

Running head: GLBT YOUTH EDUCATION

**Safe Education Environment for Gays and Lesbians:
A Plan to Implement GLBT Youth Education in Schools**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis project is to develop an implementation plan in order to complete the final steps in the process of creating the new program SEEGL, an educational program aimed at combating GLBT youth suicide. The program implementation framework, described in Netting, Kettner, and McMurty's (2008) textbook *Social Work Macro Practice*, will be applied. Before the discussion of the implementation plan, the problem of GLBT suicide will be identified, the need for the program will be assessed, and the details of the program will be explained. The action plan will then be explained, beginning first with a discussion of the goals, and followed by the outcome and process objectives. Both the outcome and process objectives will include specific time frames, target populations, specified results, and criteria for measuring the completion of the objective. Lastly, a detailed plan for evaluating the program will then be explained.

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Introduction

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for all 15-19 year olds (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) youth account for 30 % of all teen suicides (OutProud, 2007). In order to combat GLBT suicide, an educational program has been proposed. It will focus on the issues, myths, stereotypes, discrimination, harassment, policy implications, and the lack of acceptance and respect involving the GLBT population. This educational program is entitled SEEGL, Safe Education Environment for Gays and Lesbians. The program mandates a certain number of hours for GLBT education each year in middle and high schools and will promote awareness, knowledge, and acceptance of GLBT issues in the school systems, thus providing a safer environment for GLBT youth. A safer environment means reducing the harassment, bullying, and teasing that many GLBT youth face in schools through education and awareness in order to eliminate the low self-esteem and self-hate that lead many GLBT youth to commit suicide.

SEEGL has received the necessary funding to run and needs a plan for implementation. The program implementation framework described in Netting, Kettner, and McMurty's (2008) textbook *Social Work Macro Practice* will be applied to the proposed SEEGL program in order to create a step-by-step plan. First the goal and objectives will be developed and discussed. This requires creating both outcome and process objectives with specific time frames, target populations, specified results, and criteria for measuring and documenting the success of the program's ability to meet the objectives. Next an action plan will be created, which will define each task and when it will be performed. A detailed plan for evaluating the program itself and its effectiveness will also be created (Netting, Kettner, McMurty, 2008). These steps are necessary in order to implement the program SEEGL and are described in further detail in the following

sections; however, in order to create the implementation plan, it is first necessary to assess the need for the program. The following section assesses the need for GLBT youth education in schools, providing information that can be used to create an insightful, informative and effective program and implementation plan.

Needs Assessment

As previously mentioned, suicide is the third leading cause of death for all 15-19 year olds (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). In 2005, survey data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2007) shows that 17 % of high school students had seriously considered suicide, 13 % had made plans to attempt suicide, and more than 8 % had attempted suicide. Teen suicide is such a major problem in today's society that roughly every two hours a teen commits suicide (McIntosh, 2005). To put this in perspective, there are about 12 teen suicides a day, 84 a week, and 4,368 a year- thirty percent of which are GLBT teens who are also two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers (OutProud, 2007).

Most GLBT suicides occur between the ages of 16 and 21 because of the years of harassment and lack of support and knowledge about GLBT issues (OutProud, 2007). Everyday GLBT youth face discrimination, teasing, and bullying in their schools, which contributes to the low self-esteem and self-hate that can eventually lead to suicide (Pasillas & Miller, 2008). GLBT youth have a higher risk of facing other serious problems such as family and school problems, feelings of isolation, homelessness, prostitution, sexual abuse, substance abuse, and self-harm (OutProud, 2007). They are three times more likely to miss school because of feeling unsafe and three times more likely to have been injured or threatened at school (Langlois, n.d.). Many GLBT youth experience a lack of knowledge in productively coping with these negative

experiences. As a result, GLBT youth turn towards self-destructive behavior as a way of dealing with the harassment, bullying, and discrimination (Pasillas & Miller, 2008). The Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 2005 found that 44 % of GLBT youth intentionally hurt themselves, 34 % considered suicide, and 21 % attempted suicide (Langlois, n.d).

Formal education almost never discusses homosexuality; however, a message is still sent by what is not said or addressed in educational settings (Marcus, 1993). For example, “the forty year history of the gay rights movement [is never discussed] in social studies lessons that [also] include discussions about women’s rights or black civil rights,” which sends the message that the gay rights movement is not important (Marcus, 1993, p. 167). The little information about the GLBT population that is addressed in school settings is often discussed with other topics of negative connotation such as AIDS, which gives the impression that the GLBT population is subhuman (Pasillas & Miller, 2008).

Currently legislation exists in Indiana that should protect GLBT youth, but does not. For example, Indiana’s Civil Rights Laws, which are meant to eliminate discrimination and provide equal rights, does not protect GLBT youth because sexual orientation and gender identity are not specifically included under the Civil Rights Laws (Indiana Civil Rights Commission, 1988). Another example of legislation that should protect GLBT youth is the Indiana Code 20-8.1-5.1-18 (2001), which states that Indiana public schools must provide a generally “safe, orderly, and effective education environment” (HRC, 2008, para. 1-2). Despite this Indiana Code, GLBT youth do not receive information about GLBT issues and still experience discrimination, harassment and bullying in the school systems. The Education Section of the Indiana Code also mandates that curriculum include teaching self-respect as well as respect for all individuals to have their own views and religious beliefs. Unfortunately, GLBT youth do not receive respect

from others, and instead are harassed and bullied because of their sexual orientation (Indiana General Assembly, 2005). The Education Section of the Indiana Code also mandates culturally competent curriculum which should include education about the GLBT population because it is a minority group with its own culture (Indiana Civil Rights Commission, 2005).

Despite the lack of protection in existing legislation, GLBT issues, especially GLBT youth education, are slowly becoming priorities in policy making. For example, a survey administered by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in 2006, identified that “youth education issues were ranked as the fifth major policy priority behind marriage, anti-LGBT discrimination, hate violence, and AIDS” (Cahill & Kin-Butler, 2006, para. 17). Youth education issues are a priority because GLBT youth not only need the support of their families, but also the support of the community. GLBT youth need community support through mental health and youth service agencies, trained personnel familiar with gay issues, appropriate gay adult role models, protection from their peers’ abuse, and accurate information about homosexuality (OutProud, 2007). Efforts across the country to include GLBT education in public school curriculum are already underway and have had positive results. For example, a small and conservative city in Colorado has created “a physically and psychologically safe and supportive learning environment” for every child by incorporating GLBT education in their schools (Faulkner & Lindsey, 2004, p. 113).

In efforts to address GLBT suicide in Indiana, Indiana Youth Group, a non-profit organization that provides a safe environment with support services fostering personal strength among GLBT young people, proposed an educational pilot program entitled Safe Education Environment for Gays and Lesbians, SEEGL. This program mandates that a certain number of hours in middle and high schools will be designated for GLBT education. The curriculum will

discuss stereotypes, myths, discrimination, harassment, acceptance, respect and policy implications related to the GLBT population. The information will be presented by a combination of classroom discussions, workshops, guest speakers, question and answer panels, assemblies, and a school recognized GayPride Day. SEEGL will address the needs of the GLBT youth population by providing protection from abuse from peers, accurate information about homosexuality, trained personnel familiar with gay issues, and appropriate gay adult role models. The following section explains more about the design of the program.

The Program

SEEGL is a 10 month school year educational program that will promote knowledge, awareness, and acceptance of GLBT issues in middle and high schools in order to combat GLBT suicide. It is a selective educational program offering services to a target population of public school students based on a criterion of age. SEEGL will mandate 35 hours of GLBT education a year first in public schools, targeting the students in 6th through 12th grades (roughly ages 11-18). The program will first be implemented in two Indiana counties, Delaware and Marion, which were selected in order to represent a diverse range of ethnic and economic areas in Indiana. Two schools from each county will be selected to partake in the program, one middle school and one high school. In order to develop the pilot program, it is necessary that a relationship is developed with the school boards of each county.

The program will be headed by one Project Director, who will oversee 14 part-time direct staff members specifically trained in GLBT issues. These staff will administer the curriculum to the students. Seven staff members will be assigned to Delaware County and seven to Marion County. Of those seven staff members, each one will be responsible for one grade 6th-12th in the county they are assigned too. The Project Director will also oversee an on-call counseling

Psychologist and a Bookkeeper. The Bookkeeper will be responsible for working ten hours per month on maintaining the general accounting principles to manage the program's financial books (Pasillas & Miller, 2008). The on-call counseling Psychologist will be responsible for overseeing and providing counseling services to the students in both counties. The Psychologist will alternate weekly between the counties and will enlist the help of PhD students at the nearby universities and the school social workers from each school in order to provide an on-call 24-hour counseling service hotline for students.

After these positions are filled, the direct staff will be required to go through a 40 hour training program consisting of eight five hour sessions. In these training programs, direct staff will be taught how to create a safe learning environment, facilitate classroom discussions, plan and teach the GLBT educational curriculum, prepare classroom materials, organize workshops and classroom activities. Once the training is complete, the direct staff will assist the Project Director and the School Boards of both counties in curriculum planning, which will last six months. The six months will be broken up into three periods of two months each, and the first period will be planning the staff training sessions. The second period will consist of planning the curriculum for the first semester of the program and the last period will plan the curriculum for the second semester.

During the curriculum planning, the details of the educational program will be discussed and will focus more specifically on selecting and teaching age appropriate GLBT education. The curriculum will include discussion of stereotypes, myths, discrimination, harassment, acceptance, respect and policy implications related to the GLBT population as well as workshops, speakers, question and answer panels, assemblies, and an end of the year, school recognized GayPride Day. Curriculum planning also includes recruiting guest speakers, who are appropriate gay adult

role models and will contribute accurate and age-appropriate information about GLBT issues (Pasillas & Miller, 2008).

Once school begins, a pre-test will be administered in order to gauge the students' attitudes, knowledge, and acceptance of GLBT issues. The pre-test will identify the initial level of diversity acceptance and knowledge of GLBT concepts in public school students in grades six through twelve. Following the pre-test, the planned GLBT curriculum will be taught to the students in weekly lessons roughly an hour long. The curriculum addressed in the weekly sessions will help to increase the knowledge and level of acceptance in public school students as well as create a safe environment for the students to discuss GLBT issues. In addition to the weekly lessons there will be two school-wide activities, one at the end of the first semester and another at the end of the second semester. The end of the year activity will celebrate GayPride and the completion of the SEEGL program. A post-test will also be administered at the end of the semester in order to evaluate the success of SEEGL and will be analyzed, along with the pre-test, with the help of an evaluation consultant. Now that the need for the program has been established and the program explained, the next step is to discuss the plan for implementing. The next section begins the discussion of the implementation plan by first discussing the program's goals and the objectives to meet those goals.

Intervention Planning

Goal Setting

The first step of the implementation framework is to establish the main goal for SEEGL. The goal of SEEGL is to prevent GLBT suicide in Indiana through an educational program promoting knowledge, awareness, and acceptance of GLBT issues in middle and high schools. The tentative date to implement SEEGL is September 2009, the beginning of the next school

year. The program SEEGL will first be implemented as a pilot program in two counties, Delaware and Marion. Two schools from each county, a middle school and high school, will be selected to partake in the pilot program. The results will show the effectiveness of the pilot program and prove the need for the inclusion of SEEGL in all schools.

In order to achieve these goals, both outcome and process objectives must be established, which is the second step of the implementation process. The outcome objectives are specific goals for the overall outcome of the program and the process objectives are the steps to achieve the outcome objectives and the overall goal of the program. The following table identifies the outcome objectives, which demonstrate how the above goal will be achieved.

Outcome Objectives

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To increase acceptance of diversity among general population in public schools in two Indiana counties regarding GLBT issues through an educational program held in weekly sessions over the course of two semesters as evidenced by a change in total score in a pre and post test. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <u>WHEN</u>: Weekly sessions over 2 semesters ❖ <u>OUTCOME</u>: Increase acceptance of diversity ❖ <u>WHO</u>: General population in public schools ❖ <u>HOW MEASURED</u>: Change in total score on pre/post test
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To decrease harassment and bullying among public school students from 6th-12th grade making a safe learning environment for all students regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity throughout a year of educational programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <u>WHEN</u>: One year ❖ <u>OUTCOME</u>: Make a safe learning environment for all students ❖ <u>WHO</u>: Public school students 6th-12th grades ❖ <u>HOW MEASURED</u>: Decrease harassment and bullying measured by reports from students, teachers, principals, and school social workers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ At the conclusion of the year, at least half of the students in 6th-12th grades will demonstrate a test gain of at least 75 percent on the post-test, covering age appropriate GLBT concepts discussed through a weekly education program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <u>WHEN</u>: One year ❖ <u>OUTCOME</u>: test gain on age appropriate GLBT concepts ❖ <u>WHO</u>: Students in 6th-12th grades ❖ <u>HOW MEASURED</u>: 50% of students will demonstrate test gain of at least 75% on post test
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Process Objectives

There are 13 process objectives that if completed should achieve the outcome objectives and the overall goal of the program SEEGL. The following table identifies the process objectives and the time frame for completion.

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Implementing and Monitoring the Plan

The third step in the implementation process described in Netting, Kettner, and McMurty's (2008) *Social Work Macro Practice* is to initiate the action plan and then monitor and evaluate it. The process objectives from the previous section explain the action plan and how to initiate it, and the following explains the monitoring and evaluation for the program SEEGL. The evaluation plan consists of a panel study focusing on quantitative data collected in four sessions. Once the data is collected it will be analyzed in order to determine the achievement of the outcome objectives, and therefore, the success of the program.

The first two sessions will include a pre and post test in order to assess the student's acceptance of the GLBT population and their knowledge of GLBT issues. The pretest will be administered to all public school students (6th through 12th grades) from the selected middle schools and high schools in both Marion and Delaware Counties. It will be administered at the beginning of the school year in September during the first classroom lesson of the new program

SEEGL. The post test, on the other hand, will be administered to the same sample of students during the last classroom lesson at the end of the school year in May. Both the pretest and post-test will focus on quantitative data measuring the level of acceptance, the amount of harassment and bullying, and the amount of understanding of GLBT issues in public school sixth through twelfth grade students. The pre and post test will consist of scaling questions, asking the student respondents to rank their level of acceptance, the amount of harassment and bullying they see based on sexual orientation, and their level of understanding of GLBT issues.

The last two data collections sessions will assess the influence of the program SEEGL on the level of harassment and bullying related to GLBT issues in the public schools. First, a baseline data collection will take place in the summer months of June, July and August before the new program begins. During these three months, the number of harassment and bullying reports related to GLBT issues at each selected school from the past year (before the intervention of new program) will be collected. After the first year of the program, in the months of May, June and July the number of harassment and bullying reports related to GLBT issues will be collected again and the numbers for both years will be compared. After the data is collected from all four sessions, the evaluation consultant, Program Director and staff will conduct comparison tests, such as correlations and ANOVAs, between the two counties (Delaware [rural] and Marion [urban]), and between the schools (middle and high school). Ideally, the results will show the success of the program SEEGL and the need to include this program into other public schools.

Conclusion

GLBT suicide is a serious problem that can be addressed by promoting knowledge, awareness, and acceptance of GLBT issues through education in public schools. SEEGL is an

educational pilot program that will address the needs of the GLBT youth population by providing protection from abuse from peers, accurate information about homosexuality, trained personnel familiar with gay issues, and appropriate gay adult role models. In order to implement the program SEEGL, a step-by-step plan was created using the program implementation framework described in Netting, Kettner, and McMurty's (2008) textbook *Social Work Macro Practice*. First, the goals and objectives were developed and discussed, followed by an action plan that defined each task and when it will be performed. The last step in the framework was to develop a detailed plan for evaluating the program in order to assess the success and effectiveness of the program's intervention. These are the necessary steps to implement the program SEEGL and combat GLBT suicide.

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Appendix A

Budget Summary

Total Program	Total Requested	Total Donated	Total Cost
	\$118,425	\$127,865	\$246,290
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I. Personnel			\$214,175
A. Salaries and Wages	\$96,500	\$102,500	\$199,000
B. Fringe Benefits	\$14,275	Ø	\$14,275
C. Consultant and Contract Services	Ø	\$900	\$900
II. Non-Personal			\$32,115
A. Space Costs	Ø	\$6,000	\$6,000
B. Rental/Lease	Ø	\$1,410	\$1,410
C. Consumable Supplies	Ø	\$2,775	\$2,775
D. Travel	\$4,200	\$2,400	\$6,600
E. Telephone	\$2,700	\$1,880	\$4,580
F. Other Costs	\$750	\$10,000	\$10,750

Budget Detail

<u>Total Program</u>	<u>Total Requested</u>	<u>Total Donated</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
	\$118,425	\$127,865	\$246,290
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1. Personnel			\$214,17
A. Salaries & Wages			
1. Project Director (50% x \$45,000)	\$22,500	\$22,500	\$45,000
2. Consulting Psychologist (50% x 40,000)	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
3. Direct Staff Counselors (14) (\$20 x 10 hr/wk x 40 wks x 14)	\$52,000	\$60,000	\$112,000
4. Bookkeeper (\$20 x 10 hr/mo. x 10 mo.)	\$2,000		\$2,000
B. Fringe Benefits			
1. Project Director (32% x \$22,500)	\$7,875		\$7,875
2. Consulting Psychologist (32% x \$20,000)	\$6,400		\$6,400

C. Consultant and Contrast Services			
1. Evaluation Consultant			
(\$250 x 2 mo.)		\$500	\$500
2. Training Staff			
(\$200 x 2 mo.) [40 hrs over 2 mo.]		\$400	\$400
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2. Non-Personnel			\$32,115
A. Space Cost			
1. Office rent			
(1000 sq. ft. x \$6.00/ft/yr)		\$6,000	\$6,000
B. Rental/Lease Equipment			
1. Secretarial Chairs (8)			
(\$25 x 8)		\$200	\$200
2. Desks (8)			
(\$75 x 8)		\$600	\$600
3. File cabinets (2)			
(\$55 x 2)		\$110	\$110
4. Dynamite Copying machine leased			
(\$50/mo. x 10 mo.)		\$500	\$500
C. Consumable Supplies			
1. Desk top supplies for 3 staff			
(3 x \$100/ea/yr)		\$300	\$300
2. 100 reams copy paper X \$2.75/ea			
(100 x \$2.75)		\$275	\$275
3. 5 toner refills			
(6 x \$40/ea)		\$200	\$200
4. Curriculum Materials			
(\$200/mo. x 10mo.)		\$2,000	\$2,000
D. Travel			
1. Project Director local mileage			
(300 mi/mo x 20¢/mi x 10 mo.)	\$600		\$600
2. Counselors (14) local mileage			
(200mi/mo x 20¢ /mi x 10mo. x 14)	\$3,600	\$2,000	\$5,600
3. Counseling Psyc. local mileage			
(200 mi/mo x 20¢/mi x 10 mo.)		\$400	\$400
E. Telephone			
1. Installation @ \$260		\$260	\$260
2. 3 Instruments @ \$45/ea/mo x 12		\$1,620	\$1,620
3. Suicide Telephone Hotline			
(5 Instruments @ \$45/ea/mo x12)	\$2,700		\$2,700
F. Other Costs			
1. Insurance			
(\$750 yr)	\$750		\$750
2. Guest Speakers			
(1000 mo. x 10)		\$10,000	\$10,000

Table 1: Time Frame for Process Objectives

Milestones	Months																			
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	
Relationship Building & Planning with School Boards																				
Baseline Data Collection						X	X	X												
Recruit new staff					X	X														
Interview/Hire staff						X	X													
Staff training							X	X												
Curriculum Planning					X	X	X	X												
Recruit Guest Speakers							X	X												
Administer Pre-test									X											
Weekly Lessons & Staff meetings								X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Mid-year Activity												X								
GayPride Day/End of year event																		X		
Administer Post-test																		X		
Data Collection & Evaluation																		X	X	X