**HELOA National Conference workshop - LGBTQ+ in Outreach**

Kirsty McLaren from Kings College London, Chair of Proudly King’s Staff Network and WP Officer

Before the session began it was agreed;

* The room is a Brave space (safe and ok to share)
* Chatham House Rules
* Goal not to agree, it is to gain a deeper understanding
* Challenge respectfully

Session outline;

* Intro to LGBTQ+ terms (from hereon will be referred to as LGBT, which is in keeping with the terminology used at the session)
* What are the issues
* Empathy task
* What can we do
* Grill-A-Gay Q&A

Kirsty asked for Introductions from everyone in the room;

* Name
* Pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them)
* Tell us about a time when you couldn’t be yourself

**LGBT alphabet**

Kirsty introduced Stonewall’s Glossary of terms which can be found here; <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/glossary-terms>

Nobody expects you to be an expert. All people tend to expect is an open mind, unassuming language and a swift. And short apology when you get things wrong.

All of us get things wrong sometimes!

Discussed the idea of being on the receiving end of something that could be seen as being offensive, use “Kind Eyes” - if someone says something unkind, look through kind eyes, did they mean to be offensive? If not, be kind to them in their discomfort of getting something wrong.

Remember - nobody is just one thing

You are one thing

And another

And another...

Kirsty presented research from Stonewall who have produced both university and and schools reports and research with pupils and students

**School report headlines**

* + Nearly half of lesbian, gay, bi and trans pupils (45 per cent) – including 64 per cent of trans pupils – are bullied for being LGBT at school
  + Half of LGBT pupils (52 per cent) hear homophobic language ‘frequently’ or ‘often’ at school, more than a third (36 per cent) hear biphobic language ‘frequently’ or ‘often’, and almost half (46 per cent) hear transphobic language ‘frequently’ or ‘often’
  + The majority of LGBT pupils – 86 per cent – regularly hear phrases such as ‘that’s so gay’ or ‘you’re so gay’ in school
  + Nearly one in ten trans pupils (nine per cent) are subjected to death threats at school
  + Almost half of LGBT pupils (45 per cent) who are bullied for being LGBT never tell anyone about the bullying
  + Two in five LGBT pupils (40 per cent) are never taught anything about LGBT issues at school
  + Just one in five LGBT pupils (20 per cent) have learnt about safe sex in relation to same-sex relationships
  + Three in four LGBT pupils (76 per cent) have never learnt about bisexuality at school
  + Three in four LGBT pupils (77 per cent) have never learnt about gender identity and what ‘trans’ means at school

The full school report can be found here; <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/the_school_report_2017.pdf>

**University report headlines**

* LGBT disabled students are particularly likely to have been the target of such remarks from other students; almost half of LGBT disabled students (47 per cent) have experienced this.
* Three in five trans students (60 per cent) and more than one in five lesbian, gay and bi students who aren't trans (22 per cent) have been the target of negative comments or conduct from other students.
* More than a third of trans students (36 per cent) and seven per cent of lesbian, gay and bi students who aren't trans faced negative comments or conduct from university staff in the last year because they are LGBT.
* Seven per cent of trans students were physically attacked by another student or a member of university staff in the last year because of being trans.
* One in five trans students (20 per cent) were encouraged by university staff to hide or disguise that they are trans.
* Two in five trans students (39 per cent) and more than one in five lesbian, gay and bi students (22 per cent) wouldn't feel confident reporting any homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying to university staff. More than two in five LGBT students (42 per cent) hid or disguised that they are LGBT at university in the last year because they were afraid of discrimination.
* One in four non-binary students (24 per cent) and one in six trans students (16 per cent) don’t feel able to wear clothes representing their gender expression at university.
* One in six trans students (17 per cent) report being unable to use the toilet they feel comfortable with at university.

Negative comments included university staff making negative comments such as referring to the way a person dresses having an impact on their uni career

The full university report can be found here; <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_universities_report.pdf>

**Background**

There has found to be a link with harassment and background - more likely for those from low income backgrounds and in small towns

**Mental health**

Rates of mental health is very high in LGBT young people - much more chance that they will self-harm or attempt suicide

Much larger proportion of LGBT reporting mental health issues at university - trying to understand who you are

**Belonging and success**

The two are very much linked

No real outreach provision for LGBT students

Gay/ Lesbian students - more likely to drop out, trans students even more so

LGBT students are less likely to feel homesick at university as they may have experienced difficulties and discrimination in their home setting

LGBT are more likely to be estranged and to have experienced homelessness

LGBT more like to have financial stress (related to circumstances)

Fewer role models

Less accessible accommodation (gender specific blocks etc)

**Empathy task**

The groups were provided with various privileges with a price for each privilege (Privilege is relative. The privileges in this activity were about additional barriers in society)

Privileges are basic things like being able to use the toilet without feeling uncomfortable, and being included by friends and peers

For the task the group were asked to imagine life without these ‘privileges’, and groups could buy a limited number of privileges.

Feedback on what can be seen as a privilege as it is not afforded to everyone;

* Made people feel depressed, embarrassed
* Eye opening
* Just small things can make such a big difference to everyday life

Privilege choices and discussion around them included;

* Importance of support network
* Getting name correct - part of your identity
* Treatment at the doctors
* Residentials - single sex only supports cis, not LGBT so cannot be flagged as safeguarding
* Toilets - fundamental
* Paperwork - helps with identity and ID
* Difficulties within families of different cultures, death threats and worse
* The media is sometimes representation of gay men - however, often quite stereotypical
* Can’t put yourself into the picture in a book or movie - accurate representations

**What can we do?**

* Consult your LGBT societies and staff network
* Check your policies, create or suggest toolkit’s and guidance, check your comms and outputs - one thing to take away residentials
* Be visible, all year round. In comms, signage, merchant and in the curriculum - lanyards with rainbows do make a difference!
* Be accessible - both you and the university - mixed gender and single sex toilets should be available
* Avoiding ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls
* Facilitate name changes - can accept further ID on top of passport if this is different
* Have any students facing staff (including ambassadors) trained on LGBT issues
* Stick to your promises, commit something in you access and participation plans/ outcome agreements etc - only 6% too

**Q&A**

A: Advice about a situation where someone used the wrong pronoun in a school - was corrected and apologised - but other pupils laughed what to do in this situation.

A: Sometimes when you ask the person who finds it funny to explain, it sounds very stupid, also explain the terms, we can only help educate.

Q: Mixed gender accommodation for residentials - any pushback from schools/ parents/ carers?

A: Highlighting that you cannot safeguard those who do not identify as LGBT and not safeguard those who do identify as LGBT. Even shared bathroom accommodation should be lockable bathrooms and lockable bedrooms to protect everyone and allow everyone to be comfortable.

Q: How to advertise support for LGBT for schools as teachers don’t know who their LGBT community.

A: No specific way to get around this, but use the rainbow to help with advertising any specific events. Using rainbow on lanyards is seen as very positive as it highlights that the support is there from everyone, all year round.