


New Practice Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients

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 The Council of Representatives of APA recently adopted as policy the Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients at its February 2011 meeting. This document officially replaces the 2000 Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients and will have a 10 year effective period. As with other sets of APA guidelines, these are differentiated from “standards,” in that standards are mandatory

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and often accompanied by an enforcement process. Rather, these guidelines are being set forth as “aspirational in intent.”

As editor of the diversity column of TCP, I wanted to list these newly adopted guidelines in order for a broader audience (you, members of Division 12), to become more aware of this document, which can be accessed in its entirety on the web at <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/guidelines.aspx>. I have previously remarked that too often such information does not get published in

more mainstreamed venues (Nezu, 2005)—hence, my desire to “broadcast” these guidelines to a “larger” audience.

Because of lack of space for this column, I will be unable to provide detailed information regarding the history, rationale, and need for such guidelines. I only hope that you, the reader, will access the website for a more detailed scrutiny of this important document.

Taking full responsibility for the rationale behind the following statement, this is one of those times, on multiple levels, that I am very proud to be a psychologist!

There are 21 guidelines separated into the following categories: (a) attitudes towards homosexuality and bisexuality; (b) relationships and families; (c) issues of diversity; (d) economic and workplace issues, (e) education and training; and (f) research. The document also has updated literature reviews and resource lists, as well as guidelines regarding several new topics, including religion and spirituality, the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS, and research considerations. The following is a simple listing of the guidelines. I urge you to read them in their entirety.

Attitudes Toward Homosexuality and Bisexuality

Guideline 1. Psychologists strive to understand the effects of stigma (i.e., prejudice, discrimination, and violence) and its various contextual manifestations in the lives of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.

Guideline 2. Psychologists understand that lesbian, gay, and bisexual orientations are not mental illnesses.

Guideline 3. Psychologists understand that same-sex attractions, feelings, and behavior are normal variants of human sexuality and that efforts to change sexual orientation have not been shown to be effective or safe.

Guideline 4. Psychologists are encouraged to recognize how their attitudes and knowledge about lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues may be relevant to assessment and treatment and seek consultation or make appropriate referrals when indicated.

Guideline 5. Psychologists strive to recognize the unique experiences of bisexual individuals.

Guideline 6. Psychologists strive to distinguish issues of sexual orientation from those of gender identity when working with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients.

Relationships and Families

Guideline 7. Psychologists strive to be knowledgeable about and respect the importance of lesbian, gay, and bisexual relationships.

