

Sexual minority youth



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Counselors often work with a silent population of sexual minority students. Focusing on the different types of issues facing sexual minority students this article discusses issues from homophobia, isolation, abuse and alienation at school and also at home. The article also describes the process in which one school set up in a gay, lesbian, and bisexual group counseling method for its students. The article I chose was titled “ Group Counseling for Sexual Minority Youth” and was authored by Lynne E. Muller and Joyce Hartman.

This article was found in Professional School Counseling I. The article begins by mentioning that counselors often work with a silent population of sexual minority students. Because of the silence, counselors often assume that every student that every student is homosexual. The article then reviews the different types of issues facing sexual minority students and using a high school in Maryland, sets up a gay, lesbian, and bisexual group counseling method. The article mentioned several counseling issues.

Homophobia, or fear and hatred for homosexuals exist in the schools, which often results in the verbal and physical abuse of students. Out of this abuse comes isolation where students are alienated and withdrawn from their school peers. Identity issues then arise because students need to be accepted and have interaction with their peers to complete identity formation. Homosexual students also face alienation from their family by disownment, rejection, or mistreatment from their parents.

With so many problems from school and home, homosexual youths turn to drugs to cope with their rejection and eventually many commit suicide. From this point, the article explained how a group counseling session was created in a Maryland high school. The arrangement was done in a systematic order.

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They identified the members. Counselors had to advertise the group, choose leadership within the group (two heterosexual female counselors), goals were set into place and then each session was designed for a specific purpose.

For example, session one is cohesion building. In this stage goals were identified and discussed. Then the members were each given slips of paper and were to write words that a friend would describe them. The members then formed the slips of paper into a chain to symbolize unity amongst each other. Other stages included discussion of parents, the coming out process, how they perceived others to think of them, values clarification and a host of others. Each stage had different tasks that were to help the students build trust and support for each other.

In all there were twenty-five sessions. Because this is such a strong issue, more education is needed to ensure that a group counseling session similar to this could be effective. Each counselor must be aware of limitations of their own beliefs towards this issue. If a counselor doesn't understand, then they cannot help the individual. This article was very helpful because as a counselor I am positive that I will face the same types of issues with some of my students. As individuals, sexual minority students may not feel comfortable in seeking out counseling.

For me as a future counselor, this is very important to me to know. If I am at a school where homophobia exists and it is detrimental to students physical and academic well-being, I may now have the knowledge to design a group counseling session that would be beneficial to the students. This article did an excellent job in explaining, in adequate detail, the steps and procedures

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for designing a group counseling session. This article was well-written and easy to read which made it enjoyable. From a counselor stand point I have learned a great deal from this article.