Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues are at the forefront of diversity concerns in the United States: reactions range from celebration and support to hostility and rejection. Within this context, young people across the US are growing up and growing into an awareness of their sexual identities. The best available evidence shows that LGBT youth are a group at extreme risk for the most compromising challenges that adolescents may face: school failure, victimization, depression, substance abuse, and suicide. LGBT youth come out at younger ages than ever before, and they come out in environments that are not prepared to understand and support them. The majority of teachers, ministers, parents, and youth professionals of today grew up at a time when there was literally no such thing as an “out” gay youth; few of them have had professional, research-based training to help them understand the unique needs of LGBT youth, or to help them identify strategies for supporting the healthy development of all young people with regard to LGBT issues.

With funding from the James P. and Shirley J. O’Brien Diversity Endowment in the University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Stephen T. Russell (Associate Professor in the John & Doris Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences) collaborated with CALS Cooperative Extension to present a train-the-trainer workshop in the Understanding and Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth curriculum (peer-reviewed by USDA CYFERNet Teen Editorial Board). Funding was matched by the Institute for Children Youth and Families and the John & Doris Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Nature of the project:
Adolescent sexual orientation (LGBT) issues are important concerns for youth professionals today, but that there are few opportunities for professionals to be trained on this topic. Because of the recent emergence and quick pace of social change related to LGBT issues, few youth development professionals received any formal education on LGBT youth needs. Youth professionals consistently report that they would like research-based information to help them better understand and support LGBT youth, and help them help all young people better understand these issues. Professionals describe their need for (a) more personal comfort in addressing these issues, (b) current information and resources for supporting youth, and (c) strategies for gaining institutional support to better support LGBT youth. Two 1-day train-the-trainer workshops were designed for CALS Cooperative Extension Agents, their community collaborators, and other interested members of the University community. The workshop was designed to prepare the participants to use the Understanding and Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth curriculum in their communities. The trainings were scheduled as followed:

Phoenix, AHSC Phoenix Campus, Tuesday, May 10, 2005, 8-4
Tucson, Pima County Cooperative Extension, Monday, December 5, 2005, 8-4

Advertisements were shared through CE listservs, and CE Agents shared the information with their community collaborators. The training was limited to 25 participants. Anticipating that some individuals would not attend (after having signed up), we allowed 30 participants to sign up at each site. For both trainings there was a waiting list. A total of 6 CE-affiliated personnel signed up for the trainings.
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(3 each in Phoenix and Tucson); the original goal had been to reach 5-8 CE professionals. The majority of the participants were school district personnel (school counselors); a number of youth professionals from youth-serving organizations or school-based youth programs participated in each session.

The training participants received a complete printed copy of the training curriculum (and a copy of all materials on a CD), and participated in the day-long training. Morning and mid-day meals were provided.

Meeting the O’Brien Endowment mission:

This project was consistent with the O’Brien Endowment mission of promoting “diversity in people, programs, and ideas.” It addressed a pressing diversity issue in our nation, from a research-based perspective, while focusing on a key component of CALS Cooperative Extension: youth development.

Evaluation:

The trainings were well-received overall. As part of the evaluation of the workshops, participants completed an evaluation form that included a rating of the training session, of the instructor, and some general feedback about the course. Many of the participants also provided responses to several open-ended questions on the forms. The summary of the workshop ratings and the open-ended responses are included below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Rating: 1=strongly agree; 5=strongly disagree</th>
<th>Phoenix</th>
<th>Tucson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Course objectives were clearly stated</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Course objectives were met</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Course provided balance between theory and application</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Course handouts were valuable</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Overall, course was valuable and I would recommend it to others</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Displayed a clear understanding of subject matter</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Was effective in presentation style and delivery</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Stimulated discussion and was responsive to participants</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The course was too short</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The course level was too basic</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What were the strengths of the course? What did you value most?

Phoenix:

- Content, Presentation-Exploration. Details/ Online.
- The curriculum and CD to utilize later.
- The discussions and the vocabulary list.
- It helped me challenge my views about GSBT. It made me realize that there are many resources available for my use and to give to my students and families.
- The diversity of discussion.
- The information given about LGBT youth
- Self Assessment
- Open discussion
- The book and the discussion.
- I valued the interaction between the instructor and the participants.
- Good discussion among group. Valuable for gaining perspective.
Tucson:

- Stephen’s expertise.
- I valued the expertise of Stephen. He is great. Content was super!
- The instructor was engaging and was respectful to all participants.
- Opportunities for discussion. Practical applications eg. Symbols to display to show office is a safe place.
- Presenter- investing and knowledgeable.
- I would have liked more personal stories to enhance material.
- Instructor was friendly and his approach which stimulated conversation and examples to be shared by other participants.
- Balance between theory/research and application. Balance between positive ways to support LGBT studies and negative stereotypes/risks.
- I really enjoyed the fact that it was much more conversational.
- The discussions from the participants were extremely valuable.
- The discussions that were facilitated were of most value. Engaging the audience is always so effective.
- Presenting new information and facts and reinforcing concepts already known.
- All the interesting facts.
- The strengths of the course were the personal experiences given by the professor. I valued most the video clips, and the open discussions.
- The fact that the presenter had first hand knowledge about the material. Lots of resources!
- I appreciate the research provided in the slides & curriculum. The group discussions (personal experiences) were informative and stimulating.
- Knowledge base, stimulating discussion.
- Good interaction.

How could this course be improved?

Phoenix:

- I would like to cover the materials we passed over. Seems it would have been useful. I’d rather stay longer.
- More hand-on activities.
- Make longer
- Fine just the way it is
- This course would be useful (Could be longer) if all participants were from same agency.
- This is a great course for “newbies” – It showed probably be delineated for those who do not have much knowledge or are just starting with population. Could have part I and II.
- Have a version of handouts graded toward schools rather than agencies.
- Example: “Students” rather than “clients”
- More discussion about people’s perceptions of LBGT individuals prior to beginning workshop.
- Specific details on intersex might be useful/educational.

Tucson:

- Perhaps have a youth forum. Participants can ask questions directly.
- ? Already very good!
- Chocolate : )
- Above 101 level for those of us w/ basic knowledge and understanding.
- Perhaps have some college age LGBT talk about their experiences.
- I wouldn’t know how!
- More discussion w/ others in the room. Set up of room may affect this such as chairs in circle.
• Websites + local resource lists/handouts.
• More time for the videos and for discussion.
• N/A (have lunch on time)
• Great as is.
• I would of liked more info. On how to implement a program into a school setting.
• Perhaps a follow up workshop for those who have already participated in the 1st workshop (a part 2, so to speak).
• Maybe work out the technical issues. 😊 otherwise, this was time well spent.
• Earlier lunch😊
• Maybe make it shorter.

How will you apply what you learned?

Phoenix:
• Review Material further and incorporate into my work.
• Share with my co-workers and clientele as I can.
• Share this with others at our staff mgt. Make curriculum available to others.
• One of my coworkers and I will start a support group for GSBT students. I will also be able to offer a workshop or brown bag lunch on this topic.
• Look @ how integrate into program
• Following Threw
• Name it, Claim it, Stop it. Will Use it at daily work
• I definitely picked up a few gems. I can also use the materials as I start to educate my staff.
• Also, on your Resilience Assessment read aloud the first 2 statements.
• I’m seeing my boss! Great job, very informative!
• Useful for our training and discussions w/ non GLBTQ people.

Tucson:
• Besides personal growth- I’m not sure, maybe staff presentation.
• Will share information with school staff. Will create a visible cues in my office.
• I will be a more vocal advocate for LGBT youth.
• Will be working in school to reduce bias vs. LGBT. Will send out info to teachers and stuff. Will help recruit GSA sponsor.
• Reflect on how I talk and listen w/ youth in work with them.
• To my clients.
• It helped in reviewing my own beliefs and clarified some aspects of LGBT. I will be conscious of using more gender neutral language- hopefully to stimulate conversation.
• I will engage in and start conversations with students and colleagues. This really was a worthwhile experience. Thank you!
• Invite others to training or encourage other types of training.
• I want to seek out opportunities to work w/LGBT youth.
• Personally by more pro-active in advocating our LGBT youth.
• I will share the information and booklet with my co-workers.
• Do lessons. Educate co-workers. Use language. Name-claim-stop
• I will go back to my school + implement what I was thought.
• I plan on sharing this information w/ my faculty + staff through inservices + individual consultation. I hope that I can be a better resource for my students + their parents.
• First, I will share my experience today with others, opening the conversation w/ teachers/colleagues about supporting LGBT youth. Also, it’s important for me to be more active in affirming + advocating for LGBT. I’ll start by making my workplace a safe zone.
• To my GSA group!
• Future work with youth. Help LGBT people.