Psychology and LGBT+ State Legislative Advocacy 2021

APA Office of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity

APA Division 44 Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Public Policy Committee

Wednesday, February 17th, 2021 - 3-4pm EST





Ron Schlittler, MIPP (him/his)

Assistant Director, Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, Public Interest Directorate

Email: rschlittler@apa.org

Andrew Strickland, JD (him/his)

Legislative and Regulatory Officer, Advocacy Office

Email: astrickland@apa.org



Christina A. Patterson, Ph.D. (she/they)
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Division 44 PPC Co-Chair
Email: capatterson42@gmail.com



Michele Schlehofer, PhD (she/hers)
Salisbury University
Division 44 PPC Co-Chair
Email: mmschlehofer@salisbury.edu



Leo Rennie, MPA (him/his)

Senior Director, Congressional and Federal Relations, Advocacy Office

Email: lrennie@apa.org

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Introduction to the *Initiative to Connect Psychology and LGBT+ Legislative Advocacy*
3. Why get involved with advocacy?
4. Navigating the resources
5. Next steps
6. Discussion and Q&A
7. Wrap up

Initiative to Connect Psychology & LGBTQ+ State Legislative Advocacy

- Collaboration: APA and Division 44 Public Policy Committee; began February 2020

- Context: Extensive pre-COVID LGBTQ+ state legislation that is coming back in 2021

- Outcome: Self-serve, one-stop-shop, online support and resources to empower the voices and impact of psychologists

Advocacy Areas (Heinowitz et al., 2012)

- Public Policy
  - Influencing legislation
- Social Justice
  - Advocating for human rights
- Professional Advocacy
  - Combination of public policy and social justice advocacy

Why Get Involved with Advocacy?

- APA Code of Ethics
  - Principle D: Justice “Psychologists recognize that fairness and justice entitle all persons to access to and benefit from the contributions of psychology…”
  - Principle E: Respect for People’s Rights and Dignity “Psychologists try to eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone activities of others based upon such prejudices.”
- Advocacy is a professional obligation and central to the role of psychologists and in line with our ethical guidelines (Nadal, 2017)

Why Get Involved with Advocacy?

- Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality
  - Guideline 5. Psychologists aspire to recognize and understand historical and contemporary experiences with power, privilege, and oppression. As such, they seek to address institutional barriers and related inequities, disproportionalities, and disparities of law enforcement, administration of criminal justice, educational, mental health, and other systems as they seek to promote justice, human rights, and access to quality and equitable mental and behavioral health services

Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality Continued

- Principle 5
  - “Psychologists are encouraged to advocate for accessibility and pursue treatment with social responsibility, inherent to the elements of social justice within the field of psychology. All people, including racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and LGBTQ+ minorities, prison inmates, immigrants and refugees, the poor, and people with disabilities have a right to equitable treatment, allocation of societal resources, and decision making.”
  - “Psychologists endeavor to promote advocacy beyond the direct support of clients to include public policy decisions, advances in human welfare services, public health, systems of care, training and education, consultation, research, funding, and issues that affect the well-being of the public at large.”

Barriers to Involvement

- Disinterest, uncertainty, and unawareness (Heinowitz et al., 2012).
- May be seen as outside scope of practice (Melton, 2018).
- May be seen as oppositional to positions of scientific neutrality (Kakkad, 2005; Nadal, 2017).
- Lack of awareness of policy issues (Heinowitz et al., 2012).
- Time commitment (Jason et al., 2015).

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Thematic Areas

Thematic Areas for State Advocacy

- Response to model legislation
- Selected based on a variety of factors
- Divided into four key areas:
  - **Banning Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts**
  - **Criminalizing Gender Affirmative Care with Minors**
  - **Religious Exemption Efforts**
  - **Universal Design All-Gender Restrooms**

Using Talking Points for Advocacy

Landing pages for each issue divided into 4-5 sections

- Background on the issue
- Suggested talking points for use with legislators and staff
- Recent examples of APA member advocacy on the topic
- References to scientific evidence supporting your position on the topic
- Related Resources

Issue Pertinent Resources

- APA resources, such as Reports, Practice Guidelines, Policy Resolutions or other informational resources
- Resources from sources such as Division 44 or other organizations

Key Resources on the Main Landing Page

- Research active LGBT+ legislation state by state
- Learn about what is happening overall in your state legislature
- Learn the status of LGBT+ issues in current law in your state
- Selected sources of further information

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Webpages Tour

https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/policy/issues

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Next Steps

Next Steps

- Development of additional advocacy resources
- Future webinars centered on:
  - Targeted advocacy tools for intersectional marginalized populations
  - Skill-building for state legislative advocacy

Thank you
Questions + Answers

Thank you also to...

APA Division 44 Public Policy Committee, and particularly to committee members: Andrew Arriaga, MA, Brian Davis, PhD, Melissa Grey, PhD, Kim Skerven, PhD, and Alexander Shappie, PhD

APA staff in Communications, Division Services, Practice Directorate, with a special thanks to the Membership Office for promotional and production support

Contact Information for Today's Presenters:

Ron Schlittler - rschlittler@apa.org

Andrew Strickland, JD - astrickland@apa.org

Christina Patterson, PhD - capatterson42@gmail.com

Michele Schlehofer, PhD – mmschlehofer@salisbury.edu