GLSEN’s Safe Space Kit Intervention

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Goals & Objectives

Goals:
• To reduce homophobia among Washington Middle School (WMS) staff.
• To create a welcoming and supportive environment for LGBTQ WMS students.

Objectives:
• The first objective was for the Anti-Bullying team to increase school staff knowledge on LGBTQ issues and concerns via the implementation of the SSK presentation. This was completed by October 23, 2013 and measured through the use of a post-test survey.

• The second objective of the SSK presentation was for the Anti-Bullying Team to establish 75% of all WMS classrooms as safe spaces for LGBTQ WMS students. This is to be completed by November 13, 2013 and measured via the use of post intervention observation.
Washington Middle School & The Center
Implementation

**What:** The purpose of the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) SSK program was to raise awareness about LGBTQ student issues and encourage school staff to become allies of these vulnerable students, since research demonstrates that it is important for LGBTQ students to identify a supportive school staff member to be able improve their school climate and learning experience (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2011).

**When:** Wednesday, October 23, 2013 from 7:45 to 8:30 a.m.

**Where:** Washington Middle School’s library, located in Long Beach California.

**Who:** MSW students gave a presentation to 23 WMS educators, counselors, and school administrators.
Implementation

• **How:**

  **MSW students were in charge of:**
  - Reaching out to The Center of Long Beach and Washington Middle School to pitch the SSK intervention.
  - Developing a post-test measure survey, which was given at the end of the SSK presentation to measure outcomes and analyzing the results of this intervention.
  - Meeting with Kyle Bullock (Youth Program Manager from the center) to be trained on the SSK program and prepare for it.
  - Designing all of WMS’s student bulletin boards, co-facilitate the SSK presentation, and analyzed the results of this program by observing the number of posted ally posters at WMS two weeks after the training.
  - Maintaining solid communication with Kyle and WMS staff administrators to make sure this training was successful as well as keep track of the budget for this project.

**Others assisted with:**
- Kyle Bullock, provided training and supervision throughout the process of the SSK implementation. In addition, he provided resources and guidance to all MSW students to ensure the goals of the training were being met.
- WMS’s Principal and Assistant Principal along with other administration, helped in identifying the cause of LGBT bullying. In addition, they helped promote SSK to staff and allowed MSW students to discuss this training briefly to their educators during a monthly staff meeting.
Intervention Strategy

• Professional Development --> *Safe Space Kit*
• Presentation of the *Safe Space Kit* curriculum
• Tips on how to be an ally to LGBTQ youth
• What to do when a student comes out
• Responding to anti-LGBTQ language
• *Safe Space Kit* poster --> Create visible allies on campus --> Create a safer learning environment
• Information about starting a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) was also provided
• School personnel provided with local GSA contact
• Student bulletin boards designed to motivate students to not be a bystander
• Provide information about community resource
Relevance to Literature

• School personnel are compelled to maintain safe learning environment

• Lack adequate anti-bullying training (Hong, 2009; Kueny & Zirkel, 2012).

• Unsure or uncomfortable providing support to bullied LGBTQ students (Mishna, Pepler, & Weiner, 2006).

• *Safe Space Kit* was developed by Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network [GLSEN]

• Students with allies were half as likely to plan towards college enrollment vs. students without allies (GLSEN, 2009).

• Schools with GSA experience a decline in homophobic remarks (Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, & Russell, 2011).
Unexpected Barriers

- Street Sweeping
- Chris Wilson – Gay Straight Alliance Network
- Teachers/School Personnel walking in late to SSK training
Social Work Values/Empowerment

National Association of Social Workers’ Code of Ethics

- Service
- Social Justice
- Dignity & Worth of a Person/Empowerment
  - Importance of Human Relationships
  - Integrity
  - Competence
Evaluation Results

- There were 23 participants at the SSK training and 20 completed the evaluation form.
- Independent T-test was used and we found that teachers/school personnel who knew of LGBTQ students were significantly more likely to say they are comfortable in being an ally than those who do not, $t(14) = 4.53, p < .05$.

- All 20 participants found the training useful.
- 19 participants strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the SSK presentation
- 18 participants stated they are interested in another training.
Evaluation Results

• On the last question of the evaluation form we asked participants:
  
  “In what ways can Washington Middle School improve the safety for LGBTQ students? Please provide any thoughts and/or suggestions on this issue”.

• After analyzing and coding for common themes we found that:
  • 1. Washington Middle School staff want more training,
  • 2. Provide educators with information on resources for middle school students,
  • 3. Teach students about respect
Lessons Learned & Project Improvements

Working with Communities; Assessing Community Challenges; Involving Residents in Community Assessments and Change Efforts; Collaboration and Conflict in Planning and Implementing Community Projects

• Lessons Learned
  Flexibility

• Project Improvement
  Student centered intervention
  Work with parents to lessen resistance

Defining Project Goals, Objectives and Interventions

• Lessons Learned
  Anti-homophobia curriculum
Lessons Learned & Project Improvements

Creating and Completing an Action Plan
• Lessons Learned
  Consider all aspects of planning

Budgeting/Fundraising
• Lessons Learned
  Applying for in-kind/donations
• Project Improvement
  Use funds elsewhere

Designing Programs that Empower
• Lessons Learned
  Empowerment + Autonomy = Sustainability
Lessons Learned & Project Improvements

Multicultural Considerations in Community Practice
- Lessons Learned
  LGBTQ acronym

Ethical Dilemmas and Evaluation in Macro Practice
- Lessons Learned
  Conflict in Values
- Project Improvement
  Evaluations

Strategies for Community Intervention and Change
- Lessons Learned
  Community action change efforts
  Service provided change efforts
  Community change efforts
References

Take the Pledge!

I believe schools should be safe, supportive places for ALL students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

I PLEDGE TO:

✓ Not use anti-LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) language or slurs.
✓ Intervene, if I safely can, in situations where students are being harassed.
✓ Support efforts to make this, and every, school safe for all students.
✓ Encourage others to be allies.

BE AN ALLY.
BE THE CHANGE.