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Social Work 6417: Pathways Scholarship

Putting the Pride in PRIDE Pre-Service Training

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### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to provide recommendations to enhance the inclusivity of PRIDE Pre-Service Training for sexual, gender and spiritual minorities. At present, PRIDE Pre-Service is the exclusive training and assessment tool for social workers in Newfoundland and Labrador. However, PRIDE Pre-Service curriculum does not include content regarding LGBTQI2S children, youth or parents. It is known that there is a disproportionate number of children and youth in care that identify as LGBTQI2S and an increasing interest of LGBTQI2S prospective parents looking to expand their families. To examine this problem further I completed: a brief history of LGBTQI2S people accessing foster care and adoption services in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, a full review of the PRIDEbook (the PRIDEbook is the participant manual for all prospective foster and adoptive parents attending PRIDE Pre-Service training), a literature review of the unique needs of LGBTQI2S prospective parents and of prospective parents to LGBTQI2S children and youth in care or placed for adoption, and a scan of what other child welfare authorities are doing to recruit and support LGBTQI2S prospective parents. The results of these methods indicated a need for revisions to the current PRIDE Pre-Service Training to improve the recruitment and training for prospective parents in regards to LGBTQI2S issues.

**Putting the Pride in PRIDE Pre-Service Training: A critical review of how PRIDE Pre-Service in Newfoundland and Labrador meets the needs of LGBTQI2S prospective foster and adoptive parents and LGBTQI2S children and youth in-care.**

Disclaimer: I am completing my Pathways Project, speaking from my personal and professional experiences. I am not assuming an expert position and have completed this task in a learning position. As a member of the LGBTQI2S community myself I am not speaking on behalf of my community. I recognize my limitations as I (although part of this minority group), still face sources of privilege as they relate to my cis-gender, race, education, socio-economic status and various other intersections. I recognize that the need for representation of the various intersections of a queer identity are also important. I fully acknowledge that the issues/needs that one subset of the LGBTQI2S community may face/have is very different from another (i.e. Caucasian gay cis-male vs. African Canadian Trans woman). However, in an effort to be concise I have made general recommendations to be inclusive for LGBTQI2S prospective parents, children and youth in-care.

The pathway to fostering and adoption for LGBTQI2S individuals and couples in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) has been a long journey. It has been an evolution as Canadian society has become more progressive and liberal in their views and in supporting human rights (Sky, 2006). My interest in developing my Pathways Project has come from a personal and professional interest and connection to this field. I am employed as a front-line social worker with the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD) within the Division of Child and Youth Services (CYS). I

have been in this role for over eight years and work in a variety of program areas, but primarily in foster care and adoptions.

In my professional role I am a trained PRIDE Pre-Service facilitator. PRIDE which is an acronym for Parent Resource for Information Development and Education, is a pre-service program that is mandatory for all prospective adoptive and foster care applicants in the province of NL. This training program is utilized in various other provinces and states. This program was developed in the state of Illinois but adapted for use in NL “after being selected as the primary assessment and educational tool for all foster and adoptive applicants” (CWLA, 2003). It was implemented for use in the province in 1999 and remains in place. The PRIDE Pre-Service facilitator’s guide and participants PRIDEbook were both revised most recently in 2015. These changes occurred as following PRIDE’s initial “implementation, some feedback suggested that there were some aspects of the program that required change to better meet the needs of foster and adoptive applicants (CWLA, 2003).” Primarily it was due to the proclamation of two new acts that needed to be reflected in PRIDE and to ensure that there was consistency in the program across the province. It is unfortunate that this opportunity was not utilized to revise PRIDE to be more inclusive to LGBTQI2S identifying people.

In my personal experiences I am a prospective adoptive applicant who has applied for both an older child and younger child adoption with the Department. I am an openly gay man in a committed relationship and my partner and I completed the PRIDE Pre-Service program as applicants and later the home study process and subsequent updating processes. The culmination of my personal and professional experiences have

garnered a specific interest in how PRIDE Pre-Service training is delivered in the province of NL. More specifically, I am interested in how LGBTQI2S applicants and LGBTQI2S children and youth in-care are included in the curriculum. It was through attending the PRIDE Pre-Service Program as an applicant with my partner that I was able to critically reflect on the deficits in the training modules. These deficits pertained to gender and/or sexual minorities not being represented in the training material and the lack of LGBTQI2S content included to prepare prospective adoptive and foster applicants for caring for LGBTQI2S children and youth. Although LGBTQI2S people are becoming more visible socially, the public systems that are responsible for their care and wellbeing have been unresponsive to their needs and slow to recognize that LGBTQI2S children and youth need appropriate and equitable care (CWLA, 2006).

The term LGBTQI2S is being utilized for the purpose of my Pathways Project as this is the term most commonly utilized by Egale Canada Human Rights Trust at present. This organization is seen as a leader in promoting human rights and inclusion in Canada and on the global stage (Egale Canada, 2019). The community has struggled with finding a term that is all encompassing and inclusive of sexual, gender and spiritual diversity. The acronym is in a state of constant evolution as society continues to progress. It is important to highlight that in efforts to be inclusive in using this term; it is recognized that it is not possible to include all individuals who have been “othered” due to their sexual/gender/spiritual differences within this one acronym. The acronym, LGBTQI2S, at present stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Questioning or Queer, Intersex and Two-Spirited. Some of the research conducted uses varying terms

to refer to this community, and therefore if a direct quote is utilized a different acronym may be used throughout this paper for that reason.

### **Methodology for Pathways Project**

To inform this project, I conducted a full review of the current PRIDEbook utilized for participants. I highlighted any areas that could benefit from additional or revised content, could allow representation of LGBTQI2S children and youth and/or parents, and areas that required updates regarding use of language.

I contacted the Canadian Foster Families Association (CFFA) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association (NLFFA) to determine if they had any information on the matter. I also engaged in informal peer consultations with other PRIDE Pre-Service facilitators within the Department to determine any suggestions they may have about creating inclusivity for LGBTQI2S individuals and to inquire further about the histories of same sex parenting provincially and nationally. I also reviewed the Foster a Future website to determine if there is any targeted recruitment for LGBTQI2S foster parents occurring.

I conducted a literature review to examine what the historical barriers and challenges are for LGBTQI2S people involved with child welfare and what the on-going needs are. I also looked at the literature regarding how other provinces and agencies are working to support LGBTQI2S parents and children/youth.

### **Relevant History of LGBTQI2S parenting**

At present, it is known through research including longitudinal studies that “children raised by LGBT parents are just as happy, healthy and well-adjusted as children raised by heterosexual partners” (MAF, 2011) & (Mallon, 2011). Research

findings have also indicated that sexual orientation is not correlated with one's ability to be an effective parent (MAF, 2011). However the issue of LGBT parenting leading up to the past 15 years was a highly debated, controversial issue and queer individuals were historically denied the opportunity to parent through child welfare agencies (Mallon, 2007). In some cases, LGBTQI2S individuals became parents without disclosing their minority status; however at present LGBTQI2S people are considering their pathways to parenting in ways they may never have dreamed to be possible in the past (Mallon, 2007). Same-Sex adoption has been invisible in the legal landscape of Canada for many years however it is a growing social reality (Dort, 2010).

It is vital when looking at how to support LGBTQI2S individuals that their history of marginalization and oppression be considered to learn and grow from when making future decisions. "For decades, the Government of Canada has systemically discriminated against sexual orientation and gender identity minorities." (Egale Canada, 2019). This has occurred at both the Federal and Provincial levels of government. On November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017 the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, issued a public apology to LGBTQ2 Canadians. This public apology, the first in Canadian history, acknowledged "Canada's role in the systemic oppression, criminalization, and violence against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirit communities (Trudeau, 2017)".

I am conscious of my role as an openly gay social worker, working as a voice for children and youth in care. I am aware that I am facilitating the program used to assess potential applicants for fostering and adopting while simultaneously being approved to adopt myself; this level of privilege is something that historically would not have

occurred until very recently in Canadian culture. In Trudeau's speech, he references the tactics that government utilized to oppress public service workers from the 1950's to 1990's including developing the "fruit machine", spying on staff outside and inside their places of employment, interrogations, mass firings and forced resignations (Trudeau, 2017). It is important that when training is offered to public service members for roles that they historically could not obtain that this history be validated. During this time in Canada, homosexuality was illegal until 1969 and remained as a mental illness under the DSM until 1973. The context of the legislation and public ideology surrounding homosexuality contributed to the invisibility of LGBTQI2S people in society. As society has evolved, so too has the public consciousness regarding rights of LGBTQI2S people. Hindsight can be used as a tool to continue to take steps towards a developing a system of repair for major institutions such as child welfare agencies.

Adoption in NL historically discriminated against same sex couples until the very recent past. The legislation that governed adoption in the province until 2003 was an act respecting the adoption of children (1990). This legislation had been revised in 1990 but various similar versions had been in effect for 50 years. In this legislation it outlined in section 3 (2) "Where an application for an adoption order is made by a husband and a wife jointly, a judge may make the order authorizing them jointly to adopt, but otherwise an adoption order shall not be made authorizing more than 1 person to adopt a child (An Act Respecting the Adoption of Children, 1990)." This precluded same sex couples for applying to adopt in the province. This legislation was replaced by an Adoption Act announced in 1999, following public consultations in 1998 and put into effect in May

2003. Only after this legislation came into effect could same sex couples apply to adopt a child in the province.

It was almost a decade later when reports of same sex couples having completed adoptions in the province surfaced; this was likely due to the lengthy waitlist, hesitancy from LGBTQI2S individuals, and unfamiliarity with how to navigate the system. A news article in CBC from February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 references a lesbian couple from St. John's being one of the first same sex couples to legally adopt in the province. This couple shared their story of initially applying to adopt in 2008, at which time the Department still utilized adoption applications that made reference to male applicant and female applicant, leaving the couple to have to scratch out the male section (CBC, 2013). The current legislation, the Adoption Act, 2013 was proclaimed in June 2014 and still remains in place. This legislation utilizes terms such as a person and a prospective adoptive parent to be more inclusive when describing who can adopt (Adoption Act, 2013).

Although progress has been made in changing the views of adoption to consider options outside of the nuclear family there has been minimal changes with respect to international same sex adoption. Most foreign countries preclude same-sex couples from adopting their children (Dort, 2010). The small amount of countries that do include Columbia, Brazil and the Philippines (however applicants must be screened separately). Some states in Mexico also allow same sex adoption (The Next Family, 2016). Homosexuality is still illegal and in some cases punishable by death in some countries (such as Iran, Sudan, and Yemen). Most countries in the world ban or do not have any legislation to support same sex adoption (Zatat, 2018). This is due to the laws, societal

attitudes and ignorance regarding LGBTQI2S issues that are still prevalent in most of the world. It is important that same sex adoptive applicants have access to this information to make informed decisions even at the Pre-Service stage. This allows them time to weigh their options even prior to consulting an adoption agency. There are less constraints with domestic adoption or inter-provincial adoptions in Canada for LGBTQI2S people compared to international adoption. Adopting children from foreign countries involve determining an adoption agency that is accepting of the parent's sexual orientation. Conservative, religious and/or developing countries may not be receptive to LGBTQI2S prospective parents and thus prospective parents should consider this when exploring international adoption (NAIC, 2000).

December 2004 NL made amendments to allow same sex couples to be married in response to rising pressure and lawsuits from same sex couples who were denied licenses to marry. In 2009 the Marriage Act in NL was changed to reflect changes in the language; it referred to spouses rather than just husband and wife. The Family Law Act also made this change in 2009. There are still various struggles in place for same sex parents in Canada, in January 2018, a news story arose in Nova Scotia when two gay fathers attempted to apply for Social Insurance Numbers for their adopted children and were told that they needed to list a maiden name in order to complete the electronic form. Given that they did not have a maiden name they lobbied to Service Canada to update their forms so that male same sex partners did not need to declare a maiden name to obtain SIN cards for their children (CBC, 2018).

The history, statistics and narratives of LGBTQI2S people fostering in NL is challenging to locate information about. I reached out to the NLFFA and CFFA. The

CFFA advised that they did not have any data regarding LGBTQI2S fostering; however the NLFFA did. The NLFFA advised that they currently have 6 same sex couples registered in their database; 5 lesbian couples and one gay couple. They provided anecdotal information about their awareness of LGBTQI2S fostering in NL. In particular they described a conversation with a lesbian couple who had applied to foster and attended PRIDE Pre-Service in the metro area. They indicated that the couple self-selected out of the program as the facilitator did not honor their unique differences as a lesbian couple. They also relayed that a different lesbian couple in the 1990's had inquired about fostering with a senior manager who advised that they should not apply as they would not be approved (Molloy, personal communication, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019). These anecdotal sources of information further illustrate the historical struggles and the current need for a strategic plan for LGBTQI2S prospective parents in NL.

The history of LGBTQI2S children and youth in care in Newfoundland and Labrador is challenging to research given that their histories are not largely documented. Given the legal, societal and familial challenges associated with "coming out", there is not a clear picture of the statistics or needs of this group. LGBTQI2S youth often keep their sexual orientation secret and this makes them invisible in the system (Craig, Craig-Oldsen & Morton, 2006). Although it is suspected that there are disproportionately high numbers of LGBTQI2S children/youth in care, there have been very few research studies looking at the percentage of LGBTQI2S youth in care (Eisenberg, 2018).

Queer history continues to be excluded in training based curriculum for prospective parents. This is true of the PRIDEBook used in NL. This lack of LGBTQI2S

inclusive curriculum is a motivating factor of this project. This project aims to highlight this issue in hopes that the training in NL for prospective foster and adoptive parents acknowledges and includes queer history and current challenges/strengths. At present, although there is less legal restrictions and decreasing societal challenges, there are still a variety of factors that silence LGBTQI2S children and youth in-care (Gates, Gartrell & Goldberg, 2014). Research conducted by the provincial government of Ontario suggests that “LGBT2SQ children and youth may represent more than 10% of child welfare clients due to family rejection and other risk factors (Ontario Guide, 2018, p.5)”. Therefore, social workers and foster and adoptive parents should be mindful that they may be caring for LGBTQI2S children and youth and not know. Given the likelihood of LGBTQI2S children and youth being clients of child welfare agencies, it is important that CYS ensure there is adequate training.

Training at the pre-service level can strengthen shared parenting and increase prospective parents’ consciousness regarding safety, wellbeing and permanency issues and how they differ for LGBTQI2S individuals (Craig, Craig-Oldsen & Morton, 2006). Training can allow prospective parents to prepare for issues that may arise for LGBTQI2S children and youth such as: being targeted by people in authority, religious abuse, sexual targeting by predatory adults, surgical changes for transgender/intersex individuals, bullying and challenges with working with systems.

### **Findings & Recommendations**

I have made recommendations as an outcome of this project. These recommendations are not all encompassing but will hopefully strengthen the quality of the PRIDE Pre-Service program. The recommendations have been made to enhance

the quality of service that CSSD can provide to LGBTQI2S service users including prospective foster and/or adoptive parents and children and youth in care.

### ***Initial engagement/ recruitment***

The literature review that was conducted demonstrates that there is an increasing focus on considering LGBTQI2S caregivers in permanency planning in recent years. Same-sex couples are much more likely to reside in homes with adopted children, stepchildren or unrelated children than heterosexual individuals are. Research also indicates that LGBT parents may be more willing than heterosexual parents to adopt children with special needs or exceptionalities which are the most challenging children to place (MAF, 2011).

CYS has utilized the “Foster a Future” campaign/program as a recruitment initiative to address the shortage of available foster care placements for children in care since it was launched in 2012. As the “Foster a Future” campaign currently operates, any prospective foster care applicant contacts the social worker located in St. John’s from this program. This social worker offers information, conducts initial screening and then refers the applicants on to the regional office in the area they reside. Once their applications have been received in region and further assessment is completed, they are referred to the PRIDE Pre-Service training program.

The “Foster a Future” campaign is the initial point of contact for the Department’s foster care system; therefore it was important that it also be assessed when critiquing the pre-service program. The “Foster a Future” website (<https://fosterafuture.ca/who-can-foster.shtml>) is utilized as an online recruitment and information sharing platform for the Department. In reviewing this website there were some core recommendations:

1. There is no representation in the videos or photos utilized on the website or the television advertisement of visibly LGBTQI2S children, youth, couples and/or families. There should be representation of LGBTQI2S people included on the website and advertisements.
2. There is no statement or content expressing a specific openness to prospective LGBTQI2S parents. It is important that if an organization is inclusive and open to LGBTQI2S people, that they state it explicitly at the first point of contact for individuals who may be considering making inquiries about adoption or fostering. A statement(s) should be explicitly included on the website and any resource material utilized by the foster a future campaign.
3. Under the “who can foster” section of the website it does outline “There are many different people that make great foster parents. Foster parents can be of any gender, single, married, or living in a common-law relationship. They come from various cultural, racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds”. However, it should be expanded to list sexual and/gender diversity backgrounds and should specifically list LGBTQI2S relationships in the listings of relationship types. Again, it is important to state clearly that the Department is accepting of sexual and gender diversity as these minorities have historically faced discrimination.
4. There is no mention of the possibility of caring for a child or youth who is LGBTQI2S. It is important that it be made clear for applicants that the Department cares for LGBTQI2S children and youth. It should be indicated that there is an expectation that foster and adoptive parents who come forward will work to meet the developmental needs of these children and youth.

These four recommendations should be implemented in the current “Foster a Future” campaign and considered in any future campaigns that the Department partakes in.

***PRIDE Pre-Service For Prospective LGBTQI2S parents and for parents of LGBTQI2S children and youth.***

It is evident that changes need to be implemented in the current PRIDE Pre-Service facilitator’s guide and participants’ PRIDEbook. Although, as previously mentioned, there were revisions made in 2015, there are further additions necessary not just pertaining to LGBTQI2S issues but generally related to overall content. Issues about sexual and gender minorities have been rapidly gaining social consciousness and the social etiquette is in a constant state of evolution. Therefore regular changes need to be made to this training program; it is of particular importance given that this training is offered to prospective parents to care for the most vulnerable children in our province. The following are core recommendations made for PRIDE Pre-Service training. These recommendations are being made for the benefit of LGBTQI2S prospective parents and all prospective parents who may parent a child or youth whom is LGBTQI2S.

**Session 1: Connecting with PRIDE.**

1. Page 7, Resource 1-C in the PRIDEbook has an overview of Intercountry Adoption. This section should be revised to include information for prospective LGBTQI2S families or individuals, so that they know what the realities are with respect to this form of adoption. As previously outlined, there remains prejudice and discrimination from the majority of countries in the world when it comes to their adoption policies. Therefore, the PRIDEbook should reference some of these challenges so that LGBTQI2S people can make informed decisions about

how to proceed in planning when considering an Intercountry adoption. As adoption policies change frequently with respect to differing countries it would not be feasible to include specific details of countries but general statements about the challenges could be implemented.

2. Page 14, Resource 1-D in the PRIDEbook has an overview of “what are some of the challenges of adopting?” Again, this section should be revised to include commentary on the unique challenges of parenting through adoption as a member of the LGBTQI2S community. It also has an overview of “what are some of the challenges of fostering, and why?” Information should be included as it relates to fostering LGBTQI2S children and youth so that prospective parents recognize that this is something they need to prepare for. This may include the importance of affirming language, supporting a child or youth with the process of “coming out”, or being cognizant of the medical needs of trans youth.
3. Page 23 Resource 1-G. The video “Making a Difference” is shown to the participants and referenced through the PRIDEbook. The video is a 35 minute docudrama performed by professional actors and there are no LGBTQI2S actors or content in the video. It is important that materials utilized in training such as this main video, include representation of the LGBTQI2S population.
4. Page 24 Resource 1-H. This is a resource entitled “You Need to Know; History of Fostering”. This section provides a detailed historical view of fostering dating back to the nineteenth century. However, there is no reference to the struggles and triumphs of LGBTQI2S parenting nationally or provincially. It is of great relevance to LGBTQI2S applicants how it came to be that they could partake in

PRIDE training, when they historically have been excluded. There is also a section entitled “History of adoption”, which outlines how adoption law had its beginnings in the early 1940’s in the province. However it does not comment on the history of LGBTQI2S individuals being able to adopt and how these changes came into effect. There is a section that highlights the most important changes regarding the Adoption Act of 2003, however it fails to make any mention of the momentous change regarding permitting same sex couples adoption rights.

5. Page 31. Resource 1-H. This resource speaks to the rights of foster parents. It should be further clarified that foster parents have the right to have their sexual/gender identity respected and not face any discrimination based on these factors. This should be explicitly stated given the history of LGBTQI2S parents being discriminated against in the province.

### **Session two: Team work toward permanence**

6. A general recommendation for all sessions is the representation of LGBTQI2S individuals in the case studies, scenarios, letters or other reference material utilized. I have listed various examples of such resources to demonstrate that there is not a single example of a noted LGBTQI2S individual in the entirety of the PRIDEbook. Page 48. Resource 2-H. There are a series of scenarios presented in “Charlie’s Situation”, none of which reference any LGBTQI2S issues or characters. This is also the case for Page 73. Resource 2-K, “A Birth Parent’s Perspective: Lucky Us”, which is based on a heterosexual couple’s story. On Page 83. Resource 2-M. This resource entitled “Making a Difference” also uses a heterosexual couple in their example. Page 129. Resource 3-K. “Making a

Difference” is a letter from an adoptive family; again there is no LGBTQI2S character noted. Page 138. Resource 4-F. “ Putting it together” includes two scenarios A & B which do not include any LGBTQI2S characters. Page 153. Resource 4-I. This letter entitled “A Birth Parent’s Perspective. They Tell Me I Need to Let Her Go”. Page 157. Resource 4-K. “Making a Difference”. Page 167. Resource 5-G. The Eco-Map example utilizes a nuclear, heterosexual family in the example of the Hanson Family. Page 169. Resource 5-H. Will’s World. Page 185. Resource 5-O. A Birth Parent’s Perspective (I). This is Pretty Tough to Take and (II) My Call, both reflect heterosexual couples. Page 210. Resource 6-M. Scenario: Danielle. Page 223. Resource 6-P. A Birth Parent’s Perspective: All I Ever Wanted Was to Be in Control of My Life”. There are numerous resources utilized throughout the PRIDEBook, however LGBTQI2S examples and narratives are excluded in the curriculum.

7. Page 64. Resource 2-J. This section outlines “The lifelong issues of adoption”. This section comments on the lifelong adoption issues that a family has to manage. It would be important to include discussion regarding same-sex parents who have adopted. This section discusses the age in which children typically become aware of adoption issues and that they are not being raised by their birth parents. For same sex couples, a child may have an earlier understanding about this as they compare their family composition to others and begin to question this at a younger age. Resource 2-J also has a section pertaining to “Cultural Issues in Permanency Planning”. This resource speaks to the importance of being culturally sensitive and how to support transcultural placements. It could be

further enhanced by speaking to the need to support a child/youth's sexual or gender identity, particularly for families that may have no exposure or experience with the LGBTQI2S community.

8. Page 75. Resource 2-L. This PRIDE Connection (which is what the homework activities are referred to in the PRIDEbook) is for participants to complete a family Genogram. For many within the LGBTQI2S community their family is their "chosen family", which means that close friends and other members of their community may be viewed as their family. This is an important consideration as many LGBTQI2S individuals have experienced conflict, trauma and challenging family interactions within their immediate family. In this blank Genogram example, there are sections to fill out if you were raised in a nuclear family for example you grandmother, grandfather, mother, father, etc. This should be revised to reflect non-binary, gender neutral options for listing family and should be clarified that family does not need to be biological. There is also reference to a child being adopted i.e. he/she (example Page 80); when referring to a child or youth, edits should be made to be more encompassing of all gender expressions and a non-binary term should be utilized such as "they".

### **Session 3: Meeting Developmental Needs- Attachment.**

9. Page 90. Resource 3-D, Definitions of Child Maltreatment, in the examples listed the author utilizes his/her; instead it should be edited to reflect non-binary terms that are more inclusive. This also occurs on Page 163. Resource 5-D. This is a recommendation that should be utilized throughout the PRIDEBook.

10. Page 95. Resource 3-G. Developmental milestones, further to this page 100 discussed developmental challenges, in this list there should be discussion on being a member of LGBTQI2S community, and the specific ways this may impact regular child development. In this same section, (page 104) the possible types of emotional maltreatment are listed; additions should be made to include how identifying as LGBTQI2S may result in a risk of emotional maltreatment from a caregiver. Page 127. Resource 3-G. This PRIDE Connection is a chart for looking at the various developmental needs for children. Sexual expression and development should be considered, as this is a developmental task that parents need to assist children with.

#### **Session 4: Meeting Developmental Needs – Loss**

11. Page 141. Resource 4-G. This section provides information about developmental grieving. It is recommended that it include information pertaining to how this process may be impacted by having a LGBTQI2S identity.
12. Page 156. Resource 4-J. Pride Connection Loss History Chart. It is important that PRIDE Pre-Service facilitators be mindful of the different forms of loss that LGBTQI2S individuals may experience ranging from loss of control, loss of normative adolescent experiences, loss of self-esteem/sense of identity, possible monetary losses and physical losses for Trans individuals, etc.

#### **Session 5: Strengthening Family Relationships**

13. Page 177. Resource 5-M. “The Family and Self-Esteem, Personal Identity, and Cultural Identity”. This resource discusses the role of families in developing an understanding of one’s culture, sense of belonging and self-esteem. As noted

previously, LGBTQI2S individuals are at higher risk of experiencing challenges in these areas. When LGBTQI2S individuals are involved with the foster care system these needs are harder to meet. It is known that LGBTQI2S children and youth are more likely to be placed in group settings, less likely to secure permanency, and more likely to experience multiple placements (Field, 2018). These possible challenges should be referenced in the curriculum.

### **Session 6: Meeting Developmental Needs-Discipline**

14. A general recommendation for this session is to acknowledge the negative discipline practices that some LGBTQI2S children and youth may have faced by previous caregivers. It is also important to acknowledge that some LGBTQI2S children and youth try and have their needs met by acting out. It is important that caregivers are cognizant of the possible root issues for a child/youth's displayed behavior. For example LGBTQI2S children and youth may act out in school as a result of bullying or feelings of isolation or rejection.

### **Session 7: Planning for Change**

15. This session is one of the only areas in which children and youth's sexual development is considered (Page 232. Resource 7-C). Page 236. Resource 7-F is a group activity called "Characteristics of a Healing Home". This activity encourages participants to consider private space, boundaries and respectful nurturing in their home for children and youth entering. This would be a great opportunity to consider discussion of these issues for LGBTQI2S children and youth in care. Caregivers could be encouraged to consider ideas for their home such as: displaying hate free zone signs/rainbow or trans flags/pink triangle

symbols, using gender-neutral language when asking about relationships, supporting youth's self-expression and celebrating diversity by providing access to a variety of books, movies and other materials that have LGBTQI2S representation ( CWIG, 2013).

### **Session 8: Making an Informed Decision**

16. This session is all about the Panel discussion. I am recommending where possible to include LGBTQI2S children and youth (with experience of being in-care or with adoption) or LGBTQI2S parents as a member of the panel. This is particularly important when there is an LGBTQI2S prospective applicant in the pre-service group. However, it is also important that LGBTQI2S people have representation and for any prospective applicants that have not had a lot of exposure to LGBTQI2S people it bridges this gap and reduces ignorance. As a child welfare agency it is important that we elevate voices of LGBTQI2S children and youth in our research, service development and training opportunities (Field, 2018).

### **Comments for Facilitators**

Overall, these small changes to the PRIDEbook and its facilitation would be a positive steps toward better preparing caregivers to understand the needs of LGBTQI2S children and youth, provide a more inclusive training material and environment for learning, create representation and visibility about queer parenting and the needs of LGBTQI2S children and youth in care. Facilitators of the PRIDE Pre-Service program should be mindful of these recommendations and the needs of LGBTQI2S children and youth and prospective parents.

Facilitators should give consideration in any supplementary information, resources, or activities that they are utilizing that they are sensitive to the needs of gender and/or sexual minorities.

While this project has focused on LGBTQI2S issues, it is important that the intersections of that identity be acknowledged. It is also important that any Pride Pre-Service revisions consider the needs of various minorities outside of the LGBTQI2S community. When facilitators are presenting and engaging the group throughout the Pre-Service process, they should be cognizant of any heterosexism that may be present. This includes being cognizant of the examples used when speaking about families; not utilizing only examples of heterosexual couples or families. It is important to create an inclusive space that does not perpetuate heterosexism. It is important that we role model this standard so that those tasked with caring for our children can also in turn utilize them.

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