**Abstract**

This poster describes a class designed to increase competence in working with LGBT clients and to decrease homophobia amongst rural BSW students. In the absence of an active LGBT community, LGBT documentary film can serve to expose students to the voices of the LGBT community. This exposure, coupled with a structured exploration of issues pertinent to LGBT people, can lead to a decrease in homophobia and an increase in self-perceived skill at working with LGBT clients in social work.

**Description of the Course**

This course examined the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisex-ual and transgender (LGBT) clients across the lifespan using a biopsychosocial perspective. Practice issues specific to LGBT youth and older adults were featured. An important theme in this course was the impact of historical social context and current social policies upon LGBT people. This course included a research component which allowed students to practice research skills with this population.

The class was offered as a night class, meeting once per week for three hours. Students were all traditionally aged college students at a large rural state university in the northeast. There were 27 students in the class and 6 of them identified as LGBT students.

**Learning Goals**

- Increase knowledge about the historical and social forces that have shaped the LGBT experience.
- Increase knowledge of potential issues, problems, and strengths of LGBT clients across the lifespan.
- Increase self-assessment of readiness to help LGBT clients.
- Decrease homophobia.

**Textbook**


**Calendar of Films**

**Week 1:** Introduction: Out in the Silence

**Week 2:** History: Clips from Before and After Stonewall

**Week 3:** LGB Identity Development: When I knew

**Week 4:** Transgender Identity: I’m just a Nakee

**Week 5:** Family and Social Support: Lead with Love

**Week 6:** LGBT Youth: In the Life Media: Finding Home

**Week 7:** LGBT Family Concerns: Our House

**Week 8:** Trans Family Concerns: She’s just a boy I knew

**Week 9:** Older LGBT People: Gen Silent

**Week 10:** Health Issues: How to Survive a Plague

**Week 11:** Cultural Violence: After Stonewall

**Week 12:** Policy and Advocacy: In the Life: Foster Care’s Invisible Youth

**Week 13:** Break

**Week 14:** Spirituality in the LGBT Community: panel discussion

**Specific Strategies**

The use of documentary film was a way to bring first person experience into the classroom. This freed LGBT students to not feel that they had to be the experts in the entire community.

**Class structure:** 1/3 lecture and content, 1/3 film, 1/3 dis-cussion of film and content created a layered way to keep students engaged in a three hour night class format.

**PseySH Cards:** gave students permission to ask "stupid questions"

**Groups for projects were structured to include a diversity of experience with the LGBT community.**

**Course planning included a research component which allowed students to practice research skills with this population.**

**Outcomes**

- Decrease homophobia.
- Increase self-perceived skill at working with LGBT clients in social work.
- Increase strengths of LGBT clients across the lifespan.
- Increase knowledge of potential issues, problems, and discrimination against LGBT people.

**Competency working with LGBT Clients Self-Assessment**

This self-assessment is designed to help you understand areas of strength and weakness in your preparation for working with LGBT clients. Answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

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<th>Item</th>
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**Practice Community Assessment**

**Part I: Best Practices**

Students provided a concise summary of best practices with LGBT clients for the chosen area of social work practice.

**Part II: Local Resources**

Students investigated local service providers to find out how they help LGBT clients.

**Part III: Presentation**

A group of students presented their findings in class and prepared a one page summary of recommendations for best practices for their selected practice area. The summaries were of brochure quality and to be distributed within the department and the practice community.

**Final Project**

Outcomes

At the end of the semester students reported a general sense that they had been exposed greatly from the class. Majority students expressed a sense that a hidden history associated set of social issues had been revealed to them. LGBT students reported that, for once, they enjoyed having their experiences being the central point of a course.

At the beginning of the course, each student took two surveys. The first was the Index of Homophobia (Hudson & Rickets, 1989) and the second was a survey of readiness to work with LGBT clients. The class took each measure again at the end of the semester. Results were then discussed in class as a method to help students consolidate growth within the class. Generally speaking, the students reported improvement in both areas.