

# ALGBTIC NEWS

Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling

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A Division of the American Counseling Association

## Message from the President Amney Harper, Ph. D.



I would like to begin by telling you a little about what is important to me. In the past year of serving as President-Elect, I have reflected a lot on not just what this next year might entail, but also about what is important to me personally.

I remember sitting at my first ever ALGBTIC brunch. I felt something that I had not yet felt at an ACA conference previously. I felt that I was suddenly a part of something much bigger than myself. I felt connected. Suddenly, I felt a sense of the beloved community that then ALGBTIC President, Dr. Anneliese Singh, spoke of at the podium that year. I felt a strong sense of family, something that moved beyond my professional identity and took me, the person, into account. I didn't know then that a short few years later I would be entrusted with the leadership of ALGBTIC. All I knew was that I had found a place: a home.

I had a renewed passion for the work I was doing, and I had a renewed sense of responsibility to this community.

The relationships I forged that year, the mentors and friends along the way, combined with this new sense of belonging, have sustained me personally and professionally ever since.

It was with this renewed passion and sense of responsibility that I accepted the commitment to serve as President in this coming year. I take seriously the commitment that I have made to serve in this capacity, and so I have spent a good deal of time reflecting on how I can best fulfill this promise in the coming year.

I believe that the best work comes from the heart, and so this is where I have looked to form my goals for the coming year.

My heart has been heavy over the last couple of years from the numerous suicides that have resulted from anti-LGBT bullying and a culture that encourages self-hatred in LGBTQ individuals.

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As a counselor, I believe we have a responsibility to address the social justice issues that are so heavily weighing on not only our queer youth, but also that target anyone who steps outside of rigid gender and sexuality norms.

As a queer woman, I feel the wound to our communities as though I bear it personally... When I think about 11 year-olds like Jaheem Herrera and Carl Herbert Walker Hoover, I know that something has to change in our schools!

It is for this reason that I am starting the Safe Schools Taskforce to compile and create resources for school counselors. It is my hope that by creating a space where such resources can be more easily accessed by all who would take the mission into their schools of creating safe spaces for all students will help to combat intolerance and bullying in our schools.

Ultimately, I would also like to see these resources expanded to include resources for college campuses and for community settings. I was inspired this year in New Orleans at the ACA conference by the overwhelming response I have received so far for interest in this work, and I am further inspired by the numerous questions I hear consistently about what can be done. I feel honored to be a part of a community that cares so deeply for one another.

Another issue that I hold close to my heart is making ALGBTIC more inclusive and responsive to all its members, particularly groups who have been historically

marginalized or experience multiple oppressions. I believe in raising the question, “Who is not being represented here?”, and then “How can we address those needs?” I have been honored to serve on the transgender committee for the past three years.

This group of dedicated professionals has been a second family for me, and I am very excited about the work we have done and continue to do.

After the completion of the ALGBTIC Competencies for Counseling Transgender Clients, this committee has begun to work on developing podcasts addressing important issues for transgender individuals, and is currently compiling a list of trans-positive resources across the nation due to the numerous requests this committee continues to receive to help locate and identify such resources.

I was also fortunate to be chosen to co-chair a taskforce that is revising and updating the ALGBTIC LGBT Competencies, the LGBQIQA Competencies Taskforce, with Pete Finnerty, President-Elect of ALGBTIC. This taskforce was formed by Michael Kocet, former ALGBTIC President, two years ago during his term, and I am excited as we enter the final stages of this work. I hope to see these competencies approved by ALGBTIC and ACA during my presidential year.

Through my work on both of these committees I have learned so much about inclusive practices for those marginalized within our community. It is also a goal of mine in the

coming year to continue to see an increase in not only the involvement of Queer People of Color within ALGBTIC, but I hope to continue to collaborate with others in making ALGBTIC a place where Queer People of Color feel at home.

I believe that ALGBTIC has continued to progress in this area since former President, Anneliese Singh, initiated the first Queer People of Color Gathering at the Annual ACA Conference in Pittsburgh in 2009.

While this gathering has continued to draw in more and more interested individuals each year, there is still much to be done, and I hope to see this continue to grow. I would like to continue encouraging collaboration between ALGBTIC and other divisions, such as AMCD and CSJ to address the important intersection of race and sexual orientation and gender identity and expression as well as attending to other important social justice issues.

So much wonderful work has been done within ALGBTIC since I attended my first ALGBTIC brunch. Most recently, Past-President Mike Chaney has created a lot of energy within our division through his focus on increasing membership and his formation of the LGBTQQIA Affirmative Counseling & Social Justice Taskforce, which built so much momentum it was recently approved by the board as a standing committee!

I am hopeful to continue this energy and do justice to all the wonderful leaders that have come before me. I also look forward to our future leadership and want to welcome Pete

Finnerty, President-Elect, to his new role. Pete has been involved in several capacities within ALGBTIC including service and leadership on the national and state levels.

There are many individuals within ALGBTIC who have worked tirelessly to continue the work of our community, from the ALGBTIC Board members to those serving on national ALGBTIC committees, to the many dedicated individuals who have built or maintained active state branches.

Your work is greatly appreciated, and I look forward to working alongside you all in the year to come. Also if you are not currently serving, but want to know more about how to get involved, please visit our webpage at [www.algbtic.org](http://www.algbtic.org) or email me at [harpera@uwosh.edu](mailto:harpera@uwosh.edu).

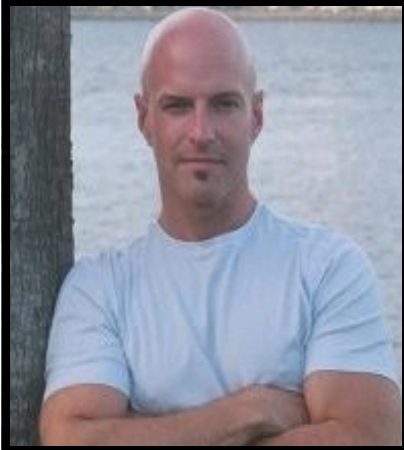
I would like to end with a quote by George Bernard Shaw that resonates deeply within me as I begin my role this year. He said, "I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can."

In Solidarity,

Amney Harper

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## Message from Past President Mike Chaney, Ph.D.



It is hard to believe it was one year ago that I wrote my first newsletter message to our ALGBTIC family as president of the association.

The time sure went by quickly. I have now joined the ranks of Presidents of ALGBTIC's past.

As I reflect on this past year, I am reminded most of the ALGBTIC friends and colleagues with whom I've worked and interacted and all of the ALGBTIC family members with whom I communicated via email and telephone. It was such a privilege to hear so many of your stories; some successes, some challenges.

Whether a member shared news that a candlelight vigil was organized to commemorate the victims of LGBTQQIA bullying and suicide, or a member disclosed feelings of helplessness because he believed he was being discriminated against within his counseling program due to his sexual orientation, or a member wanted support starting a state branch of ALGBTIC, a common theme intersected many of your narratives...your faith in ALGBTIC.

It seems like most of you trust that ALGBTIC will be able to meet some of

your personal and professional needs and goals as it relates to addressing LGBTQQIA counseling issues. As a result, ALGBTIC has a huge responsibility to continue to do what is working, assess what needs to be improved, and evolve as we go through another leadership transition.

A lot was accomplished this past year. As I highlight some of this past year's achievements, I recognize that each project could not have been accomplished if it was not for the involvement of the ALGBTIC board, committee chairs/co-chairs, committee members, leadership from other divisions, ALGBTIC members, graduate students, and ACA staff.

During this past year, we accomplished the following:

1. ALGBTIC partnered with other divisions at the ACA conference in New Orleans to establish educational and networking opportunities. ALGBTIC along with other divisions came together for a venue entitled *Unity Through Dialogue: The Intersection of Different Identities Into One Mission*. I want to send a special thank you to **Edil Torres** (AMCD) and **Judy Daniels** (CSJ) for their support and inclusion of ALGBTIC.
2. We negotiated a new contract with our publisher with Taylor & Francis. Thank you to **Michael Brubaker** who was the primary negotiator. Gratitude is also extended to members of the journal advisory board for their feedback during

this year-long process (**Ned Farley, Michael Kocet, Rob Mate, Connie Mathews**). ALGBTIC members will reap the numerous benefits of the new contract over the coming year including the *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling* transitioning to an electronic format

3. The ALGBTIC bylaws were revised and updated. They will be reviewed at the ACA Governing Council meeting in the fall. One of the exciting additions to the bylaws is the creation of a Graduate Student Trustee position. This will be a voting board member position.
4. ALGBTIC has finally created a Facebook page. Thank you so much to **Shainna Ali** for taking the initiative to create the page. It is a work in progress but LIKE us!
5. In *Counseling Today's* special issue (May 2011) on working with LGBTQQIA clients, ALGBTIC's LGBTQQIA Affirmative Counseling & Social Justice Task Force had an article published entitled, *No More Sitting on the Sidelines: Practical Strategies for Working with LGBTQQI Clients on Issues of Heterosexism and Transphobia, Coming Out and Bullying*.

One of my goals this past year was to increase membership. I am proud to report that we consistently saw an increase in

membership each month. On average, the 17 divisions of ACA saw a decrease in their membership of just over 3 percent. However, ALGBTIC had the second highest increase in membership (6%). Although these numbers are not huge, it is very encouraging. Let's keep this momentum going! Thank YOU for joining and renewing your memberships!

Thanks to everyone who helped ALGBTIC have such a successful year. We still have a lot of work to do, and that is why the annual leadership transitions are so awesome. It is exciting to see fresh ideas and change strategies come in with the new leaders. ALGBTIC will be in great hands.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve as president of ALGBTIC.

I heart you all....

Mike Chaney

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Richmond Wynn, **Multicultural Consultant**

Pete Finnerty, **Branch Chapter Committee**

Amney Harper & Pete Finnerty, **LGB Competencies Task Force**

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## Message from the editor Angelo Gomez, CRC



I want to thank you all for the opportunity to serve you through this publication as editor. I hope that by being part of the continuation of this newsletter, I have helped with the ongoing

work and advocacy on behalf of all the members of the LGBTQ community.

Moreover, I hope that the openness and flexibility that has been intended with this publication can continue to reach the widest possible audience. Above all, I hope that allies have felt the call to join forces and contribute to the work that still remains to be done on behalf of the LGBTQ community.

But this work, I must say, has not been done alone. Nothing is done in isolation when we try to make a real sustainable change in society. Thus, I want to thank the leaders of this division, and especially my co-editor, Dr. Cindy Anderton. In the next edition, she will reassume the role of the newsletter editor. I leave you then in the capable hands of a great colleague and mentor. Undoubtedly Cindy has been a guide, a friend, a mentor, and a wonderful colleague. I hope that while I was working as the editor, I have been able to at least resemble her excellent work, and wonderful disposition to serve. She is someone who truly cares for what she does, and I encourage others, to continue to help others

to serve with encouragement, understanding and sensibility.

I also want to say thanks, to all those who have contributed to this publication. Also, I encourage you again to submit ideas, articles, comments, reviews, etc. Much more needs to be said, and my hope is that this publication is one of the avenues, everyone has to communicate ideas, creations, and messages of advocacy. Everyone is invited to bring their talents. I will continue my work as co-editor. Do feel free to contact me any time.

My last message as editor is to strongly and wholeheartedly encourage allies to submit ideas, and contributions to this publication. I encourage allies to put their shoulder to the cause of anti-discrimination and help in the process of integration. Your voices must be heard louder, all over, and at all times. You are most needed. It is during these difficult economic times, and by being witness of a sad increase in hate crimes, when we are given the opportunity and receive the call as a challenge to speak louder both as members and allies of the LGBTQ community.

Please, let's all work together to create a society that is inclusive, mainly for those who are marginalized, undocumented, legally unrecognized, and socially still relegated to the margins or outside the margins of society.

Let's unite as one!  
¡¡¡Si se puede gente, si se puede!!!

Sincerely,

**L. Juergen Angelo Gómez, CRC**

You can reach us by email at [algbtic-news@yahoo.com](mailto:algbtic-news@yahoo.com).

## Publication Opportunity

The Journal of Homosexuality invites submissions for a special issue regarding Queering Education: Serving LGBTIQQ Students in P-12 Schools. Anticipated publication date for the special issue is late 2012/early 2013. The purpose of this special issue is to call the diverse fields within education to consider new and innovative ways to address lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and questioning (LGBTIQQ) students' experiences and concerns within the P-12 educational system. Specifically, the special issue seeks to represent interdisciplinary perspectives of established scholars and new voices across teacher and other school personnel professions, including but not limited to the disciplines of teacher and educational leadership, school counselor and other school-based mental health, as well as fields related to the development and implementation of school policy, systemic transformation, and student advocacy.

The guest editors of this special issue invite 1500-2000 word proposals that include an abstract and keywords, in accordance with the 6th edition of APA style. Proposals should focus on research, theory, or practice-based topics related to the education of LGBTIQQ students from early childhood through high school. The special issue guest editors seek to balance the perspectives of scholars, students, community-based organizers, and activists, as well as encourage collaborative authorship across academics, practitioners, and policy-makers. Authors are encouraged to submit proposals that specifically attend to: a) the intersection of multiple socially constructed identities, b) discuss the tensions between risk factors and resilience, c) incorporate the role of heterosexual allies, peers, or family, as well as d) consider ecological or systems-based conceptualizations or interventions. The deadline for proposal submission is July 30, 2011.

All submitted proposals will undergo a peer-review process and therefore acceptance is not guaranteed. Submissions must be original and not previously published. Authors will be notified of proposal dispositions by October 31, 2011.

If a proposal is selected to move forward, a full manuscript with a maximum length of 20 double-spaced pages will be due by December 31, 2011. Subsequent anonymous, peer-reviews, and author revisions according to reviewer feedback will occur in 90-day cycles. Due to the publication schedule, no extensions will be provided at any point in the process. The deadline for proposal submission is July 30, 2011. Please submit an electronic copy of your proposal to both Dr. Kristopher M. Goodrich at [kgoodric@unm.edu](mailto:kgoodric@unm.edu) and Dr. Melissa Luke at [mmluke@syr.edu](mailto:mmluke@syr.edu).

We look forward to receiving your proposal! Kristopher M. Goodrich from the University of New Mexico and Melissa Luke (Special Issue Guest Editors) from Syracuse University.

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## Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling Message by Ned Farley



Our journal continues to grow and prosper. A call for submissions for our next special issue focused on spirituality and the LGBT community, co-edited by guest editors Dr. Michael Kocet and Dr. Jennifer Curry

can be found in this newsletter, along with our general call for submissions.

The journal itself continues to evolve, and our next volume (Volume 5) might be published electronically only with a hard copy edition of the full volume being printed and distributed at the end of the year. Taylor & Francis, along with many other publishing companies are moving in the direction of electronic publishing in response to feedback from both individual and organizational subscribers, and as a reflection of the increased use of full-text downloads from databases and publishing sites.

This move will ultimately also speed up the process of “submission acceptance to publication” for many journals. We are fortunate that our publishing process is already faster than with many other journals, although we anticipate seeing a positive trend here as well.

According to our publisher (Taylor &

Francis), we are doing well for a new journal. The most recent evidence of this is a sharp increase in downloaded articles from our journal in the first half of 2010.

We have already surpassed the entire number of downloads from 2009 and increased it by an additional 75%. This moves us far past the projection that was set by Taylor & Francis at the beginning of this year.

In the meantime, I encourage you all to not only read the journal, but also to encourage others or yourselves to submit to the journal. A call for submissions can be found elsewhere in this newsletter, as well as on the ALGBTIC website ([www.algbtic.org](http://www.algbtic.org)), and the journal website at Taylor & Francis.

I am also submitting a call for editorial board members as we have some members now cycling off the board after their three year term. A call for editorial board applications can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. I am particularly wanting a new graduate student member (doctoral level with some history of publications preferred) as well as editorial board members with expertise in the following areas: Counseling in the Government/Military, Multicultural Counseling, Career and/or Employment Counseling.

Applicants can send a cover letter and C.V. electronically to Ned Farley, Ph.D., Editor, Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling, School of Applied Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy, Antioch University Seattle at [efarley@antioch.edu](mailto:efarley@antioch.edu)

## College Advising for LGBT Students: The Ins and Outs of Exploring Postsecondary Options

Caroline Lopez, M.S., P.P.S.

Jonathan Procter, M.Sc.

During September 2011, five gay teenagers from across the United States took their life as a result of harassment in schools over their sexual identity. These recent events have forced schools to take a closer look at campus safety and inclusiveness for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students. Schools at all levels must begin to recognize the vulnerability of LGBTQ students and evaluate the support services provided to this population.

Recent findings have revealed the often disturbing and hostile environment that LGBTQ students face in the school setting. The National School Climate Survey (GLSEN, 2009), revealed that among the high school population approximately 89.9% of youth heard the word “gay” used in a negative way. Another 61.1% of students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation.

Many students experienced various forms of harassment including name-calling and threats, physical harassment, and online harassment. Alarming, 18.8% of students reported being physically assaulted due to their sexual orientation.

Given the alarming statistics, school counselors must begin to focus on providing support to this often underrepresented population; particularly as individuals of this community being their transition from high school to post-secondary education.

Involvement and engagement in the college experience are key to student development and academic success. Findings from the State of Higher Education (2010) indicated that LGBTQ college students who reported positive experiences and perceived a welcoming and supportive environment were less likely to report a desire to leave or actually left campus due to negative experiences. LGBTQ students were consistently more likely than heterosexual students to have seriously considered leaving their institution. Additionally they were more likely to change their behavior due to their LGBTQ sexual orientation.

LGBTQ college students reported avoiding LGBTQ areas of campus, feared for their physical safety due to sexual identity, and avoided disclosure of sexual identity due to fear of intimidation and negative consequences. School counselors can assist LGBTQ students in their transition from high school to college by helping them identify campuses that are LGBTQ friendly. Providing such developmentally responsive services can help ensure that LGBTQ students apply to campuses that are conducive to both personal growth and academic success.

There is growing evidence of the effects hostile learning environments on the mental health of LGBTQ students. Loneliness and social alienation are common fears of most high school adolescents and appear to be even stronger concerns for LGBTQ youth who are struggling with the “coming out” process.

The process of disclosure can have a significant impact on the social emotional development and mental health of adolescent youth and make them vulnerable to higher rates absenteeism in school, dating violence, depression and suicidality and lower academic aspirations (Pendragon, 2010; Espelage, Aragon, & Birkett, 2008; D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2006; D'Augelli, 2003; Goodenow, Szalacha, Westheimer, 2006).

Students experiencing such difficulties may benefit from a supportive person on campus as they begin their transition out of high school. Given these findings, it is critical that school counselors help LGBTQ students during the college exploration process to find a learning environment that recognizes their unique needs.

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model (2005) requires that school counseling programs are designed with the intent to proactively reach out to students and impart skills and learning opportunities that are both preventive and developmental in nature. School counselors play an essential role in promoting a college going culture among LGBTQ students particularly as they begin their transition out of high school. School counselors are responsible for ensuring that all students are able to achieve success in the personal/social, academic, and career domains. This often consists of advocating for students to remove potential barriers to learning; moreover, LGBTQ students tend to have lower academic aspirations when compared to heterosexual students.

This finding may be due to the heterosexual bias often found in school curriculum. Challenges for LGBTQ students in pursuing higher academic aspirations may be compounded when faced with a perceived lack of familial support, bullying, or social isolation. As LGBTQ students begin the process of exploring postsecondary options, school counselors appear to be in a unique position to provide support to this population, given their understanding of adolescent and career development and mental health background.

Preparing high school LGBTQ students for the heteronormative college environment could be an overwhelming task for any high school counselor. The impetus for high school counselors to address this concern is perhaps the increased awareness of student's negative experiences that have occurred in a homophobic college atmosphere. Arguably, the biggest challenge for the school counselor is helping their college-track students find and ultimately choose their university.

With that said, it is vital that students that identify with the LGBTQ community receive direction from a school counselor who is informed of their own biases, knowledgeable about the college application process, and familiar with universities that provide a welcoming atmosphere for future LGBTQ students.

Before school counselors begin working with the LGBTQ population, one should examine their own personal prejudices and biases that could impact their interaction. In doing so, school counselors should be familiar with the developmental process of accepting a non-heterosexual identity.

Also, it is vital that school counselors be well versed in the development of an individual's sexual identity. School counselors can achieve this educational minimum by taking a course or participating in a workshop that explores information relating to human sexuality, sexual development, and one's orientation and its ultimate impact of homophobia.

Ensuring that a safe environment is created for our students to come to us is an important part of the equation. Letting the students know that you are an ally in subtle ways, such as having a 'Safe Zone' can be an effective way of gaining trust.

Although some heterosexual students and teachers might not understand the meaning behind this small act, it shows the LGBTQ student that they are noticed, valued, and safe. Once trust is gained and rapport built, school counselors can help students understand the counseling process by emphasizing confidentiality and the supportive role counselors can play.

When exploring the possibilities of attending a LGBTQ friendly university, a conversation should take place between the student and counselor addressing the role of parents in their academic search. Because some students might not be out, out only to their close peer-group, or completely out, it is vital to have a frank conversation about their own sexual identity and how comfortable they feel expressing it to others. Some students might choose to keep their university search private, understanding information the student would like to keep private in advance is important.

When helping students explore the possibility of LGBTQ friendly campuses, individual and small group advisement can be used for several different purposes. First and foremost, small groups can have a wide-reaching effect with little resources. During this process, information can be conveyed, and students will be primed for questions during your one-on-one meetings.

Also, these sessions desensitize the LGBTQ students to the heterosexual students—promoting healthy conversation around the topic. Additionally, this format could prove beneficial for questioning, curious, or closeted students. It could allow them to explore the possibility of attending a LGBTQ friendly university while keeping their anonymity safe.

When helping LGBTQ students explore the possibility of college, individual and small group appraisal can help students explore areas such as values, interests, skills and achievement. Investigating such areas such as values can be helpful during the college exploration process. For example while some students place significance on a campus that has an active LGBTQ center, other students might place higher value on LGBTQ friendly residence halls.

This conversation not only helps the school counselor build rapport with the student, but it also helps the school counselor weed out schools during the search process. It could be beneficial to produce a checklist with each student so something tangible can help channel both the school counselor and student in the most beneficial direction.

The Gay Point Average (G.P.A.) mentioned in *The advocate college guide for LGBT*

students could prove beneficial when exploring the campus' environment, programs being offered, and ultimately how suitable the college climate is to LGBTQ students.

To adequately help their high school students, school counselors need to be aware of LGBTQ resources at the high school level, LGBTQ resources at the university level, and have contact information for LGBTQ friendly universities. Being knowledgeable of resources is also vital for the school counselor in order to provide appropriate referrals if necessary.

Books such as *The gay and lesbian guide to college life* and *The advocate college guide for LGBT students* help provide interested students with ideas, and could ultimately start a dialogue between the college representatives, parents, and the school counselor. Also, when inviting college representatives to high schools, it is important to encourage them to be familiar with the LGBTQ statistics and persuade them to speak about resources available to this population.

These strategies provide school counselors with a starting point, as they begin to promote their role as allies and develop support systems for this often underrepresented population.

The transition from high school to post-secondary education can be both an exciting and challenging process for both school counselors and LGBTQ students. By developing appropriate responsive services and support systems, school counselors can ensure that LGBTQ students are able to select a campus environment that promotes both academic success and personal growth.

## References

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## Becoming and Being an Ally to People of Trans Experience

Sean Moundas, Psy.D.

As someone who has provided affirmative personal counseling to trans individuals, had romantic relationships with trans people, and has served on the ALGBTIC Transgender Committee since 2008, I consider myself a strong ally to people of trans experience. However, it is only recently that I have more deeply reflected on the significance of this term and how people can become allies. Becoming an ally is not a simple process. Earlier in my development, I considered myself an ally solely because I had transgender friends and became disappointed and confused when other friends, who also identified as allies, only focused on the physical components of my romantic relationship with a person of trans experience.

The following paragraphs describe the formation of allyhood and strategies for working with allies in a counseling context. I am defining the counseling context broadly to include mental health settings, schools, and social justice organizations.

For the purpose of this article, allies of transgender people are defined as cisgender individuals (i.e., people whose physical indicators of sex match their gender expression and/or identity) who are supporters and advocates of transgender individuals and the transgender communities (Broido, 2000 as cited in Ji, Du Bois, & Finnessy, 2009). Another component of allyhood is cognitive and emotionally appreciating the hardships of the oppressed group (Washington & Evans, 1991 as cited in Ji, Du Bois, & Finnessy, 2009).

I believe that cisgender LGB people (especially those of European-American, able-bodied, middle-upper socioeconomic class identities) are in a unique position to be allies because they can likely understand the experience of being oppressed but have more access to lobby for and effect change that benefit the lived experience of trans people.

Allies are not born but are made. Several theories have posited how one evolves into this identity. No one seems more valid than another though aspects of some may be more useful than others depending on the context in which a counselor is working with an ally. Regardless of the model used, assessing the development of a client's or student's ally identity status is a necessary step to determine how to intervene.

Multicultural Theory proposes that those who are more privileged require attitudes, knowledge and skills in order to have respectful and accepting relationships with those who are marginalized (Arrendondo, Toporek, Brown, & Jones, 1996 as cited in Ji, Du Bois & Finnessy, 2009).

Attitudes are the views and emotions that people have about trans people and groups. Concerning being an ally to transgender people, knowledge refers to awareness of topics relevant to a transgender identity including but not limited to definitions of different transgender identities; aspects of the social and physical transition process; and the impact of interpersonal and institutionalized transphobia.



Skills comprise the behaviors that signify the extent of the development of a person's knowledge and attitudes.

The Jackson and Hardiman Social Identity Developmental Model (Broido, 2000 as cited in Broido & Reason, 2005) approaches ally development via distinct stages and can be applied to transgender allyhood. This constructivist model posits that individuals in dominant groups have very limited knowledge of their own identity (Broido & Reason, 2005).

Indeed, people in stage one, termed "naïve", cannot imagine any aspect of transgenderism. As people enter the second stage of acceptance, they initially only passively accept cisgender views and will likely deny transphobia and genderism or even blame trans people for this discrimination.

This can be the most difficult point for counselors to work with potential allies; however, by having the clients or students imagine ways in which they have been oppressed may foster more empathy. This strategy can be more helpful than actively challenging their beliefs and attitudes since that approach may engender much resistance and forestall the ally development process.

The second part of this stage is a more active, conscious acceptance of these negative views and other stereotypes. However, by gaining knowledge about transgender issues (especially from individuals of transgender experience), people's skills and attitudes can change in stage 3, termed Resistance.

Initially, they passively resist this transformation because it is so emotionally and cognitively intense; at this point, they try to avoid engaging in transphobic actions. However, they gradually begin to actively advocate it by holding transphobic people accountable or even severing ties with them, and perhaps by joining transgender activist groups such as the National Center for Transgender Equality. Throughout this stage, education through media resources may be helpful; for a comprehensive list, please visit <http://www.algbtic.org/resources/tran.htm>.

During the next stage, allies resume introspecting about their cisgender identity. They may try to connect with other cisgender allies and begin to feel proud that they can appreciate how disparate forms of oppression are connected.

Lastly during the internalization phase, they begin to consolidate this newly formed ally identity and integrate into other aspects of their existence by advocating for other marginalized groups. Yet, few people achieve this status perhaps because of the emotional energy and time required as well as relatedly, society's overall negative reinforcement for becoming an ally.

According to Broido and Reason (2005), Bishop (2002) put forth six stages and similar to the aforementioned paradigm, focuses on the affective, cognitive and behavioral aspects of becoming social justice allies. Likewise, progress entails movement from awareness to action. However, there is less explicit emphasis on unconscious processes.

This model can be applied to transgender ally development as she theorized about the interconnectedness of different forms of marginalization. The process begins with an awareness of the systemic nature of oppression along with its causes and effects. People in Bishop's second stage begin to comprehend the intersectionality among distinct types of oppression. Subsequently and similar to Jackson and Hardiman's Resistance stage, allies experience emotional pain upon realizing how they may have been perpetuating transphobia and genderism.

The next stage entails people identifying areas in which they are personally affected by discrimination and trying to change that because Bishop contended that people cannot be allies if they are stymied by their own oppression.

The fifth and penultimate stage is when individuals become allies as they strive within cisgender communities to inform and empower others to work for transgender equality. Bishop emphasized the importance of cisgender allies not overpowering transgender leaders and organizations. The final phase involves trying to sustain optimism in the face of inevitable challenges.

Gentle self-disclosure regarding counselors' efforts to maintain hope and prevent burnout from activism may be helpful for allies.

A recent investigation (Ji, Du Bois, & Finnessy, 2009) examined the positive effects of explicit education about LGBT ally development and the challenges that allies can endure.

Using qualitative methodology, the re-

searchers analyzed the reaction papers of undergraduate students taking a course about LGBT ally development. The participants described experiencing the following barriers to becoming allies: fears of being shunned by LGBTQ individuals as well as heterosexual family members and friends all of whom may question their intentions and even sexual identity; lack of role models; insufficient knowledge.

Consistent with Jackson and Hardiman's and Bishop's frameworks, students were concerned if they had been too passive by their tacit responses to homophobia. Nonetheless and congruent with aforementioned models, gaining knowledge, awareness and skills strengthened their active ally identity.

The study is limited in its generalizability as only 11 students participated, all of whom were honors students and most of whom were heterosexual women and European-American; the age range was quite narrow (i.e., 19 to 21) and there may have been a self-selection bias since the class was an elective.

Finally, the following are recommendations adapted from trans affirmative websites (Brown, 2010; Tips for non trans people and allies, n.d.) for ways to enact ally identity:

- Do not ask trans people for their given name or transition status.
- Do not "out" people of trans experience to others even if you think they may already know.
- Do not objectify trans people by saying they are "cool" or "exotic."
- Do not try to guess a trans person's sexual orientation based on their gender identity, or for that matter, anything else.

- Do not assume that all transgender people want to or can physically transition or that all trans gender people want to fit within the gender binary.
- Do explicitly state your ignorance about transgenderism but be respectful when asking questions by not asking someone to disclose their gender identity in a setting that is public or otherwise causes the person to feel uncomfortable.
- Compassionately correct other people and yourself if you and/or they misgender (i.e., use an incorrect pronoun) a person of trans experience (e.g., “I think I heard you say she when the person prefers he”).
- Respectfully speak out against jokes and slurs about transgender people.
- Invite trans people to events that are safe, affirming spaces.
- Similarly, try to avoid attending events and supporting organizations that are not inclusive to trans people.
- Be aware of your shortcomings by referring a person of trans experience to another individual who may be more knowledgeable, aware or skilled than you about a certain issue.

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## Beyond Either/or but with both: Bisexuality, the need for the validation of an identity

By L. Angelo Juergen Gomez

Bisexuality is a complex and troubling identity, and because of its multifaceted nature, it is bound to cause confusion, distrust, and criticism from many angles. For instance, bisexuality usually receives criticism from homosexuals and heterosexuals, who criticize people who define or self-identify as bisexual as closeted gays or lesbians. Another source of confusion is its permeable boundaries. Due to the difficulty to have a set boundary of what makes or not bisexuality, then, it is difficult to have a uniform definition what bisexuality is. While this feature makes bisexuality an amorphous concept, as brief article discusses it is, nonetheless, a sexual identity.

Bisexuality has been criticized as a “double-dipping” in human sexuality, because it overlaps both sides of the spectrum of sexual orientation. Also, what makes even more complicated the recognition of bisexuality is its challenge to the notion of a single sexual orientation. Bisexuality is not about the concept of “either/or,” that is heterosexuality or homosexuality, it lies beyond the notion of disjunction into the conjunction of both sexual orientations.

Bisexuality refers to a concept of “both,” male and female, and sometimes, for some bisexuals, it is about “both” genders at the same time, that is relations within the homosexual as well as heterosexual realm (e.g. through cognitive or emotional relationships, having feelings or engaging in sexual encounters, etc. with both genders). Thus, bisexuality can embrace both sides of the continuum of sexuality. Moreover, because bisexuality challenges the binomial system of being either gay/lesbian or heterosexual, it troubles most people by preventing a understanding and/or classification of what sexual orientation in one direction. Bisexuality is sexual orientation and an identity, as this article argues, that demands careful, and new forms of understanding human sexuality. New paradigms need to be sued to understand and validate bisexuality as a sexual identity.

Bisexuality could also serve as a hiding for individuals from being or living an open homosexual relationship and/or orientation. For instance, this can occur when gays/lesbians are in a lower level of sexual identity. The benefits of having or potentially being in a heterosexual

relation appear to some people who in general see heterosexuality as a source of potential social benefits. This condition also contributes to the discredit for the validation of bisexuality as a proper identity in its own right.

Homosexual as well as heterosexual individuals tend to observe with distrust by the “perceived gains” within a bisexual identity. While there might be some truth in that by engaging in a heterosexual relationship a bisexual individual can enjoy the temporary privilege and acceptance by being in a legally and socially recognized relationship, this does not represent the only reason why some bisexuals engage in a heterosexual relation. Rather, being in a heterosexual relation may be due to the fact bisexuals can have an honest interest in a person of the opposite gender. However, it is difficult to determine whether an individual is bisexual or not because for some gays/lesbians, being in an heterosexual relation may be a temporary condition or part of their sexual development. Furthermore, living in a committed heterosexual relation for a lifetime, for some bisexuals, it means knowing that they could love and even enjoy physical contact (sex with other people) of their same gender. For some bisexuals their bisexuality might never be actualized.

Consequently, in defense of bisexual as an identity, the premise of this article is that for some individuals bisexuality is “the final stop” in their sexual identity development, and as such, it is a valid sexual identity. One that somehow, appears hidden or minimized within the acronym ALGBTIC; consequently, the purpose of this short article is to bring notice and consideration to the bisexual identity within the ALGBTIC and heterosexual communities. Nevertheless, before beginning this article, a limitation must be stated. A full treatment of this complex and troubling topic would take more space than a newsletter allows; this short commentary, however, is an honest attempt to bring some light upon this sexual identity. Thus, this article unfolds with a brief but insightful discussion on five aspects about bisexuality which is then followed by a set of resources from the literature and the Internet.

This article first discusses appropriation of bisexuality for those who might not be bisexuals. Second, it talks about the overseeing and the invalidation of bisexuality within both the ALGBTIC and heterosexual communities. Third, it introduces the term biphobia. Fourth, there is a short introduction to the various forms of bisexuality. Fifth, there is a brief discussion on the limitations of the label “bisexual,” and the current interpretation of sexuality under the binomial system of understanding sexuality common in our Western society, particularly in the US. The final part of this article refers to the introduction of some sources of reference for further information on bisexuality. Lastly, another word of caution for the reader, this article is not about the analysis on the topic of bisexuality from the moral or ethical standpoint, rather this article is about the possible implications of bisexuality and the justification of sexual behaviors related to bisexuality. This is the scope on how the ideas presented in this article are conveyed.

#### **Hiding behind a name, hurting those who are what the names calls**

Before establishing what bisexuality is or may be, certain acknowledgements must be stated. For some individuals, who are not bisexuals, but who engage in bisexual relations or sexual encounters, the use of the opportunity to engage in heterosexuality, if they are gay or lesbians may serve them as the hiding for their homosexuality. This is currently known as “on the down-low.” Somewhat it is true, engaging in heterosexual relationships may bring some social benefits for some gays/lesbians, by being able to portray a double face, one that is more socially acceptable in public by appearing as heterosexual, and one in hiding, that is closer to the inner true nature, but that is less recognized or appreciated. This is not what bisexuality is.

The reasons why gays/lesbians do sometimes engage in heterosexual relations escapes the scope of this article. However, while there may be some truth in the fact of the possible social gains of heterosexuality. Although not all gays/lesbians or bisexuals use a heterosexual relationships or feelings to hide their homosexual tendencies. For some bisexual, homosexuality may never even happen in their lifetime, while heterosexual experiences, for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals at certain times in their lives can be truthful relationships of commitment based in love.

Some bisexuals may live heterosexual lives (e.g. getting married, having children, dating etc.), during their entire lives, due to religious or personal choice commitments, or by meeting a person who fulfills them completely.

Another aspect that must be clarified a difference in two terms. Sexual orientation is the tendency or attractions to a person regardless of gender, which can be consider gay/lesbian or heterosexual, and sexuality is the actualization of the person’s physical attraction, and erotic feelings. While again it must be said that not all people come to actualize their sexual orientation for various reasons. While they may want to stop or attempt to refrain from having their inner feelings, they can deny the existence of their sexual identity. This means that they can erase who they truly are or what they feel and for whom have feelings. That is why some formats of counseling such as Reparative Therapy (see previous issues of this publication) fail to be an assertive mode of counseling. By denying individuals’ true feelings and attractions, despite the possibility of a temporary refraining from the actualization of their sexual orientation, people generally cannot actually eradicate their true inner nature or attractions. People cannot not deny who they are, rather they can suppress with, nonetheless, catastrophic consequences to their mental health, what they feel and who can make them feel fulfilled. A healthy life is based on a personal and honest fulfillment and acceptance of the person’ true nature and this must also include one’s sexual orientation.

Moreover, another aspect that can make more troubling the acceptance of bisexuality as sexual identity is the possibility that a bisexual behavior or experience that can be part of a stage of development towards a gay/lesbian identity. Moreover, a homosexual experience for some people can be nothing but an occasional detour for a heterosexual individual, that is due to life circumstances, opportunities, or erratic attractions. Thus, this can be even more difficult to determine when an individual is truly bisexual. That is why counselors and mental health professionals need to learn and investigate about the various sexual identities, including, bisexuality, and rather than erring in rushing to classify a person as gay or bisexual. Therefore, all these factors can contribute to the difficulty to determine bisexuality an why this identity is often be misunderstood and is highly distrusted among other groups.



Nevertheless, despite all the precious challenges bisexuality can be the final stage of development for some people, and not the hiding or facade for their sexual orientation. While for some bisexuals, this orientation may never be fully actualized, due to marriage or lack of opportunities. Thus, in some instances, counselors and mental health professionals can help uncover and guide clients in their self-discovery

### **The common error, overlooking those with attractions to both genders**

As mentioned before, it is not unusual to hear the use of the acronym ALGBTIC, among members of this non-monolithic community, allies or even among heterosexual individuals. However, the danger of bringing together all sexual minority groups under one umbrella acronym can be the tendency to err by highlighting or simply referring to one single identity. Within the multiple community that entails the acronym ALGBTIC, bisexuals is one of the group within this acronym, but it tends to disappear in this soup of letter. So we can analyze this topic from these following perspectives.

First, one has to be aware of the risk in the utilization of acronyms in general. For instance, using the acronym ALGBTIC, sometimes, when intending to be politically correct, we may dilute our message of advocacy and admonition by being “overly inclusive.” The failed attempt to be specific by using the ALGBTIC, when referring to only one group, for instance gays or lesbians, may result in the minimization of the subtle differences, which in essence make up what constitute each one of the disenfranchised groups that make up the acronym. And while the acronym ALGBTIC suggests a large group of sexual minority groups, each one has different conditions and characteristics. Then, when intentionally or not, when one uses the acronyms ALGBTIC one may contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes that lead the assimilation of different groups suggesting them as a monolithic entity. Although using one single acronym may facilitate understanding, grouping a set of any disenfranchised group prevents attention and care. Thus, it is suggested to avoid acronyms when possible, highlighting the necessary distinctions or differences that make each group, and being specific of the group one refers to promote advocacy, especially when it refers to the members of ALGBTI community.

Second, another problem by using an acronym is the oversimplification of what each sexual minority group is. Through the use of one single acronym, one may cause a sense of loss of identity, and consequently, promote misunderstandings. Furthermore, it can make more difficulty to separate each group as different units. Bisexuals, among the sexual minority groups, usually complain that the reference, either implicit or explicit to gays is done by the use of the acronym ALGBTIC. This appears to bisexuals and other groups as the unification that while it may strength, it causes loss of understanding and advocacy. At the same time, it may help to prevent their recognition and presence by avoiding the admonition of their unique challenges, and lack of social acceptance. Bisexual are different from other groups because for a long time they have struggled for their validation as a group, and as a sexual identity; whereas gays and lesbians may see marriage as their more pressing struggle for their rights rather their recognition, and not validation as much (although discrimination always affects all groups).

The suggestion presented in this article is not that each group does not share similar struggles, and it does not suggest a hierarchy of struggles either, but rather it highlights that there are differences in what appears as more pressing and oppressing to each sexual minority group. Thus, the use of an acronym must be done with tact and avoiding oversimplifications and lack specificity. Otherwise, this can also be a form of oppression or source of discrimination as biphobia, as it is later discussed.

Third, it also happens that frequently, when the acronym ALGBTIC is used, there is an overemphasis on males (gays). When this occurs, there is a minimization and overlooking of other members of the ALGBTIC community, for instance bisexuals and lesbians. One can suggest that sexism also affects the ALGBTIC community. Lesbians also tend to be omitted in much of the literature and dialogue on homosexuality. Transgender individuals are also rarely mentioned and lag behind in the amount of literature about them, that is compared to gays, and are usually confused with transvestites. Transgender refers to individuals who are or will go through the process of sexual reassignment that is the change their physical gender for the opposite they were born with. This is a medical condition recognized by the DSM IV-TR (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). And transvestite refers to individuals, regardless of their sexual



identity, who likes to dress in clothing associated with the opposite gender. Thus, the use of the acronym ALGBTIC, may result in the omission of bisexuals as well as lesbians.

Moreover, it is common to hear especially bisexuals men complain on how their identity or experiences with both genders are devalued, ridiculed or minimized. Men, it is stated here with an emphasis because bisexuality or a bisexual behavior among women appear to be more accepted or condoned in the general population; whereas for males, the social consensus appear to be more punitive and higher in discredit when they engage in homosexual behavior. Some of the reasons that bisexuals give about the struggle they have for the validation of their identity are: gays may tend to consider bisexual individuals as hidden or closeted gays; being bisexual is only circumstantial and given the opportunity individuals who would choose either one; bisexuals engage in a relationship that is heterosexual to prevent being seen as gay; because bisexuals “can have it all” they are accused of being one of the most promiscuous groups.

On this last point, what is more troubling among bisexuals is the blame put upon them as the guilty parties for spreading of STDs, due to their potential behavior of having partners of both genders. What this last statement may reveal as a mistake is that it is not a sexual identity what causes the transmission of sexual diseases, but the action of engaging in unprotected sex or ignoring the status and health condition of the person who any individual engages in sex with. One can argue that regardless of a person sexual orientation, it is unprotected sex what causes the transition of any STD or illness. That is why an open and healthy sex education is needed for all people, and should start early. Individuals do not stop from expressing their sexuality because it is forbidden or legally not recognized, but it is the lack of education what puts everyone in life danger and this also includes the possibility for the developing of a healthy sexual identity, and having the rightful power to enjoy self-esteem based on one’s sexual identity.

In summary, it is detrimental to minimize a gay or lesbian experience for any individual. And labeling it as incidental by not accepting it as the possibility for a more complex and wide form of fulfillment, either physical or emotional, leads to the invalidation of some individuals who may be considered as bisexuals. Furthermore, the use of the acronym ALGBTIC may be hurtful and oversimplifying for bisexual individuals, when it is used to refer to one of its

Members. Thus, it is limiting and unfair, particularly for those individuals who later on may identify themselves as bisexuals. Failing to acknowledge them as bisexuals causes more struggles, pain, and confusion to them and their partners. An acronyms can also contribute to not accepting the complexity of human sexuality, and promotes sexuality in a narrow conception as an “either/or” matter-of-subject. Sexuality exists in a continuum and can change in a person’s lifetime, and it is more than being either gay/lesbian and heterosexual; bisexual individuals cut right in the middle and are more than on a stage of development.

### **Biphobia, the short sighted view of sexuality**

While more can be said about the invalidation of bisexual as an sexual identity, all can be summarized in the notion that: bisexuality and bisexual individuals tend to have their relationships, and consequently their identity frequently invalidated, either because it is too complex or because bisexuals represent a disruption in the polarization of parties within the sexual communities, heterosexuals and/or (sometimes versus) homosexuals (gays/lesbians). A term that has allowed bisexual individuals to express their lack of visibility and the lack of validation of their identity is **biphobia**. This is a term made up of or coined with two words: biopia and bisexuality. It refers to the oversight or invalidation of bisexuality as a healthy and rightful form of sexual identity.

Bisexuality is a challenging term because it cuts in between two forms of sexual behavior. Bisexuality is very multifaceted. Therefore, what the term biphobia does is to describe a new form of ism. This form of oppression, biphobia, is not only found among those who are heterosexuals, but also among those who are part of other sexual minority groups e.g. gays, lesbians, who may either minimize bisexual experiences in general or criticize bisexuals for having the possibility of enjoying privileges attributed to heterosexuals when bisexuals engaged in an opposite gender relationship.

While this may be somewhat true, bisexual individuals either at will or by opportunity can engage in relationships that can bring upon them the benefits, validation, and legal protection that homosexual relationships do not have in most places of the US; nonetheless, it is not less true that once a bisexual identity is revealed, it presents a source of distrust for those who holds such a label.

For many people, for instance, among heterosexual as well homosexual individuals, bisexuality is not yet a recognized identity. Thus, in many cases, bisexual individuals tend to conceal their desires, past experiences, and attractions from their partners or members of either community, *compartmentalizing* their friends in either group. This condition adds anxiety, creates dishonesty, and promotes dissociative behavior for some individuals.

Counselors, educators, allies and others can contribute to the advocacy of bisexuals and its partners by educating themselves. Learning about this type of sexual identity is mandatory when serving any person in relation to sexuality. That is why a list of resources is offered at the end of this article. This is a possible avenue to eradicate what has been called "biphobia," the shortsightedness of the bisexual identity.

### **Bisexuality and its multiple forms**

The complexity of bisexuality lies beyond the attraction to either gender although it suggests two genders because the prefix bi means two. Bisexuality is a kind of two forms of sexuality, heterosexuality and homosexuality. Thus, the use of the prefix "bi," which means two, can somehow be confusing. Nonetheless, bisexuals are more complex than either/or. At times, for some bisexuals sexuality may mean being engaged or attracted to two or more individuals of the same or different genders at the same time. Some bisexual individuals can have partners of one gender, and then, members of the other gender; while some bisexuals may only have one single partner or experience with a member of the same or opposite gender in the lifetime; while some bisexuals can have relationships at the same time with members of the same of different gender. The spectrum of what being bisexual means is as far as sexuality itself; however, as all human beings they can bound themselves according to their will and moral values, like any heterosexual or gay/lesbian person can. Although it must be said again, not all bisexuals will have such a condition, that is having multiple partners at the same time, due to their values. Bisexuals are capable, as any human being, to limit themselves to one partner at a time, as any other individual due to will power or simply by committing themselves to one person in a life time.

Sexuality is complex, and circumscribes to context, time, space, and opportunity. The potential to have sex or engage in romantic relations is based on the context where individuals live, and the opportunities they are allowed or allow themselves to have. Thus, it is unfair to limit bisexual individuals to one gender or one relation at a time. Love, laws, social norms, fear, hatred, etc., all these social conditions

And other circumstances can inhibit the realization of a bisexual identity and circumscribed to socialization within a social and historical context. In summary, they are arbitrary and circumstantial. Various cultures and at different times, or within certain social circles in history, different standards have been in place, giving more or less opportunities to bisexual individuals to express themselves.

Not all bisexual may find partners with whom they can express and develop their bisexual identity. Besides, there are individuals who may engage in sex with other people of the same gender, but allow themselves to only care or have emotional feelings for people of one gender only. While some people can experience a physical closeness with some genders, while with other people they may also experience an emotional connection, bisexuality might not have the same level of intimacy with either gender for the individual who identifies as bisexual. Having one single partner also is a limiting form sexual expression. Since ancient times, usually men, have been allowed to have more than one wife, and at times young lads as lovers while being married or getting married later on. This has occurred in many cultures. From the socioeconomic point of view some women, usually of higher economic status, throughout the ages there are accounts that they have engaged in multiple partner relationships as well, which have included both genders. Thus, again sexuality is complex and not only a sexual experience can result in the personal change or development of a sexual identity that can result in a bisexual identity. Self-discovery of being bisexual can also occur even without engaging in a physical relation or sadly it may never be actualized in a lifetime. Some individuals have recounted a lifetime with the possibility to living a gay life, while being married and having children for a lifetime, but recognizing the potential to love beyond the choice of their life style of an heterosexual option (see literature at the end of this article).

Moreover, while for some people having or engaging in a gay relation may be only an incidental circumstance or a one-time occasion, which no matter how meaningful it might it never may represent or become what can lead to help an individual to consider themselves a bisexual individual, but only an experience in a life time. On other hand, one time relationship while it may not become a trend, it can lead to the discovery of an orientation towards personal, emotional, psychological, and physical fulfillment that can allow a person to discover themselves as bisexuals.

While this is currently morally non-standard, it is the nature of some human beings, and while it is not within the parameters of Western thinking and thus considered conventional, it is nonetheless, it is still done as an underground practice among various religious groups, and social circles, even within the US.

This last condition may demand communication, agreement, and negotiation with the respective partners of bisexuals. While some partners of bisexual individuals might not agree to live under such terms, other individuals might. Counselors and mental health professionals, among other professionals that support bisexual individuals, could serve as mediators for negotiations and with help needed to promote understanding these forms of intimacy that is when it is with more than two partners at the same time. Individuals who are within this category have been called polyamorous, among other names. They appear to be capable of moving, caring, or being physical attracted and acting upon these attractions with more than one partner at a time. Further research is suggested in this area, and more documentation is needed to help them cope, both bisexuals and their partners, within the current social habits which are prohibited or penalizing of such practices.

### **Bisexuality and the power of a name**

The use of the name bisexual, while it explains the variation of sexual, mental, emotional, and personal attraction to both genders; it fails to explain that this can also be a swing that may include both genders at the same time. The name bisexual implies two, from its etymological origin, but nonetheless, there maybe more than 2 people as partner within the life of bisexual person, including from different genders. There can also be 3 or more. This is not the case for all bisexual individuals. Not all bisexuals may even exercise their capacity to love 2 people of different genders in a lifetime, or they may not even engage in a sexual relationship with people of the same or different gender. Some bisexuals may simply choose to be with one person at a time their whole life.

Moreover, intending to limit the level in which a man or woman feels attracted to another man or woman may vary from time to time, place to place, circumstance to circumstances, etc. Sexuality, especially for bisexual individuals, can be rather complex. Thus, while most commonly name the bisexual is given or self-appropriated for individuals who are physically, emotionally or cognitively attracted to members of both genders, the notion of gender may be

secondary or even irrelevant for some individuals; thus, calling them bisexual might not be accurate or it may require a redefinition or reappropriation of the term. For instance, in Nordic countries, which have evolved faster and become more tolerant towards various forms of sexuality, due to a cultural worldview of sexuality, have notions of sexuality that usually contrasts with US paradigms. The worldviews found in the US usually emanate and are engrained in the Puritan faith and come from Judeo Christian beliefs as interpreted in the last few centuries. Also, Eastern cultures and in Ancient Times, e.g. Greece and Rome, sexuality was defined and interpreted in other terms, where a person's attraction and intimacy were beyond or rather above gender. Even more, utilizing a name that clearly separates individuals in only 2 categories, fails to recognize that throughout history many individuals have engaged in relationships with members of both sexes depending on the circumstances they live. Furthermore, there are individuals who self-defined as androgynous. That is a topic for another discussion, but this term refers to individuals with characteristics attributed or identified in both genders, male and female.

A text that provides a great insight into a new form of looking at sexuality from Ancient Times and that may better explain better the notion of what we call as bisexuality in our Western culture was written by an Italian author called Eva Cantarella. The book is titled "Bisexuality in the Ancient World." In this text, bisexuality, as the author explains, appeared as a natural development in men's life and furthermore, as she explains, in Ancient Times there was not even a name or word to describe homosexuality, but rather either the passive or active role of men during sex. This illuminates the power of a name and the liberating and/or contraction when naming something including an act, behavior and subsequent personal identify. A name can validate as well as nullify an identity and a relationship. Counselors and mental health professionals should be careful when giving names and attributing names and labels to clients.

### **Conclusion**

It is unfair to conclude this short article without mentioning that bisexuality represents a breakthrough within the binomial system of understanding sexuality and human lived experience in general. And because of that, it is extremely disruptive to our common understanding of sexuality. It is also unfair to say that this, what has been said in this brief article, is all there is to say about this highly

controversial concept and emerging sexual identity, in our consciousness, of our Western US society. It is also challenging to conclude such complex, and highly misunderstood sexual identity within a few pages, nonetheless, as expressed before, this article intended to bring some light upon this topic and not aim for a deep scope among all the complex details that entail the bisexual identity. But this article stands as a validation of this sexual orientation for some individuals that become their sexual identity.

Bisexuality exemplifies the notion that “gray areas” are not only transitional stages, but at times, they are final stages for some human beings within their healthy development. As the color gay sits in between the gradient of black and white, and in itself, it is a color identifiable and identifying from other colors, so does the bisexual identity reveal itself as a possibility among the spectrum of sexual behavior and identity among people. Sexuality exists on a continuum, and it is far more complex than we appear to accept as current viable either gay/lesbian or heterosexual. Thus, understanding the complexity of this topic, and the nature of the previous statements, it is acknowledged that accepting bisexuality as a valid identity demands far more research, and far more information than has been currently given in this article. Furthermore, it appears as absolutely demanding to look into other forms of understanding sexuality so that the bisexual identity can have and gain a serious space in our rhetoric of sexual identity development. Other paradigms need to be studied and considered, and then the suggested readings list and resources of information found in the Internet are provided at the end of this article.

This article has been created as a light reading about a complex topic, not because it is intended to trivialize or simplify such a complex topic, but considering the avenue in which these ideas are presented, I hope that the reader can be brought to the pondering and consideration of the option for some individuals that can be called as bisexuality. Let it be then, the authors that are suggested next the one who can do the more extensive and laborious work of expanding and revealing more about bisexuality and its complexity. As a last word, I strongly recommend “Becoming Visible: Counseling Bisexuals Across the Lifespan” (2007), edited by Beth A. Firestein for further information and consideration.

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## Suggested books by the Human Rights Campaign

### **Blessed Bi Spirit: Bisexual People of Faith**

*Debra R. Kolodny, Continuum, 2000*

A collection of 31 essays written by bisexual people of faith. Authors speak about ritual, community, theology, their personal journeys into wholeness and the intersections of their sexual orientation and their faith practice.

### **Bisexuality in the United States: A Social Science Reader**

*Paula C. R. Rust, Columbia University Press, 1999*

An overall picture of the subject of bisexuality with contributions by sociologists, psychologists, historians and political theorists. The book provides information about the lives and experiences of bisexual people.

### **Bi Lives: Bisexual Women Tell Their Stories**

*Kata Orndorff, See Sharp Press, 1996*

Contains 18 in-depth interviews with bisexual women. Some of them are in relationships with women, some with men. The women range in age from 21 to 57.

### **The Bisexual Option**

*Fritz Klein, Haworth Press, 1993*

Provides a balanced approach to exploring sexual identity through personal interviews.

### **Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out**

*Loraine Hutchins, Alyson Press, 1991*

More than 70 women and men from all walks of life describe their lives as bisexuals in prose, poetry, art, and essays.

### **Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World**

A collection of essays, comments, and information about bisexual people from around the world. This anthology features a wide range of people describing their lives and experiences in their own words. There are 184 essays, from 32 different countries, written by teenagers, grandparents and everyone in between. In essays and in poems, authors talk about coming out, tell their life stories, discuss bi community, relationships, politics and desire.



## Other Media Resources

**BiMagazine** Your Community Your Magazine

**BiNet USA News and Opinions** News, Essays and Editorials by & for America's Bisexual Community

**Bi Lines On Line** Newsletter of the Richmond Bisexual Network (ROBIN)

**Bi Women** a quarterly newsletter produced in Boston

**The Fence** a bi women's 'zine' produced in Canada

**BiMedia** Bisexual News and Opinion produced in the UK

**Bi Social News** an entertainment, social and news website produced in the USA

**Bisexuality Examiner** with bisexual author & columnist Mike Szymanski

**The Advocate** not exactly bi-welcoming but important

**Curve Magazine** for all queer-identified women and very Bi-positive & inclusive

**DC Agenda** because it covers Washington & their News Editor is the very out bi-identified Joshua Lynsen

**365Gay** news & views from LOGO produced in partnership with CBS

**Pam's House Blend** . . . always steamin — who doesn't love Pam & friends?

The **Bilerico** Project daily experiments in LGBTQ — and they actually include bisexual bloggers regularly!

**Queers United** uniting the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual, Asexual community & Allies in the fight for equality — and they **really** mean it!

**Towleroad** a site with homosexual tendencies (*aka "Gay! Gay! Gay!"*)

**Queerty** the gay child of PITNB et.al. but it keeps straying into hard news pieces

**TransGriot** News, opinions, commentary, history and a little creative writing from an African-American transwoman about the world around her.

## Internet Resources

- **ALGBTIC Related Resources INDEX**

<http://www.algtic.org/resources/bisexual.htm>

- **The Kinsey Institute at Indiana University**

<http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/library/Pdf/BISEXUALITY1960-1980.pdf>

- **Bisexual Studies - General Books on Bisexuality**

<http://www.rainbowsauce.com/glbtonfic/bistud.html>

- **Goodreads.com "books on bisexuality"**

<http://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/bisexuality>

- **10 books every bisexual should read**

<http://www.pamshouseblend.com/diary/3990/>

- **The Bisexual resource center**

<http://biresource.net/>

- **Binet USA**

<http://www.binetusa.org/>

- **The American Institute of Bisexuality**

<http://www.bisexual.org/home.html>

- **Bisexual Resources:** The Bisexual Resource Center produced the *Bisexual Resource Guide*, an international listing of bisexual groups, for many years. In this age of the Internet, however, the printed guide is no longer the best way for bisexuals to find each other. We are in the process of determining how we will continue to provide contact information to groups around the world, but in the meantime, here are a few of the active groups we are aware of. If you belong to a group that you would like to have listed here please drop us an email at [brc@biresource.net](mailto:brc@biresource.net) with information about your group and the URL to use.

<http://www.biresource.net/biresources.shtml>

## Sexual Orientation Change Efforts: Are we advocating enough for our LGBT Youth?

By Jack Simons, MA; Joel Filmore, MA; Jessica Graner, BA

Recent suicides involving lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth have informed society at large about what LGBT youth know all too well: that oppression and anti-gay bullying is an ever present concern. Because of these tragic and senseless deaths of adolescents of sexual minority status, ranging from 13 to 19 years of age, people are paying more attention. For example, if you read comments that many online publications allow the general public to post you will see that while many are speaking out in supportive ways, others are not. One "less than" empathetic post from the Huffington Post, an online newspaper, illustrates the extent of anti-LGBT sentiment: "The big question is why did he feel the need to commit suicide? Guilt?"

This particular post presupposes that the reason one gay adolescent took his own life was because he accepted that he did something wrong, that he was wrong for being gay. As counselors and counselor educators this negative, hateful, mentality strikes at the heart of who we are, why we exist, and our roles as social justice advocates. Counselors for Social Justice remind us that in instances such as this when one myopic viewpoint with the potential to perpetuate ongoing injustice aimed at LGBT youth rears its head, we must speak up.

Furthermore, we should support initiatives by The Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling (ALGBTIC) and the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), both that have competencies to refer to when working with individuals who are "different." These competencies have also been endorsed by the American Counseling Association (ACA). The purpose of this article is to motivate counselors and counselor educators to take an affirmative stand for the LGBT community and our youth who are systematically put in positions which reinforce heteronormative viewpoints.

If these recent tragedies have done nothing else, they shine a spotlight on the areas in which we as professionals have fallen short. Unless counselors-in-training specifically seeks out specialized training in working with the LGBT population, they probably only receive a gratuitous mention in their program's multicultural counseling course.

During one author's master's level education, a professor made a profound statement, "Laws don't change unless

they impact a significant number of people or a number of significant people." Unfortunately, it appears that neither of these two things have occurred, either we must not see these gay adolescent's deaths as a significant number or we do not see these gay adolescents as significant people. As counselors and counselors-in-training, we do not believe this to be the case but believe it will take focused advocacy on the part of professional counselors in order to see the kind of systemic change that reflects the beliefs we espouse as a profession.

In the midst of discourse surrounding the marginalization of LGBT youth (and their subsequent deaths) is the use of sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) or reparative therapy. SOCE portray homosexuality as a developmental disorder or mental illness and increase the rejection of LGBT youth, yet there are still counselors and counselor educators who support its use and claim that it is effective despite evidence to the contrary.

This dilemma further tests counselors to do "what is right" by publicizing the damaging effects of SOCE. This may include but is not limited to hosting panel discussions, contacting counseling boards when a counselor is found to be practicing SOCE, and writing articles for publication such as this. This is also an opportune time to do this given the presence of a sociopolitical climate that supports the cause more so than any other time in history post the Gay Liberation Movement.

### LGBT Youth

One group that has been negatively affected by SOCE is lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth. According to Cates (2007), youth are finding it easier to identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, but this comes at a price though. In comparison to their straight counterparts, they are at higher risk to become the victims of hate crime, to turn to alcohol or other drugs to cope, to drop out of school, and more (Biegel, 2010). Moreover, in some instances, their parents/guardians may subjugate them to participating in SOCE against their will. This may especially become the case with youth from conservative religious families. In turn, their spiritual values may be compromised or their exploration of sexual identity may be delayed, Self-identified sexual minority youth who participate in SOCE may ultimately find themselves unable to make healthy decisions.



Cates (2007) has proposed the following for counselors who assist sexual minority youth who have undergone SOCE: 1) Realize that adolescents need more time to explore their identity. Do not "force" development. Ask, "What is the meaning of same-sex orientation? Is the self-identified sexual minority status a label or an identity? If it is an identity, for how long and how deep has it run? What would have to happen for it to change?" 2) Do not incorporate the use of shame or guilt in light of a client's homosexual feelings. This further compromises development.

Take, for example, the experience of one school counselor. One of his students "came out" as a lesbian to her parish priest. After he found out, he informed her that she would have to leave the church. 3) Research the limits of SOCE. At present, there are not any outcome based studies on reparative therapy with youth that exist to support its practice (Hein & Matthews, 2010). Counselors who advocate for LGBT youth share this knowledge at all levels, which are set forth in both the ACA Code of Ethics and the ACA Advocacy Competencies. Counselors and counselor educators may do this at individual, group, institutional, and societal levels to effectively assess the obstacles (e.g., SOCE) that limit the development of LGBT youth.

### Counselors

Counselors who advocate for SOCE with sexual minority youth could be in a position to violate the ACA Code of Ethics in several areas, four of which are mentioned here. According to section A.1.c, counselors work tandem with their clients to develop counseling plans. Thus, a counselor who does not do this may be violation (e.g., a counselor practicing SOCE with an gay adolescent student who does not want to change).

Section A.2.c informs that counselors provide information to clients in developmentally and culturally sensitive ways. SOCE appears to involve deception especially in cases involving religion/spirituality. There is church doctrine that explicitly states that homosexuality is sinful and that it is not legitimate. Consequently, SOCE exists as a way to fix those that fall into this category in order to prevent them from acting on attraction to the same sex.

Other areas relate to avoiding harm and the imposition of values. It appears that SOCE harms clients by causing demasculinization, anxiety, depression, lack of self-confidence, suicidal ideation, and intimacy/sexual dysfunction. Counselors who practice SOCE appear to impose

their own values on clients. This is done in such a way that it discounts equality and fairness for LGBT youth, and it runs counter to code A.6.a and the ACA Advocacy Competencies (Cramer, Golom, LoPresto, & Kirkley, 2008). On the other hand, there are counselors who do take a stand against SOCE, which is done with the help of clients too. Clients (e.g., LGBT youth) are empowered to ask questions about the counseling services they receive, referred to practitioners who do not make use of SOCE, and provided with literature on the harmful effects of SOCE.

Some counselors also become involved at the community level. They may choose to contact local counseling boards, politicians, and educators. In doing so, they could share empirical data, personal stories from those who have experienced negative effects of reparative therapy, and develop plans with a vision to limit (and ideally terminate) all practices associated with the continued marginalization of sexual minority youth.

### Affirmative Therapy

With these ethical violations exposed, counselors must find another type of therapy that will affirm LGBT youth, affirmative therapy (AT). AT arose after the removal of homosexuality from the DSM. In contrast to SOCE, AT offers ways to assist LGBT youth embrace their sexual identity. This results because AT counselors do not rely solely on their views, attitudes, and beliefs in regards to changing sexual orientation at the expense of client needs (Milton, Coyle, & Legg, 2002).

There is also a focus in adaptation and integration in some instances. For example, if clients are having religious conflicts with their sexual orientation, they may explore their beliefs and begin to integrate their sexuality into those beliefs; religion and LGBT identity are not mutually exclusive. Additionally, AT acknowledges the deception of SOCE statements stating that sexual orientation can be changed, or "marginalized." AT also affirms LGBT clients' identity, encourages coping with the stigma associated with being LGBT, embraces multidimensional support, and provides community resources for LGBT clients (Cramer, Golom, LoPresto, & Kirkley, 2008).

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## 2011 Gay Pride calendar of events

D.C., June 1-12. Parade: June 11, 5:30 p.m.  
Detroit, June 4-5. Parade: June 5, 11 a.m.  
Utah, June 3-5, S.L.C. Parade: June 5, 10 a.m.  
New Jersey (Ashbury Park), June 5. Parade: June 5, Noon  
Albuquerque, June 9-11.  
Los Angeles, June 10-12. Parade: June 12, 11 a.m.  
Philadelphia, June 12. Parade: June 12, Noon  
Boston, June 3-12. Parade: June 11, Noon  
Key West, June 8-12. Parade: June 12, 5 p.m.  
Albany, June 12. Parade: June 12, Noon  
Milwaukee, June 10-12  
Iowa, June 10-13. Parade: TBA  
Indianapolis, June 5-11. Parade: June 11, 10 a.m.  
Portland, June 17-19. Parade: June 19, 11:30 a.m.  
Denver, June 18-19. Parade: June 19, 9:30 a.m.  
Baltimore, June 18-19. Parade: June 18, 11 a.m.  
Providence, June 18. Parade: June 18, 8:30 p.m.  
Columbus, OH, June 17-19. Parade: June 18, 10 a.m.  
Seattle, Spring-Summer, varied dates. Parade: June 26, 11 a.m.  
San Francisco, June 25-26. Parade: June 26, 10:30 a.m.  
New York, June 26. Parade: June 26, Noon  
Chicago, Entire month of June. Parade: June 26, Noon  
Minneapolis (Twin Cities), June 25-26. Parade: June 26, 10 a.m.  
New Orleans, June 24-27. Parade: TBA  
Cleveland, June 25. Parade: June 25, Noon  
Houston, June 18-25. Parade: June 25, Noon  
San Diego, July 15-17. Parade: July 16, Noon  
Vermont, July 23. Parade: July 23, Noon  
Provincetown, August 14-19. Parade: August 14, Noon  
San Jose, August 20-21. Parade: Aug. 20, 11 a.m.  
Las Vegas, September 16-17. Parade: Sept. 16, 8 p.m.  
Dallas, September 18. Parade: Sept. 18, 2 p.m.  
Austin, September 10. Parade: TBA  
North Carolina, September 24-27. Parade: Raleigh/Durham, June 24, 11:30 a.m.  
Orlando, October 6-8. Parade: TBA, typically 2 p.m.  
Atlanta, October 8-9. Parade: Oct. 9, 10:30 a.m.  
Palm Springs, November 6-7. Parade: November 6, 10 a.m.

### International

Sao Paulo, June 23-27. Parade: June 26, 2 p.m.  
Toronto, June 24, July 3. Parade: July 3, 2 p.m.  
London, June 24-July 3. Parade: July 2, 1 p.m.  
Vancouver, July 31. Parade: July 31, 2 p.m.  
Montreal, August 9-14. Parade: Aug. 1 p.m.  
Rio de Janeiro, October 9. Parade: Oct. 9, 1-2 p.m.  
There's always next year:  
Disney Gay Days, June  
Miami, April  
Fort Lauderdale, March  
Sacramento, June  
Phoenix, April  
Sydney, Australia, February 18-March 3 2012

# Marriage Equality passes in New York State!

By [Sheela Lambert](#), taken from Examiner.com



The Marriage Equality bill just passed in the New York State Senate, 33-29. Four Republican state senators even crossed over to vote with 29 Democrats. The bill had already passed in the Assembly last week. It was Gov. Andrew Cuomo's own bill, so there is no doubt he will sign it. The law goes into effect 30 days after his signing, so expect a wave of summer weddings by same-sex couples who have been chomping at the bit to get married.

New York is the sixth and largest state to legalize marriage for same-sex couples. Of course, there is still federal discrimination against same-sex couples in this country, even if they are legally married in their home state.

I'm proud to say I am one of the many New Yorkers who called and emailed NYS Senators, urging them to vote for equality for all New Yorkers.

New York City's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride March is this Sunday so expect to see some major celebrating!

Lets get married!

# The Washington Post

## Pentagon ready to allow gays to serve openly

By Ed O'Keefe and Craig Whitlock, Thursday, July 21, 9:10 PM



The Obama administration is expected to announce Friday that the Pentagon is ready to permit gay men and lesbians to serve openly in the military, allowing President Obama to bring a formal end to the policy of “don’t ask, don’t tell,” said a U.S. official and others familiar with the plans.

In accordance with a law passed in December that authorized repealing the ban on gays in the military, Obama must receive notice from Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and top brass that the military is prepared to end the policy before the government stops enforcing it.

The notice will verify that military readiness and recruiting will not be harmed by the repeal, according to the official and other sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the Pentagon’s conclusions have not yet been announced.

The policy will end 60 days after Obama formally certifies the repeal in writing to Congress.

Once the nearly two-decade-old ban ends, gays and lesbians serving in military uniform will be able to reveal their sexual identity without fear of dismissal or official rebuke, openly gay men and women will be able to enlist in the military, and gay couples may be allowed to wed at military chapels or live together on military bases in states that recognize same-sex marriages.

But several unresolved issues remain regarding military spousal benefits for gay couples, including potential housing options and survivor benefits. Complicating any resolution is that the Defense of Marriage Act — which bars federal recognition of same-sex marriages — will keep same-sex military couples from enjoying full spousal benefits.

Obama announced support this week for legislation to repeal DOMA, which gay activists say would be necessary for gay couples to earn full acceptance in the military.

On the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, gay service members contacted in recent weeks said they don’t anticipate publicly disclosing their sexual orientation right away. Soldiers stationed in Afghanistan reported that despite the completion of mandatory training programs in recent months, colleagues and commanding officers have been using gay slurs or making gay jokes.

In Iraq, training courses ended weeks ago, and troops said they don’t anticipate the policy change would adversely affect operations.

“I don’t think there’s any issue with it whatsoever,” Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan, the chief spokesman for U.S. forces in Iraq, said in an interview. “And if there are individual issues, then people will have to either conform or make a decision to leave when they can.”

**ALGBTIC News, the newsletter of the Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling, is published three times annually. The ALGBTIC News is typically published online for summer and fall. Our Pre-Conference issue is a mailed hardcopy. The publication dates and submission deadlines are:**

**Summer edition: July 31, 2011**

**Fall edition: December 24, 2011**

**Submission deadline: December 1, 2011**

**PreConference edition: March 15, 2012**

**Submission deadline: February 24, 2012**

**Submission Guidelines:**

**Submit articles and items that would be of interest to our readership and ALGBTIC members. Information should be current and informative. Submissions that promote dialogue and opinion are especially encouraged.**

**All submissions should be sent to the Editor via email as a Microsoft Word attachment. Please be advised that the Editor has the right to edit your submission due to space considerations and/or content issues.**

**Please send your submissions to:**

**Cindy Anderton, Ph.D.**

[andertoc@uww.edu](mailto:andertoc@uww.edu)

**Disclaimer: Although ALGBTIC News attempts to publish articles and items of interest that are consistent with the mission and goals of ALGBTIC, they do not necessarily reflect the overarching opinions, policies, or priorities of ALGBTIC or ACA.**



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