International Movements on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Psychology

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Current Legal Statuses

- Death penalty in 5 countries (Iran, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen) and parts of Nigeria and Somalia
- Imprisonment in 78 countries and 4 entities
- Recognition of same-sex marriages or unions in 32 countries and 47 entities
- Anti-discrimination laws in 70 countries and 84 entities
- Joint adoption allowed in 15 countries and 32 entities
International Milestones

- United Nations Human Rights Committee identified sexual orientation as a protected status in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1994)
International Milestones (cont.)

- UN General Assembly adopted resolution on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity (2011)
- International meeting on LGB concerns in psychology, San Francisco (2001)
- International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO; May 17, 2004)—observed by more than 100 countries
UN recognizes same-sex marriages of UN staff members even if the marriage licenses are not issued by their home country (July 3, 2014)
Impact of LGBT Psychology

- **Nature of sexual orientation, sexual identity, and gender identity and expression**
  - Nature or nurture debate—implications for advocacy
  - Multidimensionality and fluidity of sexual orientation
  - Sexual identity is different from sexual orientation, and is socially constructed
  - Understanding of gender identity development has become much more complex and ever-evolving

- **Sexual and gender identity development**
  - Cass 1979 model (linear and stage-wise progression)
  - Different models for lesbians and bisexual persons
  - Complex models accounting for individual as well as micro and macro systemic ecological factors
  - Currently in the beginning stage of developing transgender identity models

- **Decriminalization and depathologizing of LGBT persons**
  - Scientific evidence for the normality of variation in sexual orientation
  - Elevated mental health problems and suicide rates are attributed to adjustment issues due to societal discrimination and oppression
  - DSM2 removal of homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1973
  - DSM5 revision of gender identity disorder to gender dysphoria in 2013
  - Working group led by Dr. Susan Cochran to propose removal of any category of mental and behavioral disorders related to sexual orientation in the ICD–11, scheduled for 2017 publication by the World Health Organization
  - Providing scientific evidence to advocate for decriminalization of LGBT persons worldwide
Impact of LGBT Psychology (cont.)

- **Discrimination, oppression, hate crimes**
  - Research documenting incidences of discrimination, oppression, and hate crimes, and their severe negative effects on LGBT persons
  - Demographic, psychological, and behavioral correlates of perpetrators
  - Designing interventions to reduce bias, discrimination, and hate, and to promote open-mindedness and appreciation of sexual and gender diversity

- **Work discrimination and career issues**
  - Work discrimination and its negative effects on LGBT people
  - LGBT career decision-making and development
  - Identity management and discrimination coping strategies at work
  - Work and personal life interaction

- **HIV/AIDS prevention and intervention**
  - Since the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, psychologists have studied the effects of discrimination, stigma, and health issues related to HIV and AIDS on LGBT persons
  - HIV risk factors, prevention, and compliance with HIV treatment
  - How LGBT and other persons respond to advancements in medical treatment

- **Same-sex relationships and marriage**
  - Rapid changes in marriage equality laws internationally since 2001 (The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Canada, South Africa, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Iceland, Argentina, Denmark, New Zealand, France, Uruguay, United Kingdom). As you can see, most of these are European and Western countries.
  - The USA is changing almost daily
  - Scientific evidence on the benefits of same-sex marriage to LGBT persons' well-being, and the quality of their relationships is not less than heterosexual relationships
Impact of LGBT Psychology (cont.)

- Parenting rights
  - Single LGBT persons, particularly same-sex couples are often denied parenting rights in the world
  - Psychological science supporting LGBT persons being fit parents and the psychosocial development and well-being of their children are no different from those from heterosexual couples
  - Research on parenting identity development models
  - Advocating for LGBT parenting rights

- Military service
  - The fit of LGBT persons to serve in the military and addressing myths about LGBT military personnel
  - Psychological associations such as the American Psychological Association providing affirmative statement on LGBT persons serving in the military
  - Example—the US has taken down the ban on LGB persons, but transgender persons remain unwelcome

- LGBT children and youth
  - Psychological research addressing emotional problems, suicide, physical and sexual abuse, homelessness, prostitution, substance abuse, physical and sexual risk behaviors, and dating challenges among LGBT children and youth
  - Identifying strength and resilience factors
  - Effective psychological interventions
Impact of LGBT Psychology (cont.)

- Anti-bullying against LGBT persons
  - Research on bullying against LGBT persons and its severe negative effects (e.g., suicide)
  - Incidents are largely underreported in countries where people do not want to identify any relation to LGBT
  - Intervention to prevent bullying, and to help LGBT persons cope with bullying (It Gets Better)

- Costs of heterosexism to LGB and heterosexual persons
  - One strategy to address heterosexism is to demonstrate that heterosexism does not only affect LGB persons negatively, but also heterosexual persons (e.g., their family relationships, friendships, personal freedom, suffering from hatred, society’s financial cost to deal with consequences of heterosexism, and all the legal battles)
  - This is parallel to psychologists’ work addressing racism
Impact of LGBT Psychology (cont.)

- Cultural diversity and intersectionality of multiple identities (race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age)
  - The LGBT community is not culturally homogenous
  - This community is not a role model for tolerating cultural diversity within the LGBT community (racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, discrimination against bisexual and transgender persons)
  - Sexual identity development is a socially constructed process; therefore, there are cultural differences in how people deal with their sexual identity.
  - Recognition of multiple identities within a person and the integration of these identities

- Training of health service psychologists and other mental health professionals
  - The first line of battle is that not all psychologists and mental health professionals are LGBT affirmative
  - Research discovers correlates of heterosexism among psychologists and mental health providers (e.g., being male, being older, frequency of church attendance, belonging to a conservative political party, not having LGBT friends or family members, not participating in LGBT competency training, no experience working with LGBT client)
  - Documenting ineffective or damaging effects on LGBT clients due to heterosexism on the part of service providers
  - Developing effective training models
Impact of LGBT Psychology (cont.)

- **Banning of conversion therapy**
  - Scientific evidence showing that conversion therapy does not work, and may have long-term negative effects on LGB clients
  - Advocacy on banning conversion therapy (e.g., statements by psychological associations)

- **LGBT-affirmative practice**
  - Research on factors contributing to LGBT affirmative practice
  - Developing professional practice guidelines

- **LGBT research**
  - Ethics and community responsibility in LGBT research
  - Advocating for culturally sensitive research methods for all research projects, not just LGBT studies

- **Media and LGBT issues**
  - Increasing media coverage and positive representation of LGBT issues (e.g., news, movies, TV shows, songs)
  - Research on media’s effect on public attitudes regarding LGBT issues
Impact of LGBT Psychology (cont.)

- Policies and statements of professional organizations
  - International Union of Psychological Science’s policy on non-discrimination based on sexual orientation (2010)
  - International Council for Science’s statement that includes gender identity and sexual orientation (2011)
  - Statements by psychological associations such as
    - American Psychological Association’s series of statements on LGBT issues (since 1975)
    - Brazil’s resolution on professional conduct standards for psychologists with regard to sexual orientation (1999)
    - Psychological Association of the Philippines’ statement on non-discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (2011)
    - Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists’ position statement on sexual orientation (2011)

- Public policy advocacy and social justice
  - Use of psychological science to do advocacy and social justice
  - Dr. Ilan Meyer’s statement to the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Bayev vs. Russia
Future Agenda

Education and training
- LGBT training should be a core element of cultural competency training which should be mandatory in health service psychology training
- Given that older clinicians tend to be less LGBT-affirmative, and that LGBT psychology is rapidly evolving, continuous education on LGBT training should be strongly encouraged

Research
- Interdisciplinary research (e.g., with medical professionals, public health, social work, counseling)—it takes a village
- International collaborations

Practice
- Continue to develop culturally responsive practice for LGBT clients, paying particular attention to cultural diversity and intersectionality of identities within the LGBT community
- International psychological practice now made more possible because of technology and the ease and opportunities for international travel. Culturally responsive practice should be emphasized in international practice.

Advocacy
- Special needs in Africa and South and Southeast Asia. We must address fundamental human rights for all LGBT persons in the world.
- Using art and sport for advocacy (two things that people pay to see). They are international language and entertainment, and they have very effective influence on people.
- The art and sport of advocacy (creativity, touching hearts not just minds, paying attention to rules and regulations, use of strategies, keep practicing, keep trying, never give up)
Resources

- American Psychological Association (APA), *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients* (2011)
- APA *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Clients* (2014 draft)
Resources (cont.)

- APA *Policy Statements on LGBT Concerns* (2011)—e.g., discrimination, child custody, employment rights, hate crimes, youth in the schools, marriage, military service, conversion therapy, transgender issues
- International Network on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns and Transgender Issues in Psychology (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Europe, Ireland, Netherlands, Philippines, South Africa, UK, USA)—11:30am meeting today in Room 364
Thank You!

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