Inclusive Practices for Tumultuous Times:

Environmental Educators' Role in Supporting the LGBTQIA+ Community

Libby VanWyhe, Yarrow Koning & Charissa V. Jones
WELCOME!

Please drop the following in the chat:

- Name
- Pronouns (optional)
- Where you’re calling in from
- Include an emoji to describe how you’re doing today
Co-Presenters

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Can't Stop Change: Queer Climate Stories from the Florida Frontlines

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Agenda

1. Political Climate
   The volatile state of LGBTQ+ legislation

2. Impacts
   Personal and collective impacts in the EE field

3. Principles of Inclusion
   Framework for supporting educators and students

4. Resources and Strategies
   For continued learning and motivation
POLITICAL CLIMATE

The volatile state of LGBTQ+ legislation in the United States
LGBTQ+ Rights: A Defining Issue of the 2020s

Photo Credit: Top, L-R: Florida Phoenix - Brooke Baitinger; Dallas Morning News- Elias Valverde II; Them Magazine - Pride Liberation Project.

Photo Credit: Bottom, L-R: Moms for Liberty; Steven Monacelli; Vice - Shannon Burnstein
Major Types of Anti-LGBTQ Legislation

- Healthcare
- Bathrooms
- Sports Bans
- Censorship
- Outing
Health Care Criminalization

Bans and criminalizes access to gender-affirming care (e.g. hormones, surgeries, puberty blockers) for trans youth and sometimes adults.

Photo credit: Matt Hrkac www.matthrkac.com.au
Sex Separated Facilities
“Bathroom Bills”

Prohibit transgender and non-binary people from using restroom and changing facilities aligns with their gender.
Sports Ban

Bans transgender and non-binary athletes (especially women and girls) from playing on sports teams that align with their gender identity.
Censorship

Censorship of LGBTQ+ inclusive materials and instructional content, as well as the behavior, self expression, and free-speech of LGBTQ+ youth and adults.

Illustration Credit: Maura Losch/Axios
Outing

Mandates teachers, administrators, and counselors non-consensually “out” LGBTQ+ youth to their parents and sometimes to other students and other students’ parents.
Anti-LGBTQ Policy Disasters

Clip from Can’t Stop Change: Queer Climate Stories from the Florida Frontlines
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9arA9Zvep8w
IMPACTS

Personal and collective impacts in Environmental Education
 Seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, with higher rates for transgender and non-binary youth, as well as LGBTQ+ youth of color.

Reported that their well-being was negatively impacted due to recent politics.

Transgender and nonbinary young people found their school to be gender-affirming, and those who did reported lower rates of attempting suicide.

The Trevor Project 2024 Survey
70% Transgender respondents experienced workplace discrimination or harassment in the past year.

70% LGBTQI+ individuals have experienced verbal harassment in the workplace in the past year.

37% Have left a job due to treatment they received from their employer.

Center for American Progress, Discrimination and Barriers to Well-Being: The State of the LGBTQI+ Community in 2022

UCLA, Williams Institute Study on Workplace Discrimination 2021
The Great LGBTQ+ Migration

“No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.” - Warsan Shire.
Why Migration Matters

Breaks Up Families and Communities
Migration tears the social fabric of already strained families and communities.

Loss of Institutional Knowledge
When LGBTQ+ EE staff flee, it can lead to a loss of institutional knowledge for their organizations.

Intersectional Risks
LGBTQ+ people with other marginalized identities, like QTBIPOC, must navigate additional threats to safety.

Loss of Place-Based Knowledge
Educators displaced from their bioregions, lose ecological knowledge.
NAAEE is committed to being a champion for promoting justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. We believe that a wide array of perspectives allows all organizations to be more effective, more creative, and more relevant, and we honor the beliefs, attitudes, languages, interpersonal styles, and values of all individuals.

Our goal is to create an environment that is inclusive, respectful, and equitable, and to employ the talents of people with different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to accomplish the mission of NAAEE.
LGBTQ+ Experiences in Environmental Education

LGBTQ+ people in environmental and outdoor education fields experience the same forms of discrimination found in other spaces.

LGBTQ+ people may feel disconnected to nature due to safety concerns and claims that LGBTQ+ people are “unnatural”.

Same-sex behavior has been documented in over 1500+ species, and the list keeps growing! (Monk et al., 2019)

Photo L-R: Danish Siddiqui/Reuters; Harry Quan/Unsplash; Jorge Saavedra/Unsplash
PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION

Framework for supporting educators and students
Supporting Through Culture

Be Open and Supportive
Allow people to explore their identities, and LISTEN deeply.

Language Matters
Using correct names, pronouns, inclusive language

Transition Care
Be understanding of physical challenges and changes

Question Your Assumptions
Examine how gender-essentialism limits yourself and others
Supporting Through Policy

“Put it in the mission”
Explicitly Include LGBTQ+ people in DEI efforts and consider protections for LGBTQ+ people central to your mission.

Universal Design for Inclusion
Creating supports for the most marginalized individuals, creates safety for the most people.

Nondiscrimination Policies
Adopt and enforce anti-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identities.

Inclusive Facilities
Offer gender inclusive facilities (bathrooms, cabins, changing rooms, etc) for staff and participants.

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Supporting Through Advocacy

**Stay Informed**
Keep up with LGBTQ+ legislation in your area and get involved in the fights ahead.

**Think Beyond EE**
Anti-LGBTQ+ policy in any realm impacts EE, because LGBTQ+ are our students, learners, teachers, staff.

**Courageous Action**
Find concrete ways to get involved in LGBTQ+ movements. It’s the right thing to do, even if it involves personal or organizational risks.
RESOURCES & STRATEGIES

For continued learning, motivation, and staying hopeful for the future
RESOURCES

Sharing resources for continued learning and action

bit.ly/LGBTQinEE
Personal Strategies

Allyship in Action

Question assumptions and bring your whole self to work

Attuning to queer and trans experiences in the natural world
In the Chat

Please share one of your own strategies for resilience and hope.
Thank You

Resources: bit.ly/LGBTQinEE