

Focus Group: LGBTQ Youth

October 16, 2014 at United Way, 3:30 – 5:15 p.m.

Facilitated by Dr. Jerry Solomon

Staff assistance: 2

Number of person in attendance: 8

Question: Where are the gaps in services?

- Accessibility of services
- Don't know how to get help for others in need; school counselors or doctors may help
- Most kids don't know how to get services
- Kids don't know counseling services are confidential
- Hesitant to seek services if they don't know their view/attitude (about LGBTQ)
- Would prefer to have a choice, and not just assigned to a specific counselor
- Some counselors are biased. They try to steer you in a different direction trying to get them to be straight, saying "it's a faze".
- Schools should have resources (lists of counselors, groups, hotlines).
- Therapists need to be well trained in lgbtq
- Peer groups are useful for specific issues, e.g. STRANGE
- No peer services in Pajaro high
- Obstacle: being a minor; can't visit friend at psychiatric hospital
- Juvenile hall/prison/jail: doctors need to be aware of meds/hormones for Trans individuals
- Some churches are not gay friendly

What is the most important thing??

- Education
- Sex Ed is heterosexual focused. No information on homosexual or trans issues.
- There needs to be a cultural shift and sensitivity to lgbtq
- People shouldn't assume you are attracted to them (e.g., lesbians are not attracted to all women)
- People need to not ask inappropriate questions about sex
- Lgbtq kids are interested in relationships, not just about sex
- Stereotypes (eg., gay guys like to shop)
- People confuse gender identity with sexuality; there is a difference!
- People don't understand Trans issues
- Forms/documents should have multiple ways of identifying gender (not just male and female)

What issues exist in South County? What are the unique challenges?

- Downtown Santa Cruz is very diverse (LGBTQ), it isn't diverse in South County
- There may be a cultural difference in accepting lgbtq
- Even close-minded people can change (e.g., traditional Mexican father is coming to accept bisexual daughter)

What about personal safety? How safe do you feel?

- Pay attention to the “vibe”; are people staring at me?
- Some places feel safe, like the Castro in San Francisco or Santa Cruz
- You have to be prepared for possible unsafe situations.