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## Leadership in LGBTQ Research and Practice within Counseling Psychology

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# LEADERSHIP IN LGBTQ+ RESEARCH AND PRACTICE WITHIN COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY, COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS, 2018

Sue Motulsky, Sidney Trantham, Maura McCullough, Carla Rosinski, and  
Kimberly Cherry, Division of Counseling & Psychology, Lesley University

Community of Scholars, 2018

# UMBRELLA OF SEXUAL MINORITIES

- Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans individuals are all gender transgressive, thus sexual minorities. Transgender also an umbrella—transmen/transwomen, gender queer, gender non-binary, intersex, etc.
- Sexual minorities share issues of invisibility, isolation, discrimination, and marginalization, including in education, career development/employment, and health/mental health.
- Intersection of multiple identities includes sexual and gender orientation, race/ethnicity, social class, religion, disability and also developmental and relational contexts.
- 'I'd rather get wet than be under that umbrella': Differentiating the experiences and identities of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.
  - Fassinger & Arseneau, 2007

# TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

- Social justice framework—focusing on marginalized and underserved populations, advocacy and social change
- Research informs clinical and counseling practice, program development, counselor training, and public awareness.

# TRANS-AFFIRMATIVE CAREER COUNSELING

DR. SUE MOTULSKY

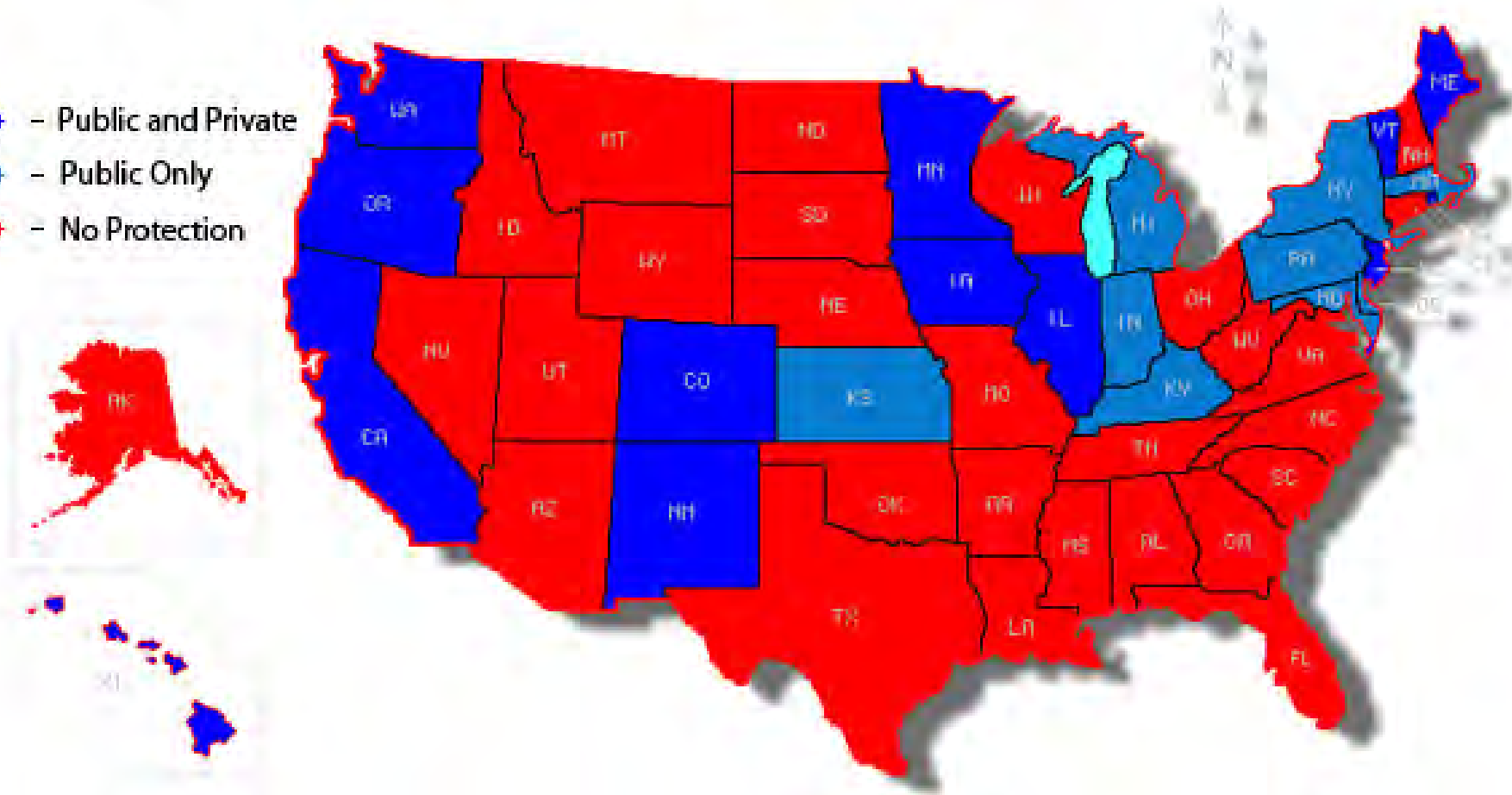
- Employment and workplace barriers are pervasive realities for trans people:
  - Double the unemployment rate of general population
  - Trans POC have four times unemployment rate
  - 48% of LGBTQ POC report experiencing verbal harassment related to both their sexual/gender identity and their racial/ethnic identity
  - **97% trans workers experience harassment or discrimination on the job**
- **BUT...**
  - 78% reported **feeling more comfortable at work and their performance improving after transitioning**
  - Sample quote: *"I am the same, only better and more free"*

# TRANSGENDER CAREER COUNSELING

- “Prospective clients cannot assume that the counselor they see will have affirming attitudes, content knowledge, or specific awareness of concerns that may be unique to transgender individuals.” (O’Neil, McWhirter, & Cerezo, 2008, p. 296)
- Core knowledge for counselors: terminology, diversity of gender identity and expression, gender transition process, trans-specific psycho-social issues, and trans sensitive protocols/practices as applied to work and career.

# Transgender Employment Non-Discrimination Protection

- - Public and Private
- - Public Only
- - No Protection



# CREATING POSITIVE SPACES

- Counselors need education/training on the unique issues facing transgender individuals in the workplace, in career development, and in job searching/career planning activities and services.
- Learn proper terminology and keep up with changing terms and preferences; sensitivity to preferred names and pronouns is key.
- Acknowledge the significant discrimination in employment and education, but also empower the transgender student/client and support resilience.
- Collaborate with other professionals, become aware of available resources and legal protections, and work toward transgender equity and social justice.



# **LOSS AND DISENFRANCHISED GRIEF:**

## **NAVIGATING THE EMOTIONAL COMPLEXITIES OF PARENTING A TRANSGENDER CHILD**

**Maura McCullough**

**M.A., N.C.C., L.P.C., L.S.C.**

**Doctoral Student**

**Counseling & Psychology**

**Lesley University**

# SEXUAL HEALTH IN TRANSGENDER COMMUNITIES

- **Sexual health in transgender and non-binary communities: Pleasure and Trans\* Sexualities**
  - Carla Rosinski, MA, LMHC
  - Sex Therapist and Doctoral Student, Division of Counseling and Psychology

# EXPANDING OUR DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HEALTH

- The World Health Organization (2006) has defined sexual health as “ a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease.”
- Comprehensive definition includes:
  - relationship to our bodies
  - ability experience pleasure and intimacy with ourselves and others

# CONFLATING GENDER AND SEXUALITY

- Historical context
- Loss of erotic self
- Sex ≠ Sexuality ≠ Gender



# CENTRALIZING TRANS\* SEXUALITIES

- Dismantling assumptions
- Embracing pleasure and embodied experiences
- Expanding narrative of orgasms
- Unique perspective of trans experiences

# BISEXUALITY AND MISRECOGNIZED IDENTITY

- **Bisexuality and misrecognized identity**
  - Kimberly Cherry, MMFT, LMFT
    - Doctoral student, Division of Counseling & Psychology



# BISEXUALITY AND MISRECOGNIZED IDENTITY

- From binary concepts
  - Language
  - Perception
  - Representation

# BISEXUALITY AND MISRECOGNIZED IDENTITY

- **Implications:**

- Identity development
- Social support and connection
- Psychological
- Intersectionality
- Issues of power and privilege





# APPROACHES & FRAMEWORKS

DR. SIDNEY TRANTHAM

- Gender Affirming Counseling
- Developmental Perspective
- Expanding the narrative of what it means to be trans\* and non-binary



# GENDER AFFIRMING COUNSELING

- EXPLORATORY
- SUPPORTIVE
- CHALLENGING
- ADVOCACY



# DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORK

- PSYCHOSOCIAL
- PSYCHOSEXUAL
- AGING



# EXPANDING THE NARRATIVE

- CHALLENGING TRANSPHOBIA
- PROMOTING FULL EXPERIENCE OF TRANS\* & NON-BINARY INDIVIDUALS



Thank you!

## Leadership in LGBTQ Research and Practice within Counseling Psychology

### Program Description:

Leadership in research on LGBTQ community issues involves initiating critical social justice research agendas that inform and guide clinical practice. A panel of counseling and psychology faculty and doctoral students discuss their LGBTQ research agendas related to issues such as queer identity development and bisexual erasure, family dynamics and parental grief during a child's gender transition, healthy sexuality in transitioning individuals, transgender career development and advocacy, and trans-affirmative therapy for families with transitioning or gender questioning children.

### Abstract:

Many issues affecting the well-being of LGBTQ individuals and communities need more research to inform clinical and counseling practice. Transformative leadership employs a social justice framework to focus attention, resources, and research on critical LGBTQ agendas so that this marginalized and underserved population can receive needed services and programs. This panel of Counseling and Psychology faculty and doctoral students discuss how they are taking a leadership role through research, practice, and training in specific LGBTQ issues.

- Bisexuality is commonly misunderstood as society struggles to move from binary conceptualizations of sexuality and gender to new paradigms. Queer women are often confronted with microaggressions, including biased assumptions, erasure, and identity misrecognition, that affect their sense of self and relationships.
- The intricate complexities of parenting a transgender child are not adequately understood, and parents of transgender youth can experience disenfranchised grief when envisioning their child's gender transition. Research on how that grief and loss influence the parent and child relationship is needed.
- Sexual health services have not been inclusive of the transgender experience. A comprehensive definition of sexual health extends beyond risk reduction and disease prevention to include one's ability to experience pleasure and have a healthy relationship with one's body.
- Due to stigmatization, transgender clients or students often face work-related issues around job searching, employment discrimination, and career decision-making, and need the support of informed counselors and advocates.
- Families with transitioning or gender questioning children need trans-affirmative counselors and advocates who assist them in navigating school, work and life as a family.

### Participants:

Dr. Sue Motulsky, Associate Professor, Division of Counseling and Psychology

Dr. Sidney Trantham, Associate Professor and Division Director, Division of Counseling and Psychology

Kimberly Cherry, LMFT, PhD Student, PhD in Transformative Leadership, Education and Applied Research, Division of Counseling and Psychology

Maura McCullough, LPC, LSC, PhD Student, PhD in Transformative Leadership, Education and Applied Research, Division of Counseling and Psychology

Carla Rosinski, LMHC, PhD Student, PhD in Transformative Leadership, Education and Applied Research, Division of Counseling and Psychology