

Chapter Key People

CHAPTER 18

Group Work: Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Clients

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Chapter Key Terms

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Bisexual
Gay
Lesbian
Homoerotic
Sexual preference
Sexual orientation
Heterosexism
Homophobia
Homoprejudice
Homosexual
Gay-affirmative counseling
Counselor homophobia
Colorado's antigay Amendment 2
Goodridge v. Department of Public Health
Civil unions
Domestic partnerships
Reciprocal beneficiaries
Internalized homophobia
Counselor homophobia
Living in the closet
Aids groups
HIV positive
Coming-out groups
Political Action Committees (PACs)
People living with AIDS (PLWAs)
Coming out
Affirmative older lesbians and gay men
Common interest groups
The Los Angeles Program

Chapter Summaries

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Group Work: Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Clients

Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals have a right to unbiased and professional mental health services. Group leaders must recognize and address homophobia and heterosexism in themselves, in the counseling profession, in individuals, and in groups they lead. Gay-affirmative group leaders encourage the groups they facilitate to openly address sexual orientation issues by creating an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance so that anyone who wishes to explore his or her sexual orientation can bring up concerns easily and openly. Group leaders who are sensitive to gays, lesbians, and bisexuals address the issues that are presented and do not make sexual behavior the problem if it is irrelevant to the situation. They create and model norms of nonjudgmental acceptance and tolerance of everyone in the group. Finally, gay-affirmative group leaders are knowledgeable about gay, lesbian, and bisexual culture and the resources that exist.

Professional groups have been slow to respond to gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals and their unique concerns. This mirrors the attitudes of the American public, which continues to favor heterosexism. As a product of homophobia, some gays, lesbians, and bisexuals have internalized society's negative attitudes and deny their own sexual orientation. Some counseling professionals have adopted heterosexist and homophobic attitudes.

What is needed is gay-affirmative counseling, in which leaders create an atmosphere of tolerance, acceptance, and advocacy. Such group leaders are sensitive to gay, lesbian, and bisexual concerns; openly address sexual orientation issues; and create and model norms of nonjudgmental acceptance and tolerance of all group members.

Types of groups in which sexual minorities can find support include common-interest groups, self-help groups, and counseling groups. Specific gay, lesbian, and

bisexual groups include coming-out groups, youth groups, couples groups, parenting groups, drug and alcohol abuse groups, aging groups, and AIDS groups. Self-help and support groups have developed for HIV-positive individuals; for PLWAs; for families, friends, and survivors of PLWAs; and for health care workers who care for people living and dying with AIDS.

Chapter URLs

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Bisexual Resource Center

<http://www.biresource.org/>

Gay and Lesbian Association of Retired Persons:

<http://www.gaylesbianretiring.org/>

Gay and Lesbian Outreach to Elders (GLOE) Resources

<http://www.sfgate.com/eguide/gay/pages/community.shtml#seniors>

[http://dmoz.org/Society/Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual/Elders/](http://dmoz.org/Society/Gay,_Lesbian,_and_Bisexual/Elders/)

Community AIDS Resource & Education Services CARES

<http://www.caresswm.org>

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)

<http://www.nglftf.org/>

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

<http://www.pflag.org/>

Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE)

<http://www.sageusa.org/index.cfm>

Youth Resource

<http://www.youthresource.com/>

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)

www.glaad.org

Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

www.glsen.org

Human Rights Campaign

www.hrc.org

Test Your Knowledge

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Group Work: Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Clients

1. T F Until 1973 and 1975 respectively, the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association labeled “homosexuality” a form of mental illness.
2. T F Counseling gays, lesbians, and bisexuals is like counseling other culturally diverse populations in that practitioners need culture-specific preparation.
3. T F The term homosexual is the preferred label used by most gays and lesbians to describe themselves to others.
4. T F Sexual preference implies that individuals choose to be gay, lesbian or bisexual, and sexual orientation suggests that sexual predisposition is innate.
5. T F Evidence is increasing that sexual orientation is biologically intrinsic in human beings with genetic patterns, pre- and post-natal hormonal activity, and brain structure differences being explored as possible factors in sexual orientation.
6. T F Bisexuality has been continually attacked as a nonentity, a transitional stage from heterosexuality to homosexuality or vice-versa, or as a denial of one’s homosexuality.
7. T F Because of the more accepting atmosphere of the 90s, most states now have in place legal protection against discrimination in employment and housing for individuals perceived to be gay, lesbian, and bisexual.
8. T F In 1996, Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, which facilitates and supports the efforts by some states to sanction same-sex marriage.
9. T F Nearly 80% of Americans believe people should not be fired or discriminated against at work for being gay, lesbian, or bisexual.
10. T F Homophobia refers to a set of political assumptions that empowers heterosexual persons, especially heterosexual white males, and excludes people who are openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual from social, religious, and political power.
11. T F Heterosexism is the societal norm in the United States.
12. T F Counselors are a part of the culture which denies that same-sex behaviors exist

and/or teaches that they are morally repulsive and psychologically damaging.

13. T F Mainstream recovery groups such as Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, and Al-Anon do not facilitate the inclusion of gay, lesbian, or bisexuals into their organizations.
14. T F When internalized homophobia is a major issue, all-gay, all-lesbian, or all-bisexual groups are more appropriate for dealing with adjustment difficulties.
15. T F Coming out is a complex sequence of events through which individuals acknowledge, recognize, and label their sexual orientation and then disclose it to others throughout their lives.
16. T F Nearly 30% of all teen suicides were gay or lesbian in sexual orientation.
17. T F Most gay, lesbian and bisexual relationships are transitory and many gay, lesbian, or bisexual individuals do not maintain permanent relationships on a long-term basis.
18. T F It is common for gay men to value emotional relatedness, which may lead to boundary maintenance and sexual desire; while lesbians may value sexual attractiveness, which may lead to problems of emotional intimacy.
19. T F Domestic violence is as frequent in gay, lesbian, and bisexual couples as it is in society generally but has been grossly ignored and underreported.
20. T F As a product of homophobia, some gays, lesbians, and bisexuals have internalized society's negative attitudes and deny their own sexual orientation.

Chapter 18 Answers

1 T, 2 T, 3 F, 4 T, 5 T, 6 T, 7 F, 8 F, 9 T, 10 F, 11 T, 12 T, 13 F, 14 T, 15 T, 16 T, 17 F, 18 F, 19 T, 20 T