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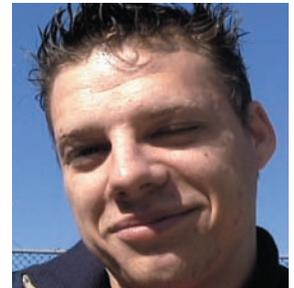
NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS

A DVD AND RESOURCE CD

Breaking the Silence:

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Foster Youth Tell Their Stories

A Tool for Training Care Providers on Working Effectively with LGBTQ Youth



INTRODUCTION AND USER'S GUIDE

There are thousands of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) young people in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems throughout the country. Unfortunately these systems routinely subject LGBTQ youth to differential treatment, deny them appropriate services and fail to protect them from violence and harassment. ***Breaking the Silence*** is an excellent tool for raising awareness about LGBTQ youth in foster care and to assist in training providers on working with LGBTQ foster youth.

The ***Breaking the Silence*** DVD and Resource CD give presenters and trainers easy-to-use tools that can help educate providers on making foster care safe, supportive, and welcoming of all youth, including LGBTQ youth.

OVERVIEW

Breaking the Silence

The DVD

The stories in *Breaking the Silence* weave a powerful tale illustrating both the successes and failures of the foster care system for ten LGBTQ former foster youth. These youth share their stories with the hope that by giving providers a true glimpse of what it is like to be an LGBTQ foster youth, they will help make the system better for the LGBTQ foster youth who will follow them. While some youth talk about how social workers have let them down, they do so with an eye to providing insight into what would have helped them. Other youth focus on the places they found support while in care, sharing what makes a good ally. All of the youth show us the ways their LGBTQ identities have affected their experiences in state care. But they also remind us that they are, first and foremost, youth who share many of the same fears, goals, and experiences of all foster youth, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

In each three-minute stand alone story, these youth tell us:

- what it's like to come out in the system,
- how important it was for them to find supportive allies,
- how they have come to understand their multiple identities,
- the effects of rejection by family and foster parents,
- the challenges they faced when transitioning gender while in foster care,
- what they think case workers and other providers need to know about LGBTQ youth, and
- why they are activists working for social change.

The Bonus CD

To ensure the most effective use of *Breaking the Silence*, each DVD comes packaged with a CD containing over 25 training tools and resources. This is the most comprehensive collection of materials that address LGBTQ out-of-home youth that exists. The CD includes publications from organizations that are nationally respected for their expertise in this field, including the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), San Francisco's Legal Services for Children (LSC), Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the Children's National Medical Center.

Some of the resources included are:

- individual overviews for each story and discussion questions,
- information about laws and policies that protect LGBT youth in care,
- the CWLA Best Practice Guidelines for Working with LGBT Out-of-Home Youth,
- important journal articles from the field,
- resource lists, and
- sample training curriculum.

USER'S GUIDE

Breaking the Silence

Screening the Stories

The Digital Stories can be shown to educate foster youth, social workers, group home workers, foster parents, administrators, lawyers, youth advocates, other service providers, and the general public.

As you prepare to screen *Breaking the Silence*, we recommend that you view the entire DVD and review the array of resources and tools provided on the CD. In setting up a training or screening, plan carefully to allow ample time for reflection, discussion, action planning, and wrap-up. Either before or at the beginning of the training, try to assess how comfortable and familiar the audience is with LGBT issues and concerns. Whatever their knowledge level, build in ways for them to share their own experiences and ask even the most basic (or the most complex) questions.

Each of the digital stories in *Breaking the Silence* was designed to stand on its own, which gives you flexibility in structuring your screening or training to meet the needs of your group. Individual stories can be effective in illustrating particular concepts to providers over the course of a training session. For specific suggestions, refer to the DVD Viewing and Discussion Guide provided on the bonus CD. Depending on the timeframe and goals of your training, you might also wish to show the entire DVD. Even then, we have found it most effective to take breaks for discussion between each story.

Using the Resources

The resources and tools on the bonus CD have also been designed with multiple purposes in mind. These tools not only provide additional background and information for trainers and others who screen the DVD, but are meant to be distributed to those who are watching the DVD to supplement their knowledge and give them tools to put into action what they learned from the DVD and training. Some resources will also assist administrators or managers in transforming their agencies into ones that have an organizational culture that is inclusive of LGBT youth, such as the *Best Practice Guidelines for Working with LGBT Out-of-Home Youth*, published by the Child Welfare League of America in June 2006. Others give providers deeper insight into delivering specific types of services to LGBT youth in care, such as an article on meeting the permanency needs of LGBT youth and a publication on supporting gender-variant children published by the Children's National Medical Center. The *Resource CD Table of Contents* provides an overview of the resources we have included on the CD including specific suggestions on how to use each resource.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Breaking the Silence

About the Making of the DVD

In September 2005, a group of ten former foster youth - Kira, Nicky, Darryn, Remy, Wendy, Keli, Danielle, George, Captain, and Kevin - came together for a workshop at the Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley, California. Over the course of four days, they shared their stories; wrote and recorded short personal narratives; selected still images, video clips, and music; and learned to edit these materials into the digital videos presented on the accompanying DVD. During the workshop, Jessica Lawless, a filmmaker and artist from Los Angeles, talked with each youth about why they wanted to make a digital story and what they hope people watching their stories will take away with them. When the workshop was over, the Center for Digital Storytelling formatted the ten stories and incorporated excerpts from the interviews. This DVD was produced in December 2005.

Partners

The digital storytelling workshop was organized by the Y.O.U.T.H. (Youth Offering Unique Tangible Help) Training Project of San Francisco State's Bay Area Academy in collaboration with the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the Center for Digital Storytelling. For more information about the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project, contact Jamie Lee Evans at jle@sfsu.edu or visit www.sfsu.edu/~bayacad/.

THE BREAKING THE SILENCE DVD WAS PRODUCED BY:

The Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS), Berkeley, CA

For more information about digital storytelling workshops or CDS, contact Amy Hill at amylenita@storycenter.org or visit www.storycenter.org.

THE BREAKING THE SILENCE DVD AND BONUS CD HAS BEEN FUNDED IN PART THROUGH GENEROUS DONATIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING:

Annie E. Casey Foundation	Columbia Foundation	Kevin J. Mossier Foundation
Anonymous	Equal Justice Works	Stuart Foundation
B'charta B'chaim Fund of the Tides Foundation	Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund	The Walter S. Johnson Foundation
The California Wellness Foundation		

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Jennifer Barth	Jill Jacobs	Carolyn Reyes
Leanna Blankenship	Courtney Joslin	Trilce Santana
Noemi Calonje	Jude Koski	SF Video
Calla Devlin	Jessica Lawless	Six Ink Design
Mara Escowitz	Stephanie Leroux	Shannan Wilber
Rudy Estrada	Kerry Lobel	Rob Woronoff
Jamie Lee Evans	Katrina Logan	Dena Zaldúa-Hilkene
Lori Fryzel	Leslie Minot	
Lisa Haefele	Shannon Price Minter	<i>And the youth who shared their stories:</i>
Meghan Hennessey	Shayla Myers	Nicky, Jeremy, Captain, George, Kevin, Kira,
Kris Hermanns	Daniel Redman	Danielle, Keli, Darryn, Wendy
Amy Hill	Justin Reinheimer	



TO ORDER ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THE BREAKING THE SILENCE DVD AND BONUS CD OR FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THE RESOURCES INCLUDED ON THE CD, CONTACT:



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THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS—

YOUTH PROJECT has been advocating for LGBTQ youth in schools, foster care, juvenile justice settings, and the mental health system since 1993. The Project provides direct, free legal information to youth, legal advocates, and activists through a toll-free line; advocates for policies that protect and support LGBTQ youth in these different arenas; and litigates cases that are creating new legal protections for youth in schools, foster care, juvenile justice, and other settings.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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