Supporting and nurturing LGBTQ+ student resilience: Allyship and action

June 24th, 2021
Academic Resilience Consortium Presentation
Katy Collins and Susan Marine
Intros and Wonderings:

Who are we? What do we want to know?
Plan for today:

- Susan and Katy will discuss:
  - How individual LGBTQ+ students navigate college, and what challenges face them
  - What we know from research about structural/institutional barriers to resilience, and
  - How LGBTQ+ programs and services aim to address them
  - Katy will also share details about the program she is launching at BU this year

- We’ll address the questions you raised along the way…
- And, we’ll engage you in sharing intentional practices you’ve observed and helped with in your institutions
Disclaimers & Definitions

* Being queer is not a monolithic identity
* Considering intersections of identity illuminates how students experience the world
* Resilience as self-acceptance, daring to dream, and liberation

Questions to consider:
* What existing conditions require the need for folks to be resilient?
* How do we eliminate those conditions?
* What conditions do we want to create?
The Trevor Project: National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2021

- 34,759 LGBTQ youth between the ages of 13–24 residing in the US
- Associated with lower rates of attempting suicide:
  - Respecting pronouns
  - Ability to change legal documents
  - Access to affirming spaces
- More than half reported that they had experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity in the past year.
  - Half of LGBTQ youth of color reported discrimination based on their race/ethnicity in the past year.
- Only 1 in 3 LGBTQ youth found their home to be LGBTQ-affirming.
Physical

- Cost of & accessibility to:
  - Gender-affirming healthcare (physical and mental)
  - Gender-affirming clothing

- Lack of:
  - Financial support—food and/or housing insecurity
  - Queer sexual health & pleasure education
    - Sexual Health Includes Pleasure
Institutional barriers to resilience for LGBTQ+ students

- *Genderism* (Bilodeau, 2007; Wilchins, 2011) pervades higher education
  - Overreliance on the gender/sex binary in practices and programs
- Lack of familiarity, knowledge and comfort with gender and sexual orientation diversity among decision-makers (Gen Xers)
- Mental and physical health impacts of COVID and Trump-era policies are significant (Hawke et al., 2021; Mosley & Hagan, 2020) and not yet attended to
- The fallacy of the idea that “the LGBTQ+ Center will do it” (only 120 institutions have LGBTQ+ centers; fewer than 50 more have designated LGBTQ+ program staff)
Institutional assets for building resilience

- Supportive environments include multiple, visible allies/accomplices (Singh et al, 2013)
- Access to fully inclusive health care (Reeves et al, 2021)
- Access to fully inclusive/gender expansive housing (Nicolazzo et al, 2018)
- Genderism-free (or genderism-reduced) environments (Nicolazzo, 2015)
- Intersectionality-informed and designed programs and personnel (Garvey et al, 2019)
- Engagement of queer students in shaping policies and programs (Stewart et al, 2015)
Examples of model programs: academic resilience and LGBTQ+ students

- The power of naming: the Center for LGBTQIA+ student success
- UC Davis’s study abroad resource site
- University of New Mexico’s queer course guide
- University of Denver’s trans on campus guide
- Wash U’s Destination Q retreat
- Teaching beyond the binary at Vanderbilt
- LGBTQ+ mentor program at Penn State
- LGBTQ+ specific scholarships at Penn State
Identity-Conscious Affinity Spaces at BU

- Protective factors to support queer youths’ resilience
  - Social support
    - Connect with other students who share social identities
  - Role models
    - Connect with faculty & staff as mentors
  - Supportive environment
    - Social programming within and across affinity groups
  - Coping strategies
    - Educational programming around leadership skills, resources, and identity development
Identity-Conscious Affinity Spaces at BU

● Points of interest:
  ○ No physical centers
  ○ Student input for creation of groups & also implementation of programming

● Centers of queer interest:
  ○ APIDA (Asian, Pacific Islander & Desi American) & LGBTQIA+
  ○ Black & LGBTQIA+
  ○ Children of LGBTQIA+ parents
  ○ LGBTQIA+ with disabilities
  ○ Trans/non-binary/genderfluid
Group dialogue: Intentional practices at your institutions
What is our responsibility? Next action steps

1. Talk with, and really listen to, LGBTQ+ students about their experiences on your campus. Make sure you offer a variety of methods for folks to share their opinion. Be cognizant of how your identity may impact whether or not someone feels comfortable sharing with you.

2. Compose a committee to conduct a formalized audit of LGBTQ+ student life

3. 

4.


