



Being an Ally: A Primer for Healthcare Providers

Brought to you by:

The American Medical Student Association's
Committee on Gender and Sexuality

www.amsa.org/gender



Today's Discussion

- Vocabulary
- Your Peers
- Your Patients
- What you can do
- Allies
- Allies Come Out
- References



Vocabulary Basics: Alphabet Soup

LGBTQIA =

- **L**esbian, **G**ay, **B**isexual,
- **T**ransgender: someone whose gender identity does not match their anatomical sex
- **Q**ueer (sometimes **Q**uestioning)
- **I**ntersex: an individual who is born with external/internal genitalia and/or secondary sex characteristics determined as neither exclusively male nor female
- **A**lly: someone who doesn't identify as, but supports alphabet soup. (More on being an *ally* later...)

Other vocab for LGBT

- Queen
- Friend of Dorothy
- FtoM
- MtoF
- Butch
- Femme
- Boi
- Lezzie
- Family
- Genderqueer
- Dyke
- Fag
- Tranny
- He-she
- And so much more!

Your Peers

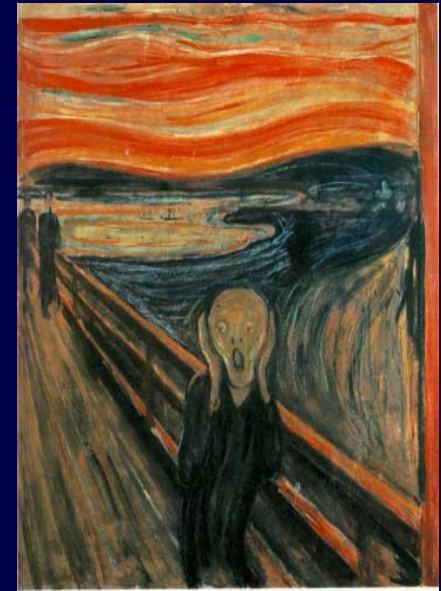
- Wave if you're _____!
 - Visibility is difficult in medical school
 - Lack of (visible) role models
 - Lack of social support - new environment, new friends
 - Academic rigors
 - Subjective grading (clinical years)

Just the Facts Ma'am

- It is legal to fire a person based on sexual orientation in 31 states and based on gender identity in 39 (HRC, 2007).
- Surveyed LGBT physicians and medical students felt their sexual orientation would negatively affect their application rankings (Merchant, et al., 2005).
 - Homosexual residency applicants have a history of being ranked lower than straight applicants.

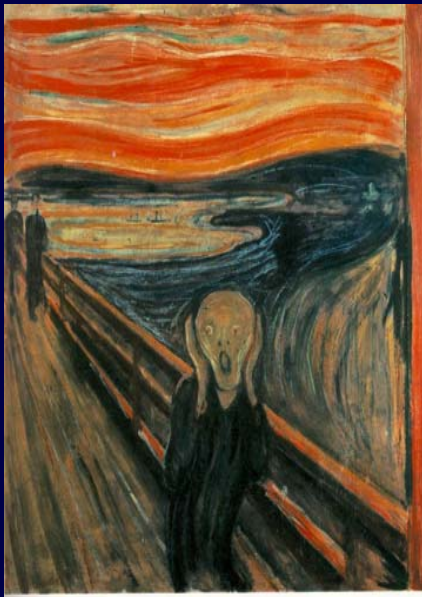
Scary stats*

- **4.3%** of physicians said they would refuse medical school admission to known LGBT applicants
- **11.8%** wouldn't refer patients to a gay or lesbian OB/GYN
- **12%** of physicians and medical students agreed that “gay, lesbian, and bisexual physicians were accepted as equals in the medical profession.” **64%** disagreed.



* survey data 1996, 1998

More Scary stats



- **51%** of medical students reported verbal harassment or insults from colleagues because of orientation
- **54%** of students reported being socially ostracized because of their orientation.
- **14%** reported being *kicked, punched, spat upon, attacked with knives, bottles or rocks or run off the road* because of their sexual orientation.
- Lesbian physicians are **4x** more likely to be harassed than their straight counterparts

Medicolegal Issues

- Visitation
- Adoption
- Custody
- Jobs
 - Hiring and firing
- Property
- Health insurance
 - IVF, sexual reassignment and other procedures
 - Partner and dependent coverage

Ally = You

- Ally: a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in his or her private and professional life through support of, and as an advocate for the oppressed population

Washington & Evans, 1991



Your role as an Ally:



- Demonstrate support of diverse identities.
- Use inclusive language
- Create an atmosphere of acceptance.
- Firmly object to homophobic speech, actions.
- Avoid gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered jokes.
- Challenge stereotypes that belittle LGBTQI people
- Verbally express your support for LGBTQI people.
- Learn about LGBTQI issues.
- Familiarize yourself with resources for LGBTQI people.
- Be willing to educate yourself.

Your role as an Ally:



- Be aware of stereotypes you might have about LGBTQI people and challenge those ideas.
- Expect to make some mistakes
- Don't assume everyone is heterosexual - including a mom or dad.
- Don't assume that all men who have sex with men identify as gay or bisexual.
- Don't assume that all women who have sex with women identify as lesbian or bisexual.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.



Allies

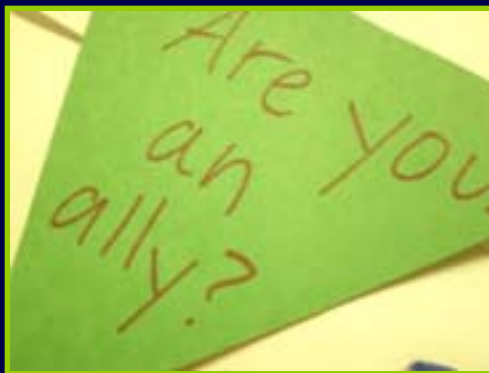
“Opinion polls show that people who know someone who is gay or lesbian are more likely to support equal rights for all gay and lesbian people.

Anecdotal evidence also suggests that the same is true for people who know someone who is bisexual or transgender.” *(HRC)*

- Allies to racial, religious, and ethnic minorities have been remarkably effective in promoting positive change in the dominant culture

Coming Out as an Ally

“Coming out also applies to our straight allies as they acknowledge that they know and support a GLBT person and then take the next step by coming out about it to others. Some make a conscious decision to come out to others, and some experience a defining moment that spurs them to speak out. “



-Human Rights Campaign
www.hrc.org

Speaking out – Med Student Allies

Being an ally means standing beside people who are in a struggle that I may not be affected by personally. More than just saying, for example, "homophobia/racism/etc is bad," being an ally means being willing to stand in solidarity with folks when it may be tough for me, when I may have to compromise or sacrifice some of my own comfort to show support for others.

Speaking out – Med Student Allies

Being an ally is simply
a "no-brainer." I stand
proudly next to my LGBT
colleagues, friends, brothers,
and sisters.

Speaking out – Med Student Allies

Being an ally means supporting the people that you care about. It is also a way to foster acceptance amongst a wider group of people. Being an ally allows the plight of LGBTPM to be discussed in a wider broader setting.



Speaking out - Med Student Allies

Being an ally means being a friend,
and supporting the people that I
care about in all areas of their lives.
We all deserve the right to love.

Speaking out - Med Student Allies

I AM AN ALLY.

not because I  love lgbt people.
not because I support lgbt people.

I AM AN ALLY because ~~that~~ i am a person and lgbt people are persons and therefore WE ARE ONE. And as I  myself and I support myself, so also I  lgbt people and disupport lgbt people. this means that i must put forth the effort to understand my lgbt friends and fight the injustices that are directed at them just as i would fight injustice against myself.

I AM AN ALLY because I can listen because i care and because as i rely on rights afforded me, so can i be relied on to ensure all rights are afforded to all people. BECCUSE we are one.

Speaking out – Med Student Allies

Personally, I feel that even the most liberal segments of our population fail to recognize the ways in which ~~we~~ LGBT ~~people~~ folks are denied equality. The list of marriage rights that are unavailable to "non-traditional" couples, for example, is nauseating. To me, being an ally means recognizing we are not yet respecting our LGBT friends as human beings with equal rights, and not relaxing from the position that that unfortunate reality is unacceptable.

Speaking out – Med Student Allies

Being an ally means supporting my LGBT friends and colleagues and advocating to end discrimination and disparities in the health care profession and in society as a whole.
I give my love + support!

How health care providers show that they are allies?

- Educate yourself – visit the AMSA website and download free white coat cards about LGBT health and check out the Resources slide at the end of the presentation
- Safe Space: present visual cues - posters, stickers, magazines, pamphlets
- Revise intake client forms with more options for gender using neutral terms like “partner/spouse” and “parent one/parent two” on forms
- Make sure you and your staff know what pronouns to use when referring to a transgender patient or same sex partner, even when the patient is not present
- Don't assume that identity defines behavior or vice versa

Increasing LGBT sensitivity

- Include chosen name and legal name as well as a blank space for gender on intake paperwork
- Establish an effective administrative policy for addressing discriminatory comments or behavior within your office or organization
- Remember to keep the focus on care rather than indulging healthcare providers' personal curiosities
- Keep in mind that a LGBTQI patient is not always a training opportunity for other health care providers. Ask permission before bringing in a student, resident or colleague.

Resources

- American Medical Student Association's LGBT Health Action Committee (www.amsa.org/gender)
- GLMA – Gay & Lesbian Medical Association (www.glma.org)
- Gay Health (www.gayhealth.com)
- Lambda Legal (www.lambdalegal.org)
- GLBT health Access Project (www.glbthealth.org)
- Bisexual Health (www.biresource.org/health/)
- Transgender Care (www.transgencare.com/default.asp)
- Intersex Society of North America (www.isna.org)
- PFLAG – Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (www.pflag.org)
- HRC - Human Rights Campaign (www.hrc.org)
- GLAAD - Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (www.glaad.org)
- NGLTF - National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (www.nglftf.org)

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- AMSA White Coat Cards (www.amsa.org/gender)
- Websites/images: amsa.org, glma.org, hrc.org, fda.gov, google.com/images, crystalbreaks.org, University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry (SPECTRUM)