Beyond Affirmation: An LGBTGEQIAP+ Advocacy Lab

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Introductions

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

1. identify systemic barriers affecting LGBTGEQIAP+ individuals across clinical, educational, and organizational settings;
2. apply the ACA Advocacy Competencies to develop strategies for addressing LGBTGEQIAP+ inequities at client, community, and institutional levels;
3. develop an advocacy framework from which to respond to scenarios across clinical, educational, and organizational settings.

When affirming individual LGBTGEQIAP+ clients isn't enough, how do we change the systems affecting them?

Agenda

- Where does the problem live?
- Advocacy
- Advocacy Lab
- Comments & Curiosities
- References



a super-exciting brainstorming activity!

Where does the problem live?

Clinical

A counselor consistently uses a transgender client's correct name and pronouns, but the agency's electronic health record repeatedly displays the client's deadname.

Counselor Education

A graduate counseling program teaches LGBTGEQIAP+ issues primarily through minority stress and suicide prevention, with little attention to affirming clinical practice.

Organizational

A counseling agency describes itself as LGBTGEQIAP+ affirming, but staff lack clear procedures for responding to discrimination or misgendering.

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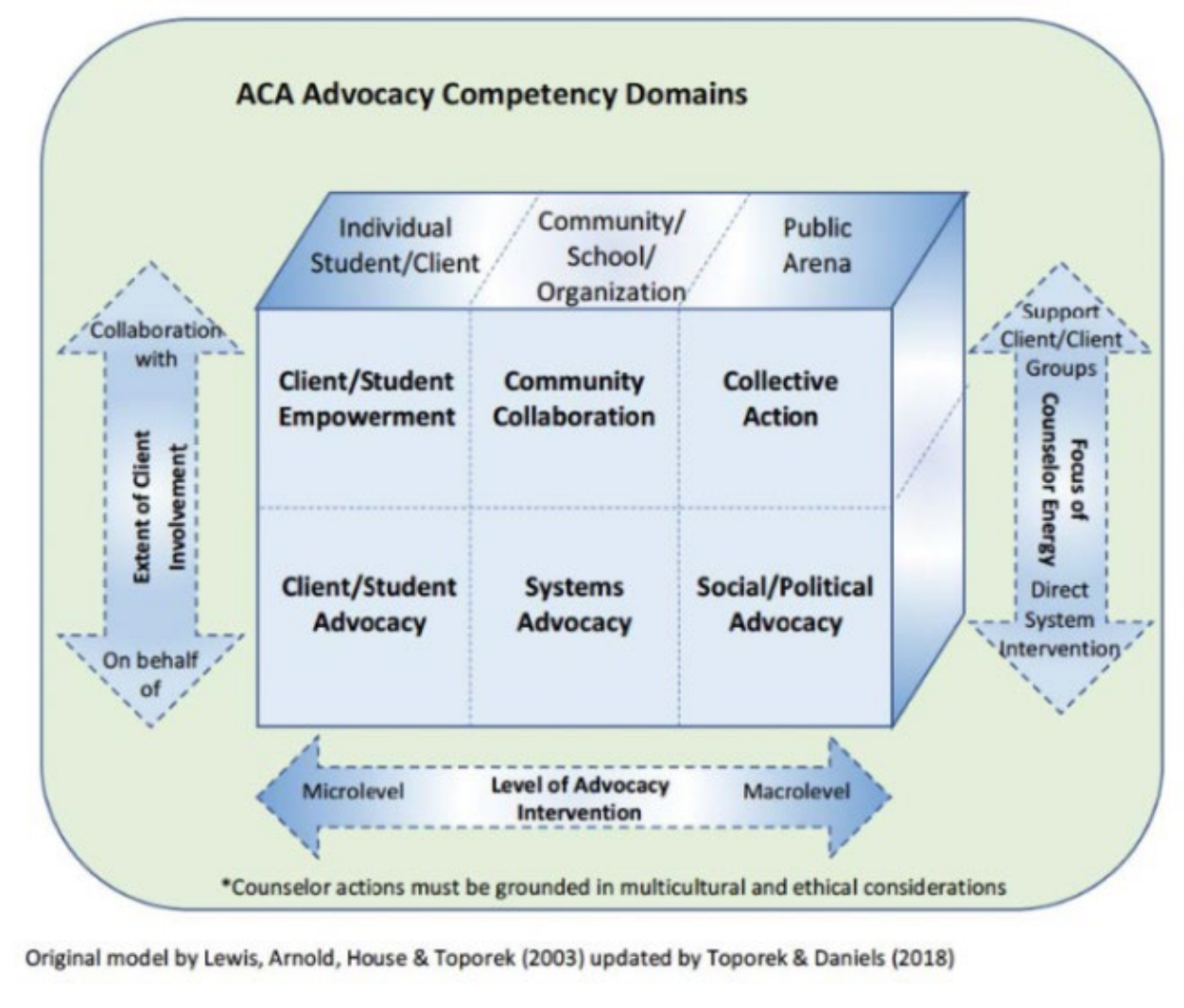
Organizational

A counseling agency describes itself as LGBTGEQIAP+ affirming, but staff lack clear procedures for responding to discrimination or misgendering.

Choose one scenario. Consider:

1. What is the immediate problem?
2. What larger system is contributing to it?
3. Who has the power to change it?

Advocacy



Original model by Lewis, Arnold, House & Toporek (2003) updated by Toporek & Daniels (2018)

ACA Advocacy Competency Domains

- With whom are you advocating? Individual, organization, or public?
- Are you doing it with them or on behalf of them?
- Are you supporting others or intervening with the system directly?

Advocacy Mythbusters

Indicate whether you agree, disagree, or feel uncertain by show of hands when prompted.

“If a counselor is affirming, they’re already doing LGBTGEQIAP+ advocacy.”

“Advocacy is primarily the responsibility of counselors in leadership positions.”

“The best way to advocate for LGBTGEQIAP+ communities is to speak up for them.”

“Ethical advocacy means challenging every discriminatory policy you encounter”

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Individual practice and systemic advocacy are related but distinct.

Counselors can exercise influence at multiple levels, even without formal authority.

Effective advocacy involves listening to affected people and sharing power, not simply speaking on their behalf.

Advocacy requires strategic judgment, attention to risk, consultation, and consideration of context.

Key Principles of Effective Advocacy

Self-Awareness & Identity[5]	Systemic Understanding[3]	Collaborative Relationships[1]	Intentional Communication[6]	Ethical Courage & Risk-Taking[2]
How does your identity inform advocacy?	In which system is advocacy needed?	How can you engage in coalition building?	What communication method is most impactful?	What is the balance between your courage and risk-tolerance?
Example: Reflective practice	Example: Systems mapping	Example: Activating peer networks	Example: Storytelling or use of data	Example: Awareness of risks

Advocacy Lab

Small Groups Advocacy Lab

Attendees will be divided intro three groups. Each group will be given an advocacy challenge. Work with your group to develop an actionable response to these five prompts.

1. **Name the problem:** What is happening and what is maintaining it?
2. **Map the power:** Who can authorize or influence change? Who is affected but missing from the decision-making process?
3. **Choose a strategy:** What is one concrete advocacy action you would recommend?
4. **Anticipate resistance:** What is the most likely obstacle and how would you respond?
5. **Define success:** What observable change would indicate that the advocacy effort worked?

Your facilitator will have 2 minutes to share your proposed strategy with the group.

Small Groups Advocacy Lab

Group A: Education

Group B: Clinical

Group C: Organizational



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Small Groups Advocacy Lab:

Complications

Group A: Education

- “There’s no room in the curriculum. What do you suggest we remove to make this happen?”

Group B: Clinical

- “We see the issue, but changing the system would be too expensive.”

Group C: Organizational

- “Our lawyers won’t go for it.”

Small Groups Advocacy Lab:
Complications

Group A: Counselor Educators
- “There’s no room in the curriculum. What do you suggest we remove to make this happen?”

Group B: Clinical
- “We see the issue, but changing the system would be too expensive.”

Group C: Organizational
- “Our lawyers won’t go for it.”

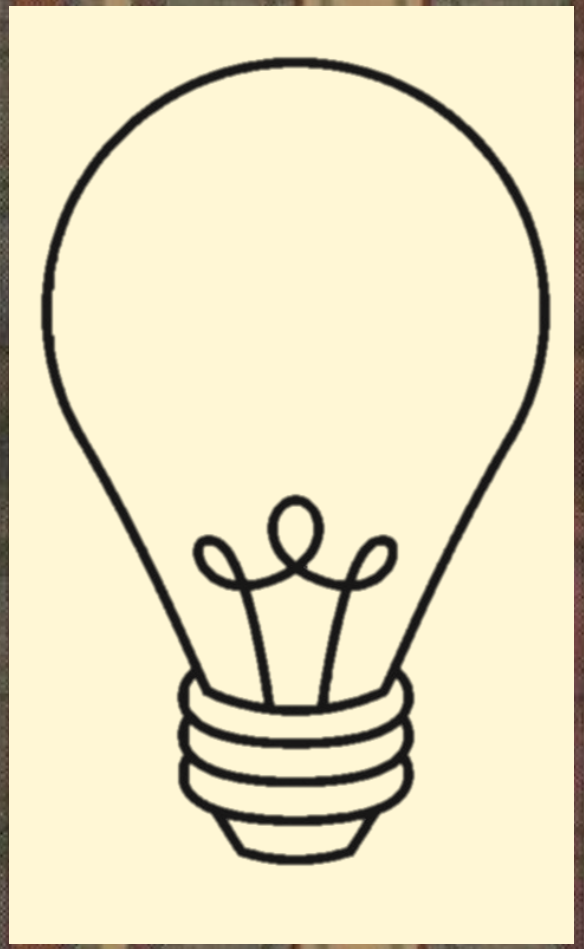
Consider:

- What would you change?
- What would you preserve?
- What ethical considerations become more important?
- Who should bear the risk of this advocacy effort?

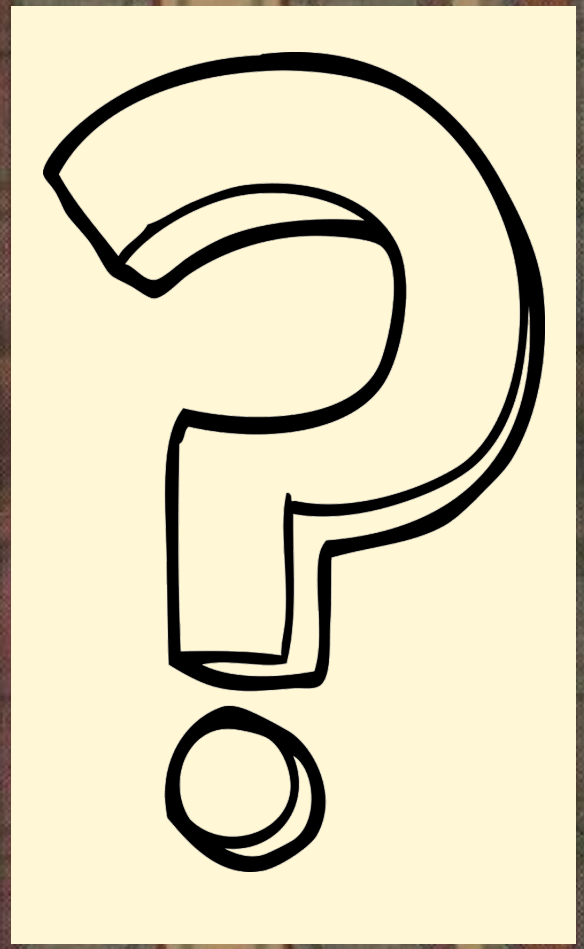
Key Takeaways?

Comments & Curiosities

Comments



Curiosities



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