

# TRANSGENDER YOUTH: The Issues The Laws The Tweets

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## Terminology

- LGBTQ
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning Youth

- Biologic sex – what the MD said
- male ←-----intersex-----→ female
- Gender identity – how you feel
- man ←-----transgender-----→ woman
- Gender expression – how you present
- masculine ---androgynous---woman
- Gender presentation—how you're seen
- man----transgender---woman

- Sexual ORIENTATION – who you like
  - attracted to women---
  - bisexual/asexual---
  - attracted to men
- Sexual Identity
  - Not a choice
- Sexual BEHAVIOR is a choice

## Prevalence

- 88.8% → 85.4 heterosexual
- 2% → 2.4 gay/lesbian and 6% → 8% bisexual
- 3.2 → 4.2% were not sure of their sexual identity

### Regarding sexual activity and partners:

- 48% → 45.3% had contact only with the opposite sex
- 1.7% → 1.6% had sexual contact ONLY with their same sex
- 4.6% → 5.3% had sexual contact with both sexes
- 45.7% → 47.8% had no sexual contact

(Kann et al., 2016→ 2018 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention))

## History

- Homosexuality term first used 1869
- Defiled by all major religions, yet members of all religions identify with it
- Viewed as a crime, a sin, a sickness, an irresponsible choice, sexual perversion, dangerous threat to family values, destroyer of morale in armed forces
- In ancient Greece, love between 2 men = highest form of love
- WWII – killed in holocaust
- 1950s, homosexuals were blacklisted, expelled from military, castrated, had lobotomies, and fired

## History

- 1957 studies by Evelyn Hooker – differentiated gay and heterosexual and determined it was not a sickness
- Child custody battles in 1970s
- 1973 APA removed homosexuality for DMS mental disorders
- 1983 – first studies of children raised by lesbians
- 1984 – first paper on violence against LGB
- Step backwards – 1996 – Defense of Marriage Act – allowed states to NOT recognize marriages in other states
  - Marriage = between man & woman

## History

- 2004 Brides magazine – first same-sex wedding
- Madonna and Britney Spears kiss at MTV Music awards
- 2 Illinois girls voted school's cutest couple
- TV shows: Will and Grace, Jazz
- Shows: Avenue Q

## Same-sex parents

- All studies show NO DIFFERENCE in lesbian-led vs. single-parent divorced
  - kids made gender preferences for toys, activities, and friendships with good psychological adjustment
- **Children raised by lesbians are no more likely to grow up to be gay or lesbian than are children raised by heterosexual parents**
- 1/3 of gay fathers say their children are teased or bullied

## Questioning youth

- Experimentation is normal
- Who am I? Who am I comfortable with? Who attracts me?
- Trying it does not label you

## Being Gay/ Lesbian

- NOT a mental illness
- NOT a defect of character
- NOT a defect of genes
- NOT a defect of parenting

## Transgender

### Has a **gender identity** of a different gender

Takes the identity of that gender with or without surgical or hormonal interventions  
Feel trapped in wrong body

- It is NOT a choice
- It has NOTHING to do with sex
- What is their 'lived gender'?
- Transgender is an adjective – not a noun.

- “There’s a gender in your brain and a gender in your body. For 99% of people, those things are in alignment. For transgender people, they’re mismatched. That’s all it is.”

• Chaz Bono

75% of males and 66% of females who identify as being L/G initially felt different by the age of 8

Those who are transgender are often aware during preschool

### Acceptance by family and friends

- 26% say feeling accepted by family = biggest problem
- Fear of being out/open
- Fear of rejection
- Needing to belong
- ¼ are forced to leave home
- 25%-40% of all homeless youth are LGBT

### Consequences


- Truancy, poor grades, repeat grades, drop out of school
  - Skipped school because they did not feel safe
  - Stunted educational aspirations
- Twice as likely to abuse alcohol; 3x increase use of marijuana; increased syphilis

### Issues

- Safety: Bullying and violence
  - Twice as likely to be assaulted on school property
    - 74% feel UNSAFE at school
  - 84% are verbally abused
  - 92% hear negative LGBTQ messages, 68% from elected leaders
  - 18% forced to have sex; 23% experience dating violence

### Consequences

- Depression in 60%
- Account for 30% of suicides
  - >50% of transgender youth attempt suicide
- One transgender youth is killed EVERY MONTH in U.S.



*"The only way I will rest in peace is if one day transgender people aren't treated the way I was, they're treated like humans, with valid feelings and human rights. Gender needs to be taught about in schools, the earlier the better. My death needs to mean something" - Leelah Alcorn*

UK: 48% of trans people under 26 attempt suicide (2014)  
 US: 41% of trans people attempt suicide (2014)  
 Canada: 43% of trans people attempt suicide (2012)

genderagenda.net

### The law

- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
  - Federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
  - Includes protection against discrimination and harassment

### US DOE Monograph on transgender students

- Office of Safe and Healthy Students
- To ensure transgender students were treated according to their gender identity

### Issues

- Names and pronouns
- Gym class and locker rooms
  - Showers
- Bathrooms
- Dress codes
- Sports teams
- Away teams

### Issues

- School dances
- School uniforms
- Physical contact
- Camps and sleepovers
- Military
- Marriage/ children/ adoption
- Valentine's day
- Family affairs
- Support for the parents

### Transgender

- Ask what name by which they wish to be called
  - Respect the name used
  - Use the pronouns requested
- 1. Protect privacy by providing alternative changing area and restroom
- 2. Participate in PE and athletics
- 3. Evaluate all policies dealing with gender (dress code)

## Schools in Transition

1. Every student has a right to learn in a safe and accepting school environment
2. All adults must act as protective agents committed to the safety and well-being of youth
3. The expression of transgender identity is a healthy, appropriate and typical aspect of human development
4. Create a welcoming environment; be proactive

## Interventions

- Those who are supported have the best chance of growing up to be content, productive adults
- Promote diversity
  - Compare to handedness
  - Different does not mean 'worse' or 'inferior'
  - Teach as diversity and include with tolerance and civil rights
  - Give the message that it is OK to be gay

## Interventions

- Provide a safe and welcoming environment
  - Assure schools are inclusive and bully-proof
  - GLSEN – Safe space kit
  - Display gay symbols
- Need to feel safe
- Need to feel that someone cares
- Need to feel they are not alone
- They don't want to live a lie

## Interventions

- Promote acceptance and socialization
  - Gay-Straight Alliance
  - Help them to answer questions
  - Hook up to support groups
  - Treat as positive lifestyle
  - Have resource numbers and web sites
- Provide counseling if needed
  - Help them cope

## Interventions

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| • Rosie O'Donnell | • Alexander the Great |
| • Greg Louganis   | • Nathan Lane         |
| • Barney Frank    | • Sinead O'Connor     |
| • Boy George      | • Shakespeare         |
| • Mary Cheney     | • Ellen DeGeneres     |
| • Jodi Foster     | • Martina Navratilova |
| • Jason Gould     | • Joan Baez           |
| • Lily Tomlin     | • Tracy Chapman       |
| • Harvey Milk     | • Anderson Cooper     |
| • Oscar Wild      | • Sara Gilbert        |
|                   | • Bruce Jenner        |

## More role models

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| • Tommy Tune       | • Socrates            |
| • Jim McGreevey    | • Liberace            |
| • Walt Whitman     | • Melissa Etheridge   |
| • Tab Hunter       | • Chas Bono           |
| • Elton John       | • Richard Chamberlain |
| • K.d. Lane        | • Harvey Fierstein    |
| • Johnny Mathis    | • Leslie Gore         |
| • Suze Orman       | • Richard Simmons     |
| • Paula Poundstone | • Neil Patrick Harris |

## Interventions

- Teach parents, teachers, classmates
  - Acknowledge there are gay students
  - Stress importance of dignity to all
  - Just because you experiment does not make you gay
  - It is not a phase
  - Have the same health needs and concerns as all teens
  - Use gender-neutral language
    - Mother's day/ father's day

## Interventions

- Sex education
  - Allow the topic to be discussed
  - Have appropriate books and resources available
  - Normalize homosexuality
  - Educate against the myths
  - Anticipate more virgin births!

“Homosexuality, in and of itself, is not the problem facing gay children. The problem is the reaction of families – of society. We do not need to change gay people. We do not need to “cure” them. What we do need to cure is homophobia.”