

# Article Response: Application of Consultation

Marc Scott

Department of Counseling Wake Forest University

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Dr. Mark Scholl and Ms. Lacey Jacobs

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*1. What considerations should a consultant consider when upholding best practices for transgender and gender-nonconforming students?*

To ensure that a consultant is upholding best practices for transgender and gender-nonconforming students, it is essential that the consultant has an objective basis with which to review what those best practices are. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) provides such standards: “The World Professional Association for Transgender Health is an international, multidisciplinary, professional association whose mission is to promote evidence-based care, education, research. Advocacy, public policy, and respect for transgender health.” The standards of care that are provided are flexible and can meet the diverse needs of all gender-nonconforming, transgender, and transsexual persons. Since these are relatively newer sources of challenges and opportunities in terms of acceptance and understanding for the education community, it is also important to make sure that these best practices are revisited often, as approaches and data are constantly changing as new evidence-based approaches are discovered and recognized.

*2. How could a consultant promote best practices for transgender and gender-nonconforming students?*

It is important that the consultant look at the current practices that the school is employing and what they are basing their standards of care upon in comparison to the most current standards being supplied by WPATH. The school climate and its acceptance of transgender or gender-nonconforming students must be reviewed to ensure that all applicable standards are being met, and opportunities for education and information have been provided to promote acceptance within the school community. The policies and procedures of the school should be reviewed to reflect the school’s commitment to an inclusive community. “No student should feel threatened or be discriminated against” for any reason, including sex, sexual

orientation, or gender identity. Not only should the policies reflect this intention, but the procedures backed by general knowledge and training should also be enhanced to ensure that these intentions are being carried out to fruition (9 V.S. A. § 4502(a)).

The general areas that should remain in constant review are the communication of the school on how they are supporting and ensuring that both educators, administration, and students, are all being compliant with their procedures. It is essential that the “tone at the top” of the organization both communicates and carries out a zero-tolerance policy for any type of discrimination within the community. The inclusive tone that is set is one that will most likely be followed if the policies are continuously updated and understood, communicated openly, and followed riotously. Only then does a school truly have an opportunity to become, and remain, in compliance. Any failure to the detriment of this, however, can result in the school having a liability issue, as well as falling out of compliance with the laws of many states, in addition to the school being an unsafe environment both for transgender and non-gender conforming students.

**References:**

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WPATH (World Professional Association for Transgender Health). 2011. *Standards of Care*, 7. WPATH.

Vermont Agency for Education: Education, Classifications and Definitions, 16 V.S.A. §11(26);(30)(A);(32);