



Child Law Practice

Vol. 26 No. 7

September 2007

Helping Lawyers Help Kids

OPENING DOORS

Exploring Attitudes about LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care

by Mimi Laver

We come to our jobs with ideas and attitudes about many topics. We reach these ideas based on how we were raised, our religious beliefs, our politics, our interactions with people we've met, and books we've read. As child welfare professionals, we bring these ideas and attitudes to our relationships with children, youth, and their families.

Young people know when the adults who are working with them don't like them or are uncomfortable with them, and they react to those negative feelings. As child welfare professionals, it is important to explore our attitudes about people who differ from us based on race, gender, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation or gender identity. Once we identify those attitudes, we must consider whether they have a negative impact on our relationships with children and youth.

When speaking about staff at his group home, Maurice said:

The best staff are those that respect you for who you are, rather than judge you for what you do. They don't have to be gay, they don't have to be straight, they just have to listen without judging. People who are nasty and have nasty attitudes make me feel uncomfortable, you know the people who just work for the money, not to help the kids.¹

This article explores the attitudes child welfare lawyers and judges expressed about lesbian, gay, bisexual,

transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth during five listening forums held around the country. It discusses how attitudes and words can impact LGBTQ youth and suggests ways we can all try to be the people who work to help the kids, not make them feel uncomfortable.

Acknowledging Attitudes

You've heard the terms "we're only human" and "no one is perfect." These are so true. Everyone makes mistakes, does or says things they feel sorry for after, forgets things, or holds beliefs that others find troubling. Being human may explain certain attitudes, but it cannot excuse actions or words that hurt others, especially if the others are children. LGBTQ youth report a high level of verbal and physical abuse. They are often belittled by the adults around them, including parents, foster parents, caseworkers, group home staff, judges and lawyers. All of these adults are human and many believe being gay is "wrong,"² but they may not want to harm the youth. Even those who don't share that belief can learn to be more caring of LGBTQ youth.

From our Listening Forums

This project involved five listening forums with LGBTQ youth, children's lawyers, and child welfare judges.³ At a forum in one southern state, a group of child welfare professionals explained the reasons that LGBTQ-identified youth were having difficulties. One lawyer looked at me and said, "*Honey, you are in the buckle of the bible belt.*" She explained that she was not surprised that a foster parent refused to adopt a child once she came out as a lesbian or that other youth did not want to reveal their LGBTQ status to the adults in their lives. Putting the common attitude "on the table" was useful and helped the group address the issues honestly. A first step in any group discussion about working with LGBTQ youth in foster care is sharing attitudes held generally by the community and by individuals.

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About this Series

This article is the second in a four-part series prepared by the ABA's Opening Doors Project. This three-year project aims to increase the legal community's awareness of LGBTQ youth in foster care and the issues they face. It will provide advocacy tools to help lawyers successfully represent these youth and tools for judges to aid decision making. For more information about this project, visit www.abanet.org/child/lgbtq.shtml.

Topics addressed in this series are:

- Understanding LGBTQ Youth Issues (July 2007)
- Attitudes and Beliefs about LGBTQ Youth (this issue)**
- Representation Issues (TBA)
- Attorney-Client Relationships (TBA)

Opening Doors Webcast, Thursday, October 11, 2007, 3-4 p.m. ET

The ABA Opening Doors project will host a one-hour webcast for child welfare practitioners on LGBTQ youth in foster care. Project attorneys, Mimi Laver and Andrea Khoury, will give a short presentation and take your questions about issues raised in the first two articles in this series.

To reserve your spot, sign up online at www.abanet.org/child/lgbtq, or call Shante Bullock, 202/662-1746.

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This example is not an isolated one. During another listening forum we heard that a judge told a lesbian young woman that he was surprised that both the youth's birth parents and adoptive parents were interested in her given her lesbian identity. A different judge belittled a gay young man by implying in open court that the youth's identity was just "a fad" by saying "So you're gay now." More typically, though, our listening forums revealed lawyers and judges lack enough information to adequately address the needs of LGBTQ youth and wanted to learn more about working with them. Some of the adults had questions about how they should interact with these youth, and were open to learning.

Negative Attitudes Hurt

When talking about the adults in his life during foster care, Carl said, "Do you know how it feels? I mean I couldn't live at home with my own family because of who I am and then to get treated like that by people who are suppose[d] to be

professional and deal with kids. I just don't think it's fair. It's just not right."⁴

We heard similar outrage by youth at our listening forums. They were so confused and hurt that the lawyers and judges who they viewed as experts in dealing with kids either ignored them, or

worse, were disrespectful. LGBTQ youth often feel beaten down. They try different strategies to cope, but outcomes for these youth are poor compared to heterosexual youth in foster care. Many of them have been verbally harassed by enough adults and peers that they hide their sexual orientation or identity. But hiding one's identity can only go on for so long and often leads to low self-esteem or low self-worth. For many, this leads to increased rates of drug abuse, prostitution, aggressive behaviors, or suicide attempts. Many LGBTQ youth leave their foster or group homes and live on the streets. They report that they feel safer on the streets than in their placements.⁵ (See "Legal Roles in Protecting and Supporting LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care," by Andrea Khoury, in the July 2007 *ABA*

Child Law Practice.)

When describing the harassment he endured at a group home, Angelo said, "That's when I decided to leave. They had me to the point where I was crying inside, but I wouldn't let them see it."⁶ No child in the foster care system should be crying inside, and it is the professional's job to end it, not to cause it.

Youth hope that child welfare lawyers and judges will be open to hearing their wishes and accepting them for who they are. At our listening forums we heard about the good and the not so good. The latter was expressed by a youth who said, "The judges aren't welcoming if they know you're gay. No one seemed interested in working with me."⁷ A youth's image of the child welfare legal system should not be one that is unwelcoming. Even if the judge has negative feelings for LGBTQ youth, it is that judge's responsibility to welcome the youth and find out what services or assistance the youth needs. "Judges and attorneys are in positions of power. They need to communicate with kids in a way that will allow kids to be honest so the judges and lawyers can do their work."⁸

Projecting Positive Attitudes

In responding to a question about the unique needs of LGBTQ youth, one lawyer said: "Their sexual identity has to be nurtured, not suppressed and they should never be made to feel ashamed of their orientation in foster care."⁹ Another lawyer, in answering a question about why LGBTQ youth have more placements than other youth answered: "Youth often experience rejection or mere tolerance instead of nurturance and celebration from foster care family members and sometimes parents and sometimes their sibs."¹⁰ What can you as judges and lawyers do to nurture and celebrate a LGBTQ youth's identity?

Examining our attitudes, deciding whether to change those attitudes, and actually changing them takes time. It

takes courage and honesty to admit to ourselves and others that there are things we want to change. Sometimes, changing attitudes is not as important as changing behavior and taking steps to work more closely with LGBTQ youth and their families.

Two studies of counselors in training show how taking time to analyze attitudes can lead to change. In the first study, a student moved from never wanting to work with a gay or lesbian couple to understanding her feelings and being much more open to counseling such a couple.¹¹ Through written dialogue with her professor, the student realized her beliefs conflicted with her professional ethics and discriminated against LGBT families.¹² Once she realized this, she was able to find ways to treat gay couples. The study concluded that dialogue, while requiring patience and continuous effort, helps challenge biases.¹³

In the second study, 10 heterosexual counselors-in-training joined a year-long course in which they heard speakers, discussed readings, and shared their beliefs about sexuality, homophobia, and gay and lesbian development.¹⁴ By studying their own sexuality and sexual differences, many of the students came to value LGBT people and understand their struggles. The study concluded that creating a safe and trusting environment for self reflection about biases and sexual identity promotes change.¹⁵

Changing Attitudes

To promote positive attitudes, the child welfare community must create a setting where child welfare professionals examine their views of LGBTQ youth and how they can become more affirming. At the beginning, this may be difficult and feel uncomfortable, especially for lawyers and judges who may not want to acknowledge that feelings can impact their job performance. Several tools are available to help this process.

Before using these tools or other approaches such as training, creating task forces, or having brown bag

Ground Rules for Discussion

- This listening forum is a **SAFE** place to be whoever and or whatever you want to be. The forum offers a **NONJUDGMENTAL** environment.
- All participants have the **OPPORTUNITY** to talk in the forum. Whether a person chooses to talk or not to talk is okay.
- Complete **CONFIDENTIALITY** is kept by everyone. No names, words, or stories are told to anyone outside the group.
- Members show **RESPECT** for each other and for what is said in the forum.
- Personal information is shared **VOLUNTARILY** without pressure from other members.
- Members use **“I”** statements, taking **RESPONSIBILITY** for their own feelings, actions, thoughts, and words.

And Remember...

- **THE OUCH RULE**—if you are upset by something someone says, say “ouch” and explain.
- **STEP UP AND STEP BACK**—If you talk a lot, step back and give others a chance to speak. If you have not spoken, step up and let your voice be heard!
- **AGREE TO DISAGREE**

*Adapted from JASMYN Inc. (Jacksonville area sexual minority youth network) norms.

lunches on this topic, it is helpful to establish ground rules for discussion. The Jacksonville Area Sexual Minority Youth Network (JASMYN) read a series of statements at the beginning of each meeting to remind participants to respect and listen to one another. As you and your colleagues engage in group discussions about your attitudes about LGBTQ youth, consider reviewing the statements in the box above or creating your own set of “norms” to guide your way.

The following three tools may help you identify and discuss your views with others as you start to explore and improve your attitudes and actions toward LGBTQ youth:

ABA Codes of Conduct

In drafting the Model Code of Judicial Conduct and the Model Rules of Professional Conduct, the ABA has acknowledged that judges and lawyers are human, but they may not let their attitudes impact their cases. Discussing these

sections of the codes may assist judges and lawyers understand that improved practice toward LGBTQ youth is rooted in their ethical responsibilities.

Canon 3 of the Model Code of Judicial Conduct is entitled **A Judge Shall Perform the Duties of Judicial Office Impartially and Diligently** and in part reads:

A. Judicial Duties in General. The judicial duties of a judge take precedence over all the judge’s other activities.... In the performance of these duties, the following standards apply.

B. Adjudicative Responsibilities

(5) A judge shall perform judicial duties without bias or prejudice. A judge shall not, in the performance of judicial duties, by words or conduct manifest bias or prejudice, including but not limited to bias or prejudice based

Riddle Homophobia Scale: Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Identity

In a clinical sense, homophobia is defined as an intense, irrational fear of same sex-relations that becomes overwhelming to the person. In common usage, homophobia is the fear of intimate relationships with persons of the same sex. Below are four negative homophobic levels and four positive levels of attitudes towards lesbian and gay relationships/people. They were developed by Dr. Dorothy Riddle, a psychologist from Tucson, Arizona.

Homophobic Levels of Attitude:

- 1. Repulsion:** Homosexuality is seen as a “crime against nature.” Gay/lesbians are sick, crazy, immoral, sinful, wicked, etc. Anything is justified to change them: prison, hospitalization, negative behavior therapy, electroshock therapy, etc.
- 2. Pity:** Heterosexual chauvinism. Heterosexuality is more mature and certainly to be preferred. Any possibility of “becoming straight” should be reinforced, and those who seem to be born “that way” should be pitied, “the poor dears.”
- 3. Tolerance:** Homosexuality is just a phase of adolescent development that many people go through and most people “grow out of.” Thus, lesbians/gays are less mature than “straights” and should be treated with the protectiveness and indulgence one uses with a child. Lesbians/gays should not be given positions of authority because they are still working through their adolescent behavior.
- 4. Acceptance:** Still implies there is something to accept. Characterized by such statements as “You’re not a lesbian to me, you’re a person!” or “What you do in bed is your own business,” or “That’s fine with me as long as you don’t flaunt it!”

Positive Levels of Attitude:

- 1. Support:** Work to safeguard the rights of lesbians and gays. People at this level may be uncomfortable themselves, but they are aware of the homophobic climate and the irrational unfairness.
- 2. Admiration:** Acknowledges that being lesbian/gay in our society takes strength. People at this level are willing to truly examine their homophobic attitudes, values, and behaviors.
- 3. Appreciation:** Value the diversity of people and see lesbians/gays as a valid part of that diversity. These people are willing to combat homophobia in themselves and others.
- 4. Nurturance:** Assumes that gay/lesbian people are indispensable in our society. They view lesbians/gays with genuine affection and delight, and are willing to be allies and advocates.

on race, sex,...sexual orientation or socioeconomic status, and shall not permit staff, court officials and others subject to the judge’s direction and control to do so.

Similarly, Rule 8.4 Misconduct, Model Rules of Professional Conduct, reads in part:

It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to:

(d) engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice;

The comment to this section says:
[3] A lawyer who, in the course of representing a client, knowingly

manifests by words or conduct, bias or prejudice based upon race, sex,...sexual orientation ...violates paragraph (d) when such actions are prejudicial to the administration of justice.

While states must enact specific rules to make the model rules enforceable, most jurisdictions have incorporated at least the general language about prohibiting bias and prejudicial words or conduct.¹⁶ Lawyers and judges may think and believe whatever they want, but those thoughts may not impact the treatment clients and litigants receive.

Riddle Scale

One useful tool to guide this exploration is the Riddle Homophobia Scale about Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Identity.¹⁷ The scale involves four homophobic levels and four positive levels of attitudes about LGB individuals. (See box this page.) As you review and discuss the scale, you could identify actions to take at each level to improve outreach toward LGBTQ youth in your system. As you continue your discussions, perhaps you and others would move up the scale, and take more steps toward nurturance. For example, for someone at the following levels:

Repulsion or Pity—The youth will know. They will see you rolling your eyes, moving away, refusing to shake hands, using derogatory labels and language, ignoring their basic needs and showing other signs of disrespect. Recognize the limits to effective advocacy and decision making these attitudes place on you. Despite these attitudes, however, represent your client competently as an lawyer and make impartial decisions as a judge. If you are unable to do so, refer clients/cases to others without expressed bias.

Tolerance—Learn about the joys and struggles LGBTQ youth face (see box for helpful resources) and acknowledge there are LGBTQ youth on your caseload. They may be hiding because they are not comfortable discussing

Attitude Checklist

Read the statements below and respond according to how you personally feel about the suggested situations. Circle the letter under the description of the response you feel most closely represents your current attitude—or in some situations, your projected future attitude.

FOR ME PERSONALLY...

| | Acceptable | Not Sure | Unacceptable | |
|--|------------|----------|--------------|--|
| 1. To have an openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender person as a close friend would be: | A | NS | U | |
| 2. To allow an openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender person to serve in the military is: | A | NS | U | |
| 3. A constitutional amendment banning gay marriage is: | A | NS | U | |
| 4. To have gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people be encouraged to be parents or to adopt is: | A | NS | U | |
| 5. To have an openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender teacher or bus driver for my child would be: | A | NS | U | |
| 6. Supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people who “come out” at work is: | A | NS | U | |
| 7. Confirming an openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender person to serve as a leader in my church mosque or synagogue would be: | A | NS | U | |
| 8. To have an openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender child is: | A | NS | U | |
| 9. To share a room overnight with an openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender person would be: | A | NS | U | |
| 10. To have an openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender person as a physician would be: | A | NS | U | |
| 11. To have an openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender person serve as President would be: | A | NS | U | |
| 12. To have an openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender supervisor or boss would be: | A | NS | U | |

their identities with you, but LGBTQ youth live in your jurisdiction. Think about the Model Rules of Professional Conduct and the Model Code of Judicial Conduct and be sure personal attitudes do not compromise representation of LGBTQ clients, or impartial decision making if you are the judge. Resist all attempts to make those youth invisible, and do not ignore their basic needs for safety, caring environments, and due process.

Acceptance—Let your clients, or the youth appearing before you, know you are interested in them. Be open to talking about any part of their life that

is important to them and respond without bias. Learn the difference between sexual identity/homosexuality and sexual molestation (pedophilia).

Support—*Lawyers*: Develop trusting relationships with your clients. Advocate for your client to be in a safe setting, even if that means going against the recommendation of the child welfare agency. Know who in your community provides services in an LGBTQ-affirming manner and advocate with the agency and the court to have your client receive services from these providers. *Judges*: Have resources available to share with

LGBTQ youth, their families, and their lawyers. Insist that the agency care for the youth in an affirming way and if it does not, consider making a “no reasonable efforts” finding against the agency. Challenge the tendency to label age-appropriate sexual activity as predatory. Avoid the double standard for behavior between LGBTQ youth and heterosexual sexually active youth.

Admiration—Use gender-neutral language when talking with the youth. For example, ask about the youth’s partners or important relationships in the youth’s life, romantic and otherwise. Use the youth’s name and pronoun of

choice. Encourage the youth to dress as he or she wishes.

Appreciation—Display hate-free zone, rainbow flag or triangle signs in your courtroom or office.¹⁸ Speak out when you hear anyone, colleagues, youth, family members, court officers, etc., make homophobic or inappropriate anti-gay comments, especially in front of kids. Learn about gender identity and gender expression. Learn about the developmental needs of all young people, including sexual development, and integrate LGBTQ youth into this understanding.

Nurturance—*Lawyers*: Visit your clients in their placements including in LGBTQ group homes or get to know their friends. Be available by

cell phone or by quickly returning calls for anything your client wants to discuss. Help them through crises and celebrate positive events with them. Work with their birth families to accept their children back into their homes, rather than assuming the youth will finish his or her childhood in foster care. Work to understand and advocate for safe and healthy services for transgender youth.

Judges: Support the youth and his or her family. Ensure the youth knows when you are proud of accomplishments and show understanding when there are problems. Talk to colleagues about the importance of nurturing all young people, including those who identify as LGBTQ.

Checklists

Use the Attitude Checklist and the Personal Comfort Assessment Tool found in the boxes on this and the previous page as other tools to examine your attitudes and start discussion with others. These checklists can be used to determine your own comfort level with LGBT issues. You might identify some topics, such as gay marriage, adoption by LGBT adults, or gays in the military, that you are interested in, and then follow up by reading books and articles on the topic or talking to LGBT individuals for their assessment of the issue. They may also be used to identify where you fall on the Riddle Scale (discussed above) and suggest actions to take. You don't need to agree with all statements in the tools to support LGBTQ youth, but rather use the lists to identify your comfort level with LGBTQ youth and how you might change to increase your ability to effectively represent them and make unbiased decisions about their care.

Conclusion

As Jill Jacobs, executive director, Family Builders said, "*Judges should be especially active at letting the youth that come before them know that their courtrooms and chambers are hate-free zones....To do this, judges need to be more culturally competent.*"¹⁹

Understanding and advocating for youth whose culture differs from your own is essential to being an effective child's lawyer or child welfare judge. LGBTQ youth live in your community and need your understanding. There is plenty to celebrate about their lives, but many of them have challenges to overcome. They need you to understand and nurture them so that they feel comfortable trusting and relying upon you. They need you to set aside any negative attitudes about LGBTQ people in general and focus on their needs. You can make a difference for a young person if you can see them for who they are.

GLBT Personal Comfort Assessment Tool

For the following questions, answer "Agree," "Disagree," or "Not Sure":

- I am comfortable using the words "gay," "lesbian," "bisexual," and "transgender."
- I am comfortable addressing and talking about GLBT issues in general.
- I address homophobic behavior/language exhibited by colleagues.
- I address homophobic behavior/language exhibited by youth/clients.
- I make an effort to use GLBT-inclusive language in conversation.
- I would be comfortable having a GLBT co-worker.
- I would be comfortable having a close friend who is GLBT.
- I would be comfortable if my child, niece, or nephew "came out" to me as GLBT.
- I ask GLBT co-workers or clients about their partners or families just as I ask heterosexual co-workers or clients about their partners or families.
- I do not assume that a gay, lesbian, or bisexual client or co-worker is attracted to me.
- I would be comfortable if a client came out to me as GLBT or questioning.
- I make an effort to use a person's preferred gender pronoun and name, even if I previously knew him or her by a different pronoun or name.
- I would be comfortable displaying a *GLBT Safe Space* sticker or other visible sign of support for GLBT people.
- I would be comfortable if someone thought I was GLBT.
- I feel that being GLBT is a healthy expression of human sexuality. I am willing to put aside my personal beliefs to help a client find the best solution for his or her own life.

The GLBT Youth Support (GLYS) Project, a program of Health Care of Southeastern Massachusetts, Inc. www.hcsm.org/glys.htm (800) 530 2770 * glys@hcsm.org

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Endnotes

¹ Mallon, Gerald P. *We Don't Exactly Get the Welcome Wagon: The Experiences of Gay and Lesbian Adolescents in the Child Welfare Systems*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, 59.

² Response to ABA Opening Doors Project National Lawyer Survey, Fall 2006.

³ These listening forums included Denver, CO, July 28, 2006; Jacksonville, FL, October 12, 2006; Nashville, TN, November 14, 2006; New York, NY, November 29, 2006; and, Seattle, WA, December, 14, 2006.

⁴ Mallon, Gerald P., 1998, 82.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 110-118.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁷ Youth comment, Jacksonville, FL, Listening Forum, October 12, 2006.

⁸ Interview with Marisa Howard-Karp, Program Director, The GLBT Youth Support (GLYS) Project, April 10, 2007.

⁹ Opening Doors Survey, Fall 2006.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Charles, Laurie L., Dina Thomas, and Matthew L. Thornton. "Overcoming Bias Toward Same-Sex Couples: A Case Study From Inside an MFT Ethics Classroom." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, July 2005, 239.

¹² *Ibid.*, 247.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 248.

¹⁴ Dillon, Frank R., et al. "On Becoming Allies: A Qualitative Study of Lesbian-, Gay-, and Bisexual-Affirmative Counselor Training." *Counselor Education & Supervision*, March 2004, 162, 164.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 176.

¹⁶ Sparling, Tobin A. "Judicial Bias Claims of Homosexual Persons in the Wake of *Lawrence v. Texas*." *South Texas Law Review*, Winter 2004, 260.

¹⁷ Riddle, Dorothy Ph.D., Tucson, AZ.

¹⁸ The rainbow flag and triangle signs are demonstrations of LGBT pride.

¹⁹ Interview with Jill Jacobs, Executive Director Family Builders, Fall 2006.

Learning from *Lawrence v. Texas*

In 2003, the United States Supreme Court decided *Lawrence v. Texas*,¹ a landmark case that should make judges more aware of their attitudes and actions towards LGBTQ people. *Lawrence* overturned a Texas sodomy law because it infringed on a homosexual individual's constitutional right to make personal choices. It overturned *Bowers v. Hardwick*,² which framed the issue as one of public morality. Its tone and language differed from *Bowers* and its effect was to permit judicial decision making on the basis of a party's sexual orientation. *Lawrence* took the issue away from public morality and reframed it to one of individual choice and privacy.³

Lawrence should result in less biased decisions by judges. Tobin Sparling writes, *Lawrence*:

Amends the Code of Judicial Conduct of every state that does not already plainly enumerate sexual orientation bias as violation of a judge's ethical duties. No longer can any judge lawfully brand a homosexual person as a criminal because of that person's sexual orientation alone. No longer can any judge lawfully treat a homosexual litigant any less respectfully than he or she would treat a heterosexual person standing in the same shoes. No longer is there any excuse for a judge to demean or slur homosexual persons by his or her out-of-court actions or words...⁴

LGBTQ individuals still suffer discrimination by judges. In family cases, such as custody and adoption, LGBTQ parties continue to lose rights to children because of their LGBTQ status.⁵ The *Lawrence* case, though, can help when bringing a judicial bias claim and can be used when discussing attitudes toward LGBTQ youth with judges and lawyers.

Sources: ¹ 539 U.S. 558 (2003); ² 478 U.S. 186 (1986); ³ Sparling, Tobin A. "Judicial Bias Claims of Homosexual Persons in the Wake of *Lawrence v. Texas*." *South Texas Law Review*, Winter 2004, 260.; ⁴ *Ibid.*, 307; ⁵ See Fedders, Barbara. "Coming Out for Kids: Recognizing Respecting and Representing LGBTQ Youth." *Nevada Law Journal* 6, Spring 2006, 774, 799-801 for discussion of post-*Lawrence* cases.

Resources

Organizations:

- ABA Opening Doors Project—www.abanet.org/child/lgbtq.shtml
- Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)—www.cwla.org/programs/culture/lgbtq.htm
- Lambda Legal—www.lambdalegal.org
- Legal Services for Children (LSC)—www.lsc-sf.org
- National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) website—www.nclrights.org
- The GLBT Youth Support (GLYS) Project—www.hcsm.org/glys.htm

Written Materials:

- CASA Guide on CASA website—www.NationalCasa.org
- *Youth in the Margins: A Report on the Unmet Needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Adolescents in Foster Care* — www.lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/news/publications.html?record=899
- *Out of the Margins: A Report on Regional Listening Forums Highlighting the Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth in Care*. Washington, DC: The Child Welfare League of America and Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, 2006.
- Model Standards Project—Guide can be accessed from CWLA, LSC or NCLR websites.
- *Breaking the Silence: LGBTQ Foster Youth Tell Their Stories*— available through NCLR, www.nclrights.org
- *We Don't Exactly Get the Welcome Wagon: The Experiences of Gay and Lesbian Adolescents in the Child Welfare Systems*. New York: Columbia University Press 1998.