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2014

LGBTQ2 WELL-BEING EDUCATION

“OUR JOURNEY”

LGBTQ COMING OUT/IN PROCESS & IDENTITY FORMATION

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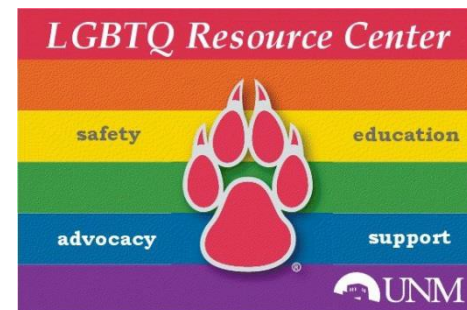
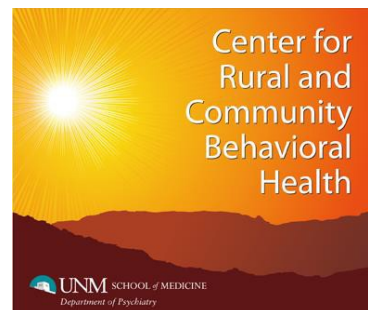
Beverly Gorman, MCSW/MBA, UNM CRCBH

LGBTQ2 WELL-BEING EDUCATION SERIES

- **Goal: to educate, inform, empower, and engage providers about the well-being of Native LGBTQ2 community**

LGBTQ2 WELL-BEING VOLUNTEER EDUCATORS

- Alma Rosa Silva-Bañuelos, Director, UNM LGBTQ Resource Center
- Adrien Lawyer, Director, Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico
- Avron Kriechman, MD, Assistant Professor, Child, Adolescent, & Family Psychiatrist, UNM CRCBH
- Beverly Gorman, Diné, MCSW/MBA, Researcher & Program Manager, UNM CRCBH
- Jason Jones, LISW, Five Sandoval Indian Pueblos Inc. Behavioral Health Counselor
- Nathaniel Sharon, MD, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Fellow, UNM Department of Psychiatry
- Chris Fore, PhD, Albuquerque IHS
- Harlan Pruden, First Nations Cree, Co-Founder North East Two Spirit Society
- Louva Hartwell, Diné, Director NativeOUT
- Terra Matthews-Hartwell, Tsimshian/Carrier, NativeOUT
- Alaina George, Tele-Health Coordinator, Albuquerque IHS

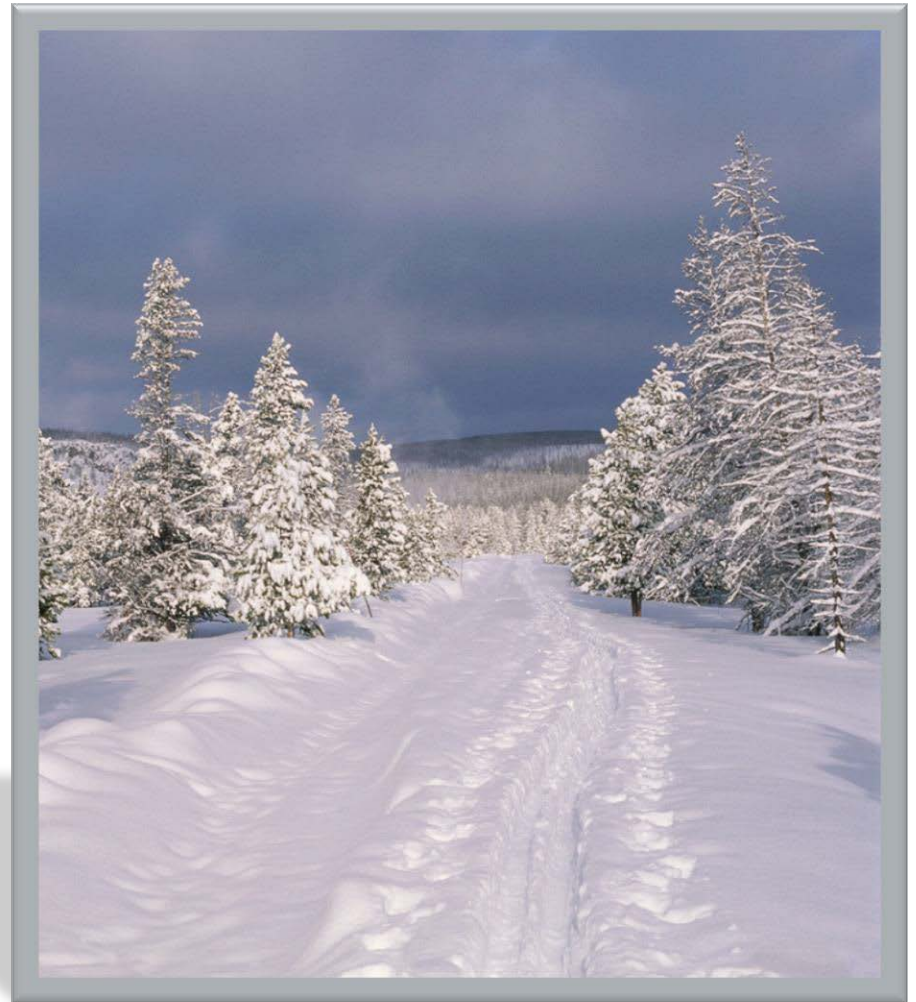


OBJECTIVES

- 1.** Define and interpret the "coming out/in" process based on literature, to integrate, utilize, and assist with LGBTQ2 community members.
- 2.** Identify, recognize, and understand the Two Spirit identity formation and the significance upon LGBTQ2 emotional and behavioral health.
- 3.** Identify, recognize, and understand the cultural perspectives of identity formation and "coming out/in" process of LGBTQ2 individuals.
- 4.** Define and interpret one "coming out" framework based on the literature by Vivian Cass, to integrate, and assist when working with the LGBTQ2 community.

“OUR JOURNEY”

- *Harlan Pruden*
- *Beverly Gorman*
- *Avi Kriechman*



HASTEEN KLAH & WEŪHA

“Within the Navajo culture, we are basically taught that – we accept people for who they are or by how they are presented to us, and we only judge them by the basis of what do they contribute to the human society....” – Wesley Thomas, PhD, Navajo/Diné Scholar, 2009



Hasteen Nish Glǎ/Hosteem Klah
(Diné/Navajo)



WeŪha (Zuni)

NATIVE AMERICAN IDENTITY “DIVERSITY”

- *I think in the LGBT community's fight for "equality," many non-native LGBT people have contextualized this battle within the construct of "equal to whom?" If the struggle is to be as close to the white male-dominated oppressive movement where money talks, and we are all "straight-acting'," and we want to get married, then that is a fight that I am not up for; that system has not been kind to my people for the past 515 years. But if we are fighting for a return of the old ways in which we celebrate diversity, and accept and honor everyone as an equal, then I am there.*



“COMING-IN”

- Background & history of the
 - Two-Spirit Society
 - **1990s “Two-Spirit” Movement**
 - **“Coming In: Native American Two Spirit People,”** Dr. Alexandria
 - Wilson,
 - Opaskwayak Cree Nation, College of
 - Education,
 - University of
 - Saskatchewan



- **“Coming In” Definition**
“A process by which Two Spirit individuals have formed empowered and resilient identities in response to and in the face of harmful government policies and colonial processes” (Wilson, 2007)

“COMING IN”

- “Affirming an Identity”:
 - Wilson’s study reviewed Aboriginal GLBT narratives about their experiences of identity development and formation (Wilson, 2007)
 - “Affirming an Identity” – is the last step or process in identity formation and/or development where one(s):
 - Family, community members, and others in the society acknowledge and embrace the person’s diversity
 - Rather than the person fitting their diverse identity into the western box – “female” or “male”; the person identifies by “who they are”
 - Is not “coming-out,” instead “coming-in”
 - “Unlike mainstream „coming-out“ stories, in which an LGBT person typically announces and asserts their individual right to be who they are, the narratives of these two-spirit people describe a process of „coming-in“ and affirming an interdependent identity”
 - “Coming – in is not a declaration or an announcement; it is simply presenting oneself and being fully present as an Aboriginal person who is GLBT.”

NATIVE PERSPECTIVE: IDENTITY FORMATION

- Traditionally – tribal people were identified by their roles

- Collective view
- Utilitarian defined
- Names were given after birth, often changed as a person aged or developed in their communities

- Traditional Roles in Tribal communities (Thomas, 2009) :

- Healers
- Herbalists
- Match makers
- Mediators or Negotiators
- Counselors
- Foster Parent(s)/Care-takers

- Today – due to colonialism, Christianity, western education, and historical trauma, tribal members are identified by their birth gender

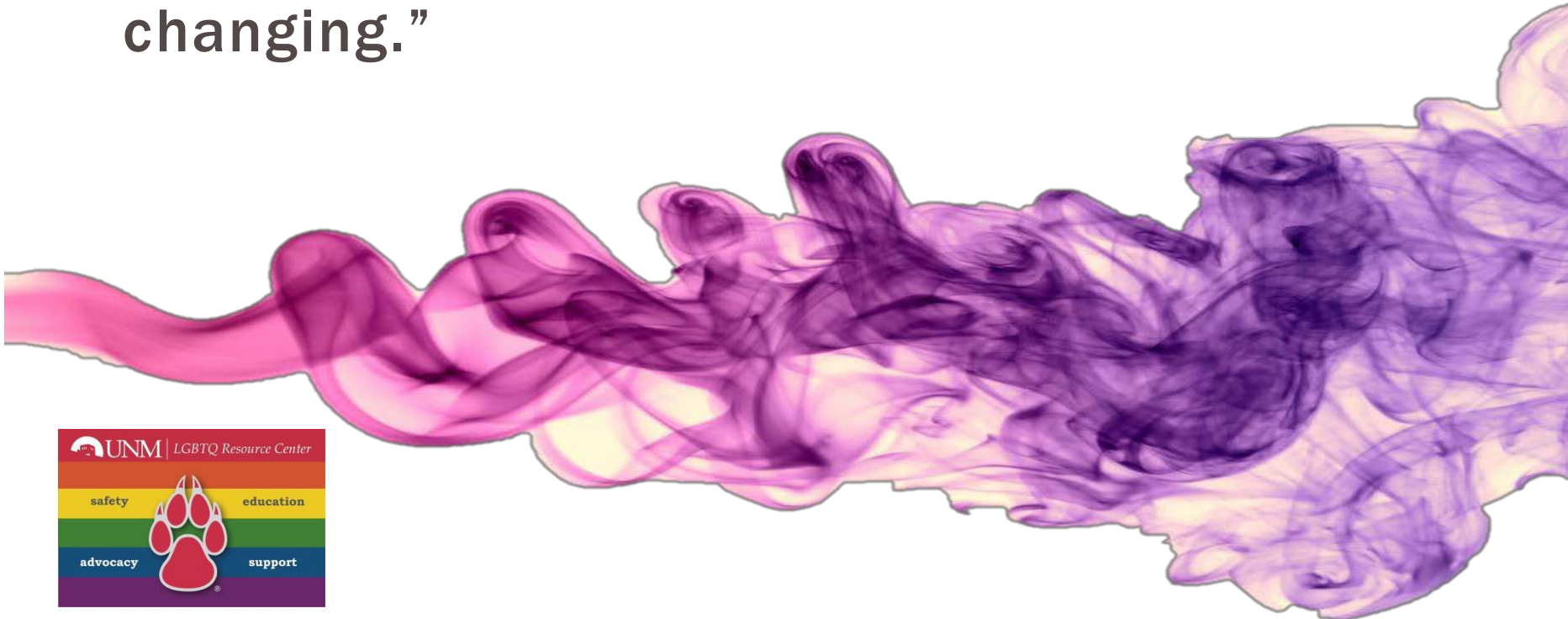
- Individualistic view
- Birth genders assignments at birth (gender genitalia defined)
- Gender is defined before birth and often names are given before birth

*“Reclaiming our Identities”
“Returning to our traditional values, teachings, and culture.”*

“Reclaiming Our Authority & Affirming an Identity – Two Spirit”

FLUID IDENTITY & ORIENTATION

- Individual identity, orientation, and coming in/out process isn't a one-time life event
- “Our identity is - spiritual, fluid, and ever changing.”



“COMING-OUT” DATA

- Lesbian, gay, and
 - bisexual (LGB)
 - individuals who have
 - not disclosed their
 - orientation experience
 - higher chronic stress
- Protective factors
 - Disclosure (to maybe one’s family and/or friends)

(Sexual Orientation & Disclosure in Relation to Psychiatric Symptoms, Juster, et al, 2013)

- In a national survey, ranked from most to least supportive, sources of social support for lesbian & gay males (LG), were indicated as follows:
 - LG friends
 - LG organization/groups
 - Hetro-friends
 - Co-workers
 - Siblings
 - Boss
 - Mother
 - Other relatives
 - Father
 - Mainstream churches

(Bryant & Demian, 1994)

“COMING-OUT” DATA

- **“Women and men are more likely to come out in the context of a relationship as opposed to an independent process of articulating and acting on sexual desire.”**
(McCarn & Fassinger, 1996)
- **Qualitative Coming-Out Narratives done with 65 Urban Native Americans in NM (Gorman, 2007)**
 - Although more than 50% indicated they were out to their parents, siblings, and extended family, qualitative narratives often expressed:
 - Still not feeling accepted
 - Parents are tolerant but hope they change
 - Often talked to mothers first about being LGBT2
 - Cultural beliefs was not significant in their coming out process, 30% of the participants indicated their cultural/traditional beliefs was significant in their coming-out process
- **Family Acceptance**
 - 43% maintained most of their family bonds, while 57% experienced significant family rejection
- **Employment Discriminatory Acts Towards Transgender Individuals**
 - Large majorities attempted to avoid discrimination by hiding their gender or gender transition

(A Report of National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 2011; surveyed 6,450 transgender and gender non-conforming study participants, in US)

“COMING OUT”

- **“Coming Out” Definition – the process of acknowledging one’s non-heterosexual orientation and integrating that awareness and understanding into one’s life. It also refers to disclosing one’s orientation or identity to others.**
(Safe & Caring Schools for Two Spirit Youth, 2011)
- **National Coming Out Day, October 11th**
- **“Reclaiming our Experiences” - recovering, restoring, and owning your own story instead of letting your experiences be defined by others**

THE BENEFITS OF COMING “OUT”

- Living an open and whole life.
- Developing closer, more genuine relationships.
- Building self-esteem from being known and loved for who we really are.
- Reducing the stress of hiding our identity.
- Connecting with others who are LGBT.
- Being part of a strong and vibrant community.
- Helping to dispel myths and stereotypes about who LGBT people are and what our lives are like.
- Becoming a role model for others.
- Making it easier for younger LGBT people who will follow in our footsteps.

SUPPORTING THE “COMING OUT” PROCESS

A person who has just had someone come out to them often feels:

- Surprised
- Honored
- Uncomfortable
- Scared
- Unsure how to react
- Supportive
- Disbelieving
- Relieved
- Curious
- Angry
- Anxious
- Unsure what to do next



“Give the person you’re telling the time they need. It may also be helpful to remember that the person you’re really doing this for is you.”

When you’re ready to tell someone, consider starting with the person most likely to be supportive. This might be a friend, relative or teacher.

Maybe you will tell this person that you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Maybe you will simply say that you have questions about your sexual orientation or gender identity.”

LGBTQ IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT & FORMATION MODELS

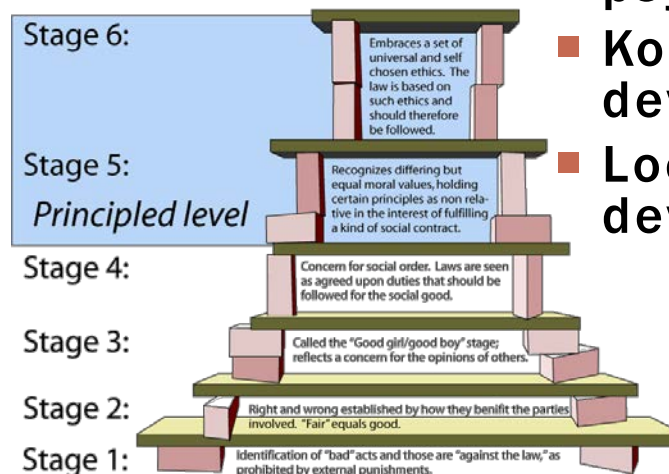
Stages of Psychosocial Development



Developmental Stage Model Theorists:

- Sigmund Freud – Psychosexual Stages
- Jean Piaget – Cognitive development
- Rudolf Steiner – Seven Year Phases
- Erik Erickson – Stages of psychosocial development
- Kohlberg – Stages of moral development
- Loevinger – Stages of ego development

Kohlberg's individual moral developmental stages (1976)



LGBTQ IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT & FORMATION MODELS

- **LGBTQ Identity Formation Researchers:**
 - **Cass 1979** - Six stage process based on “coming out” experiences in life
 - **Coleman 1982** – Five Stage model (*Pre-coming out, coming out, exploration, first relationships, integration*)
 - **Sophie 1985** – first known four stage lesbian identity theory (*first awareness, testing & exploration, identity acceptance, & identity integration*)
 - **Chapman & Brannock 1987** – Women specific, five stage conscious process by which lesbian attain a self label (*same-sex orientation, incongruence, self-questioning/exploration, identification, choice of lifestyle*)
 - **Troiden 1989** - Four stages that allow for options in social realities of disclosure (*Sensitization, Identity Confusion, Identity Assumption, Identity Commitment*)
 - **McCarn and Fassinger 1996** - Four phases that distinguish between two processes: individual identity development and minority group identity membership (*Awareness, exploration, deepening commitment, internalization/synthesis,*

LGBTQ IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT & FORMATION MODELS

- **Racial/Ethnic Identity Development Models:**
 - **Cross 1971** – Five stages of African American Conversions (Pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, & internalization-commitment)
 - **Atkinson, Morten, & Sue 1979** – five stage model that address four attitude areas of each of Cross stages (Conformity, dissonance, resistance & immersion, introspection, synergetic articulation & awareness)
 - **Morales 1989** – Identity Model for racial/ethnic GL addressing dual identities (denial of conflicts, bisexual vs. gay/lesbian, conflicts in allegiances, establishing priorities in allegiance, integrating various communities)
 - **Root, Reynolds, & Pope 1990,1991** – Four possible options for identity resolution for those individuals who come from multiple oppressed groups (Passive acceptance of societally assigned identifications with one aspect of self, conscious identification with one aspect of self, segmented identification with multi aspects of self, & intersecting identification with multi aspects of self)
 - **Janet Helms 1995** – Six stages of racial identity development, & of racial identification development (Contact, Disintegration, Reintegration, Psuedo-independence, Immersion/Emersion, & Autonomy)
 - **John & Joy Hoffman**- Stages of racial identity development with special attention to the different ways people of color and Caucasian people move through them (Conformity, Acceptance, Dissonance, Immersion, Resistance, Retreat, Emersion, Internalization, Emergence, & Integrative Awareness)

MODEL IMPLICATIONS

“... disclosure is so profoundly affected by environmental oppression that to use it as an index of identity development directly forces an individual to take responsibility for her own victimization.” (McCarn & Fassinger, 1996)

- **Developmental stage models do not fit into psycho-social, social, or ecological views/perspectives**
- **Not taking into account how culture, family, community, society, history, and spiritual environments influence identity formation and development**
- **Stigmatizes and not taking into account people of color who experience oppression & discrimination (in history & TODAY)**



IMPLICATIONS OF “COMING-OUT” MODELS

- While most researchers describe the
 - coming-out process in clear stages,
 - they also note that it is generally more fluid, with stops, starts, and
 - backtracking (Cass, 1979, 1984;
 - Troiden, 1979; Savin-Williams, 1990)
- If applying the models to adolescent and those who are early in adulthood, know that these years may be
 - characterized by increased sexual experimentation as well as by
 - confusion about identity (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1993; Ryan & Futterman, 1998; Savin-Williams, 1990)
- Adolescent same-sex experiences do
 - not automatically make them LGBT2
 - and not all who identify as LGBT2 have experienced sex (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1993; Ryan and Futterman, 1998; Savin-Williams,
- **“Coming-out” is different from Native American experiences of “coming-in”**
- **“Coming-out” is based on an psychological internal conflict; thus psychologically based**
 - Most of models focus on stage in which one practices defense strategies to block recognition of their sexual attraction to the same sex
 - Not all individuals have the feeling of being “stuck” or at a “stand still” or have the need to decide their sexual orientation in their identity development
- **Western approach**
- **Conducted with mostly Caucasian participants**
- **Linear, process-based, sequential oriented**
- **Small sample sizes**
- **Conducted mostly with gay men**
- **Often specific to adolescent & early adulthood**
- **Binary construct based on GENDER & SEXUALITY**

CASS MODEL

- **Vivienne Cass**
 - Australia
 - 1975 Master Degree in Psychology
 - 1986 PhD in Philosophy
 - 20 years experience, and expertise in human sexuality
- **Developed in 1979**
- **One of the first models used to “normalize” & “treat” LGBTQ individuals**
- **Six-Stage Model**
 - Identity Confusion
 - Identity Comparison
 - Identity Tolerance
 - Identity Acceptance
 - Identity Pride
 - Identity Synthesis



The CASS Model

Stage I: Identity Confusion

Occurs when a person begins to realize that he/she may relate to or identify as being gay or lesbian, a process of *personalizing the identity*.

- **Tasks:** Exploration and increasing awareness
- **Feelings:** Anxiety, confusion
- **Defenses:** Denial
- **Recovery:** Having a confidential support person

Stage II: Identity Comparison

(CASS Model continued)

Occurs when a person ***accepts the possibility the he/she might be gay or lesbian.***

- **Tasks:** Exploration of implications, encountering others like oneself
- **Feelings:** Anxiety, excitement
- **Defenses:** Bargaining and rationalizing
- **Recovery:** Meeting gays/ lesbians/ bisexuals/transgender persons in recovery

Stage III: Identity Tolerance

Occurs when a person comes to ***accept the probability that he/she is an LGBT person.***

- **Tasks:** Recognizing social and emotional needs as a gay man or lesbian
- **Feelings:** Anger, excitement
- **Defenses:** Reactivity
- **Recovery:** How to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender and stay sober

Stage IV: Identity Acceptance

Occurs when a person *fully accepts rather than tolerates himself or herself as an LGBT person.*

- **Tasks:**
 - Development of community and acculturation
- **Feelings:**
 - Rage and sadness
- **Defenses:**
 - Hostility towards straight culture
- **Recovery:**
 - Lesbian/gay/bisexual/ transgender recovering
 - community building

Stage V: Identity Pride

Occurs when the person *immerses himself or herself in the LGBT community and culture to live out identity totally*

- **Tasks:**
 - Full experience of being an LGBT person, confronting internalized homophobia
- **Feelings:**
 - Excitement and focused anger
- **Defenses:**
 - Arrogant pride and rejection of
 - straight culture as the norm
- **Recovery:**
 - Integrating sexuality, identity, and
 - recovery

Stage VI: Identity Synthesis

Occurs when a person develops ***a fully internalized and integrated LGBT identity and experiences himself or herself as whole when interacting with everyone across all environments.***

- **Tasks:** Coming out as fully as possible, intimate gay and lesbian relationship; self-actualization as a gay man, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender person
- **Feelings:** Excitement and happiness
- **Defenses:** Minimal
- **Recovery:** Maintenance (end stage)

RESOURCES

- A Resource Guide to Coming Out, 2013, Human Rights Campaign Foundation, <http://www.hrc.org/campaigns/coming-out-center>
- Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network (ATTC), <http://www.attcnetwork.org/>
- GLSEN, Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network <http://www.glsen.org>
- PFLAG (Parents/Friends/Families of Lesbians and Gays) <http://www.pflag.org>
- The Trevor Project www.thetrevorproject.org
- Stop Bullying.Gov www.stopbullying.gov
- UNM LGBTQ Resource Center <http://lgbtqrc.unm.edu/>
- New Mexico GLBT Resources <http://www.nmgblt.org/>
- Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico <http://www.tgrcnm.org/>

RESOURCES

- We R Native www.wernative.org
- Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board – We R Proud, Logos, Media, PSAs, etc.
http://www.npaihb.org/epicenter/project/prt_reports_publications_media_campaigns#STD/HIV_PowerPoint_Slides
- NativeOUT <http://nativeout.com>
- Native Stand <http://www.nativestand.com/>
- Two Spirit National Cultural Exchange Inc.
<http://www.twospiritnce.com/>

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