Intro

Jody Davis is a Christian woman, a mom who happens to be Transgender. Jody grew up in Cincinnati, lives in Columbus Ohio and is actively involved in supporting local gender queer folks. She is an active member of Stone Village church in the Short North.

Jody has an I.T. Background, became a Nurse in 2007, and got her Master in Social Work from OSU in 2013. She PROUDLY Served as an Intern at the NASW Ohio Chapter!

Jody is the Director of Quality for North Community Counseling, and is also a Nurse at the OSU Med Center.

Cultural Competency through Queer Poetics:
Understanding the Sexual Intimacy of Gender Non-Conforming Clients

November 17, 2016
Jody Davis, RN, LSW

Ground Rules

1. This is a safe place.
2. We will likely offend each other. Thanks in advance for your forgiveness.
3. This will be interactive, with most questions at the end.
4. When you speak to one another, look for preferred pronouns.
5. Timekeeper!
Growing Up - Johnny

- Cincinnati, Ohio
- Parents divorced
- Grew up Catholic
  - Catholic schools through high school
  - At age 6, knew something was different
  - Didn't fit in, viewed as effeminate (bullied)
- As a teen, mother went Pentecostal
  - Fundamentalist Christian Theology
  - Being gay is a sin
  - “Hate the sin, love the sinner”
- Childhood marked with shame, guilt for being different
  - Outside of “God’s plan” for life
  - Series of choices

First Communion

Basic Training
Transition Milestones

- November 2012 – Daughter Lily was born!
- Summer 2013 – More discussions with spouse
- October 2013 – First gender therapist
- February 2014 – Came out to friends and family
- April 2014 – Started female hormones
- June 2014 – Name and gender marker changes
- September 2014 – Came out at work, going “full time”
- July 2015 – Began dating again, found a partner
- April 2016 – Bottom surgery

Gender Identity Terms

- Cisgender: A term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior matches those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth.
- Transgender: A term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth.
- Transgender Man (“female-to-male” or “FTM”): A term for a transgender individual who currently identifies as a man
- Transgender Woman (“male-to-female” or “MTF”): A term for a transgender individual who currently identifies as a woman
- Intersex: A term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t fit the typical definitions of female or male.
- Gender Non-conforming: A term for individuals whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.

From the National Center for Transgender Equality

Sexual Orientation Terms

- Heterosexual (“straight”): A person who is only attracted to members of the opposite sex. Also called “straight.”
- Homosexual (“gay/lesbian”): A clinical term for people who are attracted to members of the same sex.
- Bisexual (“bi”): A person who is attracted to both people of their own gender and another gender.
- Pansexual (“pan”): A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities.
- Asexual: A person who generally does not feel sexual attraction or desire to any group of people. Asexuality is not the same as celibacy.
- Polyamorous: A non-possessive, honest, responsible, and ethical philosophy and practice of loving multiple people simultaneously.
Inventories

Kinsey Scale (1948): Also called the Heterosexual–Homosexual Rating Scale. This standard research tool attempts to describe a person’s sexual experience or response at a given time. The scale ranges from 0, meaning exclusively heterosexual, to 6, meaning exclusively homosexual.

Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG) (1978): takes into consideration the fact that many people change their orientation over time. Where a person is today is not necessarily where she or he was in the past—or, for that matter, where he or she will be or would like to be in the future. The concept of sexual orientation as an ongoing dynamic process is necessary if we are to understand a person's orientation properly in its entirety.

DSM-5 302.85 (F64.1): To avoid stigma and ensure clinical care, replaced the diagnostic name “gender identity disorder” with “gender dysphoria.” It is important to note that gender nonconformity is not in itself a mental disorder. The critical element of gender dysphoria is the presence of clinically significant distress associated with the condition.

Our forefathers on Gender Diversity

From 1492 on, European religious and sexual attitudes were imposed upon what were considered to “abhorrent” behavior of the Native Americans:

- Female divinities, responsible for creation
- Women house builders, with sexual equality
- Men who dressed as women accepted and honored
- “Immoral” sexual practices not related to reproduction

Led by the Puritans:

- Purpose of sex is procreation
- Trying to create a “pure” society unlike the depravity of modern Europe
- Sodomy laws (first used against opposite sex couples)
- Widespread violence against all natives

“A Queer History of the United States” – Michael Bronski
“What Sister Monica heard from Catholic priests: ‘Look between your legs. What you see is who you are. God will tell you who you are. Do you want to be damned to eternal hell?’”

Those same priests say, “God made them man and woman.”

But Sister Monica says: “God made day and night. There was also dusk and dawn and twilight. There is no light switch. There are 2,000 kinds of ants and there can’t be more than two kinds of people?”

The Importance of Labels

Are labels Important?

What purpose do they serve?

“Are labels Important? Is life a mad life, a life with stories and epochs in a given life. All of the queer and peace (and) still, and not, we’re just finding ways to celebrate and find that thing we’re doing, we’re just finding ways to celebrate and find that thing we’re doing. People feel really powerless with the shift away from this binary way of seeing, being, loving, etc., that happened so right.”

Queer

Queer is an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities that are not heterosexual or cisgender. Beginning in the late-1980s, queer scholars and activists began to reclaim the word to establish community and assert a politicized identity distinct from the gay political identity.

Queer identities may be adopted by those who reject traditional gender identities and seek a broader, less conformist, and deliberately ambiguous alternative to the label LGBT.

Queer has become the preferred term to describe the certain radical academic disciplines and is gaining use as a descriptor of nonnormative identities and politics.

Academic disciplines such as queer theory and queer studies share a general opposition to binaries, essentialism, and a preference of intersectionality within the mainstream LGBT movement.

Queer arts, queer cultural groups, and queer political groups are examples of expressions of queer identities.
“I’m not homophobic, but…”

Raj (2002) suggests there are many ways practitioners may inadvertently communicate or promote homophobia or transphobia. These include (but are not limited to):

- Pathologizing gay, transgender, and intersex clients as mentally ill.
- Withholding recommendations for medical interventions.
- Denying the existence of transsexual individuals.

McGeorge & Carlson (2011) offer a Three Step Model for becoming a Transgender Affirmative Clinician. A critical exploration of:

- Exploring Cisgender assumptions.
- Exploring Cisgender privileges.
- Exploring the development of Cisgender identity.

Overall, clinicians are expected to affirm and validate any form of gender or sexual variance expressed by the patient, and to support the client’s right to self-determination whenever possible.

Approaches to GLBT clients

**Negative levels of attitude:**

- Repulsion – homosexuality / transsexualism is a crime against nature, gays/trans people are sick, immoral. Anything is justified to change them.
- Pity – heterosexuality is more mature and certainly preferred. Any possibility of becoming “straight” or “c Peg nuclei” should be reinforced.
- Tolerance – Homosexuality/transgender folks are just in a phase of development that they will grow out of. Homosexuals/trans are immature and should be treated with protection and indulgence.
- Acceptance – Still implies there is something to accept. Characterized by statements like “you are not a lesbian to me, you are a person!” or “what you do in the privacy of your home is your own business.”

**Positive levels of attitude:**

- Support: Working to safeguard the rights of GLBTs. People at this level may be uncomfortable themselves, but they are aware of the transphobic climate and the irrational unfairness.
- Admiration: Acknowledging that being GLBT takes strength. People at this level are willing to truly examine their transphobic attitudes, values, and behaviors.
- Appreciation: Valuing the diversity of people and see GLBTs as a valid part of that diversity. These people are willing to combat homophobia / transphobia in themselves and others.
- Nurturance: Assumes that GLBTs are indispensable in society. They have a genuine affection and liking for and are willing to strive in others.

Approaches to GLBT clients
Feminist scholars argued that gender, race and class are interconnected as “intersecting oppressions” (Crenshaw 1989). Relational/Process Models consider the transformations that occur when different statuses meet. Rather than seeing gender and race as additively affecting a person’s experience, they consider both how gender is raced, and race is gendered.

For example, two statuses can intersect, research shows how a felony record may have differentially different effects on employment opportunities for black men in comparison to white men in entry-level jobs ( Pager 2003). Here, felony records (among men) interact with race to create different, intersectional experiences.

These relational models also recognize that privilege and disadvantage are related – whiteness itself needs to be theorized to understand why a felony record has much less of an effect on white man’s employment chances.

Intersectionality

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Applying Intersectionality

1. Which forms of identity are critical organizing principles for this community/region – gender, class, religion, ethnicity, age, ability?
2. Who are the most marginalized people (women, girls, men, boys, transgender) in the community?
3. What social and economic programs are available to different groups in the community?
4. Who does and does not have access or control over productive resources and why?
5. Which groups have the lowest and the highest levels of public representation and why?
6. What laws, policies and organizational practices limit opportunities of different groups?
7. What initiatives would address the needs of the most marginalized or discriminated against groups?

Advice for allies and advocates...

1. Assumptions are killers
2. Preferred pronouns. ASK!
3. “Are you comfortable with him/her or she/him or?”
4. Consider neutral everything
5. “Let Me Pee”
6. Look at “binary enforcers”
7. Listen without judgment
8. Treat without judgment
9. Better to love, or to be right?
10. Or is tough love the answer?
11. Or beliefs before people
Poetry Therapy

It is often been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. But when the words are poetic—full of imagery, metaphors, and rhythm—they’re much more powerful.

Poetry therapy is one of the Expressive Arts Therapies, which include art, music, drama, psychodrama, and dance therapy. This therapy can provide healing and personal growth.

The National Association for Poetry Therapy is a worldwide community of poets, writers, journal keepers, helping professionals, health care professionals, and others who recognize the healing power of language.

http://www.poetrytherapy.org/

How many of your clients journal or write poetry?

How does it help them?

How does it help you?

Queer Poetry #1 – Jody Davis (2014)

Where to even start.
I have touched myself, many times, and felt good.
I was molested once, and felt it felt good.

So very much damage done.

I have had man on woman hetero sex, and most of the time it felt good.

But I began hating myself for what seemed like, an uncomfortably required domination.

I started to understand I was betraying myself, and started letting her down.

Queer Poetry #2: Letter from Thomas Beattie to the Media: Stacey Waite (2013)

This is me, pregnant, all my clients now, all my friends now, all my family, all my dreams now, and yet I am living with the burden of both.

And you loathe me, even Oprah shifts in her chair.

But how could you?

This is me, pregnant, and there you are with me, and feel that and your "god made that".

When what you really know when you see me is that God made a pregnant man. You know, God made gender a fragile, silly thing. God made gender a tire swing, some monkey bars. God made gender an infinite playground.

And you loathe me, even Oprah shifts in her chair.

But how could you?

But how will you...

But won’t it be...
Queer Poetry #3 – How to Make Love to a Trans Person – Gabe Moses (2011)

- See Handout

Fav Gender Queer Poetry

- Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics (2013)
- Topside Press
- Transgress Press
- WavesBreaking.com
- Crab Fat Magazine
- Black Napkin Press
- Local Queer Storytelling events (Wild Goose, OSU, etc.)

Trans Resources
Thank You!!

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