

Gay and Lesbian Youth

- A. Gay and Lesbian Youth
 - 1. Same developmental tasks as all youth
 - 2. Most grow to be healthy adults
 - 3. Additional stressors due to stigma/prejudice/isolation
 - 4. Knowledgeable providers important

- B. Components of Identity
 - 1. Gender identity: male or female
 - a. Established y age 3
 - 2. Gender/Sex roles
 - a. Masculinity/femininity
 - b. Established by age 3-7
 - 3. Sexual orientation
 - a. Behaviours and attractions
 - b. By childhood or puberty

- C. Components of Sexual Orientation
 - 1. Emotional attachments
 - 2. Sexual fantasy
 - 3. Sexual behaviour
 - 4. Identity: gay/bisexual/heterosexual

- D. Behaviour distinct from identity
 - 1. Many lesbian/gay youth not sexually experienced
 - 2. Many lesbian/gay youth have heterosexual experiences
 - 3. Heterosexual youth may have homosexual experiences

- E. Challenge of lesbian/gay identity development
 - 1. Must develop healthy and integrated identity in context of negative stereotypes and prejudice, often without family support

- F. Stages of Identity Development
 - 1. Sensitization
 - a. Prepubertal: feeling different
 - 2. Identity confusion
 - a. Awareness of same-sex feelings
 - b. May have inner turmoil
 - 3. Factors influencing confusion
 - a. Changing self-perceptions
 - b. Sexual arousal and behaviour
 - c. Stigma surrounding homosexuality
 - d. Inaccurate knowledge of homosexuality
 - e. Cognitive dissonance
 - f. Lack of role models

- g. Lack of opportunity to socialize
 - h. Attraction to opposite sex
 - 4. May respond to identity confusion by denial, avoidance, escape through drugs, redefinition of feelings, or acceptance
 - 5. Identity Assumption
 - a. Self-acknowledgement, disclosure
 - 6. Commitment
 - a. Self-acceptance, integration of identity (Troiden 1989)
- G. Variables in Homosexual Identity Formation (Cass, 1990)
1. Age at which stage occurs
 2. Paths within stage
 3. Coping strategies
 4. Rate of progress through stages
 5. Final stage reached
- H. Features of Gay Identity Development (Cass, 1990)
1. Developed separate from family
 2. Not fixed but may be long-lasting
 3. Person active in identity development
 4. All dimensions important
 - a. Identity
 - b. Behaviour
 - c. fantasy
 5. Meaning of behaviour important
- I. Isolation Experiences: Social/Emotional
1. No one to talk to
 2. Family
 3. Peers
 4. Lack chance for socialization
 5. Fear friendships will be misunderstood
 6. Fear of discovery → hiding
 7. Need for vigilance → distance
 8. Emotional distance → lack of support
- J. Isolation Experiences: Cognitive
1. Lack accurate information
 2. Lack role models
 3. May base their understanding on stereotypes
- K. Psychosocial Risks
1. Negative self-perception
 2. Ridicule, violence
 3. Depression
 4. Substance use

5. Suicide risk
 6. Limits on career goals
 7. Early school leaving
 8. Homelessness (which increases risk for sexual assault, exploitation, substance use, depression...)
- L. Suicide Attempts by Gay & Lesbian Youth: 20-42%
1. Bradford, Ryan 1987 24%
 2. Martin, Hetrick 1988 21%
 3. Remafedi 1991 30%
 4. D'Augelli 1993 42%
 5. YRBS, Mass. 1995 37%*
 6. *random sample: includes youth w/same sex behaviour
- M. Risk Factors for Suicidal Behaviour in Gay Youth
1. Gay identity at young age
 2. Gender non-conformity
 3. Family conflict
 4. Runaway/throwaway
 5. Non-disclosure of orientation
 6. Conflict regarding orientation
- N. "Conversion Therapy"
1. Clearly unethical
 2. Confusion about sexual orientation not unusual during adolescence ...
Therapy directed at changing orientation is contraindicated . *Amer. Acad., Peds 1993*
 3. No evidence that any treatment can change a homosexual person's deep seated sexual feelings. *Amer. Psychiatric Assoc. 1993*
- O. Provider Issues
1. Personal beliefs
 2. No assumptions about orientation - use gender neutral terms
 3. Trust and confidentiality
 4. Facilitate selective disclosure
 5. Interact with family
 6. Appropriate referrals
- P. Medical Assessment
1. Health care maintenance
 2. STD screening
 3. Safer sex guidance
 4. Desires re: parenting
 5. Need for birth control
- Q. STD Screening—Females

1. History of sexual activity with either sex, known contact with high risk individuals
2. If exclusively non-IVDU, female partners, very low risk. Otherwise, same screening as for other females, as indicated (assess risk) Full workup includes:
 - a. Gonorrhea: genital, oral, anal
 - b. Chlamydia: cervical or urine
 - c. VDRL
 - d. HPV: pap smear
 - e. Bacterial vaginosis, trichomonas: wet mount
 - f. HIV antibody

R. STD Screening: Males

1. History of sexual activity with either sex, known contact with high risk individuals
2. Testing as indicated (assess risk) Full workup includes:
 - a. Gonorrhea: urethral, pharyngeal, anal
 - b. Chlamydia: urethral or urine
 - c. VDRL
 - d. Anal cytology
 - e. Stool culture, ova and parasites
 - f. HIV antibody

S. Anticipatory Guidance

1. Identity integration
2. Disclosure
3. Sexuality
4. Risk reduction
5. Mental health
6. Discrimination and violence
7. Social support
8. Career/vocational plans