Evolving Two Spirit Awareness and Roles in Native and Non Native Communities

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IMICH Denver
March 2017
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No disclosures

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Definitions

- MTF  male to female
- Transwoman

- FTM  female to male
- Transman

- Cis-female
- Cis-male

- Transvestite/cross dresser
- Transsexual
LGBTQQIAA

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual  pansexual

- Transgender
- Queer (gender queer)
- Questioning
- Intersex
- Androgynous
- Ally
**Diagnosis**

- DSM IV GID
  Gender Identity Disorder

- DSM V GD
  Gender Dysphoria

- WPATH SOC 7.0
  *Gender nonconformity* refers to the extent to which a person’s gender identity, role, or expression differs from the cultural norms prescribed for people of a particular sex

- ?DSM VI GNC
  Gender NonConforming

  *Gender dysphoria* refers to discomfort or distress that is caused by a discrepancy between a person’s gender identity and that person’s sex assigned at birth.”
GD/GNC should not be a DSM diagnosis, it is not a mental illness.

“the expression of gender characteristics, including identities, that are not stereotypically associated with one’s assigned sex at birth is a common and culturally diverse human phenomenon [that] should not be judged as inherently pathological or negative. 

WPATH SOC 7.0

But GD/GNC does often coincide with mental illness:
- depression
- dissociative disorder
- Asperger’s
- autism
- anxiety disorder
- substance abuse
- conduct disorder
- borderline personality disorder
Two Spirit Traditions

Navajo levels of gender

- 1 female
- 2 male
- 3 NADLEEHI feminine male
- 4 DILBAAM masculine female

Common roles

- Revered
  - Ceremonial elders
  - Healers
  - Caretakers of children
  - Crafts people
  - Warriors
- Reviled
- Changed with European Judeo-Christian influence
Historical Two Spirited People

- Woman War Chief 1850s
  Originally Gros Ventre captured by Crow at 10 and became warrior-hunter then war chief living as a man with 4 wives
  (picture from Qualia folk)

- We’ Wha (Zuni) 1849-1896
  1886 went to DC as a representative of her people. Healer, craftswoman, child care taker
  (photo pinterest, wikimedia.org)
Osh-Tisch (Crow) lived as a female during peace time, healer and shaman, fought dressed as a male warrior during Battle of the Rosebud.

Rabbit Tail (Shoshone)
Note hairstyle one side down and the other side tied up, representing both male and female.

(photos from “rejected princesses”)
Present Two Spirit

- Varies by tribe
- Encompasses sexual orientation and gender identification spectrum ie LGBTQIA, not just T

- Some tribes allow children to avoid puberty rituals of birth sex and may allow puberty rituals of indentified gender

- Some tribes allow as ceremonial elders
  Others only allow participation, but cannot lead

- Other tribes till shun these members

- Aug 1, 2011 Suquamish Tribe legally authorized same-sex marriage
  34 tribes have done the same, others have not
Tribes that do not allow same sex marriage

- Ak-chin
- Chickasaw
- Choctaw
- Kalispell
- Kickapoo
- Muscogee Creek
- Navajo
- Sac & Fox Seminole
IHS sites, urban sites, and tribal sites

- Currently there is a severe lack of services for Transgender youth
  - There are no IHS sites that provide gender re-assignment surgery
  - Extremely limited access to puberty blockers and cross-hormones
  - Most urban sites refer to larger centers

Tribal sites....?? Where will they go
• U.S. Federal Equality Law
  Sept 20, 2011 Don’t Ask Don’t Tell rescinded allowing LGB personnel to serve in the military

• Aug 20, 2012 Title VII protects against discrimination against transgender individuals. 1964 Civil Rights Act, 1978 Civil Service Reform Act. Executive orders 13087,13672

• June 26, 2015 Supreme Court- Windsor vs U.S. struck down DOMA thereby recognizing same sex unions and marriages.

June 30,2016 Transgender can serve (after 18months of diagnosis/treatment), not dependents; not Intersex yet
• May 30, 2014 Medicare can now cover Trans related surgeries; CA medicaid 2002; some private insurance

• July 2014 Washington state health insurance commissioner declared discriminatory health care practices for transgender services illegal

• April 2015 North Dakota struck down a bill to protect against discrimination based upon sexual orientation or gender identity

• February 23, 2017 Donald Trump rescinded guidance re transgender protections under Title IX BUT THIS DOES NOT CHANGE THE LAW, PROTECTION STILL EXISTS

Girl Scouts allow and are recruiting transgender leaders and members

• Boy Scouts have banned Gay and Transgender leaders and
Bathrooms

Photo cred: Huffington Post
Why we need to know this

- **Prevalence of Transgender people in US population**
  1:500-1:250  
  (vs 1:30,000 MTF; 1:100,000 FTM)
  - “How Frequently Does Transsexualism Occur?” Lynn Conway 2001-12

- **Suicide attempts**
  41-45%  
  4.6% general population
  10-20% LGB

  2/3 of those who experience domestic violence from family members attempt suicide

  59% of all trans surveyed considered suicide

  _National Transgender Discrimination Survey 2014_
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention — UCLA Law School’s Williams Institute study 2014:

- 78% of survey respondents who suffered physical or sexual violence at school attempted suicide.
- 64% of respondents who experienced violence at work.
- >50% of those who experienced harassment or bullying in schools.
- 57% of those who reported that their family chose not to speak/spend time with them.
- 69% of those who had ever experienced homelessness.
- 60% of those who reported a doctor or healthcare provider refused to treat them.
- 51% of those who are HIV-positive.
- 55-65% of those with disabilities.
- 57-61% of those disrespected or harassed by law enforcement officers.
As Health Care Providers we need to:

- recognize Transgender-Two Spirit individuals
  Those who demonstrate a long-lasting and intense pattern of gender nonconformity or gender dysphoria (whether suppressed or expressed)

- be aware of treatment options
  Social
  hormonal
  surgical

- be aware of psychological and physical risks

- be aware of local and internet referral networks
  mental health counselors
  MDs who treat for transition
  Support groups
  Legal resources
RESOURCES

AAP  American Academy of Pediatrics.  AAP.org 
“Protecting Transgender Youth”

Human Rights Campaign  HRC.org

Gender Odyssey.  Genderodyssey.org

Transyouthequality.org
Transequality.org

Vancouver Transhealth.  Transhealth.vch.org

WPATH  World Professional Association of Transgender Health
Wpath.org