



# Topics of Reflection For Counselors

Taking a Closer Look at ways to Support LGBTQ+ Clients.

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# Welcome

The following information was derived from a combination of life experience, conversations with people of the LGBTQ+ community, observations, and inspiration from academic sources.



There are times LGBTQ+ clients are confronted with moments of concern that their counselors create, that can be distracting toward their mental health during counseling appointments. Ranging from forms of microaggressions, homophobic behavior, religious beliefs, to reparative or conversion therapy. Whether unintentional or intentional all these behaviors are damaging to LGBTQ+ people.



Through these slides we will discuss and think through topics that are important to be aware of in supporting LGBTQ+ Clients.

# The Importance of Being Aware of Differences

As many similarities as people may have, everyone is different in their own ways as well, and it is important to support people in their own personal journey.

It can be so challenging at times for LGBTQ+ people to feel comfortable in sharing information that they are trying to work through with cisgender heterosexual counselors due to fear of lack of acceptance as one example of many.

If you are shocked to hear about something you are unfamiliar with, try to stay neutral in expression and utilize your active listening skills to provide the support that the client is in the appointment for.

It is important to try to be aware of implicit and explicit forms of bias and to not push personal core values onto others.

# A Brief Look at History and Topics Regarding Gender to Reflect Upon

**Berkeley professor explains gender theory | Judith Butler**

<https://youtu.be/UD9I0IIUR4k>

# Coming Out

While there are some aspects of “coming out” that can be personally relieving and rewarding this can also be a painful process for some people.

Some people experience ostracization from family and friends. As well as having the potential to be ostracized from religious communities.

Some LGBTQ+ youth become homeless, leading to many additional challenges that negatively impact their daily lives and furthermore their growth into emerging adulthood.

# Pronouns & Names

Avoid using the phrase, what are your “preferred pronouns.” Many people learned to use this terminology and it is harmful in suggesting who they are is a choice or a preference and not acknowledging them for who they are.

A rephrase would be, “What are your pronouns?” or “What pronouns do you use?”

When people share pronouns that don’t match their sex at birth it is important to use the shared pronouns when addressing the person.

When people share their name as different than their legal name use the name shared as if it were their legal name in as many ways possible.

When names and pronouns are not utilized properly according to the person, this is a form of disrespect that is degrading to the person you are addressing.



# Issues Transgender People Face



# Issues that Transgender People Face (Continued)

When watching the following video, *Beyond the Gender Binary* | Yee Won Chong | TEDxRainier, please keep in mind that this was filmed 10 years ago and the phrase “preferred pronouns” is used in this film and as previously mentioned, we are trying to move away from using this terminology now.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Lm4vxZrAig>



# Anti-LGBTQ+ Bills, Laws, and Policy

By staying current on anti-LGBTQ bills, laws, and policies to the degree you are able to, you can help grow a further understanding and awareness as to how health care, education, place of work, political standings and societal influences can negatively impact LGBTQ+ youth and adults.

Some suggestions of credible sources to view:

ACLU <https://www.aclu.org/issues/lgbtq-rights>

HRC <https://www.hrc.org/>

# Intersectionality Awareness

## BIPOC and LGBTQ+

Take some time to reflect upon the intersection of the social constructs of gender and sexual orientation with race, ethnicity, class, age, religion, culture, language, place, (dis)ability and more. Write out an example to deepen your reflection.

Intersectionality

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gN2ecPsg4xo>

LGBTQ Intersectionality

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygejLB-dHHs>

# Addiction and Substance Abuse

Consider having a list of resources ready to provide clients who express their desire or need to receive support regarding forms of addiction and/or substance abuse.

Some suggestions for this list would include local outpatient and inpatient programs for drugs and alcohol as well as support group suggestions such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and Gamblers Anonymous (GA).

While AA is the most well known it is important to add alternatives to the list such as SMART Recovery to help people gain knowledge of their options.

It's crucial to provide this type of information when asked because that moment of motivation is a window of opportunity that if distracted or discouraged can be lost.

# Suggestions for Additional Support Groups & Services

It can also be a supportive gesture to have suggestions for additional local resources and educational tools on hand for LGBTQ+ people depending on what topics come up through the talk therapy session.

LGBTQ+ Support Groups

Transgender Support Groups

Intimate Partner Violence and Domestic Violence Support Centers (That are inclusive of LGBTQ+ people.)

Any local programs that assist with GED programs or programs that assist with providing information on going to college depending on educational level and interests.

Information on LGBTQ Safe Sex Practices (Many LGBTQ+ people are not provided with the type of sex education that supports their needs.)

Contact information for government assistance programs and housing options. Some areas also have programs in place for downpayment assistance programs for first time homebuyers and business start up support options.

# LGBTQ+ Intimate Relationships

It can be challenging for some clients to discuss what they are working through in their intimate relationship or relationships during counseling appointments due to fear of lack of acceptance.

When opening up to a counselor despite how challenging that can be for some people hearing a comment such as, “As long as you’re not hurting anyone,” can be damaging.

Client: “I am exploring intimate partner possibilities.” Counselor: “As long as you’re not causing harm.” The following are potential thought responses:

“This feels like they are insinuating that LGBTQ+ intimate relationships are causing harm.”

“I have caused harm for family and friends who don’t understand, through the process of “coming out.”

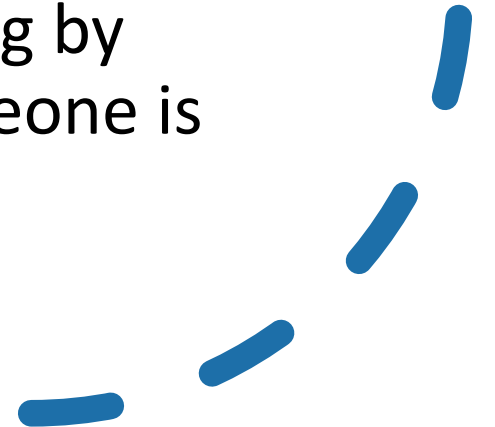
“I feel like I’m being compared to a sexual predator. When I’m just trying to talk through relationship possibilities.”

For those of you using this comment in your practice I urge you to please reflect upon why you make this statement especially if there were no previous signs of the client projecting intentional harm upon people and if you use this statement with your heterosexual clients.

To reflect further, why is this statement used toward LGBTQ+ people and not heterosexual people?

Avoid the Term  
Lifestyle in  
Conjunction  
with Sexual  
Orientation  
and/or Gender  
E.G.

- Gay Lifestyle
  - Transgender Lifestyle
  - Nonbinary lifestyle
  - Lesbian Lifestyle
  - Asexual Lifestyle
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- Stating a person's sexual orientation or gender as a lifestyle is demeaning by insinuating that this part of someone is chosen.



# Terminology

It's important to remember that terminology evolves over time. It's also important to recognize that some terms are appropriate to use in the in-group, while not appropriate for use in the out-group.

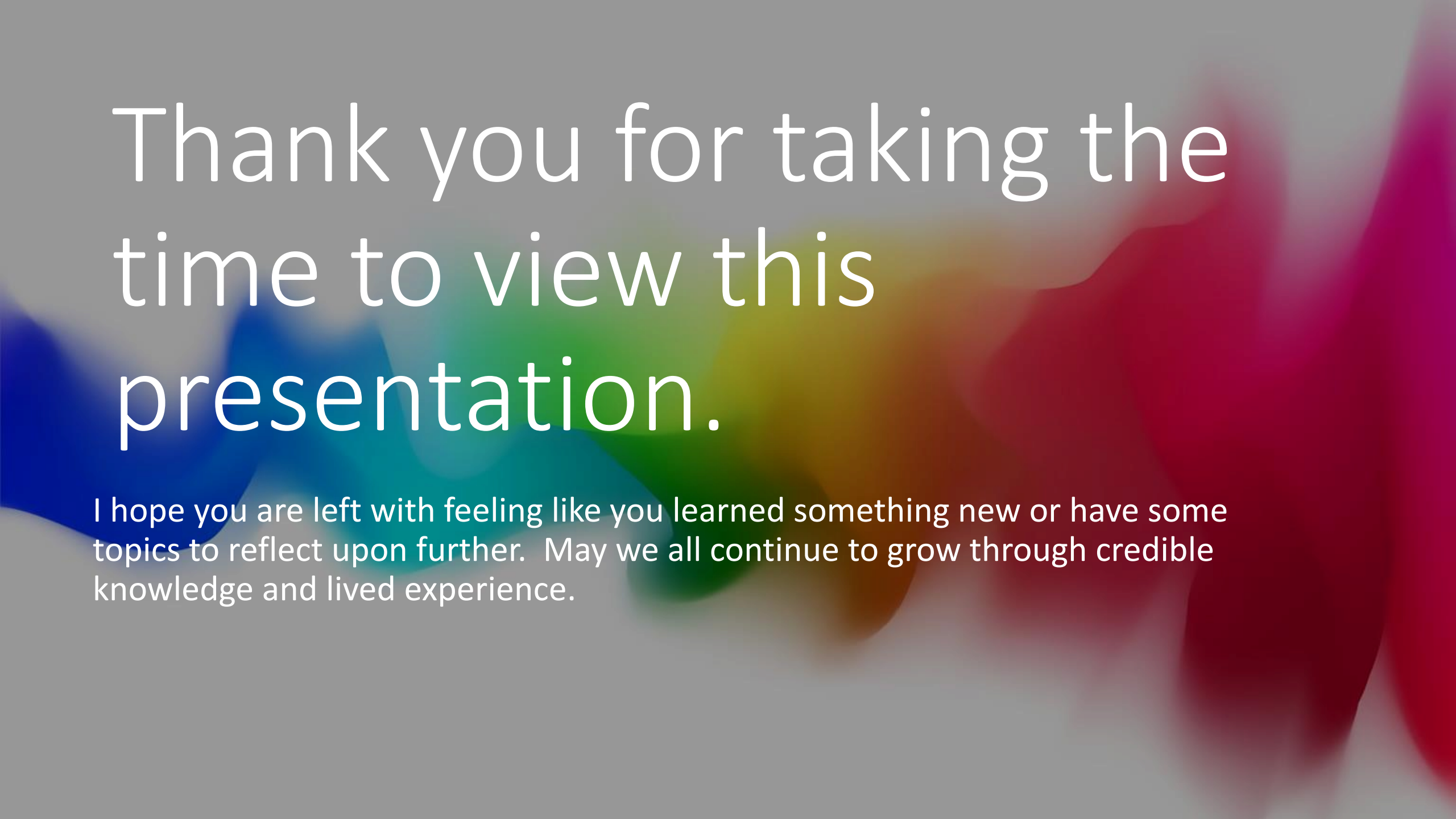
By utilizing a credible source, you may stay current on LGBTQ+ terminology.

While also trying to maintain a growth-mindset in being open to being corrected by those within the community so that you may continue to learn more.

Suggestions for a glossary of terms:

<https://glaad.org/reference/terms/> (LGBTQ)

<https://glaad.org/reference/trans-terms> (Transgender)



Thank you for taking the  
time to view this  
presentation.

I hope you are left with feeling like you learned something new or have some topics to reflect upon further. May we all continue to grow through credible knowledge and lived experience.