



Oklahoma School Psychology Association: LGBTQ Position Statement

Introduction

The Oklahoma School Psychological Association (OSPA) supports the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) position that all students, family members, school staff have equal opportunity to participate in, benefit from, and seek educational and mental health services regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression (NASP, 2011). OSPA respects the right of an individual to express their gender identity and the right for the individual to modify gender expression when necessary to preserve that individual's wellbeing.

Additionally, OSPA supports the rights of an individual to explore and question their individual gender identity. OSPA also recognizes that identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) is not a disorder and that any effort to change one's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression is ineffective, harmful, and discriminatory (NASP 2014).

Creating Safe Educational Environments

OSPA believes that as school psychologists, we are ethically obligated to ensure that all students have an opportunity to develop their identity in an environment that is safe, accepting, and respectful of all persons, as well as being free from harassment, violence and abuse. To achieve this goal OSPA proposes that schools establish and enforce comprehensive nondiscrimination and anti-bullying policies that include LGBTQ issues including ; 1) procedures for educating students and staff about the range of normal human diversity, specifically LGBTQ students' needs, 2) policies that specifically outline direct intervention for perpetrators in the case of violence, harassment, or discrimination, 3) policies that outline intervention and support provided to students who have been targets of violence, harassment or discrimination, 4) policies that recognize individuals that identify as LGBTQ often face additional issues such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other factors that can add additional challenges in the school setting (NASP, 2011), and 5) policies that affirm the dignity and rights of individuals and families and that ensure physical and psychological safety within the educational environment.

Role of School Psychologists

The role of a School Psychologist in the educational setting is to foster a safe and supportive environment. School Psychologists are able to accomplish this by advocating for gender neutral spaces and safe zones, modeling acceptance and respect, providing staff training to increase awareness, responding to bullying, intimidation, and harassment perpetrated by students or staff, minimizing bias, and providing direct counseling services or referrals to qualified professionals with experiencing working with LBGTQ individuals. Ultimately, OSPA believes that School Psychologists must advocate for the civil rights of all students.

References

NASP (2011) *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Position Statement*. Retrieved from [Http://www.Nasponline.org](http://www.Nasponline.org)

NASP (2014) *Safe Schools for Transgender and Gender Diverse Students*. Retrieved from [Http://www.Nasponline.org](http://www.Nasponline.org)