WELCOME!

Working Creatively with Sexual Minority Clients

Dr. David Mair – Head of Counselling, University of Birmingham
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Aims for today

- To reflect on the needs of LGBTQ clients
- To develop awareness of the importance of cultural stories/narratives in facilitating or hindering healthy self-esteem
- To consider how we as therapists can have positive impact on narratives within our institutions around sexual minorities.
Thinking about CLIENTS

• What are some of the needs that I identify in LGBTQ clients in a university setting?

Thinking about MYSELF

• What do I need for myself in order to work more creatively/effectively with these clients?
• What am I hoping to take away from today’s workshop?
the stories we live by

Personal Myths and the Making of the Self

Dan P. McAdams
“Our tales are spun, but for the most part we don’t spin them – they spin us.”

K. Gergen
“the primary developmental task for homosexually oriented adolescents is adjustment to a socially stigmatized role” (Martin and Hetrick, 1988)
1. Untroubled
2. Indifferent

3. The ‘Senior statesmen’ problem
4. Best not to ‘come out’?

The New Gay Teenager
RITCH C. SAVIN-WILLIAMS
What if…?
Charles Cooley’s ‘Looking-glass self’

- The importance of *imagination* in the formation of self/identity

*I am who I think you think I am.*
Stories can kill…

Gay policeman James Parkes beaten in Liverpool homophobic attack speaks from hospital bed

Oct 28 2009
By Staff Reporter

A ROOKIE police officer set upon in a vicious homophobic attack in Liverpool has spoken his first words to family and friends.

But doctors have warned that PC James Parkes is still facing a crucial 24 hours with his condition said to be "serious but stable".

He has also briefly told investigating officers about the horrific attack that left him with multiple fractures to his skull and other serious head injuries.
Is minority stress really an issue?

- ECU research - 2009: 2704 LGBTQ students
  - 49%
  - 20%
  - 7%
Issues arising…

- Accommodation issues
- Financial dependency
- Coming out to tutors/staff
- Local students - coming out at uni/staying in at home
- International students
- Ethnic minority students - intersectionality of identities
- Religious groups
- Mature students
- General lack of ‘presence’
What I found.

• ‘Minority Stress’ still prevalent
• Coming out to family problematic
• Main oppressive social narratives:
  • - hegemonic masculinity
  • - compulsory heterosexuality
• New, emancipatory narratives coexist ALONGSIDE old repressive ones
HETERO-NORMATIVITY

GENDER EXPECTATIONS
• How can we, as counsellors, make a difference for students oppressed by ‘minority stress’ and ‘compulsory heterosexuality’?
Universities are mirrors
How does your institution mirror these groups to themselves?

- International students
- Muslim students
- Disabled students
- Mature students
- Heterosexual students
- LGBTQ students
LGBT Center
University counselling services and the ‘heterosexual assumption’- are we colluding?
Gay affirmative therapy

- ‘Weak’ & ‘strong’ versions

- Weak -> implicit counsellor/service may support but not engage politically

- Strong -> explicit counsellor/service needs to support and engage politically
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is proud to recruit new members for our:

LBTQ Women’s Therapy Group

WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?
- Women who identify as lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LBTQ)

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE GROUP?
- Members and group leaders get together on a weekly basis, in a confidential and affirming environment where members talk about and explore all relevant life issues, relationships, family, past history and all else that may be affecting your life.

WHEN DO WE MEET?
- Monday afternoons starting Sept 10 (exact time to be determined)

WHERE IS CAPS?
- CAPS is located on 36th and Walnut street on the 3rd floor (above the Ann Taylor Loft Building/directly across from the Cost)

HOW TO GET INVOLVED?
- Contact Meghan Sullivan, LCSW (msulliv4@pobox.upenn.edu) or Rain Gortcheva, M.A. (raia@pobox.upenn.edu) for more information.

We are looking forward to meeting you!

A woman who is convinced that she deserves to accept only the best challenges herself to give the best. Then she is living phenomenally.

Maya Angelou
Some of our ‘ground-rules’

We respect confidentiality
We don’t judge each other
It’s OK to be quiet
It’s OK to not take part in an activity if you don’t want to
We agree to send apologies if we can’t make a meeting

The facilitators:

**David Mair** is Senior Counsellor at the Counselling and Guidance Service. His Doctorate research was into experiences of sexual minority students on campus and in counselling.

**Sue Knight** is a Student Coordinator at Counselling and Guidance. She helps to run Qchat, our online chat forum for LGBTQ students, and is co-convenor of the staff LGBTQ Rainbow Group.

What to do now...

If you think you might be interested to join this group, ask at Counselling and Guidance reception (in person, or you can phone) for an appointment to meet David for a brief chat, or email David - d.j.mair@bham.ac.uk. This is a chance to talk through any concerns you have about joining a group, and to get information about what coming to the group entails.

“The college years are a time of self-exploration, personal growth, and determination of the roles one will assume in society. Lesbian, gay and bisexual students face the added challenge of resolving issues related to their sexual orientation. Until students develop a sense of themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual people, addressing the other developmental tasks is difficult”


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**Counselling and Guidance Service**

3 Elms Road
Tel: 0121 414 5130

**Coming Out – Moving On**

**Wednesdays February 2nd - March 2nd 2011**
3.15-4.45pm
At 3 Elms Road

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**What to expect when you come to the group**

3 Elms Road
University of Birmingham
Phone: 0121 414 5130
www.as.bham.ac.uk/counsell
Educate/inform other services

- e.g., Accommodation services
Creating a 'gay affirmative' service

- Accommodation
- Students' Union
- Political engagement
- Student Services
- Annual report
- Evaluation
- Post-counselling
- Ask about relationships NOT girl/boyfriends
- Offer LGBTQ counsellor if appropriate/possible
- Groupwork
- Gender categories open? include Trans?
- Monitor sexual orientation - NOT same as disclosing

Training
- On-going - NOT "once for ever"
- Include LGBTQ clients
- Gay-affirmative Publicity
- Case-studies
- Language/images
- Artwork
- Picture worth a thousand words?
- Service reception
- Leaflets
- Books
- Gender neutral toilets
- Training for reception staff
- Anti-discrimination statement on display

Generic counselling training needs supplementing with sexual minority specific training

See also 'How to be LGBT Friendly' - booklet published by Leicester LGBT forum, PRISM: http://www.ligbc.com/page.php?id=56
There’s an old Buddhist tale....
Time for change?

- What one thing would you like to do differently when you go back to your own service? - either individually, as a service, or within your institution.
University of Birmingham, Thursday 10 November 2011
Chaired by Professor Terry Threadgold Pro Vice-Chancellor for Staff and Diversity, Cardiff University

With the extension, from 6 April 2011, of the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies such as universities must actively accommodate the needs of their lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer (LGBTQ) service-users in the design and delivery of their services.

How can university services, from counselling to advice centres, from chaplaincies to students’ unions, embrace this duty so as to create supportive and facilitative environments for sexual minority students? And why is this important?

One of the key developmental tasks of adolescence and young adulthood is the crafting of a personally meaningful life-story or narrative, to serve as a basis for entering the adult world of work and relationships.

Despite recent attitude changes in Western society, LGBTQ people must still create personal narratives in a social context where such identities are often ignored, misunderstood or belittled. In extreme cases, homo, bi or trans phobia leads to verbal abuse or physical attack.

This one day conference, organised jointly by the Counselling Services at the University of Birmingham and Cardiff University, aims to explore the impact of outer world contexts on inner world narratives. We aim to arrive at a fresh awareness of the way in which social context facilitates or hinders personal identity formation and a positive educational experience.

Confirmed keynote speakers

Dr Robert Schoenberg, Director
University of Pennsylvania LGBT Center
The University of Pennsylvania was recently voted number one USA campus for a pro-LGBT outlet (Newark). Robert will discuss how and why he founded the Center, its role on the campus, and its contribution to the well-being of the university community as a whole.

Terry and Bernard Read, OBE, Directors
The Gender Identity Research and Education Society
GLRSE supports transgendered people and champions issues affecting them. Terry and Bernard will describe the charity’s work and challenge us to consider how HE can proactively support trans people in forming positive, healthy identities.
Care more than others think is wise
Risk more than others think is safe
Dream more than others think is practical
Expect more than others think is possible