Experiences of LGBT Students: Effects on Retention in Higher Education

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Experiences of Sexual Minority Youth on Campus

- Harassment of sexual minority students on campus (Draughn, Elkins, & Roy, 2002; Rankin, 2003; United States Department of Justice, 2011)
- Stressors and behaviors that are distinctive to this population (Sanlo, 2004)
- Sexual minority youth at greatest risk for health issues (Sanlo, 2004)
- Difficulty developing a positive identity (Rankin, 2003)
Perception of Campus Climate and Student Outcomes

• Impact on academic or co-curricular learning (Rankin, 2003; Sanlo, 2004)

• Need for research on the relationship between perception of campus climate and learning and developmental outcomes (Rankin, 2006)
Support Services and Programs

• Professionally staffed centers for sexual minority students, faculty, and staff (Sanlo, 2004)

• Safe Zone, lavender graduation celebrations, leadership training (Sanlo, 2000; 2004)
Purposes and Goals of Allies or Safe Zone Programs

• Provide confidential and visible support to LGBT individuals
• Foster student development
• Create atmosphere of acceptance and support
• Reduce presence of homophobia and heterosexism (Draughn et al., 2002)
Steps to Successfully Address Homophobia and Heterosexism

• Assess institutional climate
• Assess existing programs, recruitment, and education methods
• Develop strategies for confronting incidents of homophobia and heterosexism in group-level situations (Draughn et al., 2002)
Impacts on Retention

- Study of retention in racial and ethnic minority groups focuses on stresses associated with being underrepresented (Sanlo, 2004)
- Experiences of sexual minority youth mirror experiences of minority groups (Sanlo, 2004)
- Collection of admissions data aids understanding of retention issues (Sanlo, 2004)
References


