & unity



Human Rights
Campaign



Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators
Network, www.glsen.org

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CWLA Organizational Best Practices with LGBT Youth

See Handout

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Practice Goal for Supervision of
Culturally Sensitive Practice

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