

TRANSGENDER: A CURRICULUM FOR INCLUSION

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A Project

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Abstract
of
TRANSGENDER: A CURRICULUM FOR INCLUSION
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There is a gap that currently exists in the basic diversity course for the Master of Social Work (MSW) at California State University Sacramento, in that transgender specific content is not equally included. This missing information creates a lack of awareness for all social work students in their education of a vulnerable population. Early inclusion of transgender content into graduate diversity courses is essential for building a foundation for cultural competence. A curriculum was constructed from a deep secondary meta analysis of existing information including, electronic and academic sources, historical data, books, film, and other relevant resources, including the researcher's personal involvement in the transgender community. This analysis helped to determine what was most relevant to include in an introductory transgender curriculum for social work students including; terminology, history, political struggles and the specific and cultural needs of transgender people. The curriculum is designed to invite social work students to examine their own biases toward gender variant people, as well as aid in building on their

repertoire of social work skills and strategies for practice within the context of human diversity.

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Date

DEDICATION

Of all the people in my life who have traveled this journey with me, I especially want to thank my partner, Katie, for her undying love and support. If it weren't for her, I would have never taken this step to return to school. When life became so full that I questioned my own sanity, Katie urged me on with the promise that time would pass quickly, but the feeling of accomplishment would last a lifetime. Katie stuck by me even when I was so distracted I hardly noticed she was there. With great thanks I dedicate this project to my partner, my rock, my better half, and one hell of a social worker.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In social work courses, the typical diversity class does not adequately address the subject of transgender studies. Without this knowledge, it becomes more difficult to adhere to the ethical principles held by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) to understand culture and its function in human behavior. How can a social worker act to expand choice and opportunity for a vulnerable population if there is little to no information presented about the issues associated with such populations? Social work courses are the gateway to social work practice. It is unreasonable to expect that every aspect of life where social work will touch could be covered within standard Bachelor of Social Work or Master of Social Work (MSW) coursework. However, with the world's ever-changing times there is a call to incorporate a more inclusive social work curriculum that will reach out and give structure to diversity courses so that they address current issues of vulnerable populations. With the advent of the second wave of the women's movement, numerous voices within social work academia called for the inclusion of gender content in the curriculum (McPhail, 2008).

In an earlier work, McPhail (as cited in McPhail, 2008) criticizes the traditional use of gender and its implied inclusion of only women. She goes on to discuss the new realization that men are seen as also having gender and given that, there is an increased attention to men in diverse disciplines. However, with emerging literature in transgender studies there is a need for more complex understandings and models of gender because of the lived experience of gender-variant persons as well as postmodern theoretical concepts

(McPhail). How can we be expected to serve today's clients unless we have an awareness of today's issues? Brown (as cited in McPhail) gives an acutely poignant definition of awareness. "Awareness is knowing that something exists, how we're impacted by it, and who benefits from it" (p 44).

As a social work student attending a graduate level diversity class, I was surprised at the lack of culturally diverse material covered by the class. While it may be an unreasonable expectation that everything related to diversity can be presented or lectured on, I would have personally liked to have engaged in discussions about the variety of diverse and at-risk populations and the multi-level complexities underlying human diversity. Instead, it seemed that when talking about diverse populations, lectures focused more on the most popular topics of race, ethnicity and class than anything else. Fortunately, outside assignments gave me the opportunity to delve into learning experiences that expanded my knowledge and competence about the transgender population. As I look back, I would have welcomed learning more about multiple cultures and populations in an attempt to further my cultural awareness in all areas of diversity. With the lack of knowledge about transgender people being included in standard social work diversity college courses, it sparked my interest to develop a component of the diversity course that will address the diverse transgender population.

Background of Problem

Without knowledge of diverse cultures or populations, it becomes more difficult to adhere to the ethical principles held by the NASW and to understand culture and its function in human behavior. How can a social worker act to expand choice and

opportunity for a vulnerable population if there is little to no information presented to them during their formative education about the cultures associated with such populations? In looking at diverse cultures, social work students also start to become aware of their own biases in relation to these diverse groups so that they are better able to objectify their response when they are presented with the opportunity to provide service.

To honor diversity and populations-at-risk, social workers need to build on their repertoire of social work skills and strategies for social work practice within the context of human diversity. The NASW holds that we should have a knowledge base of our clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures (NASW, 2008). Social workers may play different roles in the lives of transgender clients. They may be case managers for transgender youth in child welfare or youth services. They may serve as therapists assisting transgender people who seek to find meaning in his/her "diverse" lifestyle or who wants to pursue sex reassignment surgery. They might serve families of transgender people who seek to respond affirmatively to their transitioning loved one. School social workers can create safe places for transgender youth, and medical social workers could help sex reassignment surgery patients navigate the psychosocial aspect of their transition. At a broader level, social workers join political advocacy efforts to ensure the rights of the transgender community (Burdge, 2007).

As social workers we are put in a position not only to serve, but also to educate those we work with and for. By knowing and adhering to the ethical principles of the NASW, social workers are in a better position to advocate for vulnerable populations. In

order to advocate for vulnerable populations, social workers must have an understanding of the challenges these populations face. The challenges that gender variant individuals face have been marked by a long history of hate, fear, oppression, misunderstanding and inequality. Every aspect of social work will, in some way, touch the lives of people who suffer from one or more of these challenges. Femke and Conway (2007) indicate that although there is not any real data to estimate the number of transgender people in the United States (since the census doesn't count this population), there are between .25 and 1 percent of the US population who are transsexual. This does not account for the full range of the transgender population since those who have not had sex reassignment surgery are not well represented (Human Rights Campaign, n.d.). The importance of awareness is invaluable. Theoretically, many of the challenges transgender individuals face could be prevented by the education of those outside the transgender culture. People tend to react negatively to things they do not understand. The only way barriers can be broken down is through knowledge.

While some strides have been made in protecting transgender rights, there is still progress to be made. How do people come to change their minds? How do they learn to believe in equality, and see that gender expression is normal? How do people come to understand that sometimes biology is not in alignment with emotional and internal construct, thus creating a conflicting scenario that can move others to take offense, become fearful and harm individuals based on conflict? I believe that one key to convergence is knowledge.

As social workers, we cannot be ignorant to the diversity around us. We are responsible for knowing, or at least being aware of, the populations we are expected to interact with and help. We cannot fail to understand how important every individual is with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation and gender.

Statement of Research Problem

Currently, MSW diversity courses fail to adequately provide transgender specific content. Without the inclusion of transgender-specific education, social workers are less prepared for and less competent in their abilities to serve the transgender community. To uphold the ethical standards, as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics, as to cultural competence and social diversity; to empower, advocate for, and understand how being transgendered impacts human life; and to accept that self-definition equals self-determination, social workers need to understand what it means to be transgendered (NASW, 2008).

Purpose of Study

Without adequate inclusion as to the transgender population, there is a gap that is currently missing from the basic diversity course taught at the MSW level. This missing information creates a lack of awareness for all social work students in their education about a vulnerable population.

In order for a social worker to begin work in becoming culturally competent with transgender people, there needs to be an early inclusion of transgender education. Early information is sufficient in creating awareness as long as it contains the following: a) definitions describing transgender terminology; b) history that describes how we have

become aware of transgender people and in what ways transgender people have been among us, even before we had words to describe their identity; c) the political struggles transgender people have had to endure in history and that still persist today; and d) the implications knowledge of the transgender population has for social work practice. The logical means by which this information can be incorporated into social work course work is by supplementing the usual diversity course of instruction with a component that specifically educates students about the topic of transgender. The information imparted will prepare students to better serve the transgender population and community.

Once social work students have this knowledge regarding the human diversity of the transgender population, it is hopeful that they will then have more tools to become competent in the provision of services that are sensitive to issues of transgender clients' cultures and the differences among individuals and cultural groups. By initiating awareness, a social work student's bias can also become recognizable. It is imperative that biases be identified and even more beneficial if they are identified early on. This allows for an objective response when presented with the opportunity to serve such individuals or groups. While class instruction is not a guarantee that biases can be laid aside and the information presented can prevent biased treatment, it will guarantee that students have been exposed to certain information and put them in a place of choice in preparation for working with diverse populations.

Theoretical Framework

In considering what theories best fit the transgender population and how this group fits into the mainstream population, the researcher considered C.H. Cooley's

Looking-Glass Self (as cited in Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983) as relevant. Although this theory serves to help define self-concept in the majority, when someone who does not fit into a mold that the majority has shaped and calls “normal,” then that someone develops a self-concept formed through relationships of the responses and evaluations of others in the environment. The Looking-Glass Self also emphasizes groups and significant others as mirrors that reflect the images of self (Gecas & Schwalbe).

The view of self-concept is also seen as the idea of self-evaluation based on the power of the self to produce the desired effect. When individuals who identify with a gender not consistent with their biologically-born gender try to become one with their internal feelings associated with their identified gender, they may or may not be accepted by others. They may or may not be “read” by those in their environment as their perceived gender. Turner (as cited in Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983) also argues that

...the sense of self is not discovered in quiet reflection, but in the course of vigorous effort, especially when the group brings the individual into rivalry with other persons...The sense of self arises in connection with active striving in the face of obstacles (p. 78).

So, as the transgender person attempts to act on his/her identified gender, those around the person may challenge him/her and in this challenge may serve to strengthen the transgender person’s self-concept. In contrast, when those whose identified and biologically-born gender are congruent become aware of others who may challenge what they perceive to be a “normal” gender expression, the rivalry in being “gender normal” may strengthen their sense of self-concept as well.

Efficacious action as a basis for self-esteem is different in principle from esteem that is based upon the opinions of others. Franks and Marolla (as cited in Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983) label two types of self-esteem. Inner self-esteem is derived from the experience of self as an active agent in making things happen. Outer self-esteem is bestowed by others, and meaning comes from approval or acceptance of the others (p. 80). Transgender persons may feel complete “being” their identified gender, whether they are transsexual or an occasional cross dresser. Their inner sense of self is developed as they accept who they are, and dress and play the part. For the most part, they are comfortable being who they are. Their outward sense of self may not necessarily be as intact, depending on the approval or acceptance of others. This is one reason many transgender people seek the comfort of groups who are known to welcome gender variant individuals. In this environment, both the inner and outer self-esteem can remain intact.

Efficacy-based self-esteem depends on an individual’s opportunity to engage in efficacious activities. Social constructs enable and constrain an individual’s opportunities to engage in efficacious actions. The availability of resources and ideological belief systems may affect the formation of efficacy-based self-esteem by influencing perceptions and evaluations. Actions give meaning, and the meaning individuals attach to their actions end up influencing and being influenced by social constructs (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983).

This interaction between the transgender person and those who are not transgender is like a dance. We all act on what we perceive and then react to our own actions. Our self-esteem is paramount to how we maneuver in our world. When non-

transgender people are affected by the actions and/or beliefs of a transgender person, their beliefs about how they perceive their environment can become disrupted, causing conflict not only with the person seen as “not normal,” but also within those who perceive themselves as “normal.” This disruption in the homeostasis of what is perceived as “normal” can become a mirror for that person, eliciting a range of emotions. These emotions cause tension and tension can create action.

In understanding how differences can cause a myriad of feelings and actions, social workers can prepare by becoming familiar with diverse groups and their effect on society. They can also use this information to check their own sense of identity in preparation for working with diverse groups. By understanding the Looking-Glass Self theory and how the sense of self can be a mirror for how we see others, social workers stand a better chance of becoming culturally aware in preparing a way to balance their inner and outer self-esteem. In doing so, the social worker can promote efficacy in others and diminish the likelihood of disproportionate treatment.

Definitions

Gender: a set of cultural norms whereby humans identify as “men” and “women,” or “transgender.” Gender refers to that which a society deems masculine or feminine (Reicherzer, 2005).

Transgender: any kind of dress and/or behavior interpreted as “transgressing” gender roles (Elkins & King, 1997).

Crossdresser: a person with a passion for wearing the clothes of the opposite sex, although not necessarily with a desire to “become” the other sex (Tewksbury & Gagne, 1996).

Transsexual: a person who self-identifies as a member of one sex while possessing the anatomy of the opposite sex. These include male to female (MTF) and female to male (FTM) individuals. The terms FTM and MTF are gender identifiers of the transsexual person (Tewksbury & Gagne, 1996).

Drag queens and drag kings: biological males and females who present part-time as members of the other sex primarily to perform or entertain (Serene, 2002).

Gender queer: individuals who do not want to get boxed into either sexual orientation or gender identity. Sometimes they want hormones and no surgery. Sometimes they want surgery and no hormones. Sometimes they do not want either (Kim, 2005).

Intersexual: formerly known as hermaphrodites, are people who have ambiguous reproductive structures, leaving them neither completely male nor completely female (Kim, 2005).

Assumptions

Transgenderism is as normal as gender itself. Someone who identifies as transgender can lie anywhere within the spectrum of gender identity, somewhere between absolute “male” and absolute “female.” Transgender also lies somewhere within the multifaceted spectrum of human diversity. Transgender people have always been among us and they will continue to be a part of the diverse cultural spectrum of humanity.

Though the typical college diversity courses do cover the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) populations and try to tease out the major issues confronting individuals of these groups, the transgender group is less likely to get equal air time. The researcher suspects that one reason might be that instructors are not always knowledgeable about the GLBT culture as a whole. Another strong reason could be that although the transgender group looks to be included with gay, lesbian and bisexual groups based on the acronym GLBT, their issues are more about gender rather than sexual orientation and this is a distinct difference that brings up separate issues. A message posted on a transgender Yahoo Discussion Group recently raised the question that points out the dilemma;

...they say being transgendered doesn't mean you are gay and visa versa so why are we always categorized with them? I mean being gay is an orientation issue, a [sexual] preference. Being transgendered is an identity issue so they are nowhere near the same (Anonymous, 2009d).

While some transgender people may also be gay, lesbian or bisexual, the fact remains that there is confusion on all fronts because prejudice against gay people and transgender people has the same origin. Gay people are discriminated against precisely because they are perceived to be violating gender norms. Transgender people also transgress gender norms, but with a twist, a twist society cannot quite wrap its mind around.

Historically, laws prohibiting discrimination were based on race or ethnic origin. The feminist movement has added sex, and the rising gay and lesbian movement has

added sexual orientation. Now the transgender people are campaigning successfully to add transgender to the list of categories (Bullough, 2000). Transgenderism, as it is now defined, includes a significant part of the population, including many who can be classified as gay and lesbian. Some transgender people have gone public, some seek acceptance through various clubs and organizations, and thousands have never admitted to anyone that they have transgender characteristics. This last group is impossible to research, but as more individuals “come out” in public, the stigma associated with being transgender lessens. The more we learn about the transgender community, the more we will understand gender differences and similarities, and what makes us all human (Bullough).

Justifications

The obvious inclusion of transgender study within graduate level diversity course work will greatly enhance students’ ability to competently recognize their ability to serve the transgender population. The transgender curriculum is designed to educate students about a vulnerable population, with regard to terminology, history, political struggles and specific and cultural needs. The education will also help social work students to become aware of their own biases toward gender variant people, thus preparing them for future interactions with transgender issues.

Social workers will be called in many capacities to serve transgender people. Whether a social worker is involved in child welfare, schools, therapeutic services, the medical field, or in some kind of civil or organizational advocacy, there is going to be a time when a transgender person’s life will be impacted by this kind of work. It is the

social worker's duty to be prepared to meet the transgender person or someone whose life is being touched by a transgender person.

To fully serve the transgender person, social workers must learn to appreciate ambiguous terminology along with ambiguous genders. They must accept that self-definition is a matter of self-determination, which is a basic value of NASW. In therapy, the social worker can treat an individual by giving accurate information as to gender, hormones and sex-reassignment surgery. This can promote the offering of transgender identity as a viable option for gender-variant clients. In advocating for transgender rights, social workers can challenge gender stereotyping. In the broadest sense, social workers can educate the public and interject the language of diversity and inclusivity in all levels of communication (Burdge, 2007). Becoming a social worker is more than just wanting to help people. A social worker is someone who must find and engage in further edification beyond the traditional scope of education taught in many universities. Social workers can ensure that their practice with transgender people is life affirming, but only if they prepare themselves with knowledge and awareness. Only in preparing can true social work be carried out.

As stated in the NASW Code of Ethics, a social worker has an obligation to practice ethical responsibility toward clients. As part of practicing ethical responsibility, social workers must also serve clients with cultural competence and with an awareness of social diversity.

Cultural competence and social diversity as indicated in section 1.05 of the Code of Ethics further explains:

1. We must first understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures;
2. We should have a knowledge base of our clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups; and
3. Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, an mental or physical disability (NASW, 2008).

While sub-sections (1) and (2) seem to cover just about everyone, sub-section (3) fails to mention diversity or oppression with regard to gender. It is the goal of this project to prepare future social workers to look beyond the literal words written in the Code of Ethics, and embrace the more inclusive spirit of the meaning of cultural competence.

Limitations

The information presented in this curriculum is limited in and of itself. It is an introduction of much more information that is available beyond college course work on the transgender population. This curriculum is designed as a supplemental component to an already prescribed diversity course being taught at the MSW level. In developing this project, the researcher scoured many articles, research studies, books, public transgender websites, and personal communications from individuals within the transgender community, conducting a meta-analysis of this information in order to determine what was most relevant to include in an introductory transgender curriculum.

It is hypothesized that the information contained within this curriculum will offer genuine enrichment and awareness to students who receive such instruction. However, this study will not include actual dissemination of the information in the curriculum. Given the lack of transgender content received in the researcher's diversity class, the information contained within this curriculum is designed to fill a void in students' knowledge and awareness of the transgender population, empowering social work students to better serve this vulnerable group.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In this literature review the researcher will talk about what it means to be “transgender.” First, the researcher will explore what gender is and how this knowledge is important in the understanding of gender variance. This literature review will take into account the Diagnostic Statistical Manual IV (DSM IV) diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder and how it is used as a psychiatric diagnosis when a person’s gender identity is incongruent with their biologically-born gender. Transvestite, Transsexual, Cross Dresser, Female to Male (FTM), Male to Female (MTF), Intersex, Drag Queen and Drag King are all considered different parts of the transgender culture. The researcher will give perspectives from historical as well as current authorities within and outside of the social services fields. Included in this history are accounts of how transgender characteristics have been integrated into fashion and entertainment in such a way that we have become accustomed to some forms of dress and behavior being accepted as somewhat “normal.” The political struggles of transgender people have become entwined in the gay, lesbian and bisexual movement as all are minority groups who have fought to be accepted and enjoy the rights to which all members of society are entitled. Yet, despite their co-existence with other oppressed groups, the transgender population is still fighting to earn their right to work and live without discrimination under the law. Since transgender is an umbrella term that encompasses numerous other terms used to describe gender variant individuals, lives and social constructs, the researcher will expand on these terms to give

readers a good look at how diverse this term “transgender” really is. In order for any person to become culturally competent, one has to know about the culture one wants to become competent about. Competence is not easily attained, and maybe it can never be fully achieved. However, awareness is the first step in reaching this goal.

This literature review is meant to educate and set the stage for the further learning of social work students. It is only through education and a continued openness to ongoing learning that social work students can prepare themselves to engage in activities designed to meet the needs of society. Without some knowledge base of the transgender population, a social worker is at a disadvantage in advocating for this diverse group. The information contained within this literature review will set a foundation on which any social work student can build in order to become culturally aware and recognize the strengths of a person who is transgender. In doing this, a social worker will be better able to practice ethical responsibility for transgender and other diverse populations.

This chapter provides a historical time line that shows that transgender individuals or gender variant people have always been part of our culture. Since we didn't have a terminology and because there was actually a time where it was less important to label people, the transgender person could walk among the “regular folk” and hardly be noticed. Clothing styles for both men and women have changed over time. In 1850 Amelia Jenks Bloomer invented a costume for women. This was essentially a pair of very baggy trousers that would enable women to abandon the cumbersome dresses that flowed to the ground and restricted their movement. In the nineteenth century “bloomerism” was seen as proof of women's desire to become men, though bloomers made it possible for women

engage in activities such as riding a bicycle. “Bloomers” were regarded as turning women into men and were ridiculed, along with the women who wore them. The meaning of cross-dressing also changes depending on historical or cultural context, as well as social class. For example, working women have been historically freer to dress and behave in masculine fashion. In post-Revolutionary France, images of women in military dress, often engaging in behavior such as smoking a pipe and carrying muskets, served as inspirational motifs in pop culture. Beginning in the seventeenth century female actors were often seen playing roles typically played by males. Marlene Dietrich was famous for her male dress. Both she and Madonna became sexual icons, often donning male attire (Scott-Dixon, 2006).

Outside of accepting that women will and do wear male attire, we’ve grown accustomed to accepting some other forms of gender variant behaviors, but usually only when it has entertainment value. But, in some areas society is still unable to neutralize gender non-conforming behaviors as acceptable and normal. The idea of non-conforming or gender-crossing behaviors is scattered among cultures from the Samoan Fa’afafine to the two-spirit of the Native American Indians. I will discuss other societies who have embraced the idea of gender variant individuals within their own culture and how each society normalizes what our society still struggles with.

This chapter will educate the reader about the political struggles the transgender culture has endured from the first person to have sexual reassignment surgery to the 2009 Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which was just recently signed into law. It would be negligent to omit some political struggles gays and lesbians have

endured for it was they who the transgender people fought with and advocated beside until the 1990s when “T” was added to GLB. A hundred years ago the only people labeled as homosexual or lesbian were those who exhibited transgender characteristics. Because there was no terminology to describe masculine men who had sex with other men and feminine women who had sex with other women, the drive to accept gay and lesbian people as “normal,” contributed to the marginalization of transgender people (Currah & Minter, 2000). Discrimination takes on many shapes depending on what state we are talking about. The researcher includes some of the more recent relevant laws as well as historical political markers. Currah and Minter also explain that just like discrimination against transgender people, discrimination against GLB people is rooted in sexism and gender stereotyping. Men and women who are perceived to deviate from traditional gender expectations are routinely stigmatized as gay or lesbian regardless of their actual sexual orientation. Since gender is the foundation of the “T” in GLBT, the researcher will also try to separate those political stances based on sexual orientation discrimination verses those based on gender discrimination.

Gender, Sex and Sexuality are Different

Gender. Kessler and McKenna (2004) argue that by the mid-’70s people in and out of academia were beginning to accept that roles, appearance and characteristics (what they called “gender”) were socially defined and culturally varied. However, biological features (what they called” sex”) were considered to be a given in nature. They argued that the biological is as much a construction as is the social. They posed that every concrete decision made as to whether someone is a male or female is based on “gender

attribution.” Virtually all of the time, gender attribution is made without direct knowledge of the genitals or any other biological “sex marker.”

The first thing that strikes you about Sally is her eyes. Bright blue, they’re the kind that inspires songs. The next thing you notice is how she moves. Sally is poised the way dancers are, the result of taking movement classes with a runway model. She inspires courtliness from those around her, including the waiter who helps her into her chair. By the time you notice her muscular build and she tells you she was born in a male body and lives about half the time as a man, it’s too late. You already think of this 45-year-old as a woman (Kim, 2005, p. 1).

This narrative exemplifies a typical gender attribution scenario. On the other end of the spectrum is when a gender attribution is imposed on someone, but it is in direct conflict with that person’s identified gender. An example would be a woman who identifies strictly as a female, but who prefers to dress in masculine attire, wears her hair cut close to her head and considers herself “butch.” This woman could easily be mistaken as a male, but this is in direct conflict with her identified gender as female.

In another case of gender attribution, Ludovic, the gender challenged child in the movie *Ma Vie en Rose* (Scotta & Berliner, 1997), was initially seen by his family as a cute and playful boy with a penchant for “dressing up” in girls’ clothes. His mother and father made a concrete decision as to Ludovic’s gender. Only when his “playfulness” goes too far and is seen as a deviant act that would impose great embarrassment on his family is his self-identifying gender attribution criticized and an effort is made by his parents to prevent him from exercising his preferred gender expression. Ludovic’s

parents knew the biological sex of their son so they could not accept any other gender role other than that of “male.” They would only allow and accept the gender attributions they knew to be consistent with their son being a male (Scotta & Berliner).

“The minute you or anybody else knows what you are you are not it, you are what you or anybody else knows you are and as everything in living is made up of finding out what you are it is extraordinarily difficult really not to know what you are and yet to be that thing” (English, 2003). In this passage, Gertrude Stein challenges us to understand the invention or reinvention of self by using the second person vernacular. This must be what it is like for someone whose gender is opposite from his/her biological sex. Initially, everyone is in agreement as to the baby’s biological sex and the gender attributions that are consistent with that sex. The baby, having no intelligible vehicle for expressing him/herself differently, goes along with how others see him/her. However, at some point the baby becomes a person capable of expressing internal gender attributions. At the point when the child “knows” what gender he/she is, if a dissonance arises, it forces the child to reinvent him/herself in an effort to find out what he/she is. Those who are challenged living within our socially constructed gender binary system live by the gender attributes as imposed by themselves as well as others. Because society is gender challenged, there can be an ongoing struggle for individual to stay true to their identified gender. As their gender is challenged by society’s constructs, they have to stay vigilant in order to remain true to themselves. Nye (1998) explains that society creates a gender box into which everyone should neatly fit. This box creates two realities: if your sex is male then your gender is masculine and you are sexually attracted to women. If your sex is

female then your gender is feminine and you are sexually attracted to men. The gender box is equally confining for both men and women, with no room for variance. You must fit into either one box or the other; you cannot be in both at the same time. Nye quotes Leslie Feinberg as saying “the... dominant view [is] that woman and man are all that exist and that there is only one way to be a woman or a man” (Nye, 1998, p. 6).

Gender Identity Disorder, DSM IV and History. When gender identity and sex are not congruent, it can be disturbing to those who are witness to such incongruence. Once a gender attribution has been made, expectations follow that an “actor” will display the correct blend of such things as dress, demeanor, sex object choice, occupation or leisure time activities. In essence, the whole social life could be dichotomized by gender, but in practice, a lot of incorrect elements are allowed to blend, particularly on an occasional and more trivial level. More sustained and more fundamental blending of the elements threatens the gender categories themselves (Elkins & King, 1997). Congruence is expected between a person’s sex and his/her gender. There are expectations in both the cognitive (how things are) and the normative (how things should be) senses. Watching a drag show in Las Vegas is accepted as conventional entertainment, while dining in a nice restaurant sitting next to a person who is read as a man trying to pass as a woman may breach these expectations and set of a potential threat to this aspect of what constitutes ones reality (Elkins & King).

Gender blending might imply that there is a core gender that is mixed, merged and matched. It may also imply that there are those who transcend, transgress or threaten, with the view of living beyond gender (Elkins & King, 1997). Levi (2006) cites a legal

case in which a student was suspended from school for not wearing gender appropriate clothing. The plaintiff stated that she was diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder and the treating therapist's recommendation to wear clothing consistent with her female gender identity was medically and clinically necessary. The court ruled that the plaintiff did not wear female clothing for disruptive reasons, rather for genuine gender based reasons and that the school could not discriminate based on sex or gender (Levi). This child challenged the societal normative belief as to gender, and whenever gender is challenged there is a sense of threat felt by society. A response to threat is to remove the threatening force. However, this was a step in the movement toward neutralizing gender expectations. The American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 4th edition (DSM-IV; American Psychiatric Association, 1994) provides diagnoses that cover all mental health disorders for both children and adults. It also lists known causes of these disorders, statistics in terms of gender, age at onset, and prognosis as well as some research concerning the optimal treatment approaches. The DSM-IV lists Gender Identity Disorder in children, adolescents and adults as those who have a strong and persistent identification with the opposite gender. There is a sense of discomfort in their own gender and may feel they were "born the wrong sex." This has been confused with cross-dressing or Transvestic Fetishism, but all are distinct diagnoses. The prognosis for treatment is mixed. The goals of treatment are not as clear as in other disorders, as same-sex identification may be very difficult to achieve. More achievable goals may include acceptance of assigned gender and resolution of other difficulties such as depression or anxiety. The DSM-IV lists Gender Identity Disorder as a psychiatric disorder under the

heading of sexual disorders and dysfunctions, although no outward dysfunctions may be present. It basically means that the person's outward body is inconsistent with the internal sense of being either male or female (American Psychiatric Association).

The term Transsexual was introduced in the DSM-III in 1980 for individuals who had dysphoria concerning their sexual anatomy and their gender identification. The diagnosis was made if individuals spent at least two years desiring to change their anatomy or transform their bodies to meet their gender identity. In 1994, the DSM-IV committee replaced the diagnosis of Transsexualism with Gender Identity Disorder. Those with strong and persistent cross-gender identification and persistent discomfort with their sex or inappropriateness in the gender role of that sex were diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder. If an individual did not meet the criteria, a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder Not Otherwise Specified was to be used. Those not meeting the criteria include those wanting genital surgery not consistent with full transition process, those who were intersex, those who had stress-related cross dressing and those who were ambivalent about giving up their gender role (Wyndzen, 1998).

Terms Under the Transgender Umbrella. The term "transgender" is a challenge to the social construction of gender. In one way or another, transgender people place themselves outside the conventional female/male dichotomy, yet live in a social world that recognizes only females and males (Kessler & McKenna, 2004). Elkins and King (1997) assert that there is a wide base for terms used to describe individuals who cross gender boundaries.

In the late 1960s, Virginia Prince, the founder of Tri Ess, the first national organization for crossdressers, initially coined the term transgender or transgenderist to describe one who lives as the opposite of his/her biological sex, but without surgery. Later, activist Leslie Feinberg used the word transgender to describe anyone who fell outside of the traditional gender system, including transgender, transvestites and transsexuals (Serene, 2002).

The modern terminology really started around 1910 when Magnus Hirschfeld (as cited in Phaefflin, 1997) coined the term transvestite from the Latin words *trans* (“cross”) and *vestis* (dress”). Hirschfeld used the term transvestite to describe transsexuals, transvestites and drag queens. In 1923 he coined the term transsexual, but it did not become popular until 1949. It wasn’t until the work of Harry Benjamin, a doctor who started seeing “trans” clients in the early 1920s, that the two terms, transvestite and transsexual, came to have distinctly different meanings (Phaefflin; Serene, 2002). For ease of simplifying basic terminology, transvestites are those who wear the clothing of the opposite of their biologically born sex, while transsexuals are those who identify themselves as the gender opposite of their biologically born gender.

Pauly (as cited in Tewksbury & Gagne, 1996) has defined the transsexual as a person “characterized by a lifelong preference for the opposite gender role, predicated on the conviction of belonging to the opposite sex.” Not all transsexuals opt to complete genital reassignment surgery or complete the transformation process (Tewksbury & Gagne). Billings and Urban (as cited in Tewksbury & Gagne) argue that all transsexuals are alike and that surgery is just a product of scientific technology creating a socially

constructed reality. Transsexuals generally define themselves as heterosexual, though this is a somewhat neglected field of study. One such study conducted on MTF transsexuals (an all biological-male sample) indicates that before sexual reassignment surgery, 54% of participants had been predominantly attracted to women and 9% had been predominantly attracted to men. After sexual reassignment surgery, these figures were 25% and 34%, respectively (Lawrence, 2005). Schroeder and Carroll (as cited in Lawrence) found that after MTF sexual reassignment surgery, about half were sexually attracted to males; about one-third were bisexual; and nearly one-fifth were sexually attracted to females. This is an area where the sex and gender intersections deviate. Sexual orientation is about as predictable in gender variant individuals as it is in non-gender variant individuals.

Serene (2002) reports that Magnus Hirschfeld outlined the general features of crossdressing behaviors and emphasized the heterosexual orientation of most of these men. This was contradictory to the prevailing conception that crossdressers were acting out homosexual behaviors (Serene). In a discussion based on a review of literature outlining their examination of the dynamic interplay of sex, gender and sexuality, Tewksbury and Gagne (1996) found that although there are documented cases of homosexual transvestites, a majority of crossdressers are a biological male with a congruent gender identity and ascribed status. They go on to describe crossdressers as men who become sexually gratified by fixating on and wearing women's clothing, though Tewksbury and Gagne also believe that the development of a femme persona and an immersion into the transgender community lessens the sexual component and gives way to the gender and personal-identity based expression.

Talamini (as cited by Serene, 2002) surveyed 50 crossdressers and their significant others. He noted four main motivational factors in heterosexual crossdressing:

1. Crossdressing allows the individual to relax by breaking from his daily role. In connecting with the feminine persona he is able to express emotions and sensitivities he may not express in male mode;
2. The crossdresser gets to role play. If the crossdresser goes out in public and passes as a woman, there is a great sense of achievement in playing a part;
3. Crossdressers derive sexual pleasure from dressing as they feel sexy and attracted to themselves;
4. Women's clothes are said to be more attractive than men's, providing finer fabric with pleasant tactile sensations that fulfill the crossdresser's need for adornment.

Talamini and others have turned away from a total reliance on sexual arousal as an explanation for crossdressing as earlier research had suggested (Serene).

The inclusion of drag kings, drag queens, and intersex in the category of transgender can be problematic. Many drag queens and drag kings identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. While some drag queens (males who wear female clothing) and drag kings (females who wear male clothing) transgress gender stereotypes in society, many do not see themselves as transgressing gender stereotypes at all (Serene, 2002). Through a qualitative study, Taylor and Rupp (2004) found that through gathering life histories, observing performances and holding focus groups with audience members, they were able to conclude that for drag queens, "transgenderism, same-sex sexuality, and theatrical performance are central to the personal identities that are neither masculine nor feminine,

but rather their own complex genders” (p. 114). Although there is little research conducted on drag queens, female impersonators are typically gay men who dress in women’s clothing infrequently. They make weak attempts at passing, but all three elements of sex are male (Tewksbury & Gagne, 1996).

Intersex individuals may identify with the gender assigned to them at birth, thus experiencing no gender conflict, and resent being included under the transgender umbrella. Those who do not identify with their assigned gender may also feel resentful of being included with a group whose only shared characteristic is not identifying with the gender assigned at birth (Serene, 2002). Where medicine is sought to assist the transsexual to either cross over or maintain the status quo, it is much the same as in the approach with intersexual conditions. Patients have to be one or the other, but not both. Elkins and King (1997) credit Fausto-Sterling with coining the term “sexual multiplicity” and suggests maybe we should accept this instead of pigeonholing people into one or the other of two sexes.

Famous and Not so Famous Transgender Pioneers

From Germany to San Francisco. In most literature, physician David O. Cauldwell is generally quoted as the person who came up with the terms “transsexual” and “transsexualism.” However, not only was he first to use the term “transvestite” beginning in 1910, Magnus Hirschfeld was the original person who referred to the term “transsexualism” in a paper he wrote in 1923 where he first mentioned “seelischer Transsexualismus,” meaning psychic transsexualism. This was actually about a quarter century before Cauldwell was given the credit (Pfaefflin, 1997; Elkins & King, 2001). In

1897 Hirschfeld founded the first gay rights organization, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee. One of his contributions to transgender history is that he went on to found the Institute of Sexology in 1919, which performed several sex reassignment surgeries.

Despite the controversy over which person originated the term transsexual, the word traces back most to the work of Harry Benjamin. Christine Jorgensen, the first transsexual to really catch the public's eye, had received hormone treatments from Dr. Benjamin prior to her 1952 trip overseas for her sex reassignment surgery. When she returned, the publicity for Dr. Benjamin was overwhelming, and in 1966 he published a book about the subject (Platine, 1997). Dr. Benjamin wrote in his book that he felt there was a biological reason for the condition, stemming from hormonal influences prenatally. Early sex reassignment surgery in the United States, conducted at Johns Hopkins, was not much benefit to transsexuals. Because sexual identity and gender were not considered separate, and because only gay males were considered candidates, the outcomes resulted in suicides and unhappy MTF transsexuals who sadly found out that gay men weren't interested in someone with the "wrong" equipment. This tragic situation brought about the Harry Benjamin International Gender Association. A group of psychotherapists took it upon themselves to come up with standards of treatment for transsexuals, focusing on preventing the mistakes made at Johns Hopkins (Platine). These standards still exist today and are the backbone for transsexuals who seek sex reassignment surgery.

Benjamin was born almost twelve years after Hirschfeld, but they became friends later in life. Benjamin was a physician, formally trained as a geriatrician and an endocrinologist, and also a scientist who helped pave the way to a better understanding of

transsexualism. He was an admirer of Hirschfeld, who was also a physician and who spent time trying to cure sexual disorders, including homosexuality. Early in his career and before he met Hirschfeld in 1926, Benjamin spent his time trying to extend and rejuvenate life even before he started treating transsexuals. His wish was to create a better quality of life for all of his patients (Pfaefflin, 1997; Serene, 2002).

Benjamin began seeing transsexual patients in the late 1920s. By the 1940s, he was spending his summers in San Francisco. It was here that Benjamin took an interest in treating transsexual patients. In 1948, he was asked by Alfred Kinsey to see a child patient of his whom he was assured was a girl, despite being born a boy. Benjamin had always had an interest in hormone therapy and treated the child with estrogen, which had a calming effect. Benjamin continued to refine his understand of hormone therapy, and shortly after openly introducing the term “transsexualism” to the medical community in 1957, went on to treat several hundred patients with hormone therapy, often without taking payment. Carefully selected colleagues of various disciplines, such as psychiatrist John Alden and electrologist Martha Foss assisted him in San Francisco, and plastic surgeon Jose Jesus Barbosa performed genital reconstructive surgery in Tijuana, Mexico (Gojar, 2009). At that time, doctors in the United States refused to prescribe hormones or perform sexual reassignment or genital reconstruction surgery to the transgender people who desired these procedures. Benjamin became a board member of the Foundation for Mind Research, an organization that helped to fund early work with transsexual people (Serene, 2002). After the story of Christine Jorgensen, who became the first American to undergo sexual reassignment surgery, became widely publicized,

Benjamin was regarded as a foremost expert in the transsexual field, bringing the word into widespread use. Benjamin's model for dealing with transgender people is still the basic paradigm for transsexual medical care. In honor of his pioneering contributions to the field, the association of medical and psychotherapeutic professionals who regulate access to transgender health care is known as the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association (Stryker, 2004).

In his book, *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, Benjamin looked at the legal standing regarding the sex of a MTF. He figured that everyone knew what constituted a male and what constituted a female, but inquired of a lawyer friend of his about how the law defines the two sexes. His friend's research indicated that there was no legal definition of a male or a female, and up to that time there had been no judicial decision by any court that indicated otherwise (Benjamin, 1966).

This history created by Magnus Hirschfeld, David Cauldwell and Harry Benjamin gives us a comforting look at the progression of a gender phenomenon within the scientific community. These pioneers researched and wrote about the outcomes of their research to try to give meaning to a life experience that had been around long before they took interest. Long before Hirschfeld contrived a suitable description that could adequately label this experience, there were the individuals themselves.

Tales from the Early West. There is documentation that transgender people have been among us as early as the gold rush times. In search for gold, a wide range of male femininities and female masculinities complicated and enriched everyday life. In the mid-nineteenth century the New York Tribune's Horace Greely advised young American men

to go west and build a fortune. During a trip to Colorado he encountered a young clerk who had spent a hard winter in the gold fields and had decided to return to his parents in Indiana. While boarding the train the following morning, Mr. Greely was given the news that this clerk he had dined with the previous day was indeed a woman. The slogan “go west young man” was typical of the stereotypical beliefs of gender assignments (Boag, 2005).

The late nineteenth century and early twentieth century era had its own notions about transgenderism and transsexuality. One case in point was Alan Hart. Alan was born Alberta Hart in 1890. This is one of the most documented cases of cross-dressing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hart had endured his female biology his entire life, all the while battling against his masculine inclinations and demeanor. Hart completed medical school and soon sought the care of a physician named Allen Gilbert to help him deal with his gender confusion. Gilbert listened to the stories of how Hart had always had acted the boy while growing up and had erotic dreams of the girls with whom she fancied herself in love. These were difficult sessions for Hart, but together she and Gilbert made the decision that she would have hysterectomy (to relieve the inconvenience of dealing with menstrual flow in male attire), cut her hair, donned the complete male outfit and started a new life as a male. Hart married twice and lived as a man until the 1960s. When Hart was asked by a newspaper reporter about his sex change, he declared that he had been an unhappy person and had always felt like he was male. He further went on to exclaim that since the operation, he had been happier and had come to the

conclusion that he had finally come to know his condition, one that until surgery he had only suspected (Boag, 2005).

Storytelling of the trans lifestyle in the history of the West oftentimes points out a legitimate reason for cross-dressing, such as a woman or mother's financial need to obtain otherwise unreachable employment in a man's field of work or to follow a love into battle where women were not welcomed. Elvira Virginia Mugarrieta, a reporter, preferred to dress in male attire and went by the name of Jack Garland. Jack explained that the cross dress was protection in a time where it wasn't safe for women to travel alone (Boag, 2005).

Another example is Johanna Monahan, born in about 1850, who arrived in Idaho some seventeen years later as Joe Monahan. He worked as a bronco buster, prospector, sawmill operator, sheepherder, cowboy and small time cattle rancher until his death around 1904. It was only at the time of his death did the locals discover his female sex. However, over the period of time Joe spent in Idaho, there were those who suspected he was really a woman. Though he was well respected, the 1880 census verifies this suspicion. The census taker for that year was a man who lived very close in geographical proximity to Joe. Under sex he marked male, but beside that in pencil, he wrote "Doubtful Sex." Even after death, his community continued to regard Joe as a man, one who dressed in men's clothing and did a man's job (Boag, 2005).

These are several other examples during this time where women dressed as men and were believed to be of the male gender during their lives. While there may have been some suspicion of the individual who crossed gender boundaries, no one seemed to care,

or at least not enough to make an issue of it. It may have been noted or even recorded, but the West held different views of this cross dressing among folk. They sometimes saw a woman in men's clothing. Sometimes they actually saw them as men. Sometimes they created their own terminology, such as hyphenated man-woman. Even when community members used everyday expressions like man or woman, male or female, masculine or feminine, it seemed that the communities where these cross dressing individuals worked and lived saw them as people despite the ambiguity of their gender (Boag, 2005).

During the gold rush era, women did not venture out to work in the gold mines. It was a hard life and the life of the prospector was not always profitable. It was also a lonely life for many men. As part of their entertainment, it was common for camps to play music and have dances. Because there were no women around, men would be women for the night, wearing sackcloth patches to signify their new gender. This was an easy way to even up the ratio of men to women, a ratio very off balance with the mass migration to the gold fields. The music at these dances was usually furnished by armature fiddle players who encouraged the male/female square dancing practice. In Nevada City, a similar type of dance was organized where the men who played the role of the lady for the evening wore a handkerchief around their arms, assuming the woman's part. In Marysville, men were actually convinced to wear women's clothing, including a gown, shawl and fan. At sea, similar dances were held where the younger, smooth faced men substituted for ladies during the evening (Sears, 2008a). There is no indication in this history cited that relationships moved beyond these evenings of entertainment.

With no women to be had during this time in the West, domestic work was a task given to Chinese migrants. They were seen as having a natural propensity for women's work. The Chinese men were viewed as feminine and were seen as genderless. By marking the Chinese as feminine, Euro-American masculinity found its required opposite. By viewing the Chinese as genderless, American gender came into sharper view (Sears, 2008a).

Fashion

Although gender b(1)ending roles reach back into early America, one can't forget the influence much earlier civilizations brought to trans history. Dress is an important contribution that can easily be mislaid as irrelevant or unimportant, yet is a significant factor in the history of acceptance and normalization of how people are perceived.

As one can see, there have been many reasons why an individual may wear the attire of the opposite gender. There may be a whole host of reasons why an individual is perceived as one gender when in actuality he/she is of the opposite gender. At some point, someone defined what each gender should wear. Then, when someone chooses to dress as the opposite gender, to defy an already set body of rules as to gender appropriate dress, it automatically raises a question. In our history we see that the Greeks, both men and women, wore the Chiton. A rectangle piece of cloth that was wore around the body, tied at the shoulders and belted at the waist, draping down over the body in a long or short style, in essence, what could be considered equivalent of a modern day "dress." But today, if a man here in America were to wear a dress, it would be seen as obscene, maybe even sexual and is hardly tolerated as natural.

When it comes to the history of dress, there is no dispute that men in history have, and in some cases, still dress today in what we might call typical female wear. However, during the inception of ancient dress, since both men and women wore similar attire, there was nothing for men's garments to be judged against except maybe the brilliance or presentation as compared to the women's clothing or that of status. In ancient Rome, men wore long flowing pieces of material akin to a dress called a toga. In battle, the shorter dress or tunic was worn. The tunic was based on early Greek garments, and after the fall of the Roman Empire tunics continued to be worn. The Roman military created the first tights. In wearing the first mini-skirts, the Romans wanted their legs to look good. Tights continued to be worn from that point on (Men's Fashion Freedom, n.d.). Men started carrying purses once money became a part of society. In Scotland the "sporrán" was an accessory made to carry money and usually worn from the waist in front of the "kilt." The kilt is the skirt men wear as traditional dress. Queen Victoria was said that the women should wear white dresses so as not to compete with the men in their kilts (Men's Fashion Freedom).

The history of dress as cited above does not consider that males were dressing as women, rather males dressing for comfort, practicality and status of the time for traditional dress. Today, the dress is seen as historical, maybe a costume at Halloween, and is most certainly still in use by some cultures. Why is it, then, that people stare at or make fun of men who wear skirts or dresses for convenience or comfort? This question will be further explored later on.

Those Who Transition and Those Who Entertain

More than just in dress are the men and women who actually physically transitioned from their biological to the opposite gender. Here I present a timeline of a few of the well-known individuals who make up the early transgender history.

1. 1933 - *Man Into Woman*, the story of Danish painter Lili Elbe's transition from male to female—and the first known biography of a transsexual—is published.
2. 1952 - Christine Jorgensen becomes famous as the first American to undergo sex reassignment surgery.
3. 1975 - Richard Raskind becomes Renee Richards and later wins the right to compete as a woman in professional tennis.
4. 1989 - Jazz musician Billy Tipton dies and is found to have female anatomy. Billy lived more than 50 years and was married multiple times, raising children.

As history unfolds and people's experiences make their mark on society, it is really tolerance that allows for a continued expansion of gender expression. One place where gender expression is frequently shown and seems to be well tolerated is through television or in movies. Although it is unknown why this is, as long as it is entertainment society seems to accept the variances in people's assorted lives easier. Here are a few historical and recent depictions of gender variant individuals as portrayed through movies or television. While most are fictional, there is truth to the experiences. The truth is the

experiences that gender variant or transgender persons live and the consequences of those experiences.

Transgender on Screen.

1. “M.A.S.H.” 1972-1983: Max Klingler dons dresses in order to get discharged from the Army.
2. “All in the Family” 1971-1979: Edith befriends Beverly LaSalle, a female impersonator, after Archie saves her life. Archie is both homophobic and transphobic. Beverly was ultimately mugged and killed.
3. “Bosom Buddies” 1980-1982: Tom Hanks and Peter Scolari dress as women in order to live in an affordable women’s hotel.
4. “The Phil Donahue Show” 1970-1996: U.K. model Caroline Cossey, a.k.a. Tula appeared on Donahue’s groundbreaking talk show in 1979. Tula was the transsexual “Bond” girl in the movie “For Your Eyes Only.” Her appearance on Donahue was ground breaking and paved the way for future trans subject matter on other talk shows.
5. “Nip-Tuck” 2003 – present: Trans character, Ava Moore, seduces teenager Matt McNamara. When Matt finds out Ava is a transsexual, he picks up and brutally beats another trans woman. The trans woman and her friends attack Matt in retaliation.
6. “All My Children” 2006: Rock star Zarf is transitioning to Zoe, a gay woman.
7. “Ugly Betty” 2006- present: During part of the first season, Alex Mead was wrapped in bandages. He later emerged as Alexis. (Ferber, 2007)

So, where do we go from here? It is all around us, yet what does it mean? Just because transgender individuals have always lived among us and just because we allow them to entertain us, it does not mean that they should be treated differently, if they were second class citizens and as if they deserved less. As history has so plainly noted, we have always accepted people who differed from the majority. Of course, in some instances, like in Nevada City and Marysville during the gold rush, it was well known that there were men dressing as women for entertainment and this went down well. On the other hand, others such as Joe Monahan did not disclose their biological gender, and chose to live their identified gender until their death. The same still occurs today. Some want to pass, others do not really care if they are “read.” We accepted men, knowing they were really women, because they dressed and acted like men. We accepted men who dressed as women because there were no real women dance with. We accepted men as women, because there were no real women who could provide necessary domestic services. We have accepted from ancient times that men can dress in attire similar to women without repercussions. Yet today, if a man wants to wear a dress, carry a purse, don stockings, or if a woman wants to dress like a man and take on male dominated employment, our society acts as though this is new or unfamiliar and resists with such vehemence that laws need to be enacted in order to protect gender variant individuals. This begs the question of why? Why does it now seem to matter so much? It may be because the GLBT movement has created more awareness surrounding the transgender population. Before we really talked about it, maybe the silence allowed us to ignore the

reality. Now, the reality is that transgender people want to be acknowledged and allowed to enjoy the freedom of their civil liberties without discrimination.

A Human and Political View

Other Cultures That Embrace Transgender Identity. Despite the fact that gender variant people have probably been among us since the beginning of time, there is still an element of injustice in how they are treated. In some cultures they are accepted and embraced as a third or separate gender and given status or a place within their culture. In Samoa the Fa'afafine are biological males who express feminine gender identities. While some dress as women, not all do; while many have sex with masculine men, their role in this act is strictly feminine and thus they do not fit into the category of "homosexual." While some modify their bodies to become more feminine, those who do and the group as a whole cannot readily be defined as "transsexual" (Schmidt, 2003). The Fa'afafine is an accepted and honored "third gender" within the Samoan culture and has a place beside the traditional "male" and "female" genders. The Navajo Indian term "nádleehí" refers to hermaphrodites, or those who pretend to be. These are people who represent themselves in the behavior, occupation, and, at times, sexual preference associated with the opposite gender (Epple, 1998). Throughout history, the Native American culture has had several terms to describe genders beyond traditional male and female: alternate gender, gay, two-spirit and berdache. While berdache, with its French meaning of "male prostitute," may be insulting to Native Americans, the term two-spirit came out of the 1990 international gathering of the Native American Gay and Lesbian movement. It was during this gathering that the term two-spirit was chosen, which refers to a wide variety of Native

American and First Nation roles and identities, past and present. The term was not chosen to mark a new category of gender, rather it was seen as a term to bridge Native American concepts of gender diversity and sexualities with those of Western cultures (Epple, 1998; Thomas & Jacobs, 1999). The Native American culture has identified and embraced the gender diversities that have been a part of their history and have taken steps to integrate their culture and experiences into Western society.

In American culture, gender diversity is not so readily accepted. Being a minority group, gender variant people struggle alongside many other minorities in defending their right for equality. Gender variant people have always participated alongside the GLBT movement, but in the mid-1990s there was a consolidation of transgender inclusion (Stone, 2009). As much as inclusion benefits the transgender individuals, finding a place beside other marginalized groups may serve to marginalize them even more within society and the social movement. While jockeying for an accepted position within society, gender variant individuals are up against hate, fear, oppression, misunderstanding and inequality. In some respects they are a more accepted group now than they were in the '60s. While there has been gain in the social standing of gender variant and transgender individuals, there continues to be a social stigma attached to gender variation that still leads to unjust and unfair outcomes.

Transgender People and Their Place Among Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals.

Transgender individuals have been around, but have had to find support for their lifestyle and cause in the most familiar communities. This has not been an easy task, as something or someone familiar or similar does not mean being accepted. Stone (2009) conducted an

exploratory study of American lesbian and gay activists' attitudes toward transgender inclusion in the GLBT movement. She found that most existing analysis of transgender inclusion in the American GLBT movement has focused almost exclusively on a handful of events, including the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. According to a review of previous studies conducted by Stone (2009), Weiss and Meinter show that transphobia and gender-neutral gay identity have been blamed for the failure of lesbians and gay men to integrate transgender issues and individuals adequately within the American movement. As part of a larger study on transgender inclusion in non-discrimination ordinances in three Midwestern cities and towns, Stone conducted interviews with 32 Midwestern lesbian and gay activists involved with LGBT politics between 1992 and 2002. Although transgender individuals were eventually included under the GLB umbrella, Stone concludes that gay men have a more difficult time with transgender inclusion than lesbians. Gay men struggle with cultivating approximating experiences, movement connections and space for transgender individuals. While lesbians tended to be more ambivalent in their attitudes, they could make some connection within some feminism, privilege and socialism aspects. They could especially make the connection between butch gender variance and transgender issues. However, they really had difficulty when it came to invasion of women's space (pp. 335, 336). Stone's research also indicates that when gay and lesbian activists become allies with extremely marginalized groups such as transgender, the GLBT movement requires what is perceived as the sharing of scarce movement resources (p. 338). This study begs the question of whether or not transgender individuals are really getting the GLB backing

when it comes to activism. Transgender individuals fight for their rights as part of and alongside the GLBT movement, yet one wonders if they might not be further along if there were not so much division within the GLBT movement.

Fear and Violence. Early on the transgender person was subject to being penalized based on a perceived yet false understanding or intolerance of gender expression. One such example was in 1863, half way through the Civil War, when the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a local law against cross-dressing, prohibiting “the appearance in public in dress that was not belonging to his or her sex.” San Francisco was not alone, as by the time World War I started, forty-five more cities passed anti cross-dressing laws. This ultimately became a way to police transgender and queer communities in the 1950s and 1960s (Sears, 2008b).

In an article written for *Lesbian News* in July 2009, Diane Silver outlines the factors which lead to the Stonewall Riots in 1969. False understanding and intolerance of gender and sexuality lead to the fact that 40 years ago being “queer” was deemed illegal and considered a mental illness. In 48 states it was illegal for two consenting adults of the same sex to be intimate in the privacy of their own home. GLBT applicants were automatically denied application for federal employment and military services. It was illegal to serve alcohol to gays. Bars who served GLBT clientele were repeatedly raided by police. These laws and oppression gave rise to what was known as the Stonewall Riots. Stone goes on to explain how on that early morning a routine police raid on an establishment called the Stonewall Inn resulted in an uprising from the GLBT patrons. They fought back, risking life and freedom, preventing police from loading prisoners into

the paddy wagons, and stopped the raid. While this wasn't the official start of the GLBT activism, it did start a thought process which has led to much national political activism and many organizations. Over the period of the last 40 years, laws have changed and it is no longer a crime to be GLBT. The rules that barred GLBT individuals from federal employment have been banished. In 20 states there are bans on discrimination based on, among other things, gender identity (Silver, 2009). Although transgender people fought alongside gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals during the Stonewall Riots, it took until the early 1990s for the "T" to start being included in the GLB alphabet. There were conflicting attitudes from the gay and lesbian communities about including gender variant individuals. Gay individuals were fairly concrete in their attitudes of gender and sexuality and what constituted masculine and feminine. Their thinking was that the division between masculine and feminine was one of the first markers of sexual orientation.

While transgender attitudes were not always well tolerated, when it came to drag queens (some of whom were transgender and most being gay men), they were seen as holding a celebrity-like status and historically are both embraced as public ambassadors of the gay community and regulated within gay spaces (Stone, 2009). In 1991 a woman was expelled from the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival on the suspicion that she was a transsexual. In 1992 the brochure for the festival clarified that the festival was intended for womyn born womyn and was seen as specifically excluding transsexuals comprising of MTF, FTM and gender queer individuals. In 1994 the woman who was expelled along with other transsexuals and transsexual allies gathered across the road from the entrance

to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival and set up "Camp Trans." The purpose of this gathering is to promote an understanding of gender from a variety of perspectives and to address issues of disenfranchisement in the women's and lesbian communities.

Ultimately it was established to educate festival attendees with hopes of broadening the policy to include all women (eminism.org, n.d.). To date, the broader inclusion has still not occurred.

What is it that prevents society from allowing individuals who feel that they are born with the wrong gender from participating in life as their preferred gender? There seems to be so much division and judgment. The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival wanted women to have a safe space to share artistic, political and personal expressions. One major reason men (or anyone who has ever been a man) have been excluded from admission is because there has been so much violence perpetrated on women by men. However, they fail to recognize that there is also violence perpetrated on women by other women. Trans women are also at risk, if not more so, of being targets of violent crimes. So, as to this matter only, it is a bias based on difference that leads to the exclusion of transgender individuals rather than the open-mindedness based on similarities that could lend to their inclusion.

Anti-trans, Transphobia and Violence. Three separate studies conducted by Hill and Willoughby (2005) measured anti-trans feelings, thoughts and behaviors in undergraduate and graduate college students and parents using the Genderism and Transphobia Scale. Study participants were well educated members of a cosmopolitan city in Canada well renowned for its liberal attitudes toward sexuality and gender issues.

Through these three successive studies, the researchers found the Genderism and Transphobia Scale to be a reliable scale that performed as expected. Earlier studies these researchers reviewed had shown acceptance of transsexuals. However, these studies demonstrated that anti-trans views were neither rare nor difficult to elicit. Though there were a wide range of responses, some scores indicated extremely intolerant attitudes toward gender variance.

Bettcher (2007) believes that victims of transphobic violence can oftentimes be blamed for the violence perpetrated upon them by allegations that they are deceitful. A transgender woman might be a man in women's clothing. However, if that person presents him/herself as a woman, then he/she is subject to the intertwined notions of appearance, reality and discovery as perceived or learned by those around them (p. 47). In October, 2002 in Newark California, Gwen Araujo, an American trans woman, was beaten, killed, then buried 150 miles away in the Sierra wilderness. Gwen was a young person who at birth was pronounced male. Just three years earlier she had come out to her mother feeling like a woman trapped in a man's body and began calling herself Gwen, in hopes of one day having a sex change operation. This unfortunate murder was in part blamed on Gwen for misrepresenting herself to the young men who killed her by "leading them on". One had been intimate with Gwen and had even discussed Gwen's identity with a friend days earlier. The attorney for one of the killers asked for a lighter charge that was come to be known as the "trans panic" defense. This is similar to the "gay panic" defense and argues that the killing was committed in the "heat of passion" only after learning Gwen's biological sex (Bettcher, 2007). While there is no excuse for murdering

someone, especially if they are only guilty of being who they truly are, transgender individuals are at a disadvantage. Since transgender individuals can never truly be accepted for who they are, they are fundamentally construed as deceivers and pretenders.

Gender-based violence is understood to mean any violence against a woman. However, the term “woman” is based on genitalia and social construction of the person as it conforms to the binary gender norms. For this reason, any studies on violence against women typically do not include transsexual or transgender women (Kidd & Witten, 2007). With a new hate crimes bill currently in progress, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, the statistics for hate crimes against transsexuals or transgender individuals will one day be captured.

Kidd and Witten (2007) cite possible causes for transgender violence. First, there is the general ignorance of the public about transgender identities. Many perpetrators of anti-transgender hate violence in Los Angeles use homosexual terms such as fag, dyke or faggot during violent incidents (p. 48), which may indicate the perpetrator’s confusion between gender and sexual orientation. Another reason for causality is the bias or confusion of the terminology that represents sex and gender within institutional settings. Kidd and Witten cite studies where medical students could not see past strict XY and XX chromosomal designations (p. 48). This also contributes to a lack of adequate medical care whereby the aging transgender individual is further marginalized within the medical setting (p. 49). Kidd and Witten also bring up the point that hate violence (as it is today) serves to reinforce the gender binary in that the current law protects genetic women. In addition, transgender people are targeted for violating gender norms and are seen as easy

targets (p. 49). It is no wonder that transgender individuals become easy targets, with the lack of stricter laws that would make it a crime to commit violence against someone who doesn't fit a perceived gender norm. The perception is based on what the attacker sees as "normal" or "acceptable," and there is no law that gives specific protection to those who fall outside these boundaries.

Laws Affecting Transgender People. Since 1863 when the first anti-cross-dressing law went into effect, there have been many more laws that have affected transgender people. Most recent laws have or are seeking to end discrimination against transgender people. The first state with trans discrimination laws was Minnesota. In 1975 the city of Minneapolis amended its local discrimination law by replacing the phrase "affectional preference" with "having or projecting a self-image not associated with one's biological maleness or one's biological femaleness." In 1990 St. Paul adopted similar language. And, in 1993 the Minnesota state legislature adopted the first state-wide law banning discrimination against transgender people (Currah & Minter, 2000).

More laws have been passed at local levels, but two recent federal laws are on stage currently awaiting further disposition. As mentioned earlier, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 was introduced and designed to extend existing federal protections class list to include gender identity, sexual orientation, gender and disability. It was also designed to allow the Justice Department to assist with investigations of hate crimes when local law enforcement is unable or unwilling. It would mandate that the FBI begin tracking hate crimes based on the included protected status, and it would remove the limitation that a hate crime would have to be committed when

the victim is engaged in a federally protected activity. It has been an ongoing process to get this bill passed through into law. Currently both the House of Representatives and the Senate have passed this bill. However, at present it was voted by the Senate as an amendment to the Department of Defense bill, thus it requires reconciliation with the House before proceeding to the President's desk (Human Rights Campaign, 2009; Holder, 2009). Again, we see fear arising in the attempt to acquire basic human protection rights. This bill is opposed by some who see it as threatening their free speech, their first amendment rights. Religious sectors are afraid it would prevent them from speaking out against homosexuality. Quite the contrary is true, as this law would be imposed on violent actions and not on the rights of free speech.

At the time of this literature review, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act was found to have been introduced into the House of Representatives in June, 2009. This bill was written to prohibit employers from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. According to Frank (2009), it is still legal in 30 states to fire someone just for being gay and in 38 states it is legal to discriminate on the basis of gender identity. Contrary to some allegations by opponents, this law will not give special rights to some groups and it does not promote preferential treatment due to quotas (Frank).

What About Marriage for Transsexuals? All but six states currently recognize marriage as a union of two people of the opposite sex. Courts may require a medical finding of an individual's sex and it may or may not be consistent with the individual's identity or that of legal documents. There are no reported decisions of invalidating a

marriage of a post-operative transsexual. According to Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD; 2009), in New England there have been no actions ruled against a post-operative transsexual who was married to invalidate or prevent the marriage.

However, there have been several court decisions that have been hostile toward marriages involving transgender individuals. Three cases in Florida, Kansas and Texas invalidated or prevented marriage for post-operative transgender women because either the state did not allow any transgender marriage or because the sex of the individual at the time of marriage was predicated on the sex of the individual at birth. Even in more favorable jurisdictions, some states do not allow the change of sex on a birth certificate or require documentation that the person completed sex reassignment surgery. While there is no definition for “completed sex reassignment surgery” some individuals have found that they cannot obtain a new birth certificate without having had both top and bottom surgery (GLAD). Surprisingly, in 1968 Louisiana passed its birth certificate statute. This enabled individuals who have changed their sex to also change their birth certificate. Sponsors of the bill explained that the birth certificate change was needed by a woman, formerly a man, who wanted to get married. The bill passed the House and the Senate unanimously. Despite this bill’s passing, the state has yet to repeal its sodomy laws and has enacted an anti-gay marriage statute (Rose, 2004).

In 1989 a Nevada court terminated a transgender woman’s parental rights because the court held that the child should not have to contend with the emotional adjustments due to the parent’s transition. In California a transgender woman was not only granted

visitation, but also given custody. The court remanded this case to trial and held that the parent's transgender status is not a basis to deny custody.

The use of appropriate restrooms in public is also something a transgender person has to contend with. While there are no specific laws that address this issue, some specific cities have included gender restroom accommodations. Boston, Massachusetts has barred discrimination on the basis of gender with regard to public facilities. Also, if a transgender person is threatened, assaulted or harassed in a public restroom or other public place, they may be able to bring charges or pursue civil rights violations (*Transgender Legal Issues*, 2009).

Implications for Social Work

Awareness First. Without an awareness of the oppression some groups face based on their gender status, social workers are not able to gain the necessary competence that will aid them in serving clients from diversely challenged cultures. The awareness for social workers comes from learning about diverse groups who, though they are mentioned within course content, may not necessarily be given much discussion time in a standard diversity course. Social work students must also become aware of their own biases in relation to these diverse groups so that they are better able to objectify their response when they are presented with the opportunity to serve such individuals or groups. There is also the factor of the instructor teaching the diversity course. If the instructor is not aware, knowledgeable or has a bias that prevents him/her from actually spending time teaching about gender diversity, then future social workers ultimately fail to receive adequate information about a population they might later be asked to serve.

As social workers, there are many arenas in which we will be asked to serve someone from the transgender population or come face to face with the transgender lifestyle. In order to adequately serve those who come before us, social workers need to have an awareness of not only what being transgender means, but also the needs of this population. Most transgender people are painfully aware that their visible transgression of gender norms makes them one of the most vulnerable and least protected groups in social space (Doan, 2007). Social workers need to be alert to this reality too and try to make sense of their place within diverse populations. As stated in the NASW Code of Ethics, a social worker has an obligation to practice ethical responsibility toward clients. As part of practicing ethical responsibility, social workers must also serve clients with cultural competence and with an awareness of social diversity.

Cultural competence and social diversity, as indicated in section 1.05 of the Code of Ethics, further explain:

1. We must first understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures;
2. We should have a knowledge base of our clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups; and
3. Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, an mental or physical disability (NASW, 2008).

While sub-sections (1) and (2) seem to cover just about everyone, sub-section (3) fails to mention diversity or oppression with regard to gender. In anticipation of the 2005 NASW Delegate Assembly, the NASW Alaska Chapter conducted a petition drive to garner support for adding “gender orientation” to the list of vulnerable statuses named in the *NASW Code of Ethics*. This addition would have clarified social work’s commitment to transgender individuals, but the effort did not succeed (Burdge, 2007). Despite the lack of specificity within the NASW Code of Ethics as to the inclusion of “gender” as a diverse or oppressed group, we must not forget that we are bound to seek knowledge and understand and recognize the strengths of ALL cultures. Besides, we make decisions based not only on the letter, but on the spirit of this Code. Effective social work means that while working with transgender clients, social workers must engage in political action to ensure all people have equal access to rights and opportunities. In addition, they must help expand choice and opportunities for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed and exploited people and groups (NASW)

Because the term “transgender” is an umbrella over which numerous self-definitions can be covered, social workers must not only be aware of these terms and their implied meanings, but also of how clients use any of these definitions as they describe themselves. Social workers must be able to appreciate ambiguous terminology along with ambiguous genders. Self-definition is a matter of self-determination and social justice, which are basic values of the profession (Burdge, 2007).

When clients present themselves, it is important for social workers to remember our commitment to the person-in-environment perspective. Individuals define who they

are, and while society works off a gender binary that may exclude individuals for “not fitting in a box,” social workers are the conduit for assisting clients to explore gender identity options. These identity options become recognizable only to social workers who become familiar with or educate themselves on gender and gender-variance. Social workers can advocate for individuals’ rights to express their gender variance by challenging gender stereotyping (Burdge, 2007). In the case of gender stereotyping in a recent radio broadcast of local traffic, the traffic reporter announced, “There is a person in a dress outside a car in the center divide. So folks, be careful and I hope the woman is careful too...at least I hope it’s a woman” (Hess, 2009). While on the surface there didn’t seem to be anything malicious about this report, the reporter initially assumed the person was a woman. However, he caught himself, readjusted what he said, yet showed an ignorance of the fact that the person in the dress may have been a male, possibly a cross dresser. This comment begs to ask the question of why it was important to qualify the phrase “woman in a dress” by assigning a sex and not just accepting the gender. After hearing this statement, this researcher contacted the radio station to call their attention to my observation and educate them as to individuals’ rights to gender variance and how what was said came across as stereotypical and somewhat narrow.

Social workers may play different roles in the lives of transgender clients. They may be case managers for transgender youth in child welfare or youth services. They may serve as therapists assisting families of transgender people to respond affirmatively to their transitioning loved one. School social workers can create safe places for transgender youth, and medical social workers could help sex reassignment surgery patients navigate

the psychosocial aspect of their transition. At a broader level, social workers join political advocacy efforts to ensure the rights of the transgender community (Burdge, 2007).

Family and Friends of Transgender People. Transgender individuals have family, friends, loved ones and romantic partners who are touched by their transgender identity. Therapeutic intervention may be an avenue for all those coping with and understanding the complex transgender journey, but especially for those who are not transgender. In helping those who seek services as a person who is affected by a transgender individual, a therapist will need to acknowledge the challenging nature of this topic, and possibly even admit personal limitations of knowledge about transgender issues. In working with this population it is imperative to encourage communication with family, loved ones and the transgender person for the most successful outcomes. In a study by Money, Clark and Mazur (as cited in Zamboni, 2006), family adjustment and acceptance of a surgically reassigned loved one were related to the degree to which the transition was overtly shared with family, friends and loved ones. The therapeutic process can enable those dealing with the transgender identity of a loved one to share thoughts and feelings in a safe space. This can be a long process and the therapist will need to be able to problem solve with the family in a culturally sensitive manner (Zamboni, 2006).

Medical. In a medical setting, social workers will become aware of the social stigma many transgender patients face as they help coordinate the health related needs of the gender minorities. There is limited access to health care for transgender individuals and uninsured levels seem to be highest among transgender people and most healthcare related to transgender issues are not covered by insurance, making transgender health

care very expensive (Johnson, Mimiage & Bradford, 2008). It is quite important that the medical social worker has a working knowledge and understanding of the language associated with gender variant individuals. Also helpful for the medical social worker is an awareness of hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery. Since medical care for transgender people is scrutinized, a social worker could be in the position to aid in bridging communication and service delivery between the transgender person and the trans-ignorant provider. Since transgender people may not seek health services or may be reluctant to do so if there has been a negative experience or if they fear a stigmatizing environment, a responsive social worker working in the medical field could educate and advocate for safe health care.

Community, Advocacy and Civil Rights. Kenagy and Hsieh (2005) conducted a study as to the social service needs of FTM and MTF individuals. The results indicate that both groups have the need for housing, welfare, job training and legal services. The study also indicated a greater need for counseling, parenting, family planning and child care in the FTMs than in the MTFs. This study also indicates that transgender people experience difficulty in accessing social services because of discrimination (Kenagy & Hsieh). Social workers have a duty to educate the public on the nature of diversity so that we can advocate for and develop services that are accessible and appropriate for transgender people. In order to do this, social workers must first have an awareness of transgender people so that they (we) can pay the education forward into the social service and human service fields. Social workers are also obligated to advocate on a larger scale for the rights of culturally diverse and vulnerable populations. To fully value and

advocate for transgender people, it might be important to look at the barriers that prevent them from obtaining appropriate services. Then, of the services that are out there, there is a significant need to evaluate their appropriateness and effectiveness as to individual and specific needs (Kenagy & Hsieh).

Social workers might advocate for transgender people by getting involved in hate crime prevention. They can become part of other state or local activities that are designed to end discrimination and violence on the basis of gender identity and expression and provide for equal opportunity for all human beings. Social workers can become part of a movement that educates others about gender issues in their connection to and differences from sexuality and how the separation of the two has led to discrimination and marginalization. Other ways social workers can advocate for transgender people include: a) examining our own ideas about gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexuality, using gender appropriate pronouns; b) read, learn and teach others about what transgender means; c) report acts of violence toward gender variant individuals; and d) work with local law enforcement, judges and clergy to educate them on hate crimes, violence, harassment, suicidal ideation, run-away and “throw-away” youth and the dangers of hate-filled sermons (Chen-Hayes, 2004).

Practice Implications. Youth and youth in child welfare. Youth are an exceptionally vulnerable population. With the challenges of changing bodies, changing times and extreme internal and external pressures conflicting with societal expectations, gender nonconformity is especially difficult for transgender youth. The external factors that transgender youth face are manifested most often through social pressures to

conform to traditional gender expectations. These social pressures emanate from popular culture, families, schools, peer groups, social service agencies and other institutions that define society's culture (Burgess, 1999). It is commonly held that gender identity is developed by the age of three. American society discounts that children have sexuality. Because it is assumed that sex and gender go hand in hand, children who question their birth-assigned gender are pathologized and labeled "gender dysphoric." Children who deviate from socially acceptable gender behaviors are pushed back in line by parental figures. Even though a display of gender non-conforming behaviors does not necessarily constitute a transgender child, society still seems to reward parents who maintain their children within gender-conforming roles (Mallon & DeCrescenzo, 2006).

Supports within schools and child welfare for gender variant children are poor. Too often accommodations for gender variant children might include a recommendation to "help that child be more of a boy" or "don't let her be too much of a tomboy." Given such a hostile environment, it is easy to blame a child is for his/her behaviors. In the midst of not fitting in or feeling socially isolated, these children may experience depression, anxiety, fear, anger, self-mutilation, low self-esteem and suicidal ideation. Oftentimes these behaviors are taken as further evidence that something is wrong with the child, instead of a normal response in attempting to accommodate oneself in such a hostile environment (Mallon & DeCrescenzo, 2006).

Mallon and Woronoff (2006) believe that issues of sexual and gender orientation have been at a low priority in child welfare improvement. They further believe that any political movement in the civil rights struggles for GLBT persons directly affects child

welfare practices (p. 116). Those working in child welfare would be negligent if they were not aware of the presence of gender variant children that come into the system. What would be even more unfortunate is if those working with gender variant children were not aware of the indifference to gender issues within the system and neglected to advocate for policies that supported the youth.

Given the fact that youth are not given a handbook on how to handle their sexuality as they enter puberty, nor are they given instructions on how to maneuver through the feelings of not fitting in when their gender does not match their birth-assigned sex, they are especially vulnerable to at-risk behaviors when their being part of the child welfare system is thrown into the mix. It is one thing when youth have parents who might not understand just as much as they don't understand themselves. It must be an surmountable challenge for youth to live in a strange home, in a strange community, surrounded by total strangers and all of this "strangeness" becomes more uncomfortable as their gender identity is ignored, or even worse, challenged. This can be a source of tension that eventually leads to destructive behaviors and/or outcomes. In order for youth to come to terms with a positive sexual identity means they have to come to terms with their sexual minority status. This is exactly the reason why it is imperative for social workers to have an awareness of what it means to be transgender and how it may affect youth, especially in child welfare. This awareness is an invaluable tool in educating and supporting those working with transgender youth.

Social work in schools. Schools are not the friendliest system for gender variant youth. Sometimes school officials may target these youth as watch them closely. Gender

variant boys may be mercilessly teased for not being “rough and tumble” and be pushed toward sport in order to “toughen them up.” Gender variant girls get teased, too. Though wearing androgynous or boys’ clothes is not out of the ordinary for girls these days, they are confronted with peers and adults who want them to learn proper etiquette (Mallon & DeCrescenzo, 2006). Gender variant youth are often confused with gay or lesbian youth. Though some boys may like playing with girl toys and some girls may enjoy wearing boys’ clothes, the distinct difference is that gay males and lesbian females do not express dissatisfaction with their gender.

Schools tend to be a central component in virtually every adolescent’s life. This is where they make friends, learn social skills, and learn how to communicate, solve problems, and maneuver in their world more autonomously. Although these skills are healthy and the environment is important, school can be a dangerous place for a gender variant youth. As social as school is, there is a lot of teasing toward individuals who seem “out of place.” This teasing may encompass using terms such as fag, dyke, queer, lezzie and homo and may go unchallenged by teachers, administrators and the minority group at which these words are thrown.

It is not uncommon for gender variant youth to remain closeted during the school setting. As a reaction to this stress, transgender youth may socially isolate themselves or even drop out of school. Some become overachievers or take on a hyper-heterosexuality image. Those who are more open about their gender or sexual orientation face the prospect of harassment and negativity not only from students, but also administration. In one study nearly half of the GLBT youth who disclosed their sexual orientation reported

losing friends because of their disclosure. In the same study 27% reported being physically assaulted by other students because of their sexual orientation (Morrow, 2004).

What can the social worker do? Schools are reluctant to prepare students and teachers to cope with anti-GLBT rhetoric. Most diversity and health curricula omit GLBT content because it can spark political controversy with parents and communities. The silence and ignorance perpetuates misinformation, lack of tolerance, hatred and violence. Teachers and administrators fear being GLBT-sympathetic may jeopardize their jobs (Morrow, 2004). Social workers who work within school systems are at an advantage. Though they do not teach students per se, their interactions within the student population afford them the opportunity to educate, support and guide those struggling with gender issues, whether it be a person who is gender variant or a person who is struggling with intolerance.

Gender variant and transgender youth already feel different from their peers and may become isolated for fear that their orientation or transgender identity will be discovered before they are ready to come out. As a result of their sexual orientation or gender status, teens may experience social ridicule, lack of acceptance, harassment or violence (Morrow, 2004). Rotheram-Borus et al. (as cited in Morrow) reported that over 50% of sexual minority youth are ridiculed by their peers. In addition, the most frequent abusers of GLBT youth are other teens (Morrow). It is already tough enough to be a teenager and get through life with the usual teenage social, emotional and physical changes and challenges. To be a teenager who is also discovering or coming to grips with

his/her gender or sexual orientation is only an added struggle to contend with. Youth can be unkind to their peers and sometimes the fear of being harassed or treated poorly reflects in lack of school performance. Burgess reports that those who fear for their safety may isolate themselves, have high absenteeism or drop out of school altogether (Morrow).

Social workers in the school setting need to understand how difficult it is for gender variant youth to co-exist in an environment in which it can be unsafe. They can lend support for those youth struggling with identity issues. They can help create a safe space for these youth to co-exist with peers while still being actively involved in academic life. These social workers can also use their knowledge to educate others in an effort to help increase sensitivity and maybe improve competence in the serving of sexually or gender diverse youth.

Therapy. One of the most important aspects of being a competent therapist is in understanding the commitment to do no harm. When serving the transgender client, it is important to at least have an awareness of what “transgender” means. But, being aware does not mean that the therapist is necessarily knowledgeable about this diverse group. At the very least, therapists should have enough awareness to know what questions to ask that will prepare them to know if they will be able to take on the client or if referring them to someone else is the better choice. Once there is awareness, even if the knowledge is limited, therapists may choose to move forward and use their existing skills to help guide them in learning more about their client and their client’s gender identity. Fee (2006) believes that therapists also need to be more aware and open to exploring their

own position in relation to gender, as there is no framework for existing without a gendered identity. As therapy still relies on psychoanalytical principals for understanding normal gendered experiences, this continues to influence normative cultural assumptions. Many therapists still pathologize those who express gender variation. This perpetuates the belief that anatomical differences and genitalia offer a certainty about who we are (Fee). Even with limited knowledge, the aware therapist and the client can mutually cultivate a relationship that will not only serve the client, but also enhance the therapist's response to future transgender or other gender variant individuals.

In a study to identify variables that characterized helpful and unhelpful psychotherapy experiences for GLBT clients, therapists defined as helpful situations in which the therapist was knowledgeable, helpful, and appropriate or affirming in dealing with the client's sexual orientation or gender identity. Researchers found that the therapeutic relationship emerged as a crucial variable that characterized both helpful and unhelpful situations. Positive therapeutic relationships were seen as helpful and situations where a therapist was judgmental, indifferent, cold and disaffirming were seen as unhelpful. An important outcome of this study showed that the most common consequence of an unhelpful therapeutic situation tended to be early termination (Israel, Gorcheva, Walther, Sulzner, & Cohen, 2008). This highlights just how important it is for a therapist to keep from getting into a situation where harm can be done. While it is not easy to understand or accept every client who walks through the door, an essential element for a therapist in doing no harm to transgender clients includes having a good

sense of self awareness around gender and understanding the client's goals instead of assuming the goal is that of gender conformity.

Having knowledgeable social workers is one factor in not only making therapy available to transgender people, but also in the willingness of transgender people to seek these services. In a survey conducted by Docter and Prince (1997), 45% of their respondents reported seeking counseling either from a psychiatrist or a psychologist, with 67% feeling as though they had been helped, while in a similar study by Prince and Bentler (as cited in Docter & Prince) it was reported that 24% had sought therapeutic services and only 47% felt that they had been helped. The researchers of this study attributed the difference to more accurate information being given to mental health professionals and the accessibility to more training on the subject now than there ever has been (Docter & Prince).

For youth, therapists may be helping the individual with identity development. The Cass Model (Morrow, 2004) is a useful tool for assessing identity development for gay and lesbian youth. By using the scale, therapists can help youth identify where they fall with regard to their self-identity and see what risk factors might befall them given the rating. Unfortunately, there is no scale for transgender youth, but the model can be used to measure positive self acceptance and related risks. The at-risk youth are subject to social ridicule, lack of acceptance, harassment or violence. They may be referred to a therapist due to depression, substance abuse, suicidality, victimization or because someone is concerned for their well-being. In working with youth, one of the primary goals is to establish a safe place, a place where disclosure can happen without

repercussions. A place where fear can be talked about without the need to hide; a place where youth can be who they are or who they want to be without fear of retaliation. A place where it is okay to talk about what it is like to not fit in and in return receive validation for their feelings. Most importantly, a therapist should strive to educate and be an advocate for gender diversity. To support this, they might have basic but accurate literature in their office or they might share their knowledge with others in order to encourage cultural sensitivity among co-workers, schools or organizations (Morrow).

Gaps in Training

Many professional counselors have had little or no coursework or education in sexual orientation and gender identity and expression counseling. To be culturally competent in sexual orientation and gender identity and expression counseling, it is helpful to clarify basic concepts of biological sex, gender, gender identity, gender role, and sexual orientation (Chen-Hayes, 2001). Abraham Verghese (as cited in Blechner, 2007) coined the term “homo-ignorance” when he was working as a physician and realized he knew little about homosexuality. Besides homo-ignorance, there is also transgender-ignorance and transvestite-ignorance, and other kinds of ignorance. Blechner believes that there is too little information taught as to sexual expression within psychoanalytic training. Blechner’s analysis reveals an understanding of the difference between sex and gender, but he does a poor job of differentiating between the two in his reference to further training. This perpetuates the fact that the important issues of gender are largely unexplored.

The all too familiar dual categorization of gender into male and female complicates not only service seekers, but also service providers. Some of those seeking therapeutic service believe they have a problem because they do not seem to experience what society dictates is gender normal. The therapist may also take on this view and see gender conformity a therapeutic goal (Fee, 2006). In separate studies conducted by Bartlett, King and Philips; Garnets et al.; and Hayes and Gelso (as cited by Israel, et al., 2008), there was agreement that when a therapist viewed homosexuality as a disorder and attributed all presenting concerns to sexual orientation, it contributed to an unhelpful therapy experience. However, there are limited studies that have deviated beyond therapist characteristics, behaviors or responses to client sexual orientation. Also, previous research has not included transgender or bisexual clients nor have researchers inquired beyond therapist behaviors (Israel, et al., 2008).

Students of psychology (the background of many therapeutic psychologists) are unaware of the distinction between the terms “gender” and “sex” and oftentimes use the words interchangeably. Professors are equally neglectful in separating these two terms and seeing them as “sex” being biological and “gender” as socially constructed. In the psychology curriculum more could be done to educate students about transgender people (Case, Stewart & Tittsworth, 2009).

As for the social work curriculum, there is a need to move beyond specific content to include gender awareness and consciousness. Social work students, like so many, are so immersed in the gendered culture that they cannot see the gendered assumptions and ramifications of their world. Oftentimes gender is so taken for granted

that social work students may not question it. Therefore, part of social work educators' job is to raise their own consciousness about the implications of gender, outside of the classroom as well as within it (McPhail, 2008). In order to raise consciousness, there first needs to be awareness that consciousness needs to be raised. There also needs to be awareness as to the implications of the raised consciousness.

Chapter 3

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

Considering that diversity courses might include gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender populations, such courses may only provide an all-inclusive generalized content as to all four groups. However, transgender specific content is not adequately covered in diversity courses currently being taught at the MSW course level at California State University Sacramento. Lack of transgender specific content in diversity curriculum creates a void in students' knowledge and awareness, whereby this vulnerable population may not receive adequate outreach and services as provided by individual social workers. In order to address the lack of transgender specific content, the researcher has created a curriculum that integrates a more in-depth look at transgender studies as a supplement to already prescribed diversity courses.

Research Problem

Currently, MSW diversity courses fail to adequately provide transgender-specific content. Without the inclusion of transgender-specific education, social workers are less prepared for and less competent in their abilities to serve the transgender community.

To uphold the ethical standards as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics (2008) as to cultural competence and social diversity: to empower, advocate for, and understand how being transgender impacts human life, and to accept that self-definition equals self-determination, social workers need to understand what it means to be transgender. Social workers are also obligated to serve oppressed and vulnerable populations, eliminate

discrimination based on sex, gender identity or expression and to seek social change to ensure the well-being of all people (NASW).

To serve effectively, one must become aware. Awareness comes from the integration of information. Information that challenges the binary attitudes and assumptions about gender identity and expression is one way to increase awareness and understanding of the transgender population. Mallon and DeCrescenzo (2006) indicate that very few gender-specialized services exist in mental health and child welfare systems across the country. They also indicate that most schools of social work are not preparing practitioners to respond to the needs of this population.

The curriculum contained in this project will provide information and education for anyone, including social work students, and can contribute to a better understanding of the transgender population. The better educated and aware social workers are about the world around them, the better equipped they are to help people in need and address social issues.

Methods

The project curriculum is much like a chapter in a book, and it can be used as a supplement to an already existing diversity class. This curriculum is designed to inform students in a diversity class about the transgender population, as it relates to a micro and a macro level of understanding, and not just a subset of the GLB population. While some instructors may not necessarily be knowledgeable about transgender people, culture and history, the use of a data extraction sheet (Appendix A) allowed the researcher to comb through the data, pulling out information to be used in the curriculum. In reviewing the

subject of transgender and how it could be applied to a social work curriculum, the researcher included discussions with colleagues and friends, as well as transgender people. The researcher asked colleagues and friends what they knew about transgender people. Conversations mostly included what they did not know. They were not familiar with terms, some were not even confident they knew what transgender meant, and though there was some familiarity with words, precise meanings were lacking. Transgender people were very familiar with the terminology and explained what was politically correct to be used by a non-transgender person as well as terms used within the transgender circle. The literature was fraught with terminology, usually beginning any research, article, book or other piece of information with definitions, and it was evident that terminology was of the utmost importance in understanding transgender. Also articulated in many discussions was the clarification between gender, sex and sexuality and how it is important for people to understand the continuums of each in order to truly understand transgender people. Many articles, books and websites stressed the importance of understanding that gender and sex are not equal and that society as a whole operates on a gender binary concept, believing that there are two sexes corresponding to two genders. Further, most people believe that they are mutually exclusive. This became a very important piece of information, and so terminology associated with transgender, along with defining the concepts of gender, sex and sexuality, were the first themes decided upon for data extraction.

Through reading posts on a Yahoo transgender discussion group, transgender history came up over and over in many of the messages. It became clear that history was

important for transgender people. Through continued research, some part of transgender history was included in almost all of the research articles as well as syllabi that were reviewed. It was helpful to know that other professors felt that history was important in teaching about transgender. There were several important pioneers in transgender history who are still important and incorporated into literature today. In the researcher's own experience, there have been portrayals of and reference to transgender people in many contexts of media. Because of its implied importance, the history of transgender people became the second theme included in the data extraction.

Through reviewing transgender history, it was evident that history did not happen without political struggles. At the beginning of this research there were two outstanding bills before Congress waiting to be passed. Both affected the rights of transgender people. One was the Matthew Shepard Act, a hate crimes bill, and the other was the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Transgender people are more visible now than they were a hundred years ago, and along with that visibility came rights. Because transgender people do not fit typical gender norms, they have had to fight for their place in society and alongside other minority groups who have also had to gain their own political status. In order for the curriculum to establish what the political struggles have been for transgender people, this became the third area for focus in the data extraction.

Because this research is dedicated to creating a curriculum to supplement a social work diversity course, it was only fitting to include how this information will implicate social work. The literature and personal communication with transgender people gave a voice to the areas where social work is most prevalent or needed. The researcher asked

transgender friends what they wanted others to know about them and first on their list was not the what, but the who. They need therapists who know or are willing to learn about transgender people and how to help them when they seek services. Several studies pointed out the difference in therapeutic outcomes based on a therapist's knowledge about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. Since many therapists in practice come from a social work background, and because this is a need for transgender people, the researcher felt it was important to include this as part of the data extraction. Youth are already a vulnerable population and the literature pointed to the importance of supporting transgender youth in the community, in schools and especially in child welfare. The research indicated that the medical field was an area where social workers can be especially helpful, whether it be for the transgender patient or their family. The last area included was identified through information researched on the political history of transgender people. No rights were ever won without someone fighting for them. Since social workers are ethically responsible for challenging social injustice, it was important to include how social workers can advocate for social change for oppressed individuals and groups. In reviewing the most prevalent areas where social work can impact the lives of transgender people, the final focus for the data extraction includes how social work through therapy, with youth, and in the medical field, as well as social advocacy, can benefit transgender people.

Through the use of the data extraction sheet, this curriculum will adequately outline what the data analysis and the researcher have found to be important when learning about this diverse population and their culture and make it usable for any

instructor. There are many misconceptions about transgender individuals and this curriculum is designed to inform and educate social work students in preparation for future engagement with someone who is transgender or someone who is associated with a transgender person. The curriculum is also designed to help social work students become aware of their own biases toward gender variant people, thus preparing them for future interactions with transgender issues.

The curriculum starts off with a discussion about terminology used when referring to the different aspects of the transgender population. It is important to become familiar with the language of a culture before one can understand the meanings behind that language. Terms used about and within this culture are essential in this understanding. Information will be presented about concepts essential to the discussion and support of transgender people, including how and why transgender people have come to our attention and why it is important to know this. Especially important in understanding this population, and will be included in the curriculum, is the distinction between sex and gender. This will be clearly articulated and discussed in an effort to clarify where transgender people fall on the sexual and/or gender spectrum. Next, a historical perspective will be presented. Contained within this history is terminology as it has trailed the progression of transgender life. As the history of terminology and gender roles are explained, there will be a discussion of historical people who have a connection to transgender history. Important individuals who have made significant contributions to the transgender history are explored as are their offerings. Political history and laws affecting the transgender population will be explored up through the present day. Significant

information regarding the implications of transgender study to social work practice is also included within this curriculum. It is important for social workers to understand where and how they may be presented with transgender issues and in what respect they may be called to act. Specific areas of focus discussed include social work in communities, schools, the medical field, counseling, and child welfare and advocacy.

Study Design

This study is a meta analysis of transgender information that was available in the context of varying forms of resources. In developing this project, the design incorporated the use of journal and professional articles, books, movies, radio, public transgender informative websites, and course syllabi on transgender studies from colleges, employment trainings and workshops. What have become of great importance were the researcher's affiliation with a local transgender support and social group and the personal communication with the transgender population. As the researcher combed through transgender relevant information and listened to personal stories of transgender people, it set the stage for writing a curriculum that is relevant for social work students to know about the transgender population.

To find the information contained within the curriculum the researcher utilized the Academic Search Premier (EBSCO) Database & Article Searching and the Research Guide located through the California State University Sacramento library services, as well as the World Wide Web in order to search and locate transgender information. Through these particular resources, further resources, such as books, movies, transgender specific websites and transgender specific educational sources were found and further

utilized. During the initial review of research articles and books, the researcher took preliminary notes as to the main themes or information each written source transmitted, then saved, printed, or bookmarked that particular source in some way.

After viewing the films, notes were taken to document what message or messages came through and could be used as a talking point or to add to a transgender curriculum. Websites that were viewed were transgender specific or were directly related to transgender issues. The websites were viewed for two reasons. The first reason was to gain insight into transgender issues, as was reading professional articles. The second reason was to follow up and gain further knowledge about information other sources cited. Many articles and syllabi cited books, research, films, people and organizations that gave contributions to transgender information.

The course syllabi were reviewed for their outlines. This gave the researcher a view of what other teachers/instructors have considered important for teaching transgender studies. The syllabi were categorized as to what audience was targeted for each specific class, training or workshop and what themes were represented. Notes continued to document relevant information and themes for all sources.

After the initial search, retrieval and note taking was completed, a review of the themes extracted from the sources was compiled and a data extraction sheet was created (see Appendix A). The data extraction sheet contained the four most prevalent themes that came out of the material reviewed. The researcher found four themes that seemed to be brought up over and over in most of the sources. These themes include: a) definitions of transgender terminology, b) transgender history, c) political struggles of the

transgender population, and d) how the knowledge of the transgender population has implications for social work.

Continuing on with a full and more in-depth review of the sources, the data extraction sheet was used. This set up a more formal structure for further analysis of the material, allowing the researcher to pull out specific and relevant information from the sources about the transgender population that was consistent with each of the themes. Once every source and resource was carefully reviewed and identified with a theme, and notes were compiled accordingly, the researcher used the data extraction sheet as a guide to help create the outline for the curriculum.

Throughout this process of gathering and reviewing information from concrete sources, the researcher used personal communication as another way to gain information. The researcher started asking transgender friends and acquaintances from the local transgender support group what they thought was important for someone learning about the transgender population to know. To gain some personal insight, the researcher asked individuals what important things they wanted others to know about them in particular. The researcher asked them what they felt was missing from the public's knowledge or what they felt the transgender community needed more of. Information gathered through this process was also themed and added to the data extraction sheet for use in the curriculum.

Sampling Procedures

This project was written as a meta analysis of existing data gathered using various forms of documentation. Resources used for this project include: journal and professional

articles, books, movies, radio, public electronic media, and my own personal experience with the transgender community in an effort to gather all of the information used within this project.

Data Collection, Instruments Used and Data Analysis

The manual was constructed from a deep secondary meta analysis of already existing sources, including academic sources, historical data, books, film, and other relevant sources, including the researcher's personal involvement in the transgender community. This analysis helped to determine what was most relevant to include in an introductory transgender curriculum. The articles reviewed contained historical and political data. Research indicated what was missing from and is still needed to support transgender people. The books gave personal accounts of transgender lives and the researcher's personal interactions with the transgender community gave personal insight and experience into how transgender people live, love, struggle, survive, and cope with a lifestyle cautiously embraced as members of a non-conforming, gender-variant, and socially isolated group.

In order to gather information from all sources relevant to constructing the curriculum, a data extraction sheet was used (see Appendix A). This data extraction sheet outlined important and specific information and themes that allowed the researcher to comb through the data, pulling out the information to be used in the curriculum.

The first thing the researcher found to be especially important was the language used when referring to the transgender population. This prompted the first theme of

vocabulary and its relation to the issues. References help in understanding terminology and concepts essential in understanding the transgender population.

The next theme is that of differentiating between gender, sex and sexuality and the implications for correct and incorrect use of these terms. The third theme that was prevalent in the literature review was that of the historical perspective of transgenderism. Understanding the language and concepts associate with that language provides a background for understanding how it all came to be. Who came up with what terminology and when is important in understanding the history of the transgender development. Along with a historical perspective, legal implications are just as relevant. The fourth theme came to light as the researcher acknowledged the political struggles the transgender population has endured over time and what has been won and gained through political activism. The final theme came about from the researcher's belief that social work students could be better prepared and better educated in order to serve the transgender population. Understanding the implications for social work brings to light just how prevalent the need is for transgender education in the social work curriculum.

Organization

The project curriculum was designed through the use of themes that emerged through in the literature reviewed and the use of the data extraction sheet, as well as personal experience the researcher has with the transgender population. The themes that are incorporated into the curriculum identify important aspects of the transgender population that are important in beginning to understand an unfamiliar culture. While interacting with a transgender group over the period of a year, the researcher was able to

collect additional information through personal experience that was consistent with themes that came out of the review of all pre-existing sources. The themes that are introduced throughout this curriculum help to separate out what is seen as relevant and important for non-transgender people to know about the transgender population and culture. Also included as relevant and important is how the knowledge of the transgender population translates into culturally competent social work practice.

Protection of Human Subjects

The Protocol for the Protection of Human Subjects has been submitted and approved by the Division of Social Work as no-risk. Considering all aspects of this project, the researcher contends that there is no risk to human subjects. In that this is a project consisting of a manual or component written about the transgender population, specifically to supplement an already existing diversity class curriculum, there will be no research subjects. The curriculum component will be developed from a secondary data analysis of existing public sources.

Chapter 4

PROJECT

Transgender: A Curriculum for Inclusion

As social workers, we have an obligation to gain knowledge about the diverse cultures and populations around us. Without this knowledge it becomes more difficult to adhere to the ethical principles held by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) to understand culture and its function in human behavior. In looking at diverse cultures, social work students also start to become aware of their own biases in relation to these diverse groups so that they are better able to objectify their response when they are presented with the opportunity to provide service.

To honor diversity and populations at risk, social workers need to build on their repertoire of social work skills and strategies for social work practice within the context of human diversity. The NASW holds that we should have a knowledge base of our clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2008). Social workers may play different roles in the lives of transgender clients. They may be case managers for transgender youth in child welfare or youth services. They may serve as therapists assisting transgender persons who seek to find meaning in their "diverse" lifestyle or who want to pursue sex reassignment surgery. They might serve families of transgender people who seek to respond affirmatively to their transitioning loved one. School social workers can create safe places for transgender youth, and medical social workers could help sex reassignment surgery patients navigate the

psychosocial aspect of their transition. At a broader level, social workers join political advocacy efforts to ensure the rights of the transgender community (Burdge, 2007).

In order for social workers to begin work in becoming culturally competent with transgender people, there needs to be an early inclusion of transgender education. This information, which is important for creating awareness in the social work student, is the purpose of this curriculum.

It is important to try to understand what it means to be transgender, so the first section of this curriculum defines transgender terminology and definitions important in understanding this population. It will explore what gender is and how this knowledge is important in the understanding of gender variance.

The second section will address the history surrounding the transgender population. This history describes how we have become aware of transgender people and in what ways transgender people have been among us, even before we had words to describe their identity.

The third section will discuss the political struggles transgender people have had to endure in history and that still persist today. From the first Sexual Reassignment Surgery to the 2009 Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which was just recently signed into law, transgender people have struggled to be understood and protected under basic human and civil rights.

The last section will identify how the knowledge and awareness of transgender people has implications for social work practice. The information will set a foundation in which any social work student can build on in order to become culturally aware of and

recognize the strengths of a person who is transgender. In doing this, a social worker will be better able to practice ethical responsibility for transgender and all diverse populations. The information here will prepare students to better serve the transgender population and community.

Transgender: A Curriculum for Inclusion

See the following pages to review the completed curriculum.

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank all the sisters I have met and grown to love through my affiliation with the River City Gems, a nonprofit organization with a mission to improve the lives of transgender individuals and their families. When I knew nothing about transgender people except the fact that I had much to learn, the members of the River City GEMS fully embraced me, first, as a student asking questions to fulfill a school assignment, then as an official member who regularly attends socials, making and becoming good friends with many of the members. I could not have come as far as I have in my knowledge of the transgender population without the continued support and encouragement of the transgender community. I have found the transgender community to be open to my quest for knowledge and insight. There has never been a time when I had a question that someone was not standing at the door, eager to answer. My friends constantly invited me into their personal lives to catch a glimpse of the transgender life from a different perspective. I have shared in one friend's personal experience with Sexual Reassignment Surgery and have watched a heterosexual male cross-dresser transform himself into a beautiful woman right before my eyes. I have dined, danced, and played with my transgender friends and I cannot foresee a day where I will not be an ally for and an active part of the transgender community. For this I am grateful and know I am blessed.

A special thanks to Alice Novic, psychiatrist, author, crossdresser and friend who opened her arms and her life to me when my thesis was just an idea. With five hundred miles between us, the email conversations and the gift of her book, *Alice in Genderland*,

Alice gave me a personal glimpse of the life and struggles of one male crossdresser. Alice remains an inspiration to me and my continued journey as a trans ally.

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I AM WHAT I AM
 (From the musical “La Cage Aux Folles”)

I am what I am
 I am my own special creation
 So come take a look
 Give me the hook or the ovation
 It’s my world that I want to have a little pride in
 My world, and it’s not a place I have to hide in
 Life’s not worth a damn ‘til you can say
 “Hey world, I am what I am!”
 I am what I am
 I don’t want praise
 I don’t want pity
 I bang my own drum Some think it’s noise I think it’s pretty
 And so what if I love each sparkle and each bangle?
 Why not try to see things from a different angle?
 Your life is a sham ‘til you can shout out loud: “I am what I am!”
 I am what I am
 And what I am needs no excuses
 I deal my own deck
 sometimes the ace, sometimes the deuces
 There’s one life and it’s no return and no deposit
 One life, so it’s time to open up your closet!
 Life’s not worth a damn ‘til you shout hey world “I am what I am!”
 (Herman, 1983)

Section One

The Vocabulary and the Issues

When it comes to sex, gender and sexual orientation, Western culture assumes that sex, gender and sexual orientation are fused and that they essentially, necessarily, and naturally relate to one another. Western culture also traditionally assumes that the relationship between sex, gender and sexual orientation creates two mutually exclusive results, male and female (Nye, 1998). Nye goes on to explain that society creates a gender box into which everyone should neatly fit. This box creates two realities: if your sex is male then your gender is masculine and you are sexually attracted to women. If your sex is female then your gender is feminine and you are sexually attracted to men. The gender box is equally confining for both man and woman, with no room for variance. You must fit into either one box or the other; you cannot be in both at the same time. She quotes Leslie Feinberg as saying, “the...dominant view [is] that woman and man are all that exist and that there is only one way to be a woman or a man” (Nye, p. 6).

Figure 1 illustrates three terms the reader should become familiar with in order to more fully understand the term transgender.

Sex

Sex is the biological and physical aspects of the human body. It encompasses internal and external organs, chromosomes, hormonal levels, genitalia, etc. At birth individuals can be born either solely male, solely female or somewhere in between; those in the middle are usually referred to as intersexed. With changes (either chosen or unchosen) a person can move along this spectrum.

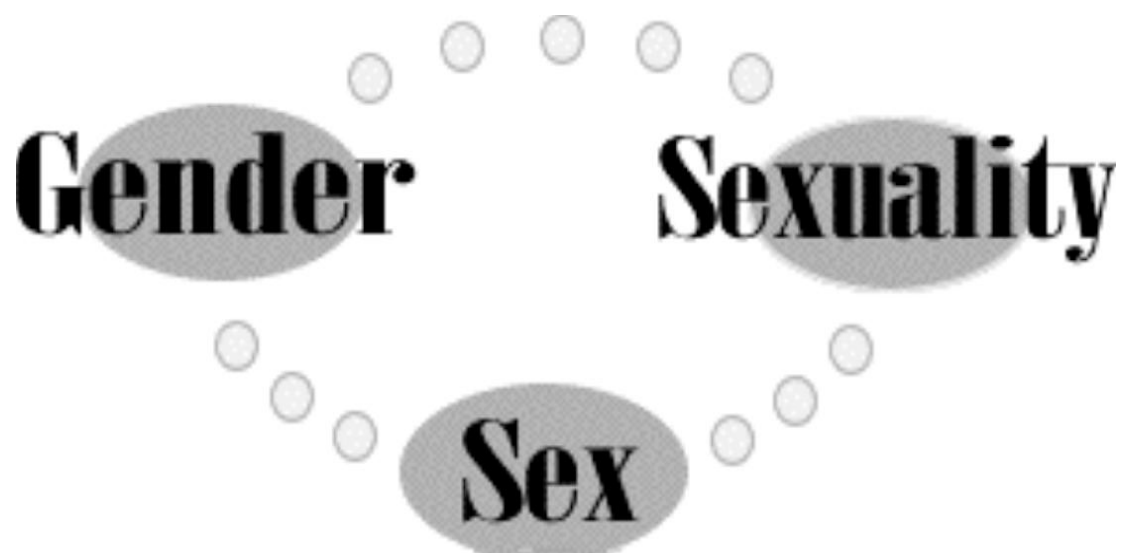


Figure 1: Sex, Gender and Sexuality are not the same

“Intersex” is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. Or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in-between the usual male and female types. For example, a girl may be born with a noticeably large clitoris, or lacking a vaginal opening, or a boy may be born with a notably small penis, or with a scrotum that is divided so that it has formed more like labia. Or a person may be born with mosaic genetics, so that some of her cells have XX chromosomes and some of them have XY. Because there are variations of sexual anatomy there is no concrete determination as to which variation is classified as

intersex. In human cultures, sex categories get simplified into male, female, and sometimes intersex, in order to simplify social interactions, express what we know and feel, and maintain order. So nature doesn't decide where the category of "male" ends and the category of "intersex" begin, or where the category of "intersex" ends and the category of "female" begin (Intersex Society of North America, 2008).

Gender

Gender is in one's mind, spirit and soul. It is the sense of one's being based on emotional, mental, spiritual, cultural and other non-physical aspects. A person's gender includes IDENTITY (how one views him/herself in relation to how society defines a man or a woman), EXPRESSION (the way one allows others to view him/her), and ATTRIBUTION (what someone assumes about your gender when they look at you). Again, an individual may fall anywhere along these spectra.

In the book *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Rupaul*, Leslie Feinberg writes "When I was born...the doctor confidently declared, 'it's a girl'. That may have been the last time anyone was so sure" (Nye, 1998). In the movie "Ma Vie en Rose," Ludovic is a gender challenged little boy. While he was pronounced a boy at birth, his emerging female identity and expression challenged his family's perceptions as to his male attributions constructed at the beginning of his life (Scotta & Berliner, 1997). Their assumption as to their little boy's gender was firmly based on what they could see and what they believed to be consistent with what they saw, his physical attributes. Ludovic innocently donned his sister's dress, wore his mother's lipstick and proudly proclaimed that he could not wait until he would become a girl and marry his

best friend, another little boy. While Ludovic's sex, gender and sexual orientation might have been considered to be fused and thought of as essentially, necessarily, and naturally relating to one another, as is assumed in Western culture, his thoughts, feelings and behaviors leave us with something more to consider. Gender is far more than what is logically constructed through the existence of physical and environmental factors. It has to take into consideration the non-physical factors too.

Sexuality

Sexuality (sexual/affectional orientation; who you are attracted to) also varies greatly individual to individual. If you think of men being on one side of the spectrum and women being on the other, it may be males/females that the person is attracted to, or is it really masculinity/femininity? For someone in the middle of the spectrum, are gender variant individuals attractive to you?

While being transgender is not directly relational to sexuality as defined here, most transsexuals identify themselves as heterosexual, though this is a somewhat neglected field of study. One such study conducted on male-to-female (MTF) transsexuals (an all biological-male sample) indicates that before sexual reassignment surgery, 54% of participants had been predominantly attracted to women and 9% had been predominantly attracted to men. After sex reassignment surgery, these figures were 25% and 34%, respectively (Lawrence, 2005), while Schroeder and Carroll's study (as cited in Lawrence) found that after MTF sex reassignment surgery, about half were sexually attracted to males, about one-third were bisexual, and nearly one-fifth were sexually attracted to females. This is an area where the sex and gender intersections

deviate. Sexual orientation is about as predictable in gender variant individuals as it is in non-gender variant individuals.

Sex/Gender/Sexuality Continuums

Sex, gender, and sexuality can all be thought of as continuums. Figure 2 shows several continuums. Where would you fall on these continuums?

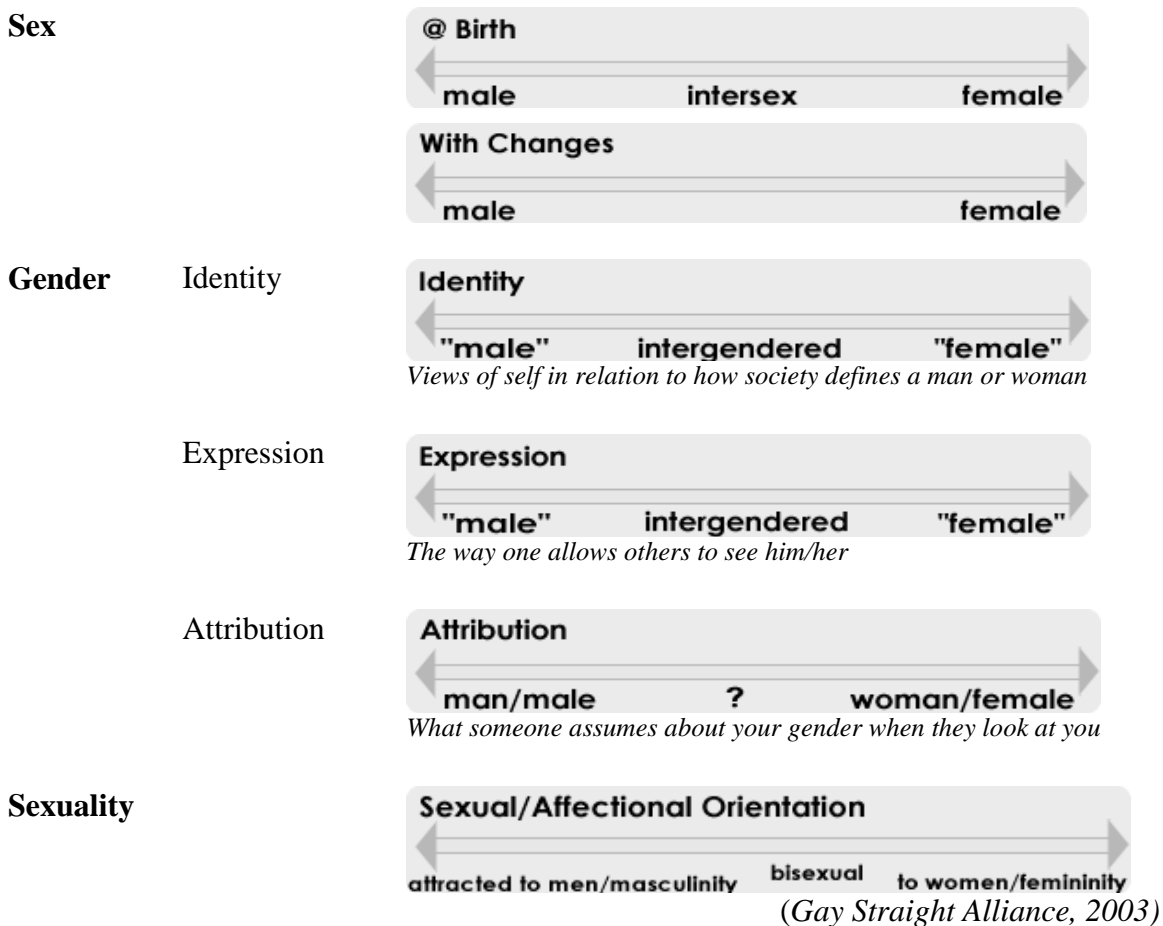


Figure 2: Sex, Gender, Sexuality Continuums

Early Learning About Gender

In order to begin to understand gender and transgender, we need to look at what we already know about gender and what we think we know. Much of what we know about gender comes from our early experiences. We have to look at those early experiences that lead to our early learning about gender. The following exercise is designed to create an awareness of our early learning and development of the understanding of gender.

For the following questions try to answer with the following in mind:

- 1) When did it occur?
 - 2) How old were you?
 - 3) How did you feel about the situation?
 - 4) How did the experience influence your attitudes, values or beliefs?
-
1. When was the first time you became aware that boys were different from girls?
 2. When was the first time you became aware that boys and girls were treated differently?
 3. When was the first time that you realized that there were different gender roles for boys and girls?
 4. When was the first time that you realized that the different gender roles were used as gender rules?

5. When was the first time you became aware that some people had a gender identity (how someone sees them self as boy, girl, man, woman) or gender expression (how someone expresses themselves-masculine, feminine, androgynous, etc.) that differed from the gender stereotypes you were raised with?
6. When was the first time you realized that people were treated differently because they did not fit the gender stereotypes you were raised with?
7. As a child or young adult, what did you learn about breaking gender rules from your parents, friends, religious experience, other?
8. When was the first time you were challenged about your beliefs and attitudes regarding gender or gender expression beliefs and attitudes? (Serene, 2002)

Transgender Terminology

The term “transgender” is a challenge to the social construction of gender. In one way or another transgender people place themselves outside the conventional female/male dichotomy, yet live in a social world that recognizes only females and males (Kessler & McKenna, 2004). Elkins & King (1997) assert that there is a wide base for terms used to describe individuals who cross gender boundaries.

To better understand the world of a transgender person, it is important to become familiar with the terminology associated with the population. We have already defined sex and gender, but those two terms are not transgender exclusive. We must become familiar with other terminology that is in line with the transgender population. There are many formal and slang terminologies for a transgender person. Some are politically correct to be used by non-transgender persons. Other terms are more commonly used

only in the transgender circle of relationship. Some terms are considered derogatory in nature for many transgender people and acceptable for others, but not politically correct for any non-transgender person to use when addressing a transgender person. For purposes of this curriculum, common and politically correct terminology will be emphasized and explained, as this will ensure the most effective communication when interacting with transgender and non-transgender persons. In order to verify the information presented in this section of the curriculum, the researcher consulted with transgender friends on terminology from an insider's perspective.

Transgender: Any kind of dress and/or behavior interpreted as “transgressing” gender roles. An umbrella term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth, including but not limited to transsexuals, cross-dressers, androgynous people, genderqueers, and gender non-conforming people. Transgender is a broad term and is good for non-transgender people to use.

Crossdresser: A person with a penchant for wearing the clothes of the opposite sex. Sexual orientation is not a specific factor for such people.

Transsexual: A person who self-identifies as a member of one sex while possessing the anatomy of the opposite sex. Not all transsexual individuals undergo sexual reassignment surgery for various reasons, including personal choice.

Transvestite: A person who enjoys wearing clothes identified with the opposite gender; often but not always straight. While some prefer to identify as a “crossdresser,” others still use the term transvestite.

Trans: A shortened word to describe those who fall under the umbrella of transgender.

Drag King or Drag Queen: Biological males and females who present part-time as members of the other sex primarily to perform or entertain.

Male to Female or MTF: Refers to someone born male who identifies as female.

Female to Male or FTM: Refers to someone born female who identifies as male.

Femme: A feminine-appearing person.

Pass or Passing: A term used by transgender people to mean that they are seen as the gender with which they self-identify. For example, a transgender man (born female) who most people see as a man.

Stealth: The act of living in plain sight without being seen as transgender or being read; to blend in.

Androgynous: Having both male and female characteristics, or neither

Gender Blending: Emphasizes not so much traditional kinds of cross dressing, but a confusion of costume whereby the illusion of assuming the opposite sex is not intended to convince the viewer of authenticity but to suggest ambiguity.

Gender Queer: Individuals who do not want to be boxed in to either sexual orientation or gender identity.

Gender Non-conforming: A term for individuals whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.

Gender Variant: A broad term to describe persons who perceive their gender as non-conforming to societal norms.

Gender Expression: How a person represents or expresses his/her gender identity to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, and voice or body characteristics.

Gender Identity: An individual's internal sense of being male, female, or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

Intersexual: People who have ambiguous reproductive structures, leaving them neither completely male nor completely female.

Gender Identity Disorder: The classification for transsexuality in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2001). Most transsexual people strongly object to being considered mentally ill, arguing that it is a completely inaccurate diagnosis and serves to dehumanize and pathologize them.

However, some transsexuals in countries such as Canada and Holland support Gender Identity Disorder being recognized as a mental disorder, because it enables them to have their gender reassignment surgeries covered by government health insurance (gender reassignment surgeries are rarely covered in the U.S.).

Transition: The period during which a person begins to live as his/her new gender. Transitioning may include changing one's name, taking hormones, having surgery, or changing legal documents (e.g., driver's license, Social Security record, birth certificate) to reflect the new gender.

Sex Reassignment Surgery: Surgical procedures that change one's body to make it conform to a person's gender identity. This may include "top surgery" (breast augmentation or removal) or "bottom surgery" (altering genitals). Contrary to popular

belief, there is not one surgery; in fact, there are many different surgeries. “Sex change surgery” is considered a derogatory term by many.

The Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association’s Standards of

Care: The Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association’s Standards of

Care for Gender Identity Disorders is designed to articulate this international

organization’s professional consensus about the psychiatric, psychological, medical, and

surgical management of gender identity disorders. The Standards of Care are intended to

provide flexible directions for the treatment of persons with gender identity disorders.

The general goal of psychotherapeutic, endocrine, or surgical therapy for persons with

gender identity disorders is lasting personal comfort with the gendered self in order to

maximize overall psychological well-being and self-fulfillment (Beemyn, n.d.; Bullough

& Bullough, 1993; International Foundation for Gender Education, 2009; National Center

for Transgender Equality, 2009; Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria

Association, 2001).

It is important to remember that while terminology is helpful in understanding any

population, people tend to categorize themselves. This identification can be helpful in

finding like-minded others for friendship, or to relate better in an unfamiliar setting, but it

can be hurtful if imposed on an individual by others, whether well-intentioned or not. In

relating to transgender folk, it is best to avoid pushing individuals to choose a category

for themselves. Some folks prefer to explore the fringes of category, and a push for

identification works against personal exploration and fulfillment (International

Foundation for Gender Education, 2009). When trying to understand an unfamiliar

population, be honest about your unfamiliarity with its construction and do not be afraid to ask for help in building your awareness of and empathy toward how people and populations what to be recognized.

Section Two

Transgender: a Historical Perspective

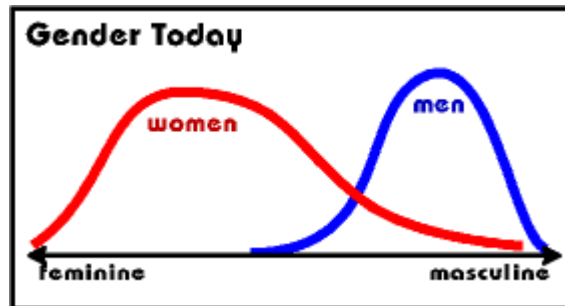
Gender variations are more common than most people suspect, because many people hide their true nature out of fear for their safety and security. Many people who explore transgender behavior do not self-identify as transgender. Women wearing pants may not seem transgender today, but fifty years ago it was. Boys wearing “girls’ clothes” may not call themselves “transgender,” yet they enjoy playing in this way. Crossdressing is enjoyed by both males and females, but appears more pronounced in males because of an imbalance in norms of attire and attitude (we see little transgression when a woman wears a suit).

Figure 3 depicts a graph showing how women’s range of gender extends through men’s range, but men’s range does not include women’s. Our gender “norms” are not symmetric. Women have won for themselves the right to a wide range of gender expression. Men have not made a corresponding effort. Most men live within a much narrower range of “acceptable” gender.

Who is Who?

Virginia Prince

In the late 1960s, Virginia Prince, the founder of Tri Ess, the first national organization for crossdressers, initially coined the term transgender or transgenderist to



(Nangeroni, 2007)

Figure 3: Gender Today

describe persons who live as the opposite of their biological sex, but without surgery. Later, activist Leslie Feinberg used the word transgender to describe anyone who fell outside of the traditional gender system to include transgender, transvestites and transsexuals (Serene, 2002).

David O. Cauldwel

In most literature, physician David O. Cauldwel is generally quoted as the person who came up with the terms “transsexual” and “transsexualism.” However, Magnus Hirschfeld not only was the first to use the term “transvestite,” beginning in 1910, he was the original person who referred to the term “transsexualism” in a paper he wrote in 1923 where he first mentioned “seelischer Transsexualismus,” meaning psychic transsexualism. This was actually about a quarter century before Cauldwel was given the credit (Pfaefflin, 1997; Elkins & King, 2001). In 1897 Hirschfeld founded the first gay rights organization, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee. One of his contributions to transgender history is when he went on to found the Institute of Sexology in 1919, which performed several sex reassignment surgeries.

Magnus Hirschfeld

Magnus Hirschfeld was born in 1868. Before he laid the cornerstone of what is now known as the gay movement and before he became the best known sexologist of his time, he worked as a general practitioner. At age 28 he published a booklet entitled “Sappho and Socrates, or how to explain the love of men and women for persons of their own sex.” From 1899 to 1923 he edited the “Yearbook of Sexual Intermediate States” which up to the present is one of the most enlightening historical sources for all kinds of gay and transgender forms of living. Hirschfeld became the best known sexologist of his time (Pfaefflin, 1997). The modern “trans” terminology really started around 1910 when Magnus Hirschfeld coined the term transvestite from the Latin words *trans* (“cross”) and *vestis* (dress”). Hirschfeld used the term transvestite to describe transsexuals, transvestites and drag queens. In 1923 he coined the term transsexual, but it did not become popular until 1949. It wasn’t until the work of Harry Benjamin, a doctor who started seeing “trans” clients in the early 1920s, that the two terms, transvestite and transsexual, had distinctly different meanings (Pfaefflin, 1997; Serene, 2002).

The first incomplete sex-reassignment surgeries in FTM patients were performed in Berlin in 1912 and in MTF transsexuals in 1920. The patients had been referred by Hirschfeld to the surgeon. This is true for the famous Dutch patient Niels Hoyer, alias Lilli Elbe, who was operated on in 1930 and who published her sensational and widely distributed autobiography in 1932 (Pfaefflin, 1997). A movie entitled “The Danish Girl,” recounting Lilli Elbe’s story, was released in 2008 (Hernandez, 2008). The first complete

MTF sex reassignment surgery was reported in 1931, and it was performed based on Hirschfeld's recommendation by two of his co-workers in his institute.

Harry Benjamin

Despite the controversy over which person originated the term transsexual, the work that the word traces back to most is that of Harry Benjamin. Benjamin was born almost twelve years after Hirschfeld, but they became friends later in life. Benjamin was a physician, formally trained as a geriatrician and an endocrinologist, and a scientist who helped pave a way to better understanding of transsexualism. He was an admirer of Hirschfeld, who was also a physician and who spent time trying to cure sexual disorders, including homosexuality. Early in his career and before he met Hirschfeld in 1926, Benjamin spent his time trying to extend and rejuvenate life even before he started treating transsexuals. His wish was to create a better quality of life for all of his patients (Pfaefflin, 1997; Serene, 2002).

Benjamin began seeing transsexual patients in the late 1920s. By the 1940s, he was spending his summers in San Francisco. It was there that Benjamin took an interest in treating transsexual patients. In 1948, he was asked by Alfred Kinsey to see a child patient of his whom he was assured was a girl, despite being born a boy. Benjamin had always had an interest in hormone therapy and treated the child with estrogen, which had a calming effect. Benjamin continued to refine his understand of hormone therapy, and shortly after openly introducing the term "transsexualism" to the medical community in 1957. He went on to treat several hundred patients with hormone therapy, often without taking payment. Carefully selected colleagues of various disciplines, such

as psychiatrist John Alden and electrologist Martha Foss assisted him in San Francisco, and plastic surgeon Jose Jesus Barbosa performed genital reconstructive surgery in Tijuana, Mexico (Goiar, 2009). At that time, doctors in the United States refused to prescribe hormones or perform sexual reassignment or genital reconstruction surgery to the transgender people who desired these procedures. Benjamin became a board member of the Foundation for Mind Research, an organization that helped to fund early work with transsexual people (Serene, 2002).

Christine Jorgensen

Christine Jorgensen, the first transsexual to really catch the public's eye, had received hormone treatments from Dr. Benjamin prior to her trip overseas for her sex reassignment surgery in 1952. When she returned, the publicity for Dr. Benjamin was overwhelming and in 1966 he published a book about the subject (Platine, 1997). Dr. Benjamin wrote in his book that he felt there was a biological reason for the condition stemming from prenatal hormonal influences. Early sex reassignment surgery in the United States, conducted at Johns Hopkins, was not much benefit to transsexuals. Because sexual identity and gender were not considered separate, and because only gay males were considered candidates, the outcomes resulted in suicides and unhappy MTF transsexuals who sadly found out that gay men weren't interested in someone with the "wrong" equipment. This tragic situation brought about the Harry Benjamin International Gender Association, a group of psychotherapists who took upon themselves to come up with standards of treatment for transsexuals, focusing on preventing the mistakes made at

Johns Hopkins (Platine). These standards still exist today and are the backbone for transsexuals who seek sex reassignment surgery.

After the sex reassignment surgery of Christine Jorgensen became widely publicized, Benjamin was regarded as a foremost expert in the transsexual field, bringing the word into widespread use. Benjamin's model for dealing with transgender people is still the basic paradigm for transsexual medical care. In honor of his pioneering contributions to the field, the association of medical and psychotherapeutic professionals who regulate access to transgender health care is known as the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association (Stryker, 2004).

This history created by Magnus Hirschfeld, David Cauldwell and Harry Benjamin gives us a comforting look at the progression of a gender phenomenon within the scientific community. These pioneers have researched and written about the outcomes of their research to try to give meaning to a life experience that had been around long before they took interest. Long before Hirschfeld contrived a suitable description that could adequately label this experience, there were the individuals themselves.

Renee Richards

Another famous transsexual was American-born Renee Richards. Richards, who was born Richard Raskind, had managed to create a new life for herself as a woman after a sex change operation in 1975 but a year later made a decision that was to have an even greater impact. She decided to take the United States Tennis Association to court for banning her from playing in women's events at the U.S. Open because she was a

transsexual. She won, winning headlines globally as a pioneer for transsexual rights. Richards was the world's most famous transsexual athlete.

Fame came at a cost for Richards, who as Richard Raskind graduated from Yale, served in the Navy, become a prominent ophthalmologist and internationally known amateur tennis player. Raskind also married and fathered a son, Nick. Her son, who is now 37 and still refers to her as "Dad" in private, attended many schools and struggled academically. He bounced between jobs before finally settling into a career as a real estate broker specializing in New York lofts."I am sure that had a lot to do with the chaos I went through in his childhood," said Richards, who refers to her son as "the apple of my eye." Although Richards' mother died before she had her sex change surgery, her father refused to acknowledge her sex change and her sister denies Richard's existence to friends. Richards' former wife, who remarried and had another son, only talks to Richards when they need to discuss their son (Goldsmith, 2007).

Transgender Progress through Popular Media

Popular media has brought the subject of transgender into our lives and living rooms as entertainment since the early beginnings of visual media. Notable actors and actresses have been seen on the screen transgressing gender norms.

In his early films, Charlie Chaplin used this technique. In 1914, he played a prizefighter in "The Knockout." His girlfriend wanted to see him fight; since women were forbidden from entering boxing arenas, she dressed as a man. A year later, Chaplin donned a dress in "A Woman" to escape the angry father of his beloved (Teague, 2003).

Through the years of black-and-white and into the early color years, the themes remained the same. In 1935, the Marx Brothers dressed in drag in “A Night at the Opera.” In 1948, Ingrid Bergman wore armor as Joan of Arc. Cary Grant slipped into a WAC uniform for 1949’s “I Was a Male War Bride.” For pathos, one of the prisoners of 1952’s “Stalag 17” stuck a mop head atop his own to become a dance partner for another prisoner. Meanwhile, at MGM, Elizabeth Taylor was having her hair cut short by Mickey Rooney in Technicolor for “National Velvet,” because girls could not ride in horse races (Teague, 2003).

In 1959, one of the finest examples of crossdressing comedy arrived at the theaters. Billy Wilder’s “Some Like it Hot,” starring Tony Curtis, Jack Lemmon and Marilyn Monroe, raised the bar to new levels. Although Curtis and Lemmon joined an all-girl band in an attempt to escape gangsters in Chicago, the subjects covered in the film were wider than skirts and flirts. How women walked, talked, dressed and dated, all were explored with considerable compassion (Teague, 2003).

More American Media with Transgender Content (the short list)

1. M.A.S.H. 1972-1983: Max Klinger dons dresses in order to get discharged from the Army (Ferber, 2007).
2. All in the Family 1971-1979: Edith befriends Beverly LaSalle, a female impersonator, after Archie saves her life. Archie is both homophobic and transphobic. Beverly was ultimately mugged and killed (Ferber, 2007).
3. Bosom Buddies 1980-1982: Tom Hanks and Peter Scolari dress as women in order to live in an affordable women’s hotel (Ferber, 2007).

4. The Phil Donahue Show 1970-1996: U.K. model Caroline Cossey, a.k.a. Tula appeared on Donahue's groundbreaking talk show in 1990. Tula was the transsexual "Bond" girl in the movie "For Your Eyes Only." Her appearance on Donahue was groundbreaking and paved the way for future trans subject matter on other talk shows (Ferber, 2007).
5. Boys Don't Cry 1990: Actress Hillary Swank plays Brandon Teena, a transgender teen who preferred life in a male identity until it was discovered he was born biologically female (IMDb, 1990-2010).
6. Nip-Tuck 2003 – present: Trans character Ava Moore seduces teenager Matt McNamara. When Matt finds out Ava is a transsexual, he picks up and brutally beats another trans woman. The trans woman and her friends attack Matt in retaliation (Ferber, 2007).
7. All My Children 2006: Rock star Zarf is transitioning to Zoe, a gay woman (Ferber, 2007).
8. Ugly Betty 2006- present: During part of the first season, Alex Mead was wrapped in bandages. He later emerged as Alexis (Ferber, 2007; IMDb, 2010).
9. America's Next Top Model 2007: Isis Tsunami is the show's first transgender contestant (Serjeant, 2008).

Transgender men and women are now more accepted in their roles as heroes, heroines, villains, comedians, friends and neighbors. The shock value has worn off, and their fifteen minutes of fame has been passed to someone else. With that passing, transgender people may begin to join other minorities that have found acceptance in

society. Their place in the movies and television is secured; their understanding by mainstream society is still in progress (Serjeant, 2008).

Transgender and the Early Western Civilization

While the media has brought the subject of transgender to our immediate attention, there have been forms of transgenderism throughout history. With no women to be had during this time in the West, domestic work was a task given to Chinese migrants. They were seen as having a natural propensity for women's work. The Chinese men were viewed as feminine and were seen as genderless. By marking the Chinese as feminine, Euro-American masculinity found its required opposite. By viewing the Chinese as genderless, American gender came into sharper view (Sears, 2008).

In the search for gold a wide range of male femininities and female masculinities complicated and enriched everyday life. In the mid-nineteenth century the New York Tribune's Horace Greely advised young American men to go west and build a fortune. During a trip to Colorado he encountered a young clerk who had spent a hard winter in the gold fields and had decided to return to his parents in Indiana. While boarding the train the following morning, Mr. Greely was given the news that this clerk he had dined with the previous day was indeed a woman. The slogan "go west young man" was typical of the stereotypical beliefs of gender assignments (Boag, 2005).

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century era had its own notions about transgenderism and transsexuality. One case in point was Alan Hart. Alan was born Alberta Hart in 1890. This is one of the most documented cases of cross-dressing in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Hart had endured his female biology his

entire life all the while battling against his masculine inclinations and demeanor. Hart completed medical school and soon sought the care of a physician named Allen Gilbert to help him deal with his gender confusions. Gilbert listened to the stories of how Hart had always had acted the boy while growing up and had erotic dreams of the girls with whom she fancied herself in love. These were difficult sessions for Hart, but together she and Gilbert made the decision that she would have a hysterectomy (to relieve the inconvenience of dealing with menstrual flow in male attire), cut her hair, donned the complete male outfit and started a new life as a male. Hart married twice and lived as a man until the 1960s. When Hart was asked by a newspaper reporter about his sex change, he declared that he had been an unhappy person and had always felt like he was male. He further went on to exclaim that since the operation, he had been happier and had come to the conclusion that he had finally come to know his condition, one that until surgery he had only suspected (Boag, 2005).

Storytelling of the trans lifestyle in the history of the West oftentimes points out a legitimate reason for cross-dressing, such as a woman or mother's financial need to obtain otherwise unreachable employment in a man's field of work or to follow a love into battle where women were not welcomed. Elvira Virginia Mugarrieta, a reporter, preferred to dress in male attire and went by the name of Jack Garland. Jack explained that the cross dress was protection in a time where it wasn't safe for women to travel alone (Boag, 2005).

Charlie Parkhurst was a teamster who ran the stagecoach between Los Gatos and Santa Cruz from about 1854 to 1874. He is known to have survived a grizzly bear attack,

but lost an eye in the process. He eventually retired to his home and died in 1879. At that time it was discovered that Charlie was a she. Apparently an orphan, Charlotte escaped the orphanage dressed as a boy, and simply continued on that way. Here is an interesting fact. Charley Parkhurst voted on November 3, 1868 when Ulysses Grant was running for president of the United States. This makes her the first woman to have voted both in the state of California or anywhere in the US (Pope-Handy, 2007).

During the gold rush era, women did not venture out to work in the gold mines. It was a hard life and the life of the prospector was not always profitable. It was also a lonely life for many men. As part of their entertainment, it was common for camps to play music and have dances. Because there were no women around, men would be women for the night, wearing sackcloth patches to signify their new gender. This was an easy way to even up the ratio of men to women, a ratio very off balance with the mass migration to the gold fields. The music at these dances was usually furnished by amateur fiddle players who encouraged the male/female square dancing practice. In Nevada City, a similar type of dance was organized where the men who played the role of ladies for the evening wore handkerchiefs around their arms, assuming the woman's part. In Marysville, men were actually convinced to wear women's clothing, including a gown, shawl and fan. At sea, similar dances were held where the younger, smooth faced men substituted for ladies during the evening (Sears, 2008b). There is no indication in this history that relationships moved beyond these evenings of entertainment.

How Fashion has Influenced Gender Perspectives

There have been many reasons throughout history why an individual may wear the attire of the opposite gender. There may be a whole host of reasons why an individual is perceived as one gender, when in actuality they are of the opposite gender. At some point, someone defined what each gender should wear. Then, when someone chooses to dress as the opposite gender, to defy a set of rules as to gender appropriate dress, it automatically raises a question. In our history we see that the Greeks, both men and women, wore the Chiton, a rectangular piece of cloth that was worn around the body, tied at the shoulders and belted at the waist, draping down over the body in a long or short style. In essence, it could be considered the equivalent of a modern day “dress.” But today, if a man here in America were to wear a dress, it would be seen as obscene, maybe even sexual and is hardly tolerated as natural.

Although gender blending roles reach back into early America, one cannot forget the influence much earlier civilizations brought to trans history. Dress is an important contribution that can easily be mislaid as irrelevant or unimportant, yet is a significant factor in the history of acceptance and normalization of how people are perceived.

When it comes to the history of dress, there is no dispute that men in history have, and in some cases still do, dress in what we might call today typical female wear. However, during the inception of ancient dress, since both men and women wore similar attire, there was nothing for men’s garments to be judged against except maybe the brilliance or presentation as compared to the women’s clothing or that of status. In ancient Rome men wore a long, flowing piece of material akin to a dress called a toga. In

battle, the shorter dress or tunic was worn. The tunic was based on early Greek garments and after the fall of the Roman Empire, tunics continued to be worn. The Roman military created the first tights. In wearing the first mini-skirts, the Romans wanted their legs to look good. Tights continued to be worn from that point on (*Men's Fashion Freedom*, n.d.). Men started carrying purses once money became a part of society. In Scotland the "sporrán" was an accessory made to carry money and usually worn from the waist in front of the "kilt." The kilt is the skirt men wear as traditional dress. Queen Victoria was said that the women should wear white dresses so as not to compete with the men in their kilts (*Men's Fashion Freedom*).

While men wearing women's clothes raises questions and prompts discussion about masculinity, seeing women wearing men's attire has become quite normal. But, this was not always the case. Clothing styles for both men and women have changed over time. In 1850 Amelia Jenks Bloomer invented a costume for women. This was essentially a pair of very baggy trousers that would enable women to abandon the cumbersome dresses that flowed to the ground and restricted their movement. In the nineteenth century "bloomerism" was seen as proof of women's desire to become men, though bloomers made it possible for women engage in activities such as riding a bicycle (Scott-Dixon, 2006). "Bloomers" were regarded as turning women into men and were ridiculed, along with the women who wore them. The meaning of cross-dressing also changes depending on historical or cultural context, as well as social class. For example, working women have been historically freer to dress and behave in masculine fashion. In post-Revolutionary France, images of women in military dress, often engaging in behavior

such as smoking a pipe and carrying muskets, served as inspirational motifs in pop culture. Beginning in the seventeenth century female actors were often seen playing roles typically played by males. Marlene Dietrich was famous for her male dress. Both she and Madonna became sexual icons, often donning male attire. In a River City Gems Yahoo Group post a member forwarded a message from another transgender group. The author (anonymous) comments:

I have always been curious as to why GG [genetic girl] women do not cross dress in the same sense as male cross dressers. Of course, you see women that will dress as men or I should say look very male looking and some may very well be lesbians, but I am wanting [to] know why they don't have the same need as a male crossdresser. What is it that you think makes the difference? And there may very well be GG women crossdressers but I really haven't heard of any (Anonymous, 2009a).

One responder gave four reasons why G.G. women might cross dress. She included the possible need for disguise, fetish or erotic desires associated with wearing men's clothes, the desire to make a political or philosophical statement, aesthetics or personal expression, and during a period of transition (Anonymous, 2009a). Another member commented:

That's right, women can wear men's clothing but why don't they cut their hair and go further with their crossdressing? (as we call it). What came to mind was, they don't have to! Yes, they can enjoy wearing male clothing and for the most part it's totally OK. Thus they need nothing further. But if I want to wear

women's clothing and not put on makeup, breast forms or a wig, now, that's a different story" (Anonymous, 2009b).

But, considering all the responses to this particular post, the consensus was that women, G.G. or FTM, can wear the clothes of the opposite gender and society hardly notices. Because women have forged their way in many areas, including the right to wear men's clothes, they are not really seen as cross dressing, they are seen as fitting into our societal norm. Men have not waged the same battle nor "earned" the right to wear women's clothes, so when wearing women's clothes they are seen as cross dressing.

In researching this curriculum and getting to know transgender people personally, this researcher has heard many opinions as to why men dress in women's clothes and how cross dressing affects various aspects of their lives. Most of those whom this researcher has met have had an interest in and/or a passion for wearing women's clothes since early pubescence. Some dress occasionally at home, some dress occasionally and go out, some have a need to dress more often and have to remain in the confines of their home, some have a need to dress more often, but are comfortable going out into public. All have a need to feel "pretty" and, though they can't explain it (no one has been able to come up with a concrete explanation), they have a need to get in touch with their feminine side. It goes beyond feeling; they have to "be" feminine. For heterosexual cross dressers, being feminine entails donning feminine attire and all that goes with it. Hair (either long or styled or a wig), nails (for occasional cross dressers it is temporary press on nails), make up (there is a lot to learn about makeup and how to apply it so that it looks natural and covers a beard), and then there are the clothes. Some cross dressing

men are quite large, so size is important when shopping for clothes. Some men are not open enough to shop for women's clothes, so mail order is usually a preferred choice. Shoes can be difficult for cross dressing men to buy as not every shoe store carries the sizes needed.

Cross dressing has become somewhat more acceptable and over time has proven to allow for more freedom of expression, whether for personal or cultural needs and beliefs. By "acceptable," the researcher means that cross dressing is no longer against the law. It is not always looked upon favorably, but there are safe places where cross dressers can be in public with little to no fear of repercussion. While American culture has normalized the wearing of traditional men's wear for women, the opposite cannot be said. Although most dress is gender based, clothing that challenges gender norms is stigmatized. Dress based on gender expression challenges societal norms, especially if the person expresses the gender opposite of his/her birth gender. Challenges may increase if the person cannot pass as the gender he/she desires to express. When others are uncomfortable with what they see, when others are confused by what they are confronted with, the environment can become unsafe for a transgender person. The clothing people wear is only one aspect considered when society is sizing them up.

The Progress Transgender People Have Made in Society

Despite the fact that gender variant people have probably been among us since the beginning of time, there is still an element of injustice in how they are treated. In some cultures they are accepted and embraced as a third or separate gender and given status or a place within their culture. In Samoa the Fa'afafine are biological males who express

feminine gender identities. While some dress as women, not all do; while many have sex with masculine men, their role in this act is strictly feminine and thus do not fit into the category of “homosexual”; while some modify their bodies to become more feminine, those who do and the group as a whole cannot readily be defined as “transsexual” (Schmidt, 2003). The Fa’afafine is an accepted and honored “third gender” within the Samoan culture and has a place beside the traditional “male” and “female” genders. The Navajo Indian term “nádleehí” refers to hermaphrodites, or those who pretend to be. These are people who represent themselves in their behavior, occupation and, at times, sexual preference associated with the opposite gender (Epple, 1998). Through history, the Native American culture has had several terms to describe genders beyond traditional male and female: alternate gender, gay, two-spirit and berdache. While berdache, with its French meaning of “male prostitute,” may be insulting to Native Americans, the term two-spirit came out of the 1990 international gathering of the Native American Gay and Lesbian movement. It was during this gathering that the term two-spirit was chosen, which refers to a wide variety of Native American and First Nation roles and identities, past and present. The term was not chosen to mark a new category of gender; rather, it was seen as a term to bridge Native American concepts of gender diversity and sexualities with those of Western cultures (Epple, 1998; Thomas & Jacobs, 1999). The Native American culture has identified and embraced the gender diversities that have been a part of their history and have taken steps to integrate their culture and experiences into Western society.

Transgender individuals have been around, but have had to find support for their lifestyle and cause in most communities. This has not been an easy task, as something or someone familiar or similar does not mean being accepted. The acronym GLBT includes transgender alongside gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals. While being a transgender person does not necessarily mean that there is a sexual component to a diverse lifestyle, as is with the other three groups, the early history of these marginalized groups brought them together under the same umbrella.

Stone (2009) conducted an exploratory study of American lesbian and gay activists' attitudes toward transgender inclusion in the GLBT movement. She found that most existing analysis of transgender inclusion in the American GLBT movement has focused almost exclusively on a handful of events, including the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. According to Stone's review of previous studies, Weiss (2003) and Meinter (2006) show transphobia and gender-neutral gay identity have been blamed for the failure of lesbians and gay men to integrate transgender issues and individuals adequately within the American movement. Stone's research also indicates that when gay and lesbian activists become allies with extremely marginalized groups such as transgender, the GLBT movement "requires what is perceived as the sharing of scarce movement resources" (p. 338). This study begs the question as to whether or not transgender individuals are really getting the GLB backing when it comes to activism. Transgender individuals fight for their rights as part of and alongside the GLBT movement, yet one wonders if they might not be further along if there were not so much division within the GLBT movement.

What brought these groups together?

An article written by Diane Silver (2009) for *Lesbian News* outlines the factors which led to the Stonewall Riots in 1969. False understanding and intolerance of gender and sexuality led to the fact that forty years ago being “queer” was deemed illegal and considered a mental illness. In 48 states it was illegal for two consenting adults of the same sex to be intimate in the privacy of their own home. GLBT applicants were automatically denied application for federal employment and military service. It was illegal to serve alcohol to gays. Bars that served GLBT clientele were repeatedly raided by police. These laws and oppression gave rise to what was known as the Stonewall Riots. Stone goes on to explain how on that early morning a routine police raid on an establishment called the Stonewall Inn resulted in an uprising from the GLBT patrons. They fought back, risking life and freedom, prevented police from loading prisoners into the paddy wagons and stopped the raid. While this wasn’t the official start of the GLBT activism, it did start a thought process which has led to national political activism and the establishment of many organizations. Over a period of the last forty years, laws have changed and it is no longer a crime to be GLBT. The rules that barred GLBT individuals from federal employment have been banished. In 20 states there are bans on discrimination based on, among other things, gender identity (Silver, 2009). Although transgender people fought alongside gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals during the Stonewall Riots, it took until the early 1990s for the “T” to start being included in the alphabet GLB. There were conflicting attitudes from the gay and lesbian communities about including gender variant individuals. Gay individuals were fairly concrete in their

attitudes toward gender and sexuality and what constituted masculine and feminine. Their thinking was that the division between masculine and feminine were one of the first markers of sexual orientation, and this thinking has inhibited them from fully embracing the transgender group.

While most transsexuals identify as heterosexual, this is a somewhat neglected field of study. One such study conducted on MTF transsexuals (an all biological-male sample) indicates that before sexual reassignment surgery, 54% of participants had been predominantly attracted to women and 9% had been predominantly attracted to men. After sex reassignment surgery, these figures were 25% and 34%, respectively (Lawrence, 2005), while Schroeder and Carroll (as cited in Lawrence) found that after MTF sex reassignment surgery, about half were sexually attracted to males; about one-third were bisexual; and nearly one-fifth were sexually attracted to females. This is an area where the sex and gender intersections deviate. Sexual orientation is about as predictable in gender variant individuals as it is in non-gender variant individuals.

While transgender attitudes were not always well tolerated, when it came to drag queens (some of whom were transgender and most being gay men), they were seen as holding a celebrity-like status and historically were both embraced as public ambassadors of the gay community and regulated within gay spaces (Stone, 2009). In 1991 a woman was expelled from the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival on suspicion that she was a transsexual. In 1992 the brochure for the festival clarified that the festival was intended for womyn born womyn and was seen as specifically excluding transsexuals comprising of MTF, FTM and gender queer individuals. In 1994 the woman who was expelled, along

with other transsexuals and transsexual allies, gathered across the road from the entrance to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival and set up "Camp Trans." The purpose of this gathering was to promote an understanding of gender from a variety of perspectives and to address issues of disenfranchisement in the women's and lesbian communities.

Ultimately it was established to educate festival attendees with hopes of broadening the policy to include all women (eminism.org, n.d.). To date, the broader inclusion of this festival has still not occurred.

What is it that prevents society from allowing individuals who feel that they are born with the wrong gender from participating in life as their preferred gender? There seems to be so much division and judgment. The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival wanted women to have a safe space to share artistic, political and personal expressions. And, one major reason men (or anyone who has ever been a man) have been excluded from admission is because there has been much violence perpetrated on women by men. However, they fail to recognize that there is also violence perpetrated on women by other women. Trans women are also at risk, if not more so, of being targets of violent crimes. So, as to this matter only, it is a bias based on difference that leads to the exclusion of transgender individual rather than the open-mindedness based on similarities that could lend to their inclusion.

Violence and fear

Three separate studies conducted by Hill and Willoughby (2005) measured anti-trans feelings, thoughts and behaviors in undergraduate and graduate college students and parents using the Genderism and Transphobia Scale. Study participants were well

educated members of a cosmopolitan city in Canada well renowned for its liberal attitudes toward sexuality and gender issues. Through these three successive studies, the researchers found the Genderism and Transphobia Scale to be a reliable scale that performed as expected. Earlier studies these researchers reviewed had shown acceptance of transsexuals. However, these studies demonstrated that anti-trans views were neither rare nor difficult to elicit. Though there were a wide range of responses, some scores indicated extremely intolerant attitudes toward gender variance.

Bettcher (2007) believes that victims of transphobic violence can oftentimes be blamed for the violence perpetrated upon them by allegations that they are deceitful. A transgender woman might be a man in women's clothing. However, if that person presents himself as a woman, then he is subject to the intertwined notions of appearance, reality and discovery as perceived or learned by those around them (p. 47). In October, 2002 in Newark California, Gwen Araujo, an American trans woman, was beaten, killed, and then buried 150 miles away in the Sierra wilderness. Gwen was a young person who just three years earlier had come out to her mother feeling like a woman trapped in a man's body and began calling herself Gwen, in hope of one day having a sex change operation. This unfortunate murder was in part blamed on Gwen for misrepresenting herself to the young men who killed her by "leading them on." One had been intimate with Gwen and had even discussed Gwen's identity with a friend days earlier. The attorney for one of the killers asked for a lighter charge that was come to be known as the "trans panic" defense. This is similar to the "gay panic" defense and argued that the killing was committed in the "heat of passion" only after learning Gwen's biological sex

(Bettcher). While there is no excuse for murder, especially if the victim is only guilty of being who he/she truly is, transgender individuals are at a disadvantage. Since transgender individuals can never truly be accepted for who they are, they are fundamentally constructed as deceivers and pretenders.

Gender-based violence is understood to mean any violence against a woman. However, the term “woman” is based on genitalia and the social construction of the person as it conforms to the binary gender norms. For this reason, any studies on violence against women typically do not include transsexual or transgender women (Kidd & Witten, 2007). With a new hate crimes bill having recently passed, Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, the statistics for hate crimes against transsexuals or transgender individuals will one day be captured.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance was set aside to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honor Rita Hester, whose murder in 1998 kicked off the “Remembering our Dead” web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999. Since then, the event has grown to encompass memorials in dozens of cities across the world.

One recent anti-transgender public outcry came after a Sacramento radio station sparked controversy when alarming statements of intolerance were directed at a vulnerable population—transgender youth (Rowe, 2009). These are the types of actions that promote violence in our communities and leave us with victims to remember. The May 28, 2009 segment of KRXQ 98.5 FM Sacramento’s Rob, Arnie, & Dawn in the Morning radio talk show forged a vicious verbal attack against transgender children,

some as young as five, focusing in particular on the case of one Omaha family raising a gender dysphoric child, and their decision to support her transition from male to female. The hosts, Rob Williams and Arnie States, took turns referring to gender dysphoric children as “idiots” and “freaks,” who were just out “for attention” and had “a mental disorder that just needs to somehow be gotten out of them,” either by verbal abuse on the part of the parents, or even shock therapy. States bragged that if his own son dared to wear high heels, he would beat his son with one of his own shoes. He urged parents whose own little boys expressed a desire to wear a dress to verbally abuse and degrade them as a viable response. “Because you know what? Boys don’t wear high heel shoes. And in my house, they definitely don’t wear high heels.” “You know what? You’re a little idiot! You little dumbass!” States sneered, adding later, “I look forward to when [the transgender children] go out into society and society beats them down. And they wind up in therapy, or dead” (Rowe, 2009).

Kidd and Witten (2007) cite possible causes for transgender violence. First, there is the general ignorance of the public about transgender identities. Many perpetrators of anti-transgender hate violence in Los Angeles use homosexual terms such as fag, dyke and faggot during violent incidents (p. 48), which may indicate the perpetrator’s confusion between gender and sexual orientation. Another reason for causality is the bias or confusion of the terminology that represents sex and gender within institutional settings. Kidd cites studies where medical students could not see past strict XY and XX chromosomal designations (p. 48). This also contributes to lack of adequate medical care, which results in the aging transgender individual being further marginalized within the

medical setting (p. 49). Kidd also brings up the point that hate violence (as it is today) serves to reinforce the gender binary in that the current law protects genetic women. In addition, transgender people are targeted for violating gender norms and are seen as easy targets (p. 49). It is no wonder that transgender individuals become easy targets, with the lack of stricter laws that would have made it a crime to commit violence against someone who doesn't fit a perceived gender norm. The perception is based on what the attacker sees as "normal" or "acceptable," and until recently there was no law that gave specific protection to those who fall outside these boundaries.

Section 3

Political History and Laws Surrounding the Transgender Population

Since 1863 when the first anti-cross dressing law went into effect, there have been many more laws that have affected transgender people. Most recent laws have or are seeking to end discrimination against transgender people. The first state with trans discrimination laws was Minnesota. According to Currah and Minter (2000), in 1975 the city of Minneapolis amended its local discrimination law regarding sexual orientation by replacing the phrase "affectional preference" with "having or projecting a self-image not associated with one's biological maleness or one's biological femaleness." In 1990 St. Paul adopted similar language. And, in 1993 the Minnesota state legislature adopted the first state-wide law banning discrimination against transgender people (Currah & Minter).

More laws have been passed at local levels, but one law has been recently enacted while another law is on stage awaiting further disposition. As mentioned earlier, the

Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 was introduced and designed to extend the existing federal protections class list to include gender identity, sexual orientation, gender and disability. It was also designed to allow the Justice Department to assist with investigations of hate crimes when local law enforcement is unable or unwilling. It would mandate that the FBI begin tracking hate crimes based on the included protected status and finally it would remove the limitations that a hate crime would have to be committed when the victim is engaged in a federally protected activity. It has been an ongoing process to get this bill passed through into law, but in October 2009 President Obama signed this bill into law (Human Rights Campaign, 2009).

Also in the works is the Employment Non-Discrimination Act that was introduced into the House of Representatives in June, 2009. This bill would prohibit employers from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. In 2007 the House passed a version of ENDA that protected on the basis of sexual orientation, but not gender identity. It is still legal in 30 states to fire someone just for being gay and in 38 states it is legal to discriminate on the basis of gender identity. Contrary to some allegations, this law will not give special rights to some groups and it does not promote preferential treatment due to quotas (Frank, 2009).

Marriage and Other Legal Considerations for Transgender People

In his book, *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, Harry Benjamin (1966) looked at the legal standing regarding the sex of a MTF. He figured that everyone knew what constituted a male and what constituted a female, but inquired of a lawyer friend of his about how the law defined the two sexes. His friend's research indicated that there was

no legal definition of a male or a female, and up to that time there had been no judicial decision by any court that indicated otherwise (Benjamin).

All but five states currently recognize marriage as the union of two people of the opposite sex. Courts may require a medical finding of an individual's sex and it may or may not be consistent with the individual's identity or that of legal documents. According to Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD, 2009), in New England there have been no actions ruled against a post-operative transsexual who was married to invalidate or prevent the marriage. However, there have been several court decisions that have been hostile toward marriages involving transgender individuals. Three cases in Florida, Kansas and Texas invalidated or prevented marriage for post-operative transgender women because either the state did not allow any transgender marriage or because the sex of the individual at the time of marriage was predicated on the sex of the individual at birth. Even in more favorable jurisdictions, some states do not allow the change of sex on a birth certificate or require documentation that the person completed sex reassignment surgery. While there is no definition for "completed sex reassignment surgery" some individuals have found that they cannot obtain a new birth certificate without having had both top and bottom surgery (GLAD). Surprisingly, in 1968 Louisiana passed its birth certificate statute. This enabled persons who had changed their sex to also change their birth certificate. Sponsors of the bill explained that the birth certificate change was needed by a woman, formerly a man, who wanted to get married. The bill passed the House and the Senate unanimously. Despite this bill's passing, the state has yet to repeal its sodomy statute and has enacted an anti-gay marriage statute (Rose, 2004).

In 1989 a Nevada court terminated a transgender woman's parental rights because the court held that the child should not have to contend with the emotional adjustments due to the parent's transition. In California a transgender woman was not only granted visitation, but also given custody. The court remanded this case to trial and held that the parent's transgender status is not a basis to deny custody (GLAD, 2009).

The use of appropriate restrooms in public is also something a transgender person has to contend with. While there are no specific laws that address this issue, some specific cities have included gender restroom accommodations. Boston, Massachusetts has barred discrimination on the basis of gender with regard to public facilities. Also, if a transgender person is threatened, assaulted or harassed in a public restroom or other public place, he/she may be able to bring charges or pursue civil rights violations (GLAD, 2009).

Section Four

Implications for Social Work

There are many areas of service in which social workers could be asked to serve a transgender person or come face to face with the transgender lifestyle. In order to adequately serve those who come before us, social workers need to have an awareness of not only what being transgender means, but also what the needs of this population are. Most transgender people are painfully aware that their visible transgression of gender norms makes them one of the most vulnerable and least protected groups in social space (Doan, 2007). Social workers need to be alert to this reality and try to make sense of their place within diverse populations. As stated in the NASW Code of Ethics (2008), a social

worker has an obligation to practice ethical responsibility toward clients. As part of practicing ethical responsibility, social workers must also serve clients with cultural competence and with an awareness of social diversity (NASW).

Because the term “transgender” is an umbrella over which numerous self-definitions can be covered, social workers must not only be aware of these terms and their implied meanings, but also of how clients use any of these definitions to describe themselves. Social workers must be able to appreciate ambiguous terminology along with ambiguous genders. Self-definition is a matter of self-determination and social justice, which are basic values of the profession (Burdge, 2007). By taking the time to become familiar with the terms introduced earlier in this curriculum, a social worker becomes able to identify any biases that may come up. We usually do not accept something new or unfamiliar without discerning how the information affects us as individuals. Although we are supposed to serve diverse people and cultures, unfamiliarity can be uncomfortable. Discomfort can prevent us from moving forward, unless we have a way to frame new or unfamiliar information. By creating an awareness of transgender people and their culture through material introduced in this curriculum, it is the hope of this researcher that social work students will gain a common understanding of a diverse group not covered in great detail through most diversity courses.

Social workers may play different roles in the lives of transgender clients. They may be case managers for transgender youth in child welfare or youth services. They may serve as therapists assisting the transgender person or families of transgender people to respond affirmatively to their transitioning loved one. School social workers can create

safe places for transgender youth, and medical social workers could help sex reassignment surgery patients navigate the psychosocial aspect of their transition. At a broader level, social workers join political advocacy efforts to ensure the rights of the transgender community (Burdge, 2007).

Youth

When clients present themselves, it is important for social workers to remember our commitment to person-in-environment perspective. Individuals define who they are, and while society works off a gender binary that may exclude individuals for “not fitting in a box,” social workers are the conduit for assisting clients to explore gender identity options. These identity options become recognizable only to social workers who become familiar with or educate themselves on gender and gender-identity. Social workers can advocate for individuals’ rights to express their gender variance by challenging gender stereotyping (Burdge, 2007).

This is especially important when working with transgender or gender variant youth. Youth are an exceptionally vulnerable population. With the challenges of changing bodies, changing times and extreme internal and external pressures conflicting with societal expectations, gender nonconformity is especially difficult for transgender youth. The external factors that transgender youth face are manifested most often through social pressures to conform to traditional gender expectations. These social pressures emanate from popular culture, families, schools, peer groups, social service agencies and other institutions that define society’s culture (Burgess, 1999). It is commonly held that gender identity is developed by the age of three. American society discounts that children

have sexuality. Because it is assumed that sex and gender go hand in hand, children who question their birth-assigned gender are pathologized and labeled “gender dysphoric” or with having gender identity disorder. Children who deviate from socially acceptable gender behaviors are pushed back in line by parental figures. Even though a display of gender non-conforming behaviors does not necessarily constitute a transgender child, society still seems to reward parents who maintain their children within gender-conforming roles (Mallon & DeCrescenzo, 2006). Physically, transgender youth may become repelled or ashamed of their developing sexual characteristics. With this shame may come attempts at hiding their developing bodies. Psychological changes are also heightened for transgender youth. Mood swings and “testing of limits” through increased risk taking may signify deeper troubles for these youth. Because of the internalization of negative attitudes toward gender non-conformity, transgender youth are at an increased risk for low self-esteem, which may manifest itself through depression, substance abuse, self mutilation and/or suicide (Burgess, 1999).

Remember Ludovic, the little boy in “Ma Vie en Rose”? His parents were firmly planted in socially acceptable gender behaviors. When Ludovic came outside while his parents were entertaining his father’s new boss and family, they were appalled and embarrassed because Ludovic had on his sister’s princess dress and was wearing lipstick and earrings. While this presentation was initially a shock and poor timing for Ludovic’s father, knowing his penchant for wanting to be a girl, his family had been humoring him as best they could, rationalizing that he was only trying to find his identity and this phase he was in would be over soon. After this episode and subsequent behaviors that

challenged his family and other peoples' gender expectations of the child, Ludovic's parents took a more proactive stance in trying to "fix" their little boy. They were uncomfortable with his non-conforming gender behaviors but more so by society's judgment not only of him, but of them too. They took him to a therapist and eventually moved to a new town after his father was fired because Ludovic declared that when he became a girl he wanted to marry the boss' son Jerome (Scotta & Berliner, 1997).

Supports within schools and child welfare for gender variant children are poor. Too often accommodations for gender variant children might include a recommendation to "help that child be more of a boy" or "don't let her be too much of a tomboy." Given such hostile environment, it is easy to blame a child for his/her behaviors. Physically, transgender youth may become repelled or ashamed of their developing sexual characteristics. With this shame may come attempts at hiding their developing bodies (Burgess, 1999). In the midst of not fitting in or feeling socially isolated, these children may experience depression, anxiety, fear, anger, self-mutilation, low self-esteem and suicidal ideation. Oftentimes these behaviors are taken as further evidence that something is wrong with the child, instead of a normal response in attempting to accommodate oneself in such a hostile environment (Mallon & DeCrescenzo, 2006).

After families, schools have the second greatest impact on a child's development in adolescence. Schools are the testing ground for social skills and through testing, identity formation takes place. Fortunately there are cliques where transgender youth may be accepted, and in some schools, cliques of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth are forming on their own. Despite these positive strides, school communities still have a

long way to go. Curricula remain negligent of mentioning transgender issues. It is also rare that sensitivity training occurs among faculty and staff on the unique needs of transgender youth (Burgess, 1999). By being aware and informed, school social workers can help educate school personnel and create a safe space for gender non-conforming students. By advocating and promoting transgender education social workers engage others in the awareness of gender variance in youth. A social worker is in a unique position to address the isolation and persecution of transgender youth from many angles.

Mallon and Woronoff (2006) believe that issues of sexual and gender orientation have been at a low priority in child welfare improvement. They further believe that any political movement in the civil rights struggles for GLBT persons directly affects child welfare practices (p. 116). Those working in child welfare would be negligent if they were not aware of the presence of gender variant children that come into the system. What would be even more unfortunate is if those working with gender variant children were not aware of the indifference to gender issues within the system and neglected to advocate for policies that supported the youth.

Given the fact that youth are not given a handbook on how to handle their sexuality as they enter puberty, nor are they given instructions on how to maneuver through the feelings of not fitting in when their gender identity does not match their birth-assigned gender, they are especially vulnerable to at-risk behaviors when their being part of the child welfare system is thrown into the mix. It is one thing when youth have parents who might not understand, just as much as they don't understand themselves. It must an insurmountable challenge for youth to live in a strange home, in a strange

community, surrounded by total strangers, and all of this “strangeness” becomes more uncomfortable as their gender identity is ignored, or even worse, challenged. This can be a source of tension that eventually leads to destructive behaviors and/or outcomes. In order for youth to accept a positive gender identity about themselves they have to come to terms with their gender minority status. This is exactly the reason why it is imperative for social workers to have an awareness of what it means to be transgender and how it may affect youth, especially in child welfare. This awareness is an invaluable tool in educating and supporting those working with transgender youth.

Above all else, the very core of what social service professionals can do is to provide acceptance and positive affirmation for these youth. Just a simple validation of who the individual is, including his/her gender identity, can make all the difference in the world for that person. Acceptance will lead to a willingness to learn, the willingness to learn will lead to understanding, and understanding will lead to the eventual cessation of the oppression and isolation of transgender youth (Burgess, 1999)

Therapy

One of the most important aspects of being a competent therapist is in understanding the commitment to do no harm. When serving the transgender client, it is important to at least have an awareness of what “transgender” means. But, being aware does not mean that the therapist is necessarily knowledgeable about this diverse group. At the very least, therapists should have enough awareness to know what questions to ask that will prepare them to know if they will be able to take on the client or if referring them to someone else is the better choice. Once there is awareness, even if the knowledge

is limited, therapists may choose to move forward and use their existing skills to help guide them in learning more about their client and their client's gender identity. Fee (2006) believes that therapists also need to be more aware and open to exploring their own position in relation to gender, as there is no framework for existing without a gendered identity. As therapy still relies on psychoanalytical principals for understanding normal gendered experiences, this continues to influence normative cultural assumptions. Many therapists still pathologize those who express gender variation. This perpetuates the belief that anatomical differences and genitalia offer a certainty about who we are (Fee). Even with limited knowledge, the aware therapist and the client can mutually cultivate a relationship that will not only serve the client, but also enhance the therapist's response to future transgender or other gender variant individuals.

In a study by Israel, Gorcheva, Walther, Sulzner, & Cohen (2008) to identify variables that characterized helpful and unhelpful psychotherapy experiences for GLBT clients, therapists defined helpful situations in which the therapist was knowledgeable, helpful, appropriate or affirming in dealing with the client's sexual orientation or gender identity. Researchers found that the therapeutic relationship emerged as a crucial variable that characterized both helpful and unhelpful situations. Positive therapeutic relationships were seen as helpful, and situations where a therapist was judgmental, indifferent, cold and disaffirming were seen as unhelpful. An important outcome of this study showed that the most common consequence of an unhelpful therapeutic situation tended to be early termination (Israel, et al.). This highlights just how important it is for a therapist to keep from getting into a situation where harm can be done. While it's not easy to understand or

accept every client who walks through the door, an essential element for a therapist in doing no harm to transgender clients includes having a good sense of self awareness around gender and understanding the client's goals instead of assuming the goal is that of gender conformity. In a study conducted by Docter & Prince (1997), where they compared an earlier study conducted in 1972, they determined that having knowledgeable social workers is one factor in not only making therapy available to transgender people, but also in the willingness of transgender people to seek these services.

For youth, therapists may be helping the individual with his/her identity development. In working with youth, one of the primary goals is to establish a safe place where disclosure can happen without repercussions; to create a place where fear can be talked about without the need to hide. This is a place where youth can be who they are or who they want to be without fear of retaliation, a place where it is okay to talk about what it is like to not fit in and in return receive validation for their feelings. Most importantly, therapists should strive to educate and be an advocate for gender diversity. To support this, they might have basic but accurate literature in their office or they might share their knowledge with others in order to encourage cultural sensitivity among co-workers, schools or organizations (Morrow, 2004).

As a therapist, a social worker might be sought out by family members of a transgender person in their effort to respond affirmatively to their transitioning loved one. The same sensitivity given the transgender person must be bestowed upon these clients as well. Although this might not be about gender identity development, there may be many questions, feelings and possibly self-doubt brought forward with regard to the gender

non-conforming issues of a loved one. Again, the therapist needs to allow a safe place for clients to explore their feelings associated with their loved one's gender journey. Therapy may be about grief surrounding their loved one. It may be about wanting to understand. They might be there out of guilt or confusion due to their inability to grasp what is happening. They may just want to talk to someone about their experience. In helping those who seek services as a person who is affected by a transgender individual, a therapist will need to acknowledge the challenging nature of this topic, and possibly even admit personal limitations of knowledge of transgender issues. In working with this population it is imperative to encourage communication with family and loved ones and the transgender person for the most successful outcomes. According to Money, Clark and Mazur (as cited in Zamboni, 2006), family adjustment and acceptance of a surgically reassigned loved one were related to the degree to which the transition was overtly shared with family, friends and loved ones. The therapeutic process can enable those dealing with the transgender identity of a loved one to share thoughts and feelings in a safe space. This can be a long process and the therapist will need to be able to problem solve with the family in a culturally sensitive manner (Zamboni).

Medical

It is quite important for the medical social worker to have a working knowledge and understanding of the language associated with gender variant individuals. Also helpful for the medical social worker is an awareness of hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery. In that medical care for transgender people is scrutinized, a social worker could be in the position to aid in bridging communication and service delivery

between the transgender person and the trans-ignorant provider. Since transgender persons may not seek health services or are reluctant to do so if there has been a negative experience or if they fear a stigmatizing environment, a responsive social worker working in the medical field could educate and advocate for safe health care. The same sensitivity used while working with youth and therapeutic clients is incorporated here as well.

Advocacy

Social workers have a duty to educate themselves on the nature of diversity so that we can advocate for and develop services that are accessible to and appropriate for transgender people. In order to do this, social workers must first have an increased awareness of transgender people so that they can pay the education forward into the social service and human service fields. By way of ethical responsibility, social workers are also obligated to advocate on a larger scale for the rights of culturally diverse and vulnerable populations. To fully value and advocate for transgender people, it is important to look at the barriers that prevent them from obtaining appropriate services. Then, of the services that are out there, there is a significant need to evaluate their appropriateness and effectiveness as to individual and specific needs (Kenagy & Hsieh, 2005).

Social workers might advocate for transgender people by getting involved in hate crime prevention. There are also other state or local activities social workers can become part of that are designed to end discrimination and violence on the basis of gender identity and expression and provide for equal opportunity all human beings. They can be part of a movement that educates others about gender issues in their connection to and

differences from sexuality and how the separation of the two has led to discrimination and marginalization. Other ways social workers can advocate for transgender people include: a) examining our own ideas about gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexuality; b) using gender appropriate pronouns; c) reading, learning and teaching others about what transgender means; d) reporting acts of violence toward gender variant individuals; and e) working with local law enforcement, judges and clergy to educate them on hate crimes, violence, harassment, suicidal ideation, run-away and “throw-away” youth and the dangers of hate-filled sermons (Chen-Hayes, 2001). Also important is the advocacy for the services transgender people desire and need. There are ways to get involved on many levels that will build cultural competence and encourage and support the transgender population.

Where do we go from here?

The all too familiar dual categorization of gender into only two separate divisions of male and female complicates not only service seekers, but also service providers. Some of those seeking therapeutic service believe they have a problem because they do not seem to experience what society dictates is gender normal. The therapist may also take on this view and see gender conformity a therapeutic goal (Fee, 2006). In separate studies conducted by Bartlett, King and Philips; Garnets et al.; and Hayes and Gelso (as cited in Israel, et al., 2009), there was agreement by all that when a therapist viewed homosexuality as a disorder and attributed all presenting concerns to sexual orientation, it contributed to an unhelpful therapy experience. However, there are limited studies that have deviated beyond therapist characteristics, behaviors or responses to client sexual

orientation. Also, previous research has not included transgender or bisexual clients nor have researchers inquired beyond therapist behaviors (Israel, et al.).

Many students of psychology (from which many therapeutic psychologists originate) are unaware of the distinction between the terms “gender” and “sex” and oftentimes use the words interchangeably. Professors are equally neglectful in separating these two terms and seeing them as “sex” being biological and “gender” as socially constructed. In the psychology curriculum more could be done to educate students and professors about transgender people (Case, Stewart & Tittsworth, 2009).

As for the social work curriculum, it is limited, and there is a need to move beyond much of the current content to include gender awareness and consciousness. Social work students, like others, are so immersed in the gendered culture that they cannot see the gendered assumptions and ramifications of their world. Oftentimes gender is such a taken-for-granted part of their world, social work students may not question it. Therefore, part of the social work educator’s job is to raise students’ awareness and consciousness about the implications of gender, outside of the classroom as well as within it (McPhail, 2008). In order to raise consciousness, there first needs to be the awareness that consciousness needs to be raised. This is true not only for students, but also for instructors of diversity courses. In turn, there needs to be the awareness as to the implications of the raised consciousness. Why do social workers need to be educated about transgender people? The question needs to be explored.

This curriculum came about after the researcher completed a graduate level diversity class in social work and discovered that more was taught about race and class

than was taught about gender. In fact, the instruction that was given was provided by a guest speaker. Although the speaker was knowledgeable, it struck the researcher as odd that the course instructor did not even attempt to generate discussion about this topic. As a class assignment, the researcher chose the transgender culture and population to research and write about for an immersion project. It was during the three months of this project that the researcher learned more about something that was very unfamiliar than anything else that was taught in that diversity class. There was an interest in something new, a desire to learn about a vulnerable group and an aspiration to become a more culturally competent social worker.

In reflecting on this class experience, the researcher wonders if the instructor possessed a lack of awareness of transgender people and culture. If instructors do not have the awareness of or comfort with the subject of transgender, this sets up a barrier to creating discussion within the classroom. Information cannot always be transmitted through readings alone and some students may not indulge in outside research in order to build their knowledge base. If left to their own devices and if the subject is not brought forward by the instructor, students may never have the opportunity to engage in a learning experience to enhance their cultural awareness and competence.

Considering the evolution of this curriculum, the researcher challenges other social work students to look at the world around them. We must look beyond the known and familiar and understand that we are all responsible for taking steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation and supervision) to ensure the competence of our work and to protect clients from harm (NASW, 2008). We cannot

know what we do not know. But, we can open our consciousness to the fact that there are vulnerable people and groups who need the services of social workers. And, in order to serve these groups and people, we must become aware of their existence, then make the effort to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and culture groups (NASW, 2008).

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Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter will summarize the key data gathered in this project. There is a discussion of the benefits a curriculum about transgender people will provide for Master of Social Work (MSW) students when incorporated into a diversity course. The conclusions derived from the research are described. In addition, there is also a presentation on future recommendations, explanations of limitations of this project, and the implications for social work practice.

Summary

This project was designed to create a curriculum to fill a gap present in the MSW diversity course at California State University Sacramento, expressly, the lack of transgender specific content. Kimmel and Messner (2004) note, “Gender remains one of the organizing principles of social life. We come to know ourselves and our world through the prism of gender. Only we act as if we did not know it” (p. 9). Gender joins class and race “as one of the three central mechanisms by which power and resources are distributed in our society” (McPhail, 2008). The curriculum of the MSW diversity course that the researcher attended at California State University Sacramento included information on a range of vulnerable groups. Unfortunately, the emphasis of instruction was focused more toward race, class and ethnicity. In order to more fully expand a social work student’s awareness of diverse people and cultures, it is critical that the curriculum

move beyond specific content to teach gender awareness and consciousness. Social work students, like many others, have become immersed in a binary gender culture so they oftentimes cannot see the gendered assumptions and ramifications of their world (McPhail). While the information as presented in this curriculum is readily available to anyone who will search for it, the reason for a diversity class in the MSW program is to bring information to the attention to and raise the consciousness of participants and therefore needs to be more fully inclusive of information offering gender awareness. Outcomes of such shared information not only rely on student interest, but also instructor awareness or knowledge. This curriculum outlines the most pertinent available information about transgender people and sets a foundation for further learning. Key information about transgender people and their culture was gathered and analyzed, then further organized into a concise manual designed to be used as a supplemental teaching aid for a MSW diversity course.

Being transgender is as normal as gender itself. Someone who identifies as transgender can lie anywhere within the spectrum of gender identity, somewhere between absolute “male” and absolute “female.” Transgender also lies somewhere within the multifaceted spectrum of human diversity. The curriculum first explores gender, sex and sexuality, exploring each separately in an effort to deconstruct the binary gender culture strongly held by society. Three ideas presented on three separate continuums leads to a better introduction for understanding where transgender fits. When binary gender norms are set aside, and gender is looked at through the lens of a continuum, it becomes easier to see the complexity behind an individual’s gender identity. It is not sufficient to identify

a person by his/her appearance or social role. There is much more involved with a person's gender identity than just sex or sexuality. Van Gelder (as cited in McPhail, 2008) noted that critical thinking is a difficult and a complex skill that takes practice. He believed that, "in general, people tend to be comfortable with the first account that seems right, rarely pursuing matters further, preserving their belief" (p. 44). Gender can be such a taken-for-granted part of their world, students may not question it. Therefore, the social work educator's job is to teach students how to critically think and raise their consciousness about the implications of gender, outside of the classroom as well as inside (McPhail).

The term "transgender" is a challenge to the social construction of gender. Transgender people, in one way or another, place themselves outside the conventional female/male dichotomy, yet live in a social world that recognizes only females and males (Kessler & McKenna, 2004). Elkins and King (1997) assert that there is a wide base for terms used to describe individuals who cross gender boundaries. The curriculum content goes on to explore relevant terminology used about and important to transgender people. Terminology includes politically correct definitions as well as definitions with more subtle meanings. When we are taught about something about which we know little to nothing, it is important to begin with a common language. Once language is understood, the concepts presented start to take shape and meanings start to become clear.

For every culture, there is the history that helps us understand that culture. The transgender history presented in this curriculum includes those who were aware and lived as transgender people or those who were aware that they were helping and serving

transgender people. It also includes others who lived a concealed transgender life or those who portrayed a transgender person for entertainment purposes. No matter how you look at it, transgender people have always been among us and they will continue to be a part of the diverse cultural spectrum of humanity.

The political history and laws affecting transgender people continues to make progress. Once it was illegal to dress in clothing belonging to the opposite gender. We now have laws designed to protect the rights of people who transgress gender norms. In brief, we can see this development take shape in this summary:

1. In 1863 the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a local law against cross-dressing (Sears, 2008);
2. In 1975 the city of Minneapolis amended its local discrimination law regarding sexual orientation by replacing the phrase “affectional preference” with “having or projecting a self-image not associated with one’s biological maleness or one’s biological femaleness” (Sears, 2008);
3. In 1993 the Minnesota state legislature adopted the first state-wide law banning discrimination against transgender people (Currah & Minter, 2000);
4. The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 was signed into law in October 2009 (Human Rights Campaign, 2009); and
5. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) was signed into law in June, 2009 (Frank, 2009).

Recommendations

This Curriculum. McPhail (2008) notes that the application of critical awareness involves an all-encompassing vision, which ranges from examining social science theories presented in social work textbooks to the movies shown at the local theater. Variable gender realities have taken a more prominent position within society during the twentieth century. Through entertainment, famous personalities, political advocates, and literary authors, as well as the invent of internet social media, transgender subject matter is more readily available and allows the public more access to gender expressive material.

Given the ready availability of transgender information, there is little reason to neglect attending to gender awareness in college diversity courses. This curriculum is presented in a concise manner for utilization by instructors, whether they already have knowledge of transgender people, or whether they too are beginning their journey of awareness.

Future Research. This research could be used for future qualitative and quantitative studies. This curriculum was organized by developing existing information which is important and pertinent about transgender people. While the information was designed for use in teaching transgender inclusion within an already constructed diversity class, the information has not been disseminated to any students to determine outcomes of transgender awareness. Future studies could measure the increased awareness this information instills in students by utilizing a pre-test before instruction, and then a post-test after instruction. This type of analysis will also help determine if information

contained within the curriculum is clear and if any portions need to be revised or updated for improved effectiveness.

Limitations

The most significant limitation of this project is the inability of the researcher to present the curriculum to MSW students and determine if the information increased students' awareness. Another limitation lies in the fact that just increasing one's awareness does not equate to creating cultural competence. Competence is having the capacity to function effectively within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior defined by the group (NASW, 2001). This project informs readers about transgender people and how social workers can use the information to improve their cultural practice. But, what it does not tell us is how individuals will use the information specifically within their own practice and how the information is used to promote their own ethical responsibility to become culturally competent.

This project is further limited in the sense that even though the knowledge of diverse cultures is necessary for cultural competence, not all social work students will want to know information about transgender people. Therefore, critical elements of the curriculum cannot be assessed. These elements could have been evaluated in a classroom setting where discussions are encouraged. Discussion can be essential in promoting a learning environment, especially when the subject matter can create discomfort or disinterest for some participants. Listening to peers or other students, especially those with diverse experiences, can greatly enhance the learning opportunity for others by opening up the conversation, inspiring debate and cohesion within a group. Shared

experiences by class participants can develop interrelations that encourage awareness for diversity. The ideal outcome for this curriculum is to create awareness. By utilizing the post-test after inclusion of directed and non-directed discussion in class, a qualitative response can be obtained from students evaluating the effectiveness of the use of discussion as part of the curriculum.

Implications for Social Work Practice

Transgender individuals comprise social workers' students, clients, friends and colleagues. For these reasons and more, transgender issues belong in a call for inclusion of gender in the social work curriculum (McPhail, 2008). Social workers can be active in supporting gender-variant individuals with their skills and values of empathy, acceptance, self-determination, and advocacy (McPhail). Exploring these areas and supporting these clients can be challenging work for many social workers. As Green (2004) noted:

We tend to prefer our male-bodied people to have masculine gender characteristics and our female-bodied people to have feminine characteristics, and when they don't, particularly when the dichotomy is highly visible, it can make some people uncomfortable, even angry, when they feel they don't know how to classify the person they are observing, or when the other person's gender qualities threaten the observer's sense of confidence in his or her own gender (McPhail).

Knowledge is power, and power can promote change. Social work students are just beginning their journey in obtaining education to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion,

immigrant status, and mental or physical disability (NASW, 2008). To begin this journey, students need exposure to all of these areas in an effort to initiate their internal awareness, thus creating a mechanism for cultural competence.

In this project there are implications for social work practice and policy. There is limited research on how transgender content within diversity courses directly affects social work practice after graduation. The information gained through this project and developed into a class curriculum will be a valuable tool for increasing MSW social work students' knowledge. The knowledge will not only increase their awareness about transgender people, but it will create self-awareness for the student. By initiating self-awareness, a social work student's bias can also become recognizable. It is imperative that biases be identified, and even more beneficial if they are identified early on. This allows for an objective response on the part of the social worker when presented with the opportunity to serve vulnerable individuals or groups. While class instruction is not a guarantee that biases can be laid aside or that information alone can prevent impartial treatment, it will guarantee that students have been exposed to certain information and put them in a place of choice in preparation for working with diverse populations.

A study on the phobias, attitudes and cultural competence of MSW students toward the LGBT population showed that there was an inadequate preparedness of MSW students regarding the needs of the LGBT populations and competencies in their practice. The researchers also believed that the classroom was the primary location to teach issues surrounding the LGBT population. However, while there were a large percentage of students who did not feel competent, there was an equally high percentage who did not

pursue training opportunities to enhance their understanding and skills in working with the LGBT population (Bridge & Bridge, 2007). This study also found that MSW students had higher phobias toward bisexual and transgender populations as compared with gay men and lesbians. Mallon (1999) found that higher phobia toward transgender people was also supported by previous research that indicates professional social work literature has neglected to recognize the unique needs of the transgender population (Bridge & Bridge).

While the curriculum contained within this project will not in and of itself be the enforcing factor that determines a social work student's cultural competence in serving vulnerable populations, it will fill a gap currently present in the MSW diversity coursework. A limited knowledge and lack of information surrounding transgender needs and issues may negatively impact practice. Lacking knowledge and competence is reflective of inadequate social work training (Bridge & Bridge, 2007). By introducing a multilevel curriculum, it is hopeful that students will prepare themselves to understand transgender people and culture and acquire skills to implement this knowledge into practice. Being prepared will require students to address their own attitudes toward transgender people with careful awareness of the transgender gap as well as to acquire skills to serve this vulnerable population.

APPENDIX A

Data Extraction Sheet

The Vocabulary and the Issues:

References to help the student understand the terminology and concepts that are essential to an understanding of the transgender population.

What does the term mean and how is it applied to transgender studies?

Gender Identity

Transgender Identity and Terms:

Transsexual, Transvestite, Crossdresser, Drag King/Drag Queen, MTF/FTM

Gender Variant, Androgynous, Intersexed

Gender Dysphoria and Gender Identity Disorder

Sexual Reassignment Surgery or Genital Reassignment Surgery

What about gender pronouns?

Where does sexual orientation fit in all this?

What does the term mean and how is it applied to transgender studies?

Define: Gender, sex and sexual orientation.

Implications for correct and incorrect use of terms:

Sex versus gender versus sexual orientation

Transgender: a historical perspective:

Describe how the current terms relating to transgender have been developed over time and who is the contributor of such history.

The key players in the transgender development; how gender and transgender themes and perspectives have emerged and developed throughout history.

History of terminology:

With regard to the transgender terminology (as cited above):

When and where did it start?

Who is/are the person(s) history sees as the main contributor(s)?

Magnus Hirschfeld

Harry Benjamin

Harry Benjamin International Gender Association Standards of Care

Other contributors in transgender history and their contributions:

Other contributors:

Christine Jorgensen

Renee Richards

(others)

Gender roles through history and implications for transgender population

Who might be seen as transgender throughout history? In what context?

Transgender themes in the media and public reaction to such themes

Political history and laws surrounding the transgender population:

Define and explore the most notable issues surrounding the rise in the political organization and the transgender movement. How do these issues impact social work?

Stonewall

GLBT movement

ENDA

Marriage

Trans-phobia

Hate Crimes Prevention Act

Trans discrimination laws

Trans Communities characteristics and how it has evolved over time

Implications for Social Work:

Summary of social work careers in which knowledge of transgender population is essential or may be helpful and ways social workers can advocate in those various fields:

Who are/is the transgender population here? What are the leading issues when working with transgender individuals in this setting? What are the ethical issues that may be presented? Who or what can you use to supplement your own knowledge (or lack of) to advocate for your client?

Child Welfare:

Schools

Transgender Youth

Medical

Counseling

Community

Advocacy

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