

Diversity Thoughts - Sexual Preference Diversity:

June 24, 2019

Happy LGBTQ Pride Week--Let us honor sexual diversity

Diverse gender identity and/or sexual preferences are being celebrated across the country during the yearly Pride events and marches. Tolerance and a safe display of other than hetero-normative living is beginning to grow in more rural areas. Some are venturing into small pride celebrations in the hope that acceptance will grow enough that one can safely and openly live as an LGBTQIA person anywhere and one should not have to leave to be true to one's identity.

'Pride parades occupy a unique civic role [relates a small rural town pride parade organizer] because political "asks" are not their primary reason for being. In one Southern town she studied, Bruce said the message was: "We want cultural respect. We want to be part of this culture, and demand that the culture treat us better."

<https://www.citylab.com/life/2018/06/new-lgbtq-pride-parades-2018/563513/><https://www.citylab.com/life/2018/06/new-lgbtq-pride-parades-2018/563513/>

It is still recent and far from universal for the diversity of humans identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, gender-Queer, Intersex or Asexual to feel respected, safe, and fully part of the fabric of society.

Let us remember that DSM-I and DSM-II classified homosexuality as a mental disorder, a view that was not revised until a 1973 vote by the American Psychological Association, leading to changing DSM-III. It feels like we are still now in the difficult process of learning that "variability does not necessarily imply pathology" (Joel Paris, 2013, p. 139).

As discussed at a November 2018 ISTSS symposium about Hate Based Violence, prejudice, hate crimes, and discrimination towards people who identify as LGBTQ, discrimination and hate are still prevalent. Even in 2019, it is still a crime to have an LGBTQ identity in several countries, including 34 African countries, and in some countries homosexual relations are punishable by death.

Dominant culture prejudice can cause negative beliefs about one's self or group identity (internalized homophobia is one example), and this is correlated to many negative health and mental health outcomes (Robert Carter, 2017)

If you get a chance, attend a Pride Parade or event no matter what your own sexual identity or preference. Parents of trans children go in support, allies of sexual minority friends go, and it is a vibrant and colorful party to celebrate our human diversity.

Anya