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# Serving LGBTQIA Students on College Campuses

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# *Serving LGBTQIA Students on College Campuses*

Clint Pinion, Jr., Dr.PH, RS

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# Introduction

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning, Transgender, Intersex, and Allies (LGBTQIA):
  - ❖ One to ten percent of student populations
  - ❖ Face unique challenge
  - ❖ Withdraw from college





Provision of needed campus-based services for LGBTQIA students is hindered by student not self-disclosing sexual orientation.

# Learning Objectives

- Recall issues faced by LGBTQIA students on college campuses.
- Cite two resources for LGBTQIA students on college campuses.

# LGBTQIA Campus Issues

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# Microaggressions

- Marginalized in part by heterosexism on college campuses.
  - ❖ Impacts psychosocial wellness and academic development.

# Types of Microaggressions

- **Microinsults**
- **Microinvalidations**
- **Microassaults**



# Microaggressions

- LGBTQIA students face:
  - ❖ Verbal harassment
  - ❖ Anti-LGBTQIA language from peers
  - ❖ Threats
  - ❖ Physical Violence

# Identity Development

- Impacted by homophobic and heterosexist environment.
- College students report more positive attitudes toward heterosexual peers than LGBTQIA peers.

# Identity Development

- Negative living environments increase the likelihood of LGBTQIA students participating in at-risk behaviors



**SUICIDE**

# Identity Development

- More likely to experience suicidal risk factors and abuse substances than heterosexual students.
  - ❖ Unwelcoming campus environments
    - ✓ Increased substance abuse
- Coming out stress
  - ❖ **Suicide risk factor**
  - ❖ Alienation from peers
  - ❖ Lack of understanding from family.

# Identity Development

- Impacted by biological and environmental factors.
- Experience time periods of fixed and fluid sexual orientation.
- Time spent in each identity process or developmental time period will differ.

# Campus Environments

- Shape student's experiences, especially student success.
- Examine and understand the environments
  - ❖ maximize a student's experience while on campus;
  - ❖ Adapt to meet the needs of current and prospective students.

# Elements of Campus Environments



Physical



Organizational



Human



Constructed



# Four Elements of Campus Environments

- Physical – Buildings
  - ❖ Where are the diversity offices located on campus?
- Organizational – Campus processes, policies and procedures
  - ❖ Disciplinary procedures
    - ✓ Clearly define punishment for aggressors (verbal or physical attacks)
    - ✓ Anti-harassment or anti-bullying policy



# Four Elements of Campus Environments

- Human – Individual and group interactions and behaviors
  - ❖ Individuals will either assimilate to the behaviors around them or seek alternative spaces on campus.
- Constructed – Created through social interactions and pressures.
  - ❖ Marginalized student populations often have opposing views to the majority of their peers.

# Four Environmental Lenses of Context

- Microsystems
- Mesosystems
- Exosystems
  - ❖ Pressures external to systems to which the student belongs.
- Macrosystems
  - ❖ Synergy of all.

# Campus Climate

- Climate measures perceptions of their environment.
- Campus climate impacted by:
  - ❖ Student access to needed programs
  - ❖ Retention
  - ❖ Curriculum
  - ❖ Relations between groups of people
  - ❖ External factors
  - ❖ Policies and procedures

# Campus Climate

- Faculty, staff, and students participating in a study of **fourteen colleges** report a homophobic campus climate.
- Participants **did not believe their campus administration addressed gender identity or sexual orientation issues.**

# Campus Climate

- LGBTQIA students:
  - ❖ Report feeling isolated on campus;
  - ❖ Receiving less support than heterosexual students;
  - ❖ Frequently hide their sexual identity.
    - ✓ Microaggressions


# LGBTQIA Campus Climate Perceptions

- College students identifying as LGBTQIA
  - ❖ often **report negative campus climate perceptions** compared to their heterosexual counterparts; and
  - ❖ are **less likely to self-report feeling safe** on campus.

# LGBTQIA Campus Climate Perceptions

- Undergraduate students' experience in a variety of microclimates
  - ❖ Microinsults
  - ❖ Microinvalidations
  - ❖ Microassaults.
- Discussed the impact of negative behavior and attitudes from peers

# LGBTQIA Campus Climate Perceptions

- Not meeting heterosexist stereotype   
homophobic targeting/microassaults.
- **‘Looks or stares’ of disapproval** for  
LGBTQIA students in shared common spaces on  
campus.



# Rankin (2003) Study

33%

Experience harassment in past year

89%

Harassment was derogatory remarks

38%

Pressured to conceal sexual orientation or gender identity

# Rankin (2003) Study

79%

Harassed by other students

n=11

Experienced physical assaults

39%

Experienced anti-LGBT graffiti

# Rankin (2003) Study: Homophobic Campus

73%

Faculty

74%

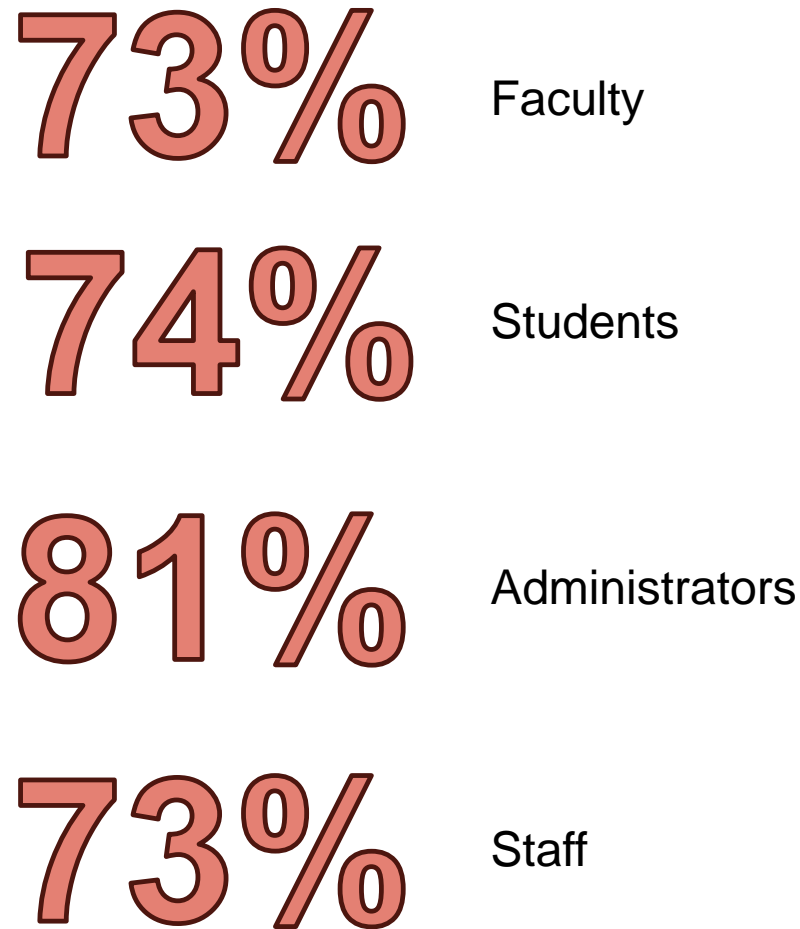
Students

81%

Administrators

73%

Staff



# Rankin (2003) Study

20%

Respondents feared for their safety

51%

Concealed their sexual orientation or gender identity

Table 1. Demographics of Ranking (2003) study.

Campus Category	n=
Undergraduates Students	713
Graduate/Professional Students	279
Staff	371
Faculty	150
Administrators	95

# University Resources for LGBTQIA Students

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- **Resource Centers**
- Student Groups
- Well-enforced Anti-discrimination Policies
- **Education for Faculty, Staff, and Students**

# Safe Spaces as Microclimates

- NEEDED:
  - ❖ Supportive and safe environment for prospering.
  - ❖ Spaces with like-minded individuals.



# Safe Spaces as Microclimates

- Requires universities to:
  - ❖ support and commit to a LGBTQIA friendly campus;
  - ❖ enhance LGBTQIA student life experiences; and
  - ❖ recruit and retain LGBTQIA students, staff, and faculty



# Safe Spaces as Microclimates

- LGBTQIA resource centers:
  - ❖ offer a variety of activities targeting development
  - ❖ Promote visibility and understanding
  - ❖ Are symbolic/physical signs of support/inclusion



# Safe Spaces as Microclimates

- LGBTQIA resource center activities can include:
  - ❖ Mentoring or advising
  - ❖ Education and training
  - ❖ Leadership development
  - ❖ LGBTQIA student advocacy.



*Mentoring improves the student's experience on campus and ultimately their student success.*

# Pitcher et al. (2016) Study

**42%**

Identify campus LGBTQIA resource centers as a source of support

**65%**

Received peer or professional support

**Piece of personal Success**

**Sought in conflict = Empowers**

**Presence of center = Comfort**

# LGBTQIA Curriculum

- Inclusion of LGBTQIA diversity courses in college curriculum
  - ❖ Explore discrimination and prejudice issues.
  - ❖ Highlights homophobia and LGBTQIA issues
- Opens dialogue between hetero and homosexual students.



# LGBTQIA Curriculum

- Enables heterosexual students to:
  - ❖ identify issues facing their LGBTQIA peers; and
  - ❖ Conduct self-work on becoming more open and accepting.
- Integrated curriculum exploring LGBTQIA issues:
  - ❖ Normalizes LGBTQIA concerns and
  - ❖ Increases students' comfort in having open dialogue.

# LGBTQIA Curriculum

- Four concept categories:
  - ❖ Understanding LGBTQIA concepts and creating self-awareness of personal biases toward LGBTQIA individuals;
  - ❖ Recognizing heterosexual privilege and LGBTQ-centered discrimination and understanding contemporary LGBTQIA issues;
  - ❖ Serving as a person of support for LGBTQIA individuals; and
  - ❖ Becoming a LGBTQIA advocate

# Conclusion

- LGBTQIA students face unique challenges;
- Lead to increased substance abuse and higher incidence of suicide;
- Negative campus climate perceptions;

# Conclusion

- Safe spaces promote personal and academic success;
- Additionally, university curriculum should be revised to discuss LGBTQIA issues; and
- To conclude, LGBTQIA students can succeed on college campuses when appropriate resources are provided.

# Office of Multicultural Student Affairs

- <http://lgbt.eku.edu/>



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