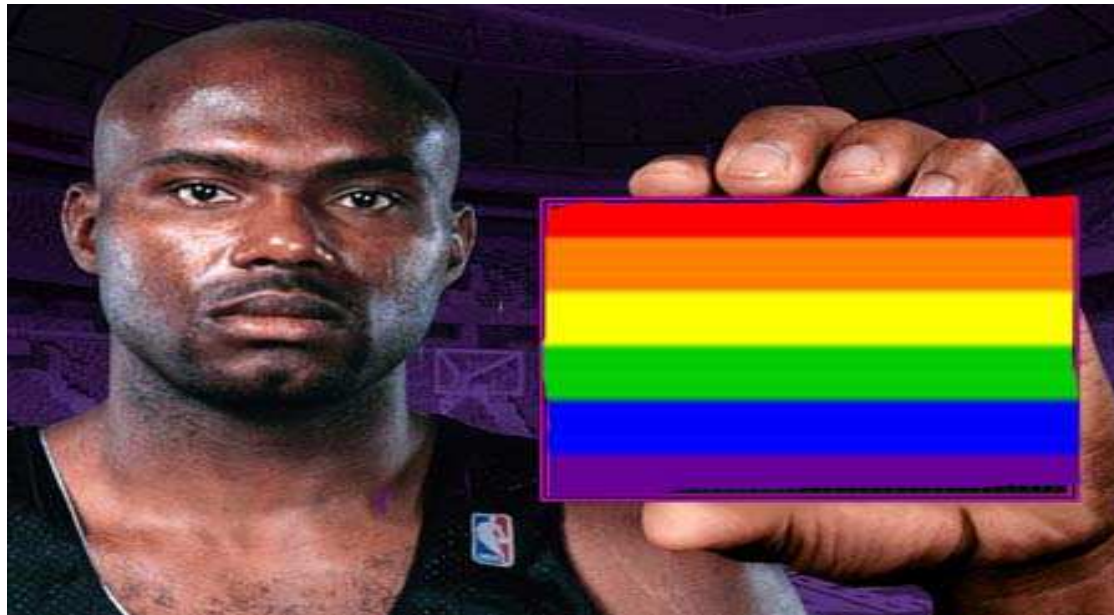


Creating a welcoming environment for LGBTQ athletes



Al Killen-Harvey, LCSW

Akillen-harvey@cox.net

619-977-8569

Goals and Objectives

- To identify issues of risk, challenge and strength specific to LGBTQ youth and young adults and develop strategies that balance personal beliefs with professional responsibilities
- To increase knowledge and empathy regarding the unique stressors experienced by sexual and gender minority youth, their families and caregivers
- To demonstrate increased understanding of the issues around coming out and how they might impact youth

Definition of Terms

- Sexual Orientation- Defined by whom you are emotionally, romantically, erotically and intimately attracted to, for the most part and over a period of time. It exists on a continuum of feelings and attractions. It is NOT necessarily congruent with behavior.
- LGBTQ- An acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/or Questioning

Definition of Terms

- Gay/Lesbian- A person who forms their primary loving, emotional, erotic, intimate and social connections with someone of the same sex
- Bisexual- A person who can form their primary loving, emotional, erotic, intimate and social connections with someone of any gender assignment

Definition of Terms

- Transgender- An umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity or gender expression differs from expectations associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. May include pre-operative transsexuals, post-operative transsexuals, cross-dressers, etc.
- Transsexual- A person whose gender identity does not match expectations with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Risk Factors

- Depression and Suicide
- 30% of all completed suicides in the U.S. are by LGBTQ (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)
- LGBTQ Youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual youth

Other Stressors/Risk Factors

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Homelessness
- School Problems/Drop Out
- Health Related Issues (eating disorders, unwanted pregnancy, HIV/STI's)

Cultural Factors

- Ethnicity
- Race
- Economics
- Cognitive Abilities
- Physical Abilities
- Community Factors (urban/rural,etc.)
- Religion

How to respond when a youth comes out to you

- Anticipate feelings of vulnerability
- Affirm, validate and show acceptance
- Start where the client is
- Avoid labeling
- Follow the youth's lead in terminology
- Provide accurate information that avoids myths and stereotypes
- Do not assume that their problems/issues are necessarily related to their sexual orientation/gender identity

Organizational Culture

- Policies of your organization
 - Formal
 - Informal
- Practices of your organization
 - Forms
 - Intake Procedure
 - Language

Creating a Welcoming Environment

- Posters, showing racially and ethnically diverse, same-sex couples, individuals and/or families
- Books/magazines with the words gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender visible
- LGBTQ friendly stickers or symbols posted in offices or on doors or bulletin boards (rainbow flag, HRC symbol, etc.)
- A universal, gender inclusive or gender neutral restroom

Community Resources

- Know what's available in your community
- Be sure to ask “specifically” how often a referral source has worked “directly” with l/g/b/t clients
- Utilize the internet
- Utilize “informed” colleagues/peers

Resources

- Family Acceptance Project : (FAP) is a community research, intervention and training initiative to study the impact of family acceptance and rejection on the health, mental health and well-being of lesbian, gay and bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth
 - familyproject.sfsu.edu
- Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays : National organization for education, advocacy and support for families and friends of LGBT persons. Chapters are available in all states – check website for local chapters and educational materials for families
 - www.pflag.org

Resources

- Gender Pac: Organization to provide education and promote advocacy to end discrimination and violence caused by gender stereotypes. National conference, training, gender law information, resources for transgender youth
 - www.gpac.org
- GLSEN : Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators Network
 - National organization for advocacy and information to promote safer schools.
 - www.glsen.org
- GSA Network: Gay, Straight Alliance Network: Youth-led organization to provide networking and support for GSAs
 - www.gsanetwork.org