

Title: Amplifying LGBTQ Youth Voices: Multilayered Counseling & Advocacy Approaches in Schools

Summary:

There are numerous barriers to supporting LGBTQ youth within a school setting. Nearly 70% of School Mental Health Professionals (SMHPs) stated that they received little to no competency training in their graduate programs related to working with LGB populations (GLSEN, 2019). Additionally, SMHPs often reported feeling that objections by parents, administration, school staff, and community members were barriers to supporting LGBTQ youth. While there has been a steady decline in the frequency of homophobic remarks from school staff, the overall presence of anti-LGBTQ harassment persists, and there has even been an increase in the frequency of transphobic remarks from school staff from 2013 to 2017 (GLSEN, 2017).

LGBTQ students who experience harassment and discrimination are more likely to miss school, have lower GPAs, lower self-esteem, lower sense of belonging, and higher levels of depression (GLSEN, 2017; Toomey, McGuire, & Russell, 2012). For these reasons, it is important for school-based mental health providers to not only address individual LGBTQ youth clients with competence, but to also work in collaboration with school staff to ensure better outcomes for LGBTQ youth.

In this interactive session, participants will engage in a dialogue about best practices to engaging LGBTQ youth in affirmative counseling within a school environment. Participants will also acquire better skills for working in collaboration with school staff, including resistant school staff, to advocate with and on behalf of LGBTQ youth.



Dr. Cort M. Dorn-Medeiros is a Counselor Educator at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. He has a background in clinical mental health and addiction counseling and is both a licensed professional counselor (LPC) and a certified alcohol and drug counselor (CADC) III in the state of Oregon. Dr. Dorn-Medeiros has expertise in addiction among LGBTQ+ populations as well as teaching, research, and writing on topics related to multiculturalism and social justice. He is also an active member of ALGBTIC and has engaged in advocacy work for LGBTQ+ populations for over 10 years.

Dr. Rafe McCullough is a Counselor Educator at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. Having worked with numerous LGBTQ clients and students, he has backgrounds in both clinical mental health counseling and school counseling.

Much of his work includes teaching, research, writing, presenting, and training focused on multicultural and social justice counseling and advocacy, LGBTQ concerns, but particularly on the needs of trans individuals. He has been involved in advocacy efforts in LGBQ and transgender communities for over 20 years.

