

SOGIE

sexual orientation, gender identity & gender expression

NEWS & RESOURCES



February 2021

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Community Corner

Community Corner is a place where you can share news about the work you are doing with young people with diverse SOGIE (sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression). To submit information about your program to be highlighted in this newsletter, please email theinstitute@ssw.umaryland.edu.

Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation Provides Virtual Support Group for LGBTQ+ Community in Pennsylvania

The Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation in Pittsburgh has launched AFFIRM, a virtual support group for LGBTQ+ youth designed to teach them how to love their true colors. "For me, [the term] 'affirm' is really important language because we need to move past 'acceptance,'" said Sarah Rosso, executive director of the Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation.

"'Affirm' is showing up wildly in support of people, affirming them for exactly as they are, who they are, across all of the intersections of their identities." The group series is for LGBTQ youth 14 to 21 years old. It features teaching methods of dealing with bias and discrimination. "It helps them build identity affirmation, to find support and connect with other peers," Rosso said. "It helps them develop resiliency and some positive coping strategies."



Each group of 12 will meet over zoom weekly for six weeks. "Youth all over Western Pennsylvania from any corner, town, or county can join us at any point," Rosso said. And if you do not have access to technology, the Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation will hook you up. "We have a technology lending library. We'll get young people tablets that have WiFi access so that there are no barriers for them to be able to participate," Rosso said.

AFFIRM is provided through [Affirmative Research](#). [Learn more](#)

Practical Tools

Intersex 101: A Beginner's Guide

Intersex is an umbrella term for differences in sex traits or reproductive anatomy. People are born with these differences or develop them at a young age.

Genitalia, hormones, internal anatomy, or chromosomes can develop in many ways.

The problem is, children's bodies are often changed for them because of shame and stigma. This includes surgeries to create a vagina, reduce a clitoris, move a urethra, or remove testes. Most surgeries happen before the age of 2. We've worked with many of the world's top human rights organizations, and all agree: Surgeries to change sex traits must be the individual's choice. That's why interACT uses innovative legal and other strategies to advocate for the human rights of children born with differences in their genitals, chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive anatomy. This two-page Intersex 101 guide was created by interACT as an introduction. [View here](#)



Intersex 101: Everything You Need to Know

Webinars/Virtual Events

Gender Dysphoria Diagnosis & Clinical Considerations for Children & Youth

March 8, 2021, 3:30-4:30 p.m. ET



This webinar is aimed at practitioners interested in building knowledge to serve transgender and gender diverse clients. The first part of the webinar will introduce Gender Dysphoria as the experience and as the DSM diagnosis with a focus on exploring both the benefits and limitations of the diagnostic criteria. We will discuss emerging literature on the experiences of gender dysphoria among trans and gender diverse adults, as well as the different manifestations of dysphoric feelings over time and across clients. Furthermore, attendees will learn about how gender dysphoria can negatively impact clients' psychological, interpersonal, and occupational functioning. Clinical strategies for supporting clients with gender dysphoria will be explored. Finally, the importance of gender affirming experiences will be discussed. One of the co-presenters will share his lived experiences of gender dysphoria and gender affirming interventions with particular attention to the implications for clinical practice. [Register here](#)

Free Continuing Education Course: Lifting LGBTQIA Voices of Color: Racism Among Gender and Sexual Minorities

This panel discussion covers the intersection of racial and gender/sexual discrimination and the real-world impact of multiple minority identities. The panel features Frank Sanchez, PhD, LMFT; Luna Malbroux, MS; and Jazzmun Nichcalala Crayton, with interviewer Elizabeth Irias, MS, LMFT. [Register here](#)



Articles/Research

Black History Month: 16 Queer Black Pioneers Who Made History

From 1960s civil rights activist Bayard Rustin to Chicago's first black female and lesbian mayor, Lori Lightfoot, black LGBTQ+ Americans have long



made history with innumerable contributions to politics, art, medicine, and a host of other fields. "As long as there have been black people, there have been black LGBTQ+ and same-gender-loving people," David J. Johns, executive director of the National Black Justice Coalition, told NBC News. "Racism combined with the forces of stigma, phobia, discrimination, and bias associated with

gender and sexuality have too often erased the contributions of members of our community." [Read more](#)

Applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to LGBTQ+ Foster Youth: Practice Implications for Child Welfare Professionals in Rural Settings

Providing safe and stable placements is a primary focus of the child welfare system in the United States. There are often challenges with finding successful placements for foster youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender for reasons related to lack of appropriate placements and resource availability and accessibility. For LGBTQ+ foster youth residing in rural placements, these issues could be especially true and pose additional hardships. The purpose of this article is to provide child welfare practitioners a framework to assist in the service of LGBTQ+ foster youth and considers implications for rural placements. Challenges associated with LGBTQ+ foster youth are highlighted, followed by suggestions for future research, policy, and practice approaches to increase successful outcomes for these youth. [Learn more](#)



Trans Youth Face Unique Difficulties While Dating, Reveals First-of-its-Kind Study



Ask any transgender person with a romantic or sexual history — or lack thereof — and they'll likely have endless tales with which to regale you. Being a trans youth only adds additional layers of complexity to these encounters, and a first-of-its-kind study from the University of Michigan explores some of those complications. Published by four pediatric researchers, the report examines what it's like to date before and during medical transition, the role that transphobia plays in trans

kids' approach to dating, and the prevalence of partner abuse.

Published in the most recent volume of the peer-reviewed journal *Pediatrics*, the study consists of interviews with 30 trans adolescents between the ages of 15 and 20; eight were transmasculine and 12 were transfeminine. When asked about their romantic relationships, participants reported that parents generally did not treat their dating lives differently from before they had transitioned. However, some stated that their parents expressed heightened concern for their children's safety and respect. [Read more](#)

Policy News

In a Historic First Week, President Biden Dramatically Improves the Lives of Millions of LGBTQ+ People

Beginning even before Day 1, President Joe Biden and his administration have made rapid, unprecedented progress toward advancing LGBTQ+ equality. From his historic appointments to a slate of executive actions advancing LGBTQ+ equality and racial equity, it was truly a historic

week for improving the day-to-day lives of the approximately 11 million LGBTQ+ adults and millions more LGBTQ+ youth. This article from the Human Rights Campaign details the historic first week in LGBTQ+ advances under the Biden administration. [Read more](#)



Aetna Expands Gender-Affirming Coverage for Transgender Women



Last month, the Transgender Legal Defense Fund (TLDEF), in partnership with civil rights law firm Cohen Milstein and Aetna, announced a significant expansion to the insurance carrier's medical coverage of transition-related care for transgender women. TLDEF and Cohen Milstein represented four transgender women to initiate contact with Aetna, including Nancy Menusan, Cora Brna, Allison Escolastico, and Elissa

Gaytan. The nation's third-largest health insurance carrier worked with TLDEF and Cohen Milstein to expand coverage of breast augmentation for transgender women. The expansion of gender-affirming coverage applies to most of Aetna's commercial plans held by its 22 million members.

According to a national study, more than half (55 percent) of transgender people who sought coverage for transition-related surgery in the past year were denied. This joint announcement with Aetna will play a vital role in TLDEF's legal advocacy to achieve comprehensive gender-affirming care for transgender people nationwide. "My hope is that being part of this groundbreaking collaboration helps other transgender and non-binary people have access to the health care we deserve," Menusan said. "By dropping exclusions for medically necessary care like top surgery, Aetna is setting an example for other health insurance providers, and I hope others will take note." [Learn more](#)

Lawmakers in 14 States Have Proposed Anti-LGBTQ+ Bills

Just weeks into 2021, lawmakers in at least 14 states have proposed a slew of bills that would restrict the freedoms of LGBTQ+ residents. Most of the bills would affect transgender young people, according to Freedom for All Americans, the LGBTQ+ advocacy group that tracks the proposals.

In Alabama, lawmakers proposed a bill that would ban physicians from prescribing medication to trans children that would affirm their gender. In Oklahoma, a proposed bill would lift a ban on conversion therapy and other practices that aim to suppress a minor's sexual orientation or gender identity. And in Montana, lawmakers in the state House have passed bills that restrict trans minors' access to health care and even school sports. "Even just the campaigns around the bills can be really stigmatizing and hurt kids, even if the bills don't ultimately pass," said Christy Mallory, legal director of UCLA Law's Williams Institute. "Just knowing that lawmakers are introducing these bills, people are seeing it and reading it, can signal to kids that maybe they're not supported by their states, that their government is not behind them." [Learn more](#)



Mississippi May Ban Trans People Under 21 From Receiving Health Care

In a potential first, Mississippi is attempting to prevent anyone from receiving transition-related health care if they are under the age of 21. That would restrict trans people from accessing potentially life-altering treatment, potentially longer than they are restricted from voting, consuming alcohol, or marriage.



State Sen. Angela Burks Hill (R) proposed what is called the Transgender 21 Act, which would “prohibit certain medical procedures from being performed upon a minor” and penalize anyone who tries to advocate for trans youth to seek health care related to their identity, even if it is non-surgical or non-hormonal.

Under the Transgender 21 Act, trans youth would not be able to seek gender-affirming care and medical professionals could be punished for even bringing up their gender identity without the consultation and express permission of a trans youth’s parents or guardians. It also would make it legally required for medical professionals to out trans youth if they try to receive treatment related to their gender identity, or face civil punishment. State employees also are barred from trying to protect the gender identities of trans youth. [Learn more](#)



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