

**The Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling &  
The Association for LGBT Issues in Counseling  
Present the  
Position Statement on LGBTQQIAA Individuals  
9-21-2015**

The *Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling* and the *Association for LGBT Issues in Counseling* are committed to the principal that *all* children and adolescents have equal access to **supportive, affirming,** and **proficient** counseling services that respond to their needs and presenting concerns as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual or allied children and adolescents throughout their lifespan development.

**Whereas,**

- Research attentive to LGBTQQIAA individuals point out that these children and adolescents are at amplified risk for mental health concerns such as depression, suicide, psychiatric care and hospitalization, substance abuse, running away, and high-risk sexual behavior due to heterosexism and associated discrimination and other concerns such as poor school performance and absenteeism, (Goodrich & Luke, 2015; Stone, 2003; Vare & Norton, 1998; Weiler, 2003).
- Research also demonstrates the benefit to LGBTQQIAA children and adolescents of: a) school-wide programming (e.g., Gay-Straight Alliances; GLSEN, 2007), b) counseling and psychotherapy that is open and affirming in comportment with recognized standards of care (ACA, 2010; ALGBTIC Competencies Task Force, 2013; APA, 2012; Craig, Austin, & McInroy, 2014), and c) the association between developmental assets such as a supportive social environment or affirming relationship and positive outcomes for LGBTQQIAA youth (Hatzenbeuhler, 2011; Saewye, Konishi, Rose, & Homma, 2014; Sheets, R., & Mohr, J. (2009).
- LGBTQQIA children and adolescents who have a supportive adult present in the school can serve as a protective factor (McCabe & Rubinson, 2008). Conversely, LGBTQQIA individuals who felt there was not a supportive adult present in the school with whom they could speak with, were more likely to have attempted suicide *multiple* times in the past year (Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006).
- Advocating, supporting, and being an ally for all children and adolescents are ethical and legal obligations for counselors and constitute the standard of care as recognized broadly across communities of helping professionals as indicated by national level professional associations other (ACA, 2014; APA, 2011; ASCA, 2010; ASCA, 2012; ASCA, 2014)
- Further, the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling and the Association for LGBT Issues in Counseling support the ASCA 2014 position statement on sexual orientation stating that school counselors are to “promote affirmation, respect and equal opportunity for all students regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression” (p.39) and the ASCA Ethical Standards (2010) echo this concept as a part of a Professional School Counselor’s ethical obligation.
- Best practices with and on behalf of LGBTQQIAA children and adolescents include prevention and developmental, comprehensive, and strengths-based interventions at the individual, group, family, and community levels (Goodrich, Harper, Luke, & Singh, 2013) while constantly considering confidentiality and concerns of potential harm/risk to

child or adolescent when it comes to contacting parents/guardians and sharing trusted information. (Richeson & Byrd, 2014).

- Counselor self-awareness of their own attitudes and beliefs toward LGBTQQIAA individuals is a mainstay of ethical counseling practice and must be attended to accordingly (Byrd & Hays, 2012).
- Understanding and building knowledge, awareness, and skills in regards to LGBTQQIAA children and adolescents are vital components of multicultural competencies. It is imperative that counselors examine, evaluate and implement multicultural competencies and proper training with respect to LGBTQQIAA individuals (Byrd & Hays, 2013; Goodrich & Luke, 2010).
- The counseling and development needs of LGBTQQIAA youth manifest in the contexts of family, schools, communities, cultures of origin, and global society, and that negotiation of these linked and overlapping systems should also encompass multicultural competency and the application of a both/and approach that honors local and international cultural perspectives along with respecting and assuring individual human rights (UNICEF, 2014)
- Consultation and supervision have been long recognized as part of best practice to build professional competency in new and emerging competency domains (ACA, 2014; Bernard & Goodyear 2014), including attainment of proficiency in the use of empirically grounded models and techniques with LGBTQQIAA children and adolescents (Moe, Perera-Diltz, Sepulveda, 2014; Goodrich & Luke 2015).
- In accordance with the "advocacy orientation" that involves both systems changes interventions as well as the implementation of empowerment strategies in direct counseling (Lewis et al., 2003, pg. 1), counselors endeavor to improve access to responsive individual, group, and family counseling services for and that reflect best practices with LGBTQQIAA children and adolescents (Goodrich, Harper, Luke, & Singh, 2013; Goodrich & Luke, 2009; 2013; Luke & Goodrich, 2015).

**Therefore,**

The *Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling* and the *Association for LGBT Issues in Counseling* are committed to the principal that *all* children, adolescents, and young adults have equal access to **supportive, affirming, and proficient counseling** that respond to their needs and presenting concerns as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual or allied statuses. ACAC in tandem with ALGBTIC believes that counselors should have and/or seek adequate training, professional development, and advocacy opportunities to further this charge.

**Summary**

Researchers have consistently found that LGBTQQIAA individuals are at increased risk for mental health concerns and other life stressors. The *Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling* and the *Association for LGBT Issues in Counseling* actively advocate for the support and affirmation of all LGBTQQIAA children and adolescents and all providers who serve this population.

## References

- American Counseling Association. (2014). *Code of Ethics*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American Psychological Association. (2011). APA Policy Statements on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Concerns. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/booklet.pdf>
- American School Counseling Association. (2014). ASCA position statement: The professional school counselor and LGBT youth (originally adopted 1995, revised 2000, 2005, 2007, 2014). Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American School Counselor Association (2012). *The ASCA national Model: A framework for school counseling programs* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American School Counseling Association (2010). Ethical standards for school counselors. (originally adopted 1984, revised 1992, 1998, 2004, 2010). Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Byrd, R. & Hays, D. G. (2013). Evaluating a safe space training for professional school counselors and trainees using a randomized control group design. *Professional School Counseling, 17* (1), 20-31. doi: [10.5330/PSC.n.2013-17.20](https://doi.org/10.5330/PSC.n.2013-17.20)
- Byrd, R. & Hays, D. (2012). Counselor competency and LGBTQ students in our schools. *Journal of School Counseling, 10* (3). Retrieved from <http://www.jsc.montana.edu/articles/v10n3.pdf>
- Craig, S., Austin, A., & McInroy, L. (2014). School-based groups to support multiethnic sexual minority youth resiliency: Preliminary effectiveness. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal, 31*(1), 87-106. doi:10.1007/s10560-013-0311-7
- GLSEN (2007). *Gay-Straight Alliances: Creating safer schools for LGBT students and their allies*. (GLSEN Research Brief). New York: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network.
- Hatzenbuehler, M. (2011). The social environment and suicide attempts in lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Pediatrics, 127*(5), 896-903. doi:10.1542/peds.2010-3020.

- Luke, M., & Goodrich, K. M. (2015). Working with family, friends, and allies of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology*, 7(1), 63-83.
- Goodenow, C., Szalacha, L., & Westheimer, K. (2006). School support groups, other school factors, and the safety of sexual minority adolescents. *Psychology in the Schools*, 43, 573-589. [doi:10.1002/pits.20173](https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20173)
- Goodrich, K. M., Harper, A., Luke, M., & Singh, A. A. (2013). Best practices for school counselors working with LGBTQ youth. *The Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 7(4), 307-322. DOI: 10.1080/ 15538605. 2013.83933.
- Goodrich, K. M., & Luke, M. (2015). *Group counseling with LGBTQ persons*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Goodrich, K. M., & Luke, M. (2013). Queering education in response to the needs of LGBTIQ students in P-12 schools. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 61(3), 1-7. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.842425>.
- Goodrich, K. M., & Luke, M. (2010). The experiences of school counselors-in-training in group work with LGBTQ adolescents. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 35(2), 143-159. DOI: 10.1080/ 01933921003705966.
- Goodrich, K. M., & Luke, M. (2009). LGBTQ responsive school counseling. *The Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 3(2), 113-127. DOI: 10.1080/15538600903005284.
- Lewis, J., Arnold, M. S., House, R., & Toporek, R. (2003). ACA Advocacy Competencies. Retrieved online from, <http://counseling.org/Publications>

- McCabe, P. C., & Rubinson, F. (2008). Committing to social justice: The behavioral intention of school psychology and education trainees to advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered youth. *School Psychology Review, 37* (4), 469-486.
- Moe, J., Perera-Diltz, D., & Sepulveda, V. (2014). Beyond competence: Fostering LGBTQI ally development through supervision. *The Journal of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Issues in Counseling, 8*(4), 389-401.
- Richeson, B. & Byrd, R. (2014). Helping students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender & questioning (LGBTQ). In Byrd, R. & Erford, B. T. (Eds.). *Common encounters in school counseling: A case-based approach.* (pp. 157-164). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Sheets, R., & Mohr, J. (2009). Perceived social support from friends and family and psychological functioning in bisexual young adult college students. *Journal Counseling Psychology, 56*(1), 152-163. DOI: 10.1037/0022-0167.56.1.152
- Stone, C. (2003). Counselors as advocates for gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth: A call for equity and action, *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 31*, 143-152.
- students. *Professional School Counseling, 1*, 8-15.
- United Nations Childrens' Fund (2014). Ending discrimination against children and parents based on sexual orientation/gender identity. *UNICEF Current Issues, 9*. Retrieved from: [http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/Current\\_Issues\\_Paper-Sexual\\_Identification\\_Gender\\_Identity.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/Current_Issues_Paper-Sexual_Identification_Gender_Identity.pdf).
- Vare, J. & Norton, T. (1998). Understanding gay and lesbian youth: Sticks, stones and silence. *The Clearing House, 71*, 327-331.
- Weiler, E. (2004). Legally and morally, what our gay students must be given. *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review, 69*, 38-43.