Amplifying Our Voice: Leading Boldly for Our Students, Our Professions, and Our Union

Out Educators: A Must for Creating Safe Schools for All Students

ADV 303 / Level: 1, 2
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COMPETENCY: ADVOCACY

NEA Leadership Competency progression level
Level 1: Foundational
Level 2: Mobilizing & Power Building

Indicate all of the NEA Leadership Competency themes within the competency that your presentation is designed to address.

- Utilizes best practices in advocacy and political efforts
- Engages and builds beneficial relationships to advance advocacy and political goals
- Interprets and acts on social and racial justice initiatives
- Acts as a political advocate
NEA Strategic Goal

- advancing opportunities that will identify, organize, and engage new and early career educators
- amplify the voices of all educators, support our members’ professional growth, and promote social justice for our students, communities and our nation

NEA Organizational Priorities

- Racial Justice in Education
COMMUNITY NORMS

- Stay engaged
- Don’t check-out
- Speak your truth
- Say what’s in your heart
- Experience discomfort
- Connect with your feelings
- Expect/Accept non-closure
- Agree to disagree
- Maintain confidentiality
- What is said here, stays here
- All participate
- No one dominates
- Honor time
- Use the parking lot for off-track topics
Guiding Questions

- Why is it important for gay educators to be able to live their lives openly and freely?
- Do all school employees really feel safe when they enter the school building/work setting?
- What kinds of issues do LGBTQ+ educators face in the school/work setting?
- What are some things that we can do to help ensure safe working environments for all school employees?
- How do you make your contract/policies more inclusive of LGBTQ employees?
KEY TERMS

**LGBTQ**: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Questioning

**Sexual Orientation**: The inner feelings of who we are attracted to emotionally and/or physically.

**Lesbian**: A person who is female-identified and who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some other females.

**Gay**: A person who is male-identified and is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some other males.

**Bisexual**: A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some males and females.
**KEY TERMS**

**Transgender**: A person whose gender identity is not aligned with their biological sex assigned at birth.

**Questioning**: A person who is in the process of understanding and exploring their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.

**Ally**: A member of the majority or dominant group who works to end oppression by recognizing their own privilege and supporting or advocating for the oppressed population.

**Gender Non-conforming**: A person whose gender identity and/or expression that does not conform to traditional or societal binary gender expectations.
Getting To Know You Activity
Getting to Know You Activity

- How did you feel?
- Was it easy to do?
- What do you think this activity was designed to model or demonstrate?
Earliest Beliefs Activity

- Let’s divide up into two groups of equal size
- Form concentric circles with individuals in each circle facing each other
- We’ll be posing a series of questions and each pair will have a set amount of time to respond
- The inner circle will then rotate so everyone has a new partner ... and a new question will be posed
Think back to your childhood
What were the first things, whether positive, negative or neutral, that you learned about LGBTQ people?
How old were you?
Earliest Beliefs

- Who taught you the first things you learned about LGBTQ people?
- In what ways were the ideas transmitted?
Earliest Beliefs

➢ To what degree have you internalized your earliest beliefs about LGBTQ people?

➢ To what degree do you agree or disagree with your earliest learnings?
Coming Out

- What does it mean to come out?
- When does coming out happen?
- What could be some ramifications from coming out?
The process by which a person identifies himself or herself as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or as a straight ally.

It involves a person being true to himself or herself by being able to open up to a family, friends, and coworkers.
Coming out is one of the most difficult decision-making processes one can ever undergo. To do so in a workplace is doubly so. When that workplace is a school, the complicating factors become infinite. Nevertheless, there are some simple lessons to keep in mind if you are thinking about coming out at school.

Taken from GLSEN www.glsen.org
Issues Faced by LGBTQ Educators

- Isolation from co-workers
- A sense of difference which leads to distancing
- Lack of Support from coworkers
- Lack of Support from School Administration/School Board
- Threat of Harassment/Violence
- Challenges from Parents and Community Members
Issues Faced by LGBTQ Educators

- Fear of Discipline leading to dismissal
- Harassment from School Administration
- Lack of Civil Rights Laws at the state/federal level protecting GLBT Employees
- Lack of equal treatment for benefits (health insurance, retirement, etc.)
Supporting LGBTQ Educators in the Workplace

- Encourage the inclusion of language in your contract that addresses the needs of all school employees
- Encourage local school boards to adopt policies prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation/gender identity
- Write or contact elected officials and encourage them to change current civil rights laws to make them more inclusive of all people
- Advocate for making LGBTQ nondiscrimination a legislative priority for your state association.
Protections for LGBTQ Educators in the Workplace

- Non-discrimination clause in the local contract/bargaining agreement
- Just Cause/Due Process provision in Collective Bargaining Agreement/Contract
- State Tenure Laws or Continuing Contract Laws
- School Board Policy
Protections for LGBTQ Educators in the Workplace

- State or Local Anti-Discrimination Law
- First Amendment
- Equal Protection Clauses (14th Amendment)
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Association
Scenarios
Activity
My Story
Action Planning

Please choose a goal that you would like to accomplish to make your workplace a more welcoming and safe environment for LGBTQ Employees. Identify resources and people you will work with to accomplish your goal.
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Session Outcomes

The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:

- The learner will be able to identify the challenges face by LGBTQ+ Educators in the work place setting and how to overcome those challenges.
- The learner will be able to better advocate for the needs of the LGBTQ+ Educator.
- The learner will be able to identify ways to advocate for LGBTQ+ Educators through school board policy, contractual language, and at the political level.
Closing

- Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session by using the NEA Summit Mobile App!
- Please visit the Leadership Development Resources website at www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment