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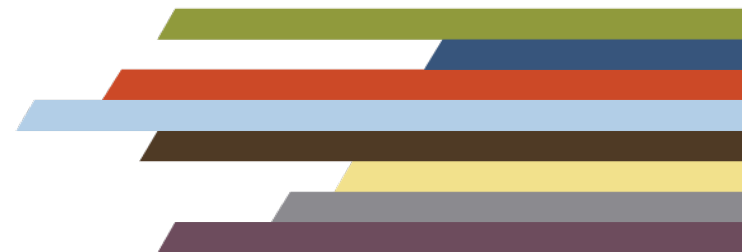
Addressing Blended Family and Trauma Issues with Affectional and Gender Minority Parents

Anthony Zazzarino, PhD, LPC, ACS, CPRP

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Department of Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Counseling
Professions

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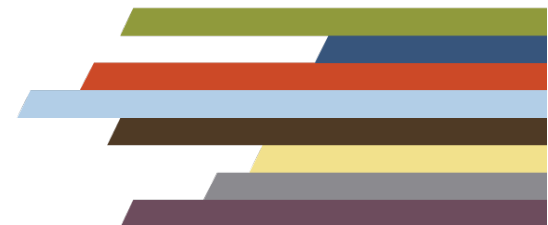
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Feedback

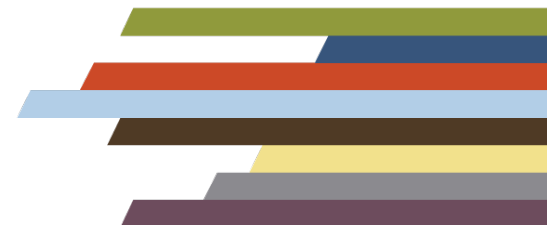
- Our funding comes from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), which requires us to evaluate our services. We appreciate your honest, ANONYMOUS feedback about this event, which will provide information to SAMHSA, AND assist us in planning future meetings and programs. Feedback about this training will assist us in developing trainings that are relevant to your current professional needs. **Therefore, your feedback counts!**



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Video Recording Information

- Please note that we will be recording this webinar and posting it to our website. Any information and input you provide during today's call will be recorded and posted on our website.

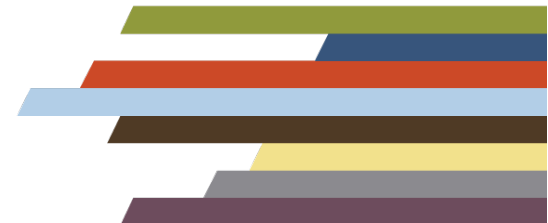
THANKS!



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Your Interactions with Us

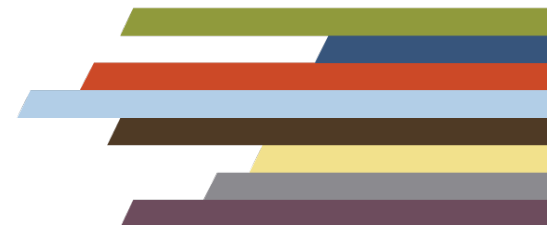
- Question and Answers
 - Q & A will occur at the end of the call.
 - Please type your questions in the Q & A feature in Zoom located on the task bar (hover over task bar).
- Chat and Polls
 - Throughout the webinar, we will be asking for your input.
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Today's Presenter:



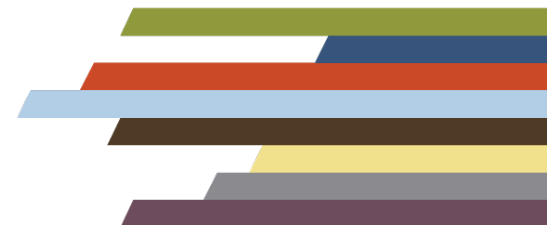
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Learning Objectives

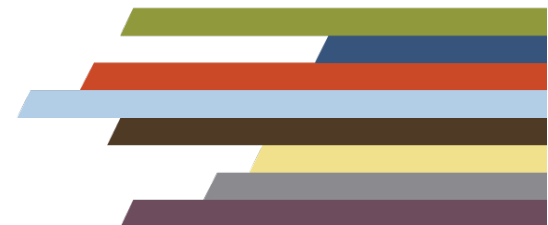
- Understand the multiple cultural identities of parents who identify as affectional and gender minorities.
- Discuss how past relationships and familial traumatic experiences, feelings of oppression, and privilege shape the development as a person and as a parent.
- Provide strategies for supporting affectional and gender diverse families.



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Language

General Guidelines

- Become more self-aware
- Catch yourself
- Replace it
- Keep practicing without judgement

General Guidelines with Clients

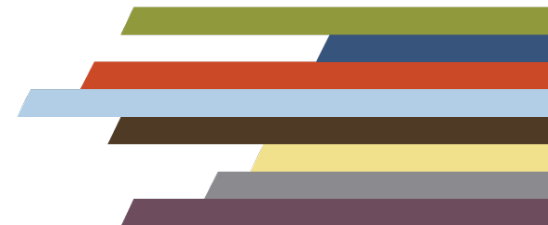
- Ask how they identify
- Do not assume ... get clarification on a term
- Use their language



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Understanding Different Types of Relationships



- Consensual non-monogamy
 - Open-relationships
 - Polyamorous relationships
 - Triads or Throuple
 - Quads
 - Monogamish

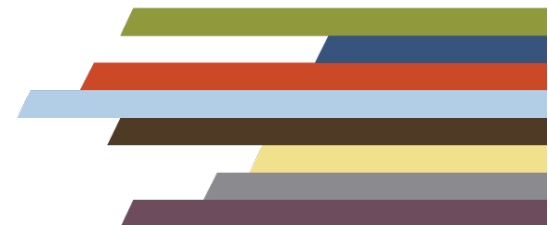
- BDSM



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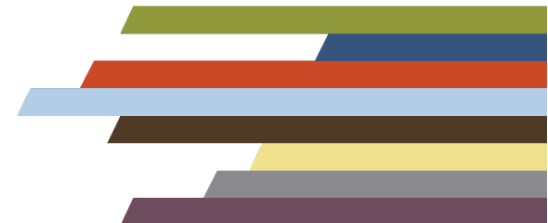
Relationships to Families



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Affectional and Gender Minority Families in Numbers

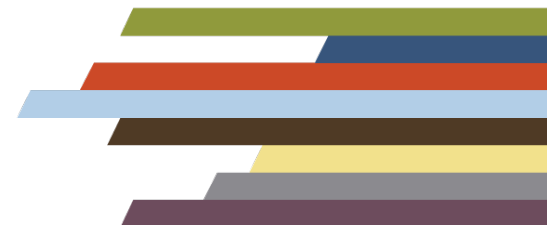
- Current estimates report that 48% of women and 20% of men who identify as a affectional or gender minority are raising approximately two to three million children under the age of 18.
- Affectional and gender minorities are raising 1.4% of all adopted children under the age of 18 in the United States.
- Currently, there is a shift in public opinion, whereas 58% of the United States view gay and lesbian relationship as morally acceptable.
 - “In 1992, polling showed that only 29 percent of Americans supported the idea that same-sex couples should have the legal right to adopt children. In a 2014 poll, that figure was 63 percent, even higher than support for marriage among same-sex couples” (Gates, 2015, p. 68).



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What is Changing?

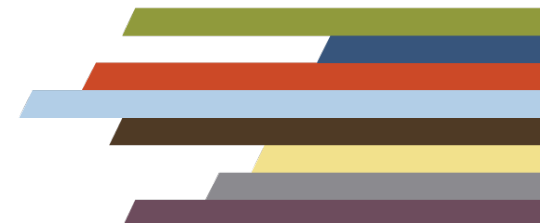
- There are more choices and options for affectional and gender minority couples to become parents, each choice brings its own set of challenges and obstacles.
- Providers will see a generational shift in affectional and gender minority parenting behaviors and must work to shift their interventions when working with affectional and gender minority parents.
- Examples:
 - Affectional and gender minority blended families
 - Change in family resources and services
 - Creating the necessary resources
 - Increase education and training



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Though views of affectional and gender minority individuals may be shifting, it is clear that discrimination is still prevalent for this population.

Many affectional minority and gender minority parents still experience social victimization, stigmatization, and harassment due to their nontraditional family structure, which impacts their daily living and their careers.

The perceived discrimination continues to be a risk factor for emotional and behavioral problems across the life-span, making it more difficult to work through parental stress.

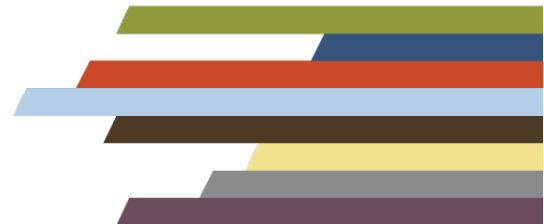
Often, some affectional and gender minority parents hear criticism that they are selfish, damaging, or dangerous for children. Experiences of heterosexism continue to be associated with poorer psychosocial outcomes for affectional and gender minority parents.



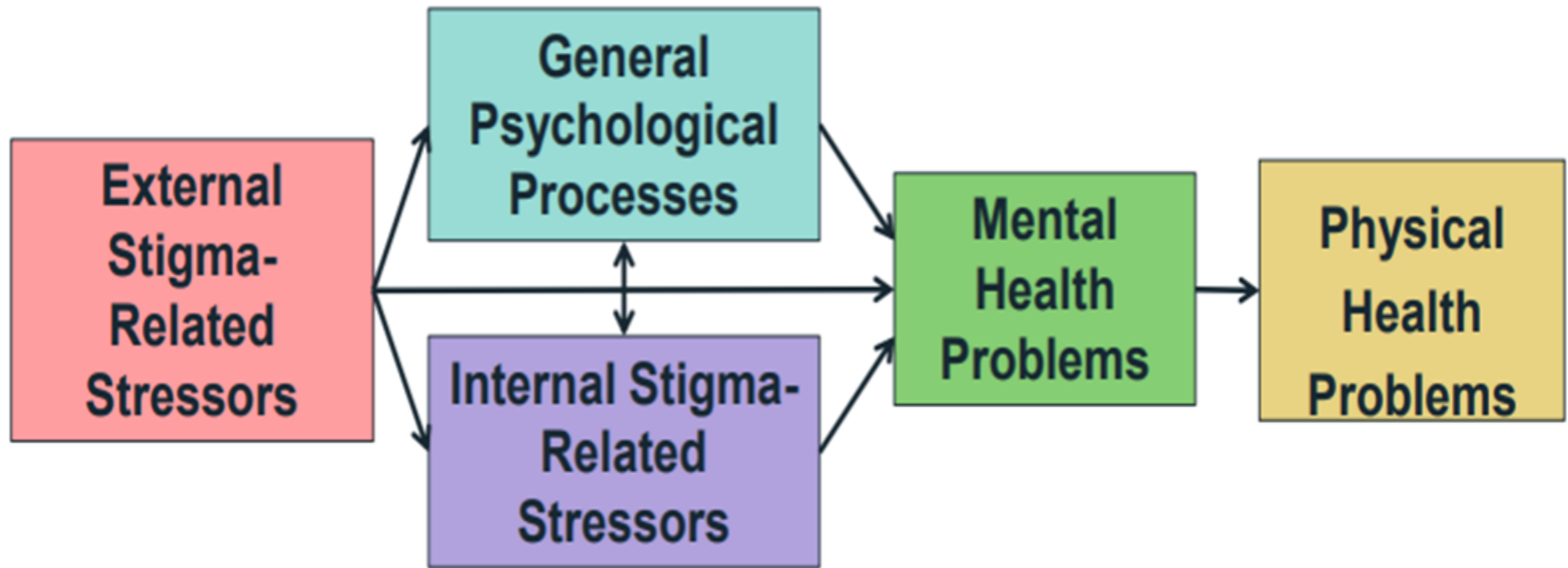
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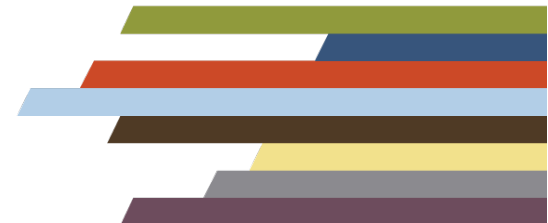
Individual and Family Minority Stress



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We're A Family, Now What?

Extended family concerns about the child and the challenges they will encounter as a family.

Encounters with care professionals who invade this choice with a lack of support, heterosexism, and hostility.

Emotional distancing from family members who choose not to accept or be a part of the relationship, child, or family dynamic.

Feelings of stress and isolation, as well as an overwhelming void of support, advice, and help navigating the world of parenting.

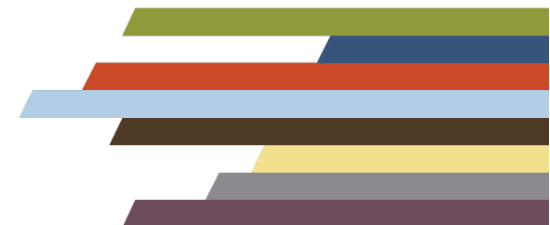
Experiencing the loss of other affectional and gender minority friends and community who do not engage in kid-friendly activities and are thus unable to provide the necessary support.



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Supporting Families

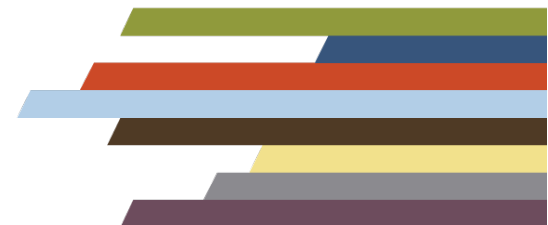
- Check your biases
- Strength perspective
- Understanding your role



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What do Affectional and Gender Minority Families Need?

Couples and Marriage Counseling



Family relationship, friendships with other parents, and ties to a community group that encourage good parenting regarding the quality of parenting.

Family and Community Support



The ability to work on strengthening the couples' support from family and friends can provide a sense of validation and external motivation.

Social Support



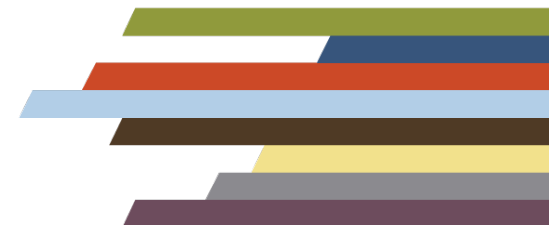
Affectional and gender minority parents who receive social and familial support will experience less difficulty adjusting to the role of parents.



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Connection to the Larger Community

Developing relationships with other affectional and gender minority parent families is crucially important for the reemergence of connection and a sense of community.

These experiences provide both parents and children an opportunity to engage with other families, with similar dynamics and racial backgrounds, in an affirming environment.

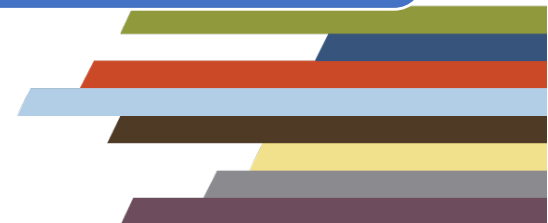
Providers may need to create safe, affirming spaces for diverse affectional and gender minority parent families to interact with one another.



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Exploring and Assessing the Needs of the Children

We must also consider the needs of the children within the family.

Children may view themselves as a minority among their peer groups due to the affectional and gender minority status of their parents.

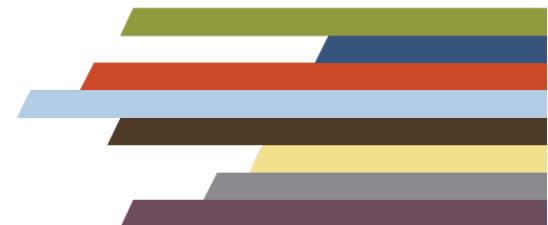
This possibility warrants an assessment of the children's needs through individual counseling including further exploration of their perception and understanding of affectional identity, gender identity, and the family dynamic.



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Using a Genogram with Affectional and Gender Minority Families

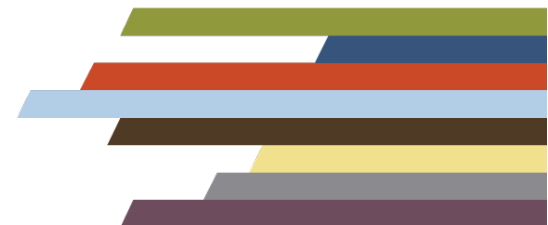
- To integrate the needs of culturally diverse families, researchers revised genograms to reinforce the inclusion of intersectionality among diverse families.
- Alterations to the original use and design have made genograms useful in treatment with families experiencing substance use, abuse and trauma by assessing and deconstructing maladaptive patterns of functioning to promote healing and resilience among families.
- Genograms are an effective tool used by counselors to help families understand relationship connections, functions, and behaviors.
 - Specifically, for affectional and gender minority led families, genogram development serves to help family members understand each member's identity, as well as understand the large community .



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Brief Vignette

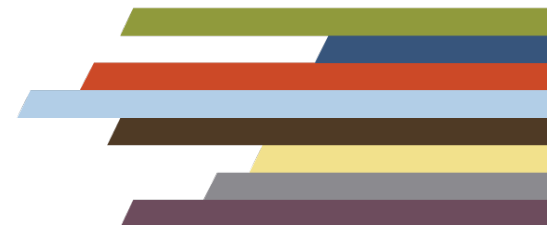
Ryan (39-years-old) and Joe (40-years-old) (short for Josephine) are a lesbian couple who present in the counseling office together for support with parenting. Ryan is an African American transgender woman and Joe is a Hispanic cis-gender woman. The couple have been married for 5 years and they each have a biological child from a previous heterosexual relationship, and one child they recently adopted together. The children are Zane (Ryan's 14-year-old son), Jason (Joe's 15-year-old son), and Timothy (14-year-old adopted son). Timothy is the only White person in the family. All three children perform well academically and have not had any issues with each other since Timothy arrived two years ago. He was placed in five foster homes until he met Ryan and Joe who fostered him for two years before legally adopting him this year. The extent of his trauma was unknown other than what they learned when he first arrived at their home; however, Ryan and Joe recently found out that Timothy was recently charged with sexually abusing a peer at school. Timothy participates in court-ordered counseling with a Certified Sex Offender Treatment Practitioner (CSOTP) weekly where this information was disclosed and shared with his adoptive parents. Timothy's clinician referred Ryan and Joe for parent-education counseling sessions. The family does not have any friend or familial support and they recently moved to the area for Joe's employment opportunity.



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During the first session with both parents, Joe informs the clinician about the circumstances surrounding their relationship and the children. She further reported that Ryan and Brian got along well until recently. Joe reported that Ryan disclosed to Timothy that she has a history of physical abuse for many years by her caregivers as a way to offer support through first-hand understanding of the experience. Since this disclosure to Timothy, the child has been triggering Ryan. Ryan reported that Timothy frequently and aggressively refuses to follow directions when given by Ryan and calls her derogatory names, often positing that her gender identity and sexual orientation are a direct result of her previous trauma. The couple reported not wanting to give up on the child, but being emotionally drained by the frequency of altercations between Ryan and Timothy daily. Ryan reported not knowing how to communicate with Timothy effectively as she often screams, cries, or avoids him altogether. Joe reported feeling as though she is the only parent in the home because Ryan often shuts down and isolates herself for what can be assumed is her attempt to have little to no contact with Timothy. The parents indicated that their relationship is also at risk because of the emotional stress they are both feeling with the new imbalance in responsibilities and decrease in appropriate communication patterns. Joe reported knowing about Ryan's trauma history, but that neither of them considered the negative impact that adopting a child with similar traumatic experiences would have on their parenting abilities.

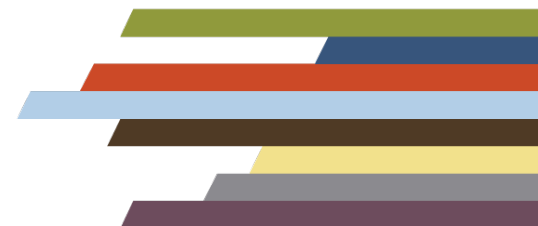


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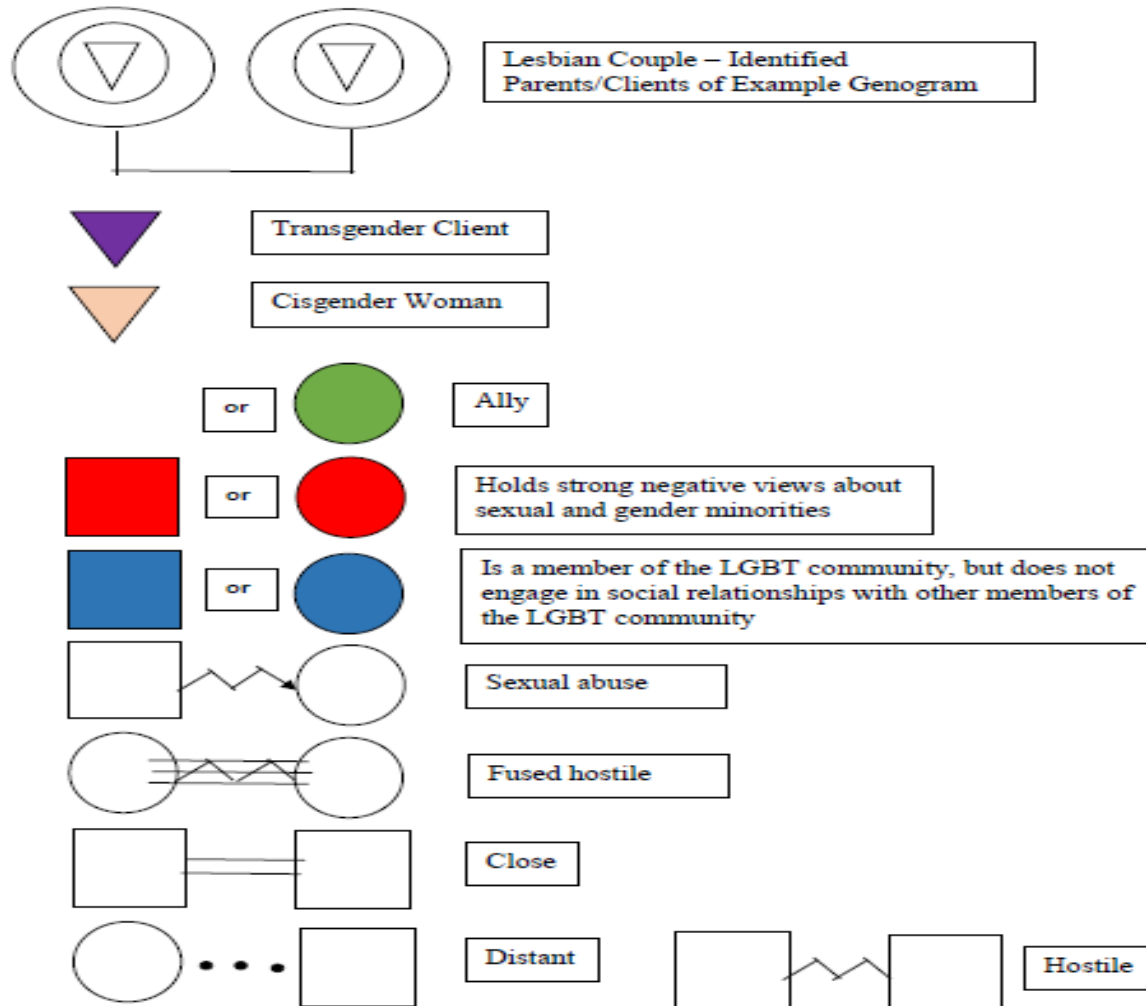
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Genogram Legend

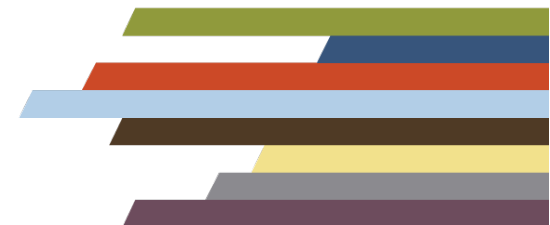
Genogram Key/Legend



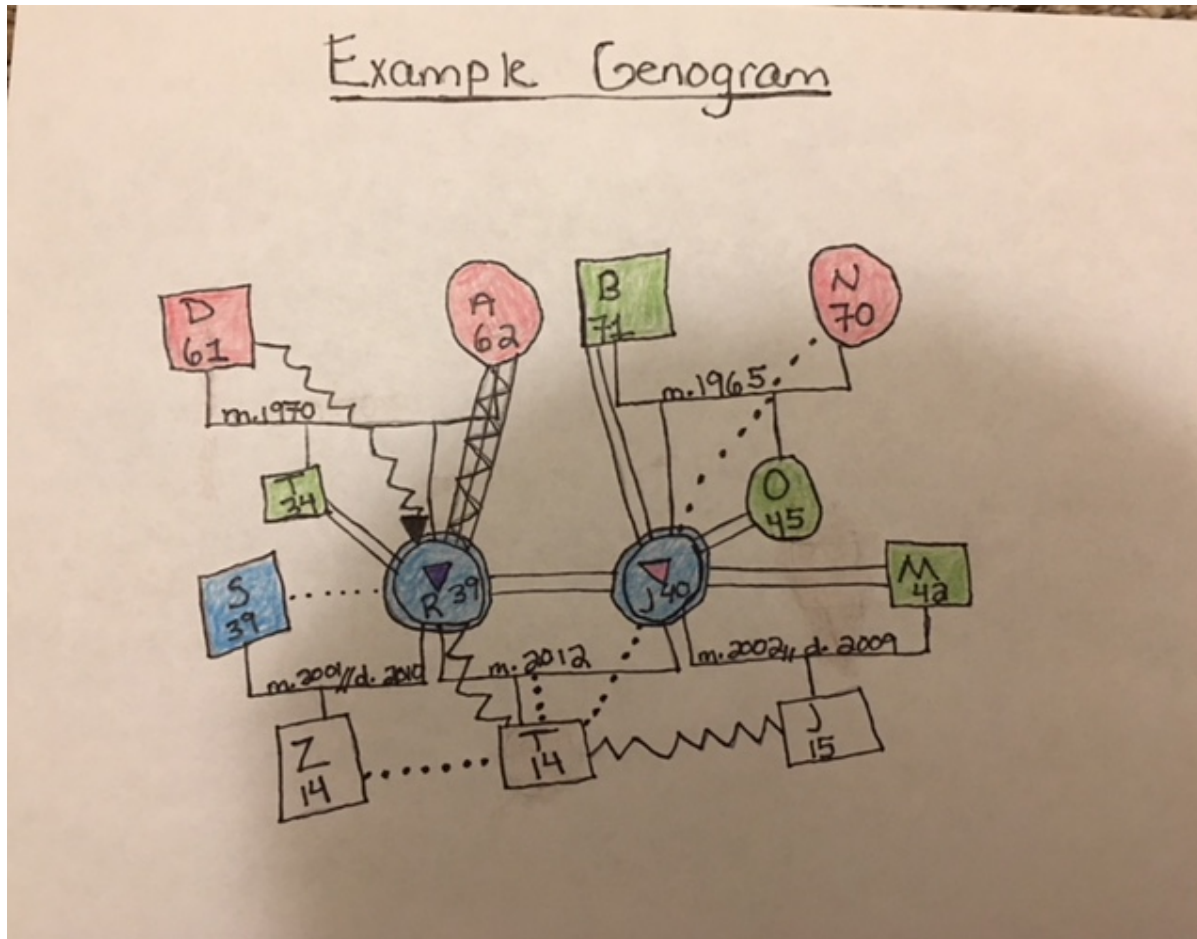
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Genogram Example



Reflective Questions:

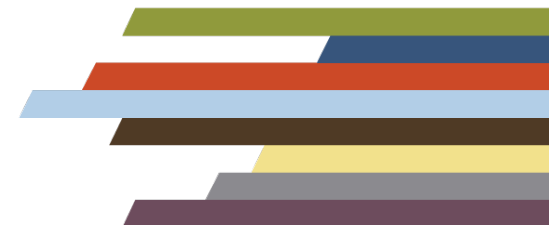
- 1) What aspects of your affectional and/or gender identity do you embrace or reject?
- 2) What biases related to your gender and/or affectional identity has your family of origin have transmitted to you?
- 3) How important is it for you to have others affirm your experiences related to your gender or affectional identity?
- 4) How do you relate to others in the affectional and gender minority community?



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Suggestions for Follow up

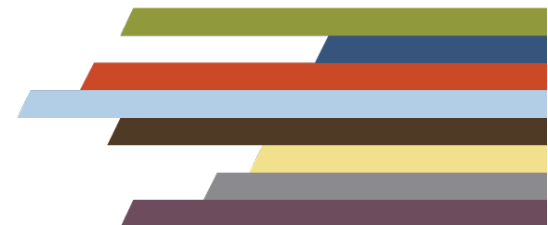
- Strengths-based approach
- Facilitate parent-led conversations about the uniqueness of the family.
- Highlight the sources of support available within the extended family and community
 - Developing relationships with other affectional and gender minority parent families is crucially important for the reemergence of connection and a sense of community.



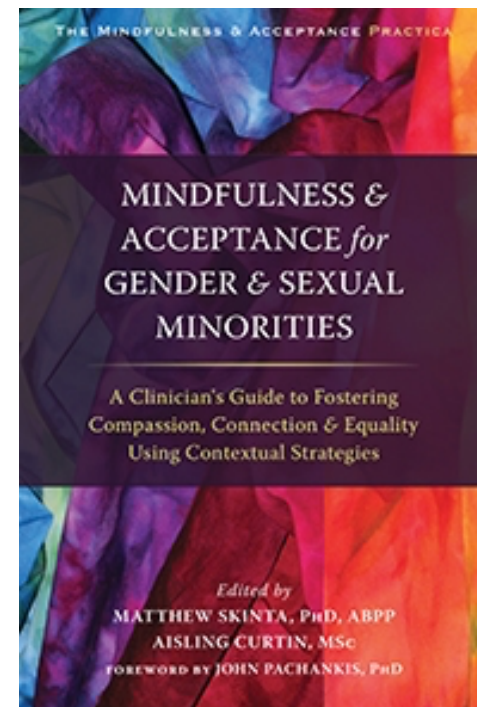
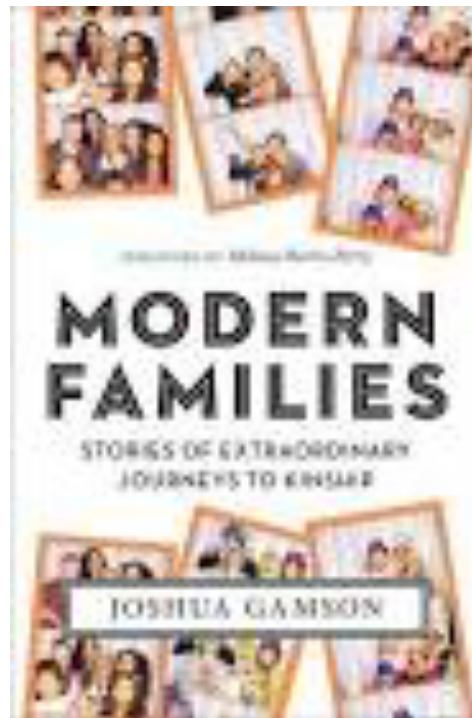
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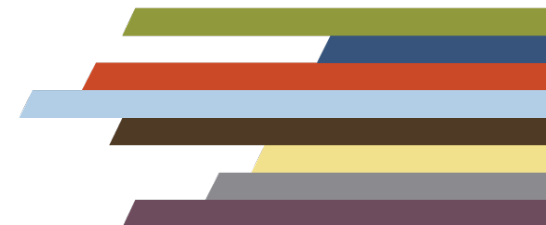
Professional Reading and Resources



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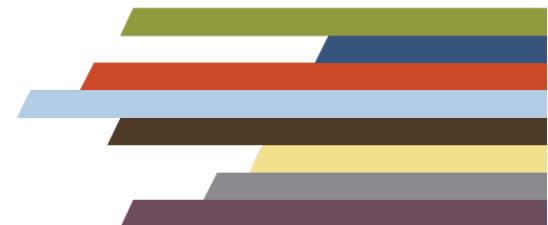
Resources for Affectional and Gender Minority Parent Families



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Questions???

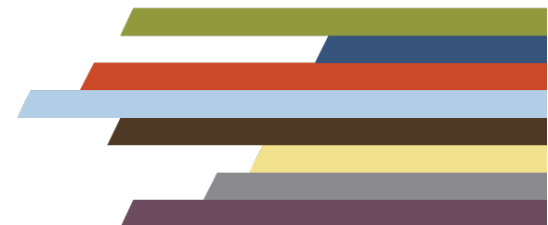
Thank you for your participation!



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We need your input!



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survey. We appreciate
your feedback

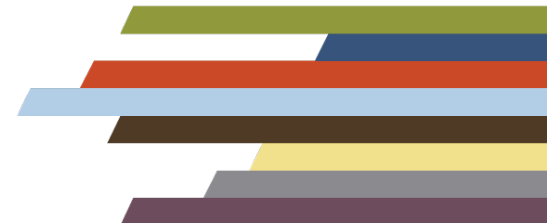
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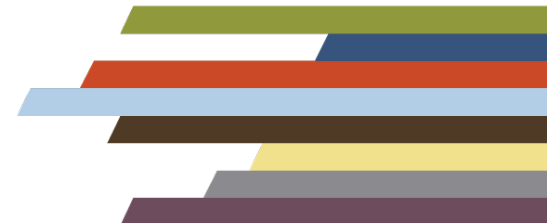
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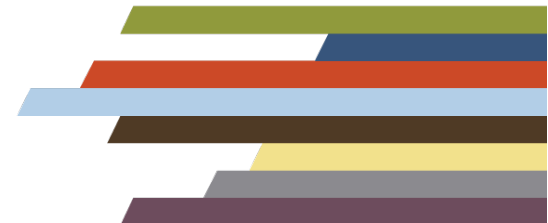
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