Approach to and Care of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender (GLBT) Teens

Speakers:

Betty Moore, RN, MSN, APN, OCN, CBCN
JSUMC Advanced Practice Nurse & local GLBT community advocate
Objectives

1. Summarize cultural competence such that it can be operationalized in the clinical setting for GLBT patients;
2. Apply cultural competence in patient care as knowledge and skill-based achievement rather than simply an attitude of acceptance toward diverse populations, specifically GLBT populations;
3. Incorporate communication skills that will enhance their ability to treat GLBT patients;
4. Integrate knowledge of social and biostatistical epidemiology in addressing GLBT patient concerns.
Known health concerns for GLBT teen population

- Confusion around sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity
- Emotional stress
- Suicide and depression
- STDs / HIV infection
- Substance Abuse
- Low self-esteem
- Body image concerns
- Cultural barriers
- Targets for bullying or other abuse

Sources: Kaiser Foundation; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Case Example: Dr. Fleck and Jason

THE MAJOR OBJECTIVES of this scenario are to:
1. Provide clinicians with skills and communication strategies for dealing with a highly delicate “coming out” situation
2. Emphasize the importance of carefully assessing the patient’s emotional mood and potential for suicidal ideation.
Video:

DR. FLECK AND JASON
(APPROX. 11 MINUTES)

Group Discussion
Some Key Takeaways from the Video

• Soothing tone of voice
• Non-judgmental
• Addresses the patient’s privacy/confidentiality concerns
• Skillful, directed inquiry to assess potential for suicide behavior
• Empathy and professionalism
• **Offers hope**
Resources for Health Care Providers

- GLMA (Gay & Lesbian Medical Association)
- WPATH (World Professional Association of Transgender Health)
- The Trevor Project
- Jersey Shore PFLAG (parents and friends of lesbians and gays)
- Teens at IEP Youth Services, Inc
- GLBT National Help Center
- The NJ Lesbian and Gay Coalition
- The Pride Center of New Jersey
Resources for Health Care Providers

- GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network)
- Many Schools now have a GSA (gay, straight alliance)
- Grammar School, High School and College LGBT groups and “Safe Zones”
Contact Information

Darryl Hughes
Manager, Cultural Diversity, Meridian Health
Department phone: 732-751-3571
Phone: 732-751-3562
dhughes@meridianhealth.com

Betty Moore, RN, MSN, APN, OCN, CBCN
Nurse Navigator, Meridian Cancer Care
P 732.776.4508
emoore@meridianhealth.com
A Medical Home for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) Youth

Barbara Snyder, MD FAAP
Principal Investigator
Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics

Gail Burack, Ph.D.
Co-investigator; Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics

University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey-
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
Project Collaborators

Divisions:
Adolescent Medicine
Allergy, Immunology & Infectious Diseases
Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
Project Objectives

- To identify gaps in community services currently available to GLBT youth
- To identify and find ways to eliminate barriers to care for GLBT youth
- To explore whether a medical home specifically for GLBT youth would improve their access to care
- To plan ways to make pediatric practices more accessible to GLBT youth
Methods

Participants:

**Youth Survey/Focus Groups** - A convenience sample of youth, ages 14-22, associated with one of the five sites completed the Youth Survey and participated in Focus Group discussion based on the survey questions. Surveys consisted of 20 questions about experiences with primary care physicians.

**Study Sites** - 5 community sites were selected based on their association with the GLBT community.

**Pediatricians** - were invited to complete a survey through AAP/NJ newsletter(s) and E-news reminders. Participation was anonymous. The Provider Survey consisted of 15 questions about routine practices when seeing youth for well visits.
Youth Survey/Focus Group Sites

Sites included:
(1) residential home for GLBT youth
(2) community based organizations
(2) after-school clubs.

- **Hudson Pride Connections Center** (provides social services to GLBT youth in Hudson County)

- **Triad House** (residential facility for GLBT youth 16+ years, Mercer County)

- **HiTops** (a community based organization in Princeton that provides reproductive and other clinical services and education to adolescents and young adults)

- **Lambda Alliance Club; North Brunswick High School** (gay-straight school club at a public high school)

- **Gay/Straight Alliance; Rutgers Preparatory School** (gay-straight high school club at a private school)
Online surveys were completed by pediatricians (members of AAP/NJ)

Participants were asked questions about their usual practices when seeing youth for well visits, including whether they see adolescents alone, and whether they talk with youth about topics such as sexual orientation, safe sex, emotional health and high risk behaviors.
# Healthcare Providers who Responded to Survey by County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monmouth</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergen</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camden</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passaic</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunterdon</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside NJ</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographics of Youth who Completed Surveys and Participated in Focus Groups (n=60)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Identity</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Self Described Sexual Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 Male</td>
<td>29 Caucasian</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14-15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Female</td>
<td>10 African American</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16-17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Transgender</td>
<td>11 Latino</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18+ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Other</td>
<td>5 Asian / Pacific Islander</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Gay/lesbian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Transgender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 Questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 Did not answer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth Responses

Survey Results:
- 83% reported physicians did not discuss sexual orientation with them during a well visit.
- 64% reported physicians did not discuss safe sex and/or birth control.
- 53% reported physicians did not discuss emotional health during visit.
- 54% youth reported they do not feel comfortable discussing personal matters with their physicians.

Focus Group Data:
- The doctor’s office and practice tend to be oriented toward young children.
- Comments/questions during visits are often directed to the parent, not the young person.
- Youth do not always have the opportunity to meet with physician in private.
- Pediatric offices seldom contain brochures/materials relevant to adolescents and young adults.
Youth who obtain medical care from pediatricians were more likely to report that their physicians asked them questions about their sexual identity, compared to youth w/o pediatricians ($x^2=6.16; p=.01$).

There was a significant association between age of youth and whether providers discuss sexual identity with youth ($F=3.99;p=.02$); a greater percentage of youth in the 16-17 year age range reported that physicians asked them about sexual orientation, compared to ages 14-15 and 18+.

If the physician speaks alone with the youth, they were more likely to talk with them about their moods ($F=6.21;p=.04$), smoking and/or substance use ($F=5.2;p=.009$).

Whether physicians “spend enough time” with youth was related to whether physicians talk with them about moods ($F=13.08;p=.0006$), and whether youth reported physician is someone with whom they can speak about personal matters ($x^2=2.71;p=.05$).
Only 38% of providers reported that they routinely speak with patients about their sexual identity/orientation during adolescent well visits, though 74% report feeling comfortable discussing these issues.

87% of providers report discussing safe sex, pregnancy prevention, STI prevention.

92% of providers report discussing drug and alcohol use.

65% of providers report discussing mood/emotional functioning

69% of providers reported not being aware of community based resources for GLBT youth.

92% of providers indicated that they need more training regarding the health needs and concerns of GLBT youth.

80% of providers are interested in obtaining additional training about the needs of GLBT youth.
• Physicians with \( \leq 10 \) years since residency are more likely than physicians out longer (>10 years) to discuss sexual orientation with patients \( (x^2=6.02; \ p=.01) \).

• There were no differences between any of the survey responses and gender of provider.

• Providers who reported feeling comfortable discussing sexual orientation with patients were significantly more likely to be aware of community based resources for GLBT youth \( (F=8.75; \ p=.004) \).

• There was a significant association between whether providers “talk alone” with patients and whether they reported feeling comfortable discussing sexual orientation with patients \( (F=13.79; \ p=.003) \).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discuss at Visit</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sexual orientation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safe sex, birth control</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional health</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substance use</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with youth alone</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(usually; always)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

• GLBT youth are at significant increased risk for problems related to depression, suicide, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, family rejection and homelessness. Healthy People 2010 emphasized the need to increase access to care and programs for sexual minority individuals. The AAP clinical report (2004) called for pediatricians to have an understanding of the unique experiences of GLBT youth.

• Despite the goals outlined in these reports, we found pediatric practices continue to lack sensitivity to the needs of GBLT youth. Most youth reported that physicians are not discussing sexual orientation, safe sexual practices, emotional health and high risk behaviors during their medical visits. In sharp contrast, the majority of surveyed pediatricians reported that they do discuss safe sex, emotional health, and high risk behaviors during well visits. Many fewer pediatricians discuss sexual identity/orientation with teens, and very few youth were comfortable bringing up these topics themselves.

• Although physicians surveyed indicated that they feel comfortable discussing the above topics, most of them indicated the need for more training about the needs and concerns of GLBT youth and about community resources for them.
Conclusions (continued)

- Pediatric offices and clinics need to become more adolescent- and GLBT-friendly. The surveyed youth thought that primary care physicians should all be educated about GLBT health and be comfortable talking to patients about these issues; they did not endorse having separate clinical facilities for GLBT people. In addition to discussing these health and mental health issues routinely, clinicians could have rainbow pins/posters and Safe Zone signs to signify that their practice is welcoming to all. Pediatric practices should also have more brochures and other educational materials pertinent to adolescents and young adults.
Thank you to all who participated in this study!
Special Thanks To:

Focus Group Sites:
Hudson Pride Connections Center
Triad House
Rutgers Preparatory School
North Brunswick High School
HiTops

* Multidisciplinary Planning Group (UMDNJ-RWJMS)
* American Academy of Pediatrics-Community Access to Child Health (CATCH)
* American Academy of Pediatrics/ New Jersey Chapter
Resources for Health Care Providers

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. Their mission is to end suicide among LGBTQ youth by providing life-saving and life-affirming resources including a nationwide, 24/7 crisis intervention lifeline, digital community and advocacy/educational programs. 1-866-488-7386
http://www.thetrevorproject.org

Jersey Shore PFLAG (parents and friends of lesbians and gays) Offers many support groups for the LGBT community and families adjusting to their child’s alternative life style.
http://www.jerseyshorepflag.org/support-meetings/

Teens at IEP Youth Services, Inc. in Freehold, NJ. The group is for students between the ages of 13 and 17-years. There is no fee to attend. IEP Youth Services, Inc. provides support and a safe space for gay, lesbian, transgender, bi-curious/bi-sexual and teens questioning their sexuality. LGBTQ youth have access to information on resources in the community, and the opportunity to discuss relevant issues and concerns with peers. The focus of the support group is to help these teens improve their ability to develop their identity in a healthy, constructive manner. The groups are held every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month from 6:30-8pm. We are located at 83 West Main Street, Freehold NJ.
http://www.iepyouthservices.org/

GLBT National Help Center has a youth talk line which provides peer-counseling and assists in locating local resources for the child’s city & town. Toll-free 1-800-246-PRIDE (1-800-246-7743)

The NJ Lesbian and Gay Coalition offers free youth meeting sites and social support information.
http://www.njlgc.org/publications/youth_guide/ssorg.html

The Pride Center of New Jersey is the LGBT community center for central New Jersey. We provide a range of support groups, social groups, educational classes, HIV testing and youth services for the LGBT community.
http://www.pridecenter.org

Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Advocacy group that works to ensure LGBT people of their basic equal rights, and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community. They focus on many youth issues.
http://www.hrc.org/blog/entry/elevating-lgbt-youth
GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network), is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. [http://www.glsen.org/centralnj](http://www.glsen.org/centralnj)

Many Schools now have a GSA (gay, straight alliance)

Grammar School, High School and College LGBT groups and “Safe Zones”

The main purpose of a Safe Zone program is to visibly mark people and places that are "safe" for LGBT students. This is usually accomplished through a sticker with a pink triangle or some other recognizable LGBT symbol. When students and staff affix stickers to their lockers, desks, backpacks, or office doors, it signifies an affirmation of LGBT people and lets others know that they are a safe person to approach for support or guidance. Often the idea behind Safe Zone stickers (and the stickers themselves) gets passed around via word of mouth and there is no organized program within the school. Ideally, however, each participating school should have a Safe Zone team (made up of students and staff) that publicizes the program and distributes materials, provides a basic training to allies who wish to be involved, and educates the larger school community about the meaning of the stickers and importance of building safe spaces for LGBT and all students.
RESOURCES

For LGBTQ Youth
GLBT National Health Center Youth Talkline
Information, telephone and peer-counseling
http://www.glnh.org/talkline

First and Third – HiTOPS, Princeton
Interactive meetings, support group for GLBTQ youth twice/month
www.hitops.org

It Gets Better Project
Project created by Dan Savage to inspire hope for young GLBT people facing harassment.
http://www.itgetsbetter.org/

LGBTQI Resource Guide
NJ Division of Children and Families
www.state.nj.us/dcf/adolescent/lgbtqi/

Mazzoni Center, Philadelphia
Medical care, resources, support groups for transgender people
www.mazzonicenter.org

OutProud: The National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth
Variety of resources
http://aboutus.org/OutProud.org

Sex, etc
Sexuality and relationship information “by teens, for teens”
www.sexetc.org [topics: LGBTQ]

The Trevor Project
24-hr crisis and suicide prevention help line for sexual minority youth
1-866-4-U-TREVOR
http://www.thetrevorproject.org

Youth Resource
Hosted by Advocates for Youth
http://www.amplifyyourvoice.org/youthresources

For Parents and Friends
Family Acceptance Project, San Francisco State University
Information, support for youth coming out to families and their families
**documentary video: “Always my son”
http://familyproject.sfsu.edu
Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
Education, other resources
www.glsen.org

Gay, Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA)
GLBTQ-friendly health care providers
www.glma.org/

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and gays (PFLAG)
Information, peer counseling, local support groups
www.community.pflag.org

Schwartz, John: “Helping a Gay Child to Come Out” – NY Times 10/7/12

**For Health Professionals**


[www.LGBTData.com](http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/documents/lgbtqi2s.pdf) a no-cost, open-access clearinghouse for the collection of sexual orientation & gender identity data and measures

Makadon HJ. Improving health care for the lesbian and gay communities. NEJM 2006; 354: 895.

The National Center for Cultural Competence: Providing Services and Supports for Youth who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex or Two-Spirit
http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/documents/lgbtqi2s.pdf