

# Substance Abuse and Sexual Orientation: The Key to Helping LGBTQ+ Students in Higher Education

*Misty Rhoads, Ph.D. May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017*



# Welcome!



- **Associate Professor**
- **Focus on Human Sexuality and Gender Issues**
- **Completed a practicum with a renowned gender reassignment surgeon to better understand the medical, physical, emotional, and spiritual support needs for trans-identified persons and their support systems**
- **Why is this topic is important?**

# Brief Summary:

- LGBTQ+ students not only face many of the same risks as heterosexual students, but also deal with population specific risks when dealing with substance abuse.
- This Webinar addresses substance abuse statistics, risk factors on a college campus affecting substance abuse, and the social/administrative support needed to better serve this population.



# Learning Objectives

- To become familiar with appropriate terms for the LGBTQ+ community
- To identify major factors affecting substance abuse in the LGBTQ+ community
- To discuss changes needed on a college campus to better serve the LGBTQ+ community

# Know What You Are Talking About



# Basic Terms



Heterosexism



Gay/Lesbian



Bi Sexual



Transgender



# Shocking Stats

- 20-30% of the GLBTQ+ population abuses substances vs. 9% of the general population <sup>3, 6</sup>
- 25% of GLBTQ+ abuse alcohol compared to 5-10% of general population <sup>3</sup>
- The LGBTQ+ population is more than 2x as likely to have experienced any kind of mental illness in the past year. <sup>7</sup>

# Substance Abuse in Lesbians

Studies suggest that Lesbians are significantly more likely to drink in a heavy manner vs. heterosexual women. <sup>11</sup>

Lesbian and bisexual women are more likely to drink more often, binge drink, and experience negative consequences from alcohol use <sup>11</sup>

They are also more likely to seek professional help for these problems <sup>11</sup>

# Substance Abuse in Bisexual Men and Women

- Bisexual adults exhibit higher rates of binge drinking (22.6%) than their counterparts (14.3%)<sup>11</sup>
- Rates for binge drinking in bisexual women can be as high as (23.7%)<sup>11</sup>



# Substance Use in Gay Men

- **Gay men use substances at a higher rate than the general population <sup>3, 11</sup>**
- **3.5% more likely to use marijuana and other illicit drugs and become dependent. <sup>3</sup>**
- **12.2% more likely to use amphetamines <sup>3</sup>**
- **9.5% more likely to use heroin <sup>3</sup>**

# Substance Use in Transgender/Gender Queer Populations

- **More likely to use marijuana, crack, and alcohol along with using meth and other injectable drugs.** <sup>3, 11</sup>
- **200% more likely to smoke tobacco** <sup>3</sup>



# Why Turn to Substance Abuse?

- **Stress**
- **Cultural competency**
- **Lack of Family Support**
- **Invisibility**
- **Financial issues**
- **Lack of effective advising**
- **Bullying and ostracizing**
- **Sexual Assault**
- **Socialize, Cope, and Conform**



3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11

# Emotions

**Turmoil**

Fear  
Anxiety  
Depression

**Disenfranchised  
Grieving**

**Hope**

**Hiding**

# The Experience

## Higher Ed. Attendance

- 1 million LGBTQ+ Students
- 160,000 faculty
- Most people struggle with identity issues in their 20's

## Micro-Aggressions

- Heterosexist/Phobic terminology
- Endorsing Heteronormative culture
- Discomfort with LGBTQ issues/experiences
- Assumptions of Abnormality
- Denial of Privacy

## Making A Mistake?

- Admit
- Apologize
- Learn/Grow/Change



2, 3, 4, 5, 11

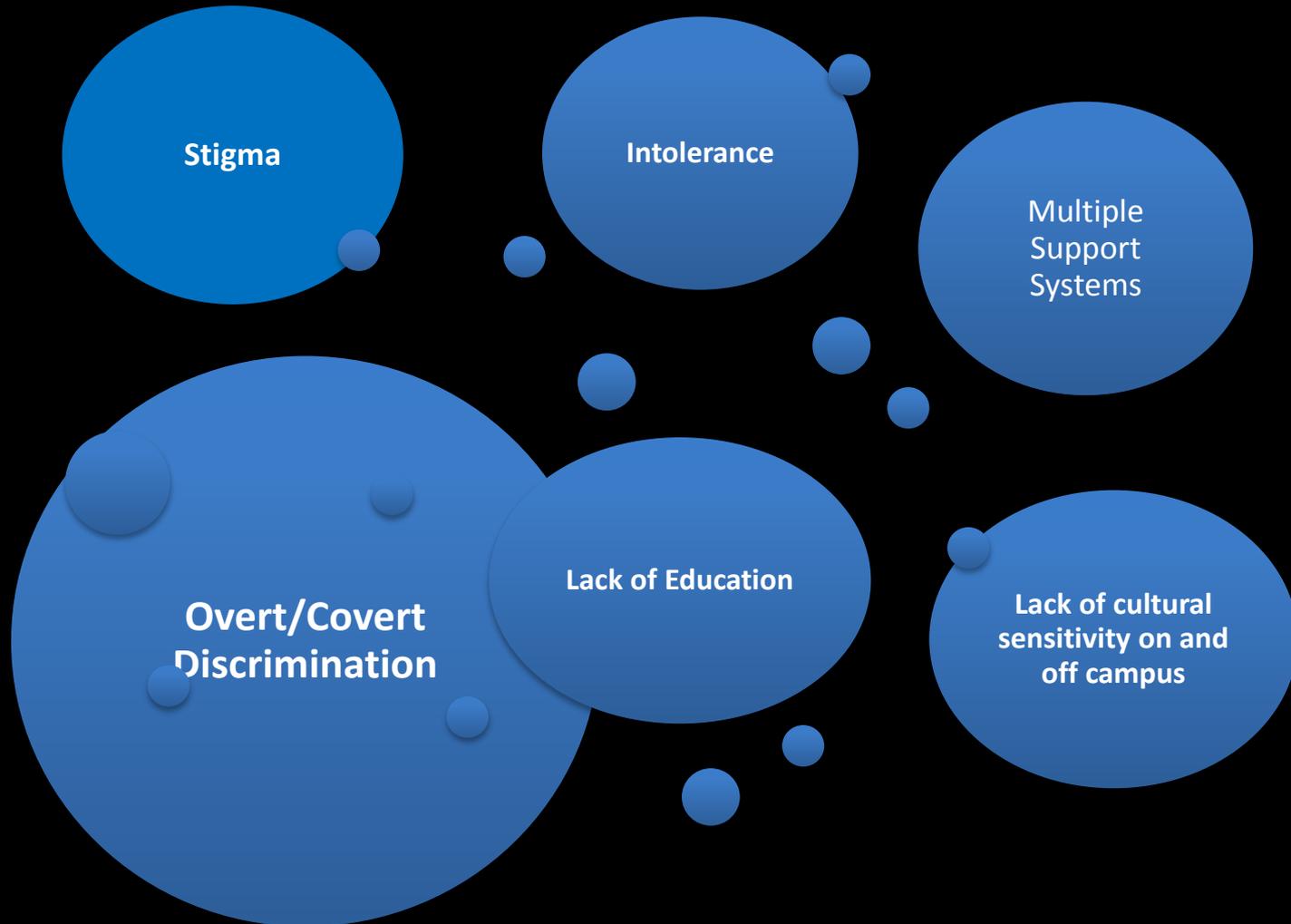
# I am Sam: A Personal Experience

- I am Sam
- \*Disclaimer some violence and disturbing actions

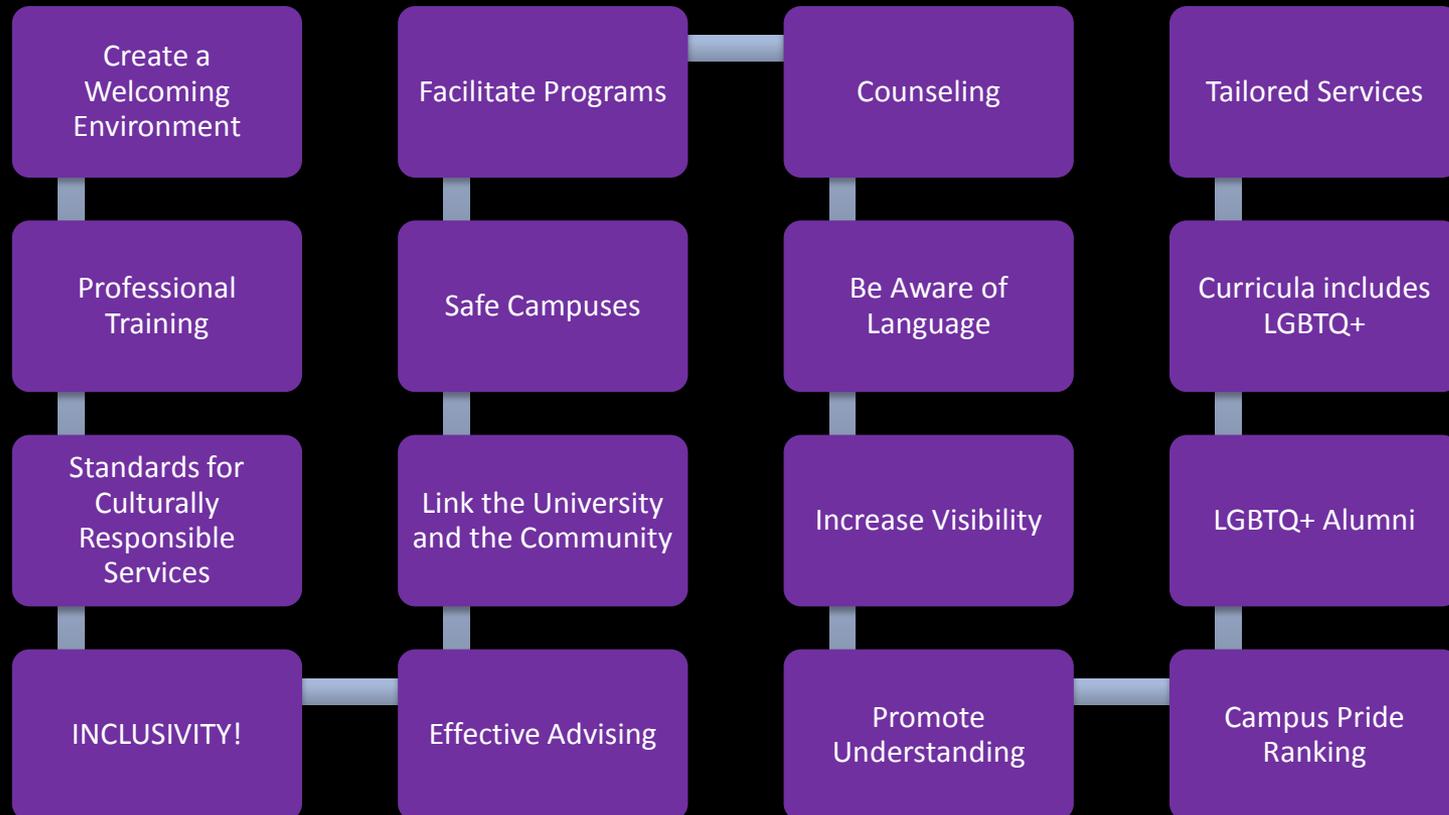


- Stop at 1:39

# Barriers to Seeking Support



# Changes that Need to be Made



1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11

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# Contact Information

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Thank You!

