

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ Liberation

Before you teach this class

- This class will go best if participants have already had at least a year of Co-Counseling experience. This should have included exposure to the idea of policy in RC and how we use it to work on oppressor distresses. It would also be best if people have seen how to work on early sexual memories, sex, and closeness, so they have a larger context for working on LGBTQ+ liberation and allyship.
- Tim Jackins' July 2010 *Present Time* article on sex and identity (Human Connections, and Sex <www.rc.org/publication/irp/sex_tj>) is a good article to teach just before you tackle this topic. Please use the version of this article which is on the website, and not earlier printed versions. Tell students that this article represents RC's current perspective on sex, sexual identities, and LGBTQ+ people.
- We use the term "LGBTQ+ oppression" to refer to the systematic mistreatment of people who stray from society's rigid gender-based stereotypes.¹ (This includes society's traditional stereotypes of women and men, which have been used as a foundation for sexism and the oppression of women for thousands of years.) LGBTQ+ oppression is an example

¹ The meanings of the terms "sex" and "gender" have changed over time. The U.S. organization Planned Parenthood currently uses the following definitions:

- Sex is a label—male or female—that you're assigned by a doctor at birth based on the genitals you're born with and the chromosomes you have. It goes on your birth certificate.
- Gender is much more complex: It's a social and legal status, and set of expectations from society, about behaviors, characteristics, and thoughts. Each culture has standards about the way that people should behave based on their gender. This is also generally male or female. But instead of being about body parts, it's more about how you're expected to act, because of your sex.
- Gender identity is how you feel inside and how you express your gender through clothing, behavior, and personal appearance. It's a feeling that begins very early in life.

of an enforcer oppression (as is "mental health" oppression). Everyone experiences LGBTQ+ oppression long before they identify as a particular sexual and/or gender identity. People then internalize both the oppressive attitudes and having been victimized, and it is important that everyone have an opportunity to work on recordings from both sets of experiences.

LGBTQ+ oppression affects everyone

- Like "mental health" oppression, LGBTQ+ oppression has been aimed at virtually everyone, even if they never identified in one of the LGBTQ+ identities. It is used to scare people into accepting and living inside of rigid gender roles that are key parts of sexism and men's oppression. The mechanism for scaring people is the visible targeting and scapegoating of anyone who strays from the rigid gender roles.
- In RC, we use the term homophobia to refer to the fears and other feelings that interfere with closeness and relationships with people we traditionally were not supposed to be in close and/or sexual relationships with because of society's rigid gender role stereotypes.
- LGBTQ+ oppression is still very real and vicious. People are killed, injured, and shunned in many places in the contemporary world because of it.
- LGBTQ+ oppression targets both sexuality and gender identity. These identities are not trivial; they matter a great deal to the people who take them on and people have often paid a high price for doing so.

Understanding identity

- It is important not to confuse identity with behavior. The LGBTQ+ identities often exist independently of what people do in their lives, whom they prioritize, how they love people, and so on.

- All identities—racial, ethnic, gender, class, national, and so on—include a combination of inherently human behaviors and characteristics, and distress recordings. All identities need to be discharged on—any distress attached to the identity will be left behind; anything inherently human will not.

LGBTQ+ people are good and LGBTQ+ oppression must be opposed

- LGBTQ+ people are good, just like all other humans.
- LGBTQ+ people are fully human, caring, and intelligent, struggling to have successful lives just like everyone else, and deserving of being treated with complete respect.
- The oppression of LGBTQ+ people is persistent and vicious. In some parts of the world it is deadly. Whatever you or others may think or feel about LGBTQ+ people or identities, as Co-Counselors we agree to stand up against all forms of oppression, including the oppression of LGBTQ+ people.
- Societies historically and currently have handled these identities and issues very differently in different places. That context matters, but does not change our basic agreements to stand up against all oppression and treat all people with respect.

LGBTQ+ internalized oppression

- Internalized oppression consists of negative messages put forward by oppressive societies about this group. These messages function as oppression and people often end up internalizing them. The RC journal *Side by Side* has articles describing some key components of internalized LGBTQ+ oppression. Key components include:
 - o “We are bad, wrong, dirty, and disgusting.”
 - o “We are dangerous, especially to children.”

- o “We cannot be trusted.”
- o “We will ‘grow out of this.’”
- o “There is something wrong with us.”

- Because of the vicious nature of LGBTQ+ oppression, people with these identities may also internalize other distress recordings, based on the mistreatment they have experienced. They include the following:

- o Defensiveness—this is a group of people who were heavily attacked, often before they identified, and often have been under attack since.
- o Distrust—many LGBTQ+ people have experienced betrayal from people they counted on the most.
- o Disappointment—LGBTQ+ people, like everyone else, started out with high hopes and expectations of those around them. Their experience with LGBTQ+ oppression can make everyone seem disappointing.
- o Despair—betrayal, oppression, and being made to feel “different” set up isolation, loneliness, and feeling abandoned. This can set them up to feel that their lives are pointless or hopeless.
- o Denial—The lives of LGBTQ+ people can be harsh, lonely, and emotionally painful, because it can feel like LGBTQ+ oppression is everywhere. Not wanting to face the oppression every day can lead to trying to deny and avoid these painful feelings. This heavy oppression can set people up for addictions of various kinds and suicide.

Counseling LGBTQ+ folks

- RC has long supported LGBTQ+ liberation with the following program:
 - o Respect for all humans
 - o The elimination of homophobia

- o The elimination of LGBTQ+ and every other form of oppression
 - o Complete re-emergence from distress recordings for LGBTQ+ folks
 - o Complete transformation of the planet so that everything works well
- As counselor to LGBTQ+ folks, be a real person who cares about this person and establishes trust with them. Once this is established, you can counsel people on almost anything. They will be more likely to be able to use your attention and caring if you have earned their trust.
 - You cannot have an agenda as counselor except to help your clients use the process of discharge and re-evaluation in order to get their minds back fully. LGBTQ+ people will notice if you have some particular endpoint in mind for them.
 - As with any identity, there will be some distresses that LGBTQ+ people will tend to have in common (we have listed some of them above), and it makes sense to be familiar with these.
 - Because the excuse for LGBTQ+ oppression is often assumptions about LGBTQ+ people's sexual behaviors and/or gender presentation², this can be an additional barrier for LGBTQ+ people in working on these issues. Everyone deserves to have the space to work on everything that has happened to them around sex, their bodies, relationships, and everything connected with them, as we do when we work in a concerted and intentional way on early sexual memories.
 - The more openly you can work on your own distresses in the area of sex and sexuality, the more room there will be for LGBTQ+ people to work. The lack of discussion of and work on "heterosexual" identities and sexual behaviors, and

traditional gender roles, colludes with the message of LGBTQ+ oppression that it is LGBTQ+ folks who are distressed in this area. We know from work with thousands of people over the years that everyone has been deeply hurt around sex, closeness, and relationships.

Allies

- To be an ally to this group you can:
 - o Always remember that we exist, that we are good, and that we are as eager as anyone else to leave our distresses behind;
 - o Counsel us well, including growing your understanding of how to counsel people on chronic distress;
 - o Stand up against the oppression;
 - o Develop awareness, sensitivity, and slack, particularly around sex and sexual behavior and gender identity;
 - o Cultivate the ability to talk and laugh about sex and issues of oppression; and
 - o Be able to be a little intrusive, because LGBTQ+ oppression has forced people to be secretive (if you don't ask, some LGBTQ+ folks won't tell much about these parts of their lives).

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LGBTQ+ leaders' commitment

From now on I will fit in, at the center: wanted, connected, confident, cooperative, and in charge, and I will see to it that everything around me goes well, especially my life. And this will mean... (State the implications, and then discharge.)

² "Gender presentation" refers to a person's behavior, mannerisms, interests, and appearance that are associated with gender in a particular cultural context.

Journal: *Side by Side*

Supplemental reading

Jackins, Harvey. *A Rational Theory of Sexuality*.
Seattle: Rational Island Publishers, 1977.

Karp, Joan. *Counseling on Early Sexual Memories*.
Seattle: Rational Island Publishers,
second edition, 1997.

Jackins, Tim. "Human Connections, and Sex."
Present Time 160 July 2010: 3-7.
<www.rc.org/humanconnectionsex>

Jackins, Tim. "Sex." *Present Time* 169 October 2012:
11-14. <www.rc.org/sex>

Jackins, Tim. "RC's Commitment to LGBTQ+
Liberation." *Present Time* 205 October 2021: 73.
<[www.rc.org/publication/present_time/pt205/
pt205_073_tj](http://www.rc.org/publication/present_time/pt205/pt205_073_tj)>

"D'Arc, Jeanne and Nijinsky, David." "Thinking About
Transgender People." *Present Time* 169 October 2012:
44-46. <[www.rc.org/publication/present_time/pt169/
pt169_044_jd](http://www.rc.org/publication/present_time/pt169/pt169_044_jd)> (currently being updated))



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