

Engaging with Sexual Identity in the Student/Supervisor Relationship

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“ I don't mind if they want to get married. I just have a problem with them having kids”

Issues and Questions

- Heteronormative assumptions
 - Homophobia
 - Cultural and religious values
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- What are the key issues for the student and the supervisor surrounding disclosure in this situation?

“I’m glad you let me know now. I don’t judge you for your life, I just would have been upset if I found out later and you hadn’t told me. It wouldn’t have felt honest.”

Issues and Questions

- Honesty and Openness
- Trust
- Acceptance
- Creating safety for student and supervisor
- How does a person's culture or identified religion impact on your disclosure or discussion of sexual identity?

“I noticed the level of disclosure, and I wondered how any disclosures between student and supervisor could be construed differently if for example you were not a real grounded human being.”

Issues

- Importance of clarity in identity and self
- Demonstration of confidence and comfort
- Disclosure as one part of my story
- Supervisor as role model

“I wasn't bothered knowing you were gay, and it makes me feel more comfortable being able to disclose mine. In a professional context I am often worried I will interact with someone who will be biased because of it or, even more, that I could make them uncomfortable because of it. So sometimes I think it is better just not to disclose if I know it will super negatively affect my professional relationship with them.”

Issues and Questions

- If you do not identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, how do you engage in discussion about the issue? How do you let students know they are safe to disclose?
- How would you discuss the issue of personal disclosure with this student?

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Questions?

Reflections?