Conditions and supports suggested by educators to enhance the implementation of a program

offered in GSAs

Alicia A. Lapointe and Claire V. Crooks (2022).

Abstract

This study examines conditions and supports that may enhance the delivery of structured programming with Genders and Sexualities Alliance/Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) members. Drawing on Meyers et al.'s (2012) Quality Implementation Framework, we explore circumstances and factors that may promote the successful implementation of a healthy relationships and positive mental health promotion program for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Two-Spirit, Queer/Questioning (LGBT2Q+) youth. Eight educators/school staff and two community youth group workers delivered the program in 2016-2017 and provided feedback on their experiences via a focus group. Thematic analysis was employed to document reoccurring information (i.e., patterns) and determine broad-based themes across participants' insights and experiences (Patton, 2002). The following strategies and supports may help GSA advisors and youth workers plan for the implementation of structured LGBT2Q+ programming: ensure sites are ready and have the means (e.g., resources, knowledgeable and competent staff, etc.) to implement; develop and provide ongoing supports for educators/youth workers (e.g., professional learning communities; regular check-ins, individualized feedback; co-facilitation support); and remain flexible and adjust implementation times and locations to meet the need and desires of youth.

Introduction

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Two-Spirit, Queer/Questioning (LGBT2Q+) youth often experience prejudice and discrimination in and through schooling (Kosciw et al., 2014; Kosciw et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2016). In response, students (in partnership with school staff) have developed Genders and Sexualities Alliance/Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) groups to support their needs, interests, and motives. GSAs differ in size, frequency of meetings, and focus, but they typically involve a group of LGBT2Q+ youth and allies meeting on a regular basis with the support of school staff (Griffin, Lee, Waugh, & Beyer, 2004). Although GSAs are not a standardized program (Poteat et al., 2015), they generally offer safety and support for LGBT2Q+ youth and allies and provide opportunities for anti-oppressive education and advocacy (Griffin et al., 2004). While GSAs promote positive learning environments (Kosciw et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2011), some researchers argue that club benefits could be bolstered through the integration of formalized programming (Lapointe & Crooks, 2018; Lapointe et al., 2018; Heck, 2015; Poteat, Heck, Yoshikawa, & Calzo, 2017).

In this paper, we discuss conditions and supports that may enhance the delivery of structured programming with GSA members. We employ Meyers et al.'s (2012) four-stage Quality Implementation Framework (i.e., assessment, collaboration and negotiation, monitoring, and self-reflection), to make sense of program preparatory and executory decisions. In particular, we examine factors that promote the successful implementation of a healthy relationships and positive mental health promotion program for LGBT2Q+ youth. Our arguments are grounded in the perspectives and experiences of club advisors/youth workers because, as Meyers et al. (2012) contend, "Constructive feedback from practitioners in the Delivery System can be important to the use, modification, or application of [an] innovation…" (p. 477). Overall, this paper explores how

GSA advisors, program developers, and implementation supervisors may work together to ensure that evidence-informed GSA programming is successfully taken-up in schools.

Genders and Sexualities Alliances and Club Advisors

GSAs are school-based, extracurricular clubs that "…are marked by a wide variety of ends and approaches…[and] provide an array of experiences for their participants" (Grace & Wells, 2015; p. 284; see also, Kassen & Lapointe, 2013). Historically, GSAs were formed with the purpose of bringing gay and straight people together to confront heterosexism (Collin, 2013), but in recent years they have evolved to address multiple and intersecting forms of oppression (e.g., cissexism and racism) (Chong, Poteat, Yoshikawa, & Calzo, 2018). These clubs may offer LGBT2Q+ youth and their allies' safety, counselling, and support, and provide anti-oppressive educational and activist opportunities (Griffin et al., 2004; Lapointe, 2014, 2015, 2016; Lapoimte & Crooks, 2018; Mayo, 2017; Mayo, 2013a/b, 2015; Miceli, 2005). Poteat et al. (2016) assert that, "…although GSAs often attempt to serve multiple functions within a limited scope of time, it would be important that these functions not overshadow…[the] fundamental provision [of support]" (p. 1751). Further, Poteat et al. (2015) insist that youth who participate in advocacy-focused GSAs are still in need of extensive emotional and social support. Since some GSAs resemble unstructured group therapy sessions where youth reflect on their personal lives, struggles, successes, and emotional states (Poteat et al., 2015), structured programing may enhance benefits associated with regular GSA participation (Lapointe & Crooks, 2018; Lapointe et al., 2018; Heck, 2015; Poteat et al., 2017).

GSAs require at least one staff member to supervise the club. Although these individuals play a significant role in supporting LGBT2Q+ students, little is known about their work in school communities (Graybill, Varjas, Meyers, Dever, Greenberg, Roach, & Morillas, 2015; Poteat et al.,

2015; Watson, Varjas, Meyers, & Graybill, 2010). Unlike LGBT2Q+ youth group staff, who are hired based on their experiences as minorities and/or their employment record with LGBT2Q+ folks, GSA advisors – educators, often do not have lived, professional, or educational experiences with sexual, gender, and romantic diversity. For example, research suggests that GSA advisors often have limited supervisory experience (Poteat et al., 2015a); possess insufficient LGBT2Q+ knowledge and have minimal training involving LGBT2Q+ topics and issues (Graybill et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2016; Swanson & Gettinger, 2016; Watson et al., 2010) – particularly with respect to intersectionality (Poteat & Scheer, 2016); and feel unqualified to support LGBT2Q+ youth with mental health concerns (Watson et al., 2010). These findings accentuate the importance of determining what strategies and supports bolster school staff's comfort, confidence, and competence with advising GSAs. As such, this study showcases how educators may develop their capacity to support LGBT2Q+ youth by participating in training with fellow GSA advisors, and receiving ongoing technical support, mentorship, feedback, and coaching to deliver formalized GSA programming. Altogether, this paper explores how meeting the needs of LGBT2Q+ youth may involve creating and supporting professional learning communities for GSA advisors (Graybill et al., 2015).

Supporting GSA Advisors: Delivering a Structured Program in GSA Contexts

"Group interventions offer SGMY [sexual and gender minority youth] opportunities to learn, observe, and practice skills, as well as obtain support from peers experiencing similar difficulties" (Craig et al., 2019, p. 10). Our small group, positive mental health promotion and healthy relationships program was developed to help schools and community agencies meet the needs and desires of LGBT2Q+ youth. It includes 17 sessions - each lasting 45 minutes, which can be delivered through GSAs, various educational venues (e.g., after school gatherings), or youth

groups. The program is non- linear with each session operating as a complete package with a distinct beginning (i.e., opening circle), middle (i.e., activity), and end (i.e., closing circle) (see Lapointe et al., 2018). Each session showcases: 1) an affirmation – supports, gives hope and/or uplifts youth (e.g., 'my identities, expressions and ways of being are real, valid, and mine to name;' 2) a skill – understand/enhance/develop a particular competency (e.g., 'I am able to identify and cope with microaggressions'); and 3) a call for practice – refine a specific skill (e.g., 'locating your mental health on the mental health grid; learning about mental health resources in my community'). Please see the following papers for further information on program development and piloting, (Lapointe et al., 2018) and subsequent revisions and preliminary findings (Lapointe & Crooks, 2018).

As opposed to universal programs that promote positive youth development among the general population, this tier-two program was designed to meet the specific needs and address the unique issues of many LGBT2Q+ youth. Moreover, the program promotes resiliency by affirming, validating, and celebrating LGBT2Q+ identities, expressions, and experiences. It helps build a caring and supportive community and encourages student-led dialogue where youth are encouraged to share their experiences and insights and learn with and from each other. It explores stressors unique to LGBT2Q+ youth (e.g., identity and expression invalidation, stigma, prejudice and discrimination, minority stress, coming out, safety, and microaggressions), and promotes healthy coping strategies (Lapointe & Crooks, 2018). The program is similar to Heck's (2015) structured, four-session GSA program, and Austin & Craig (2015a, b), Craig (2013), and Craig, Ashley, and McInroy's (2013) eight session Cognitive Behavioural Therapy-informed program, AFFIRM, in that it validates LGBT2Q+ identities and experiences, examines minority stressors, and aims to build healthy coping strategies.

Program sessions are listed in Figure 1. Individual sessions may be offered periodically throughout the school year to complement standard GSA programming, and since each session stands alone, they do not have to be delivered consecutively. By interspersing formalized programming with regular activities – as recommended by youth (Lapointe & Crooks, 2018), GSAs can maintain a flexible structure to "…ensure that multiple needs and interests can be voiced and acted on in a way that is neither too rigid to prevent unanticipated issues from being addressed nor inadequate for a necessary level of cohesion" (Poteat et al., 2016, p. 1752).

The program is a flexible roadmap for GSA advisors who may understand the importance of supporting LGBT2Q+ youth, but may lack the knowledge, skills, and resources need to do so (Swanson & Gettinger, 2016). Those who wish to implement the program are asked to attend a training session where they receive the program manual and participate in practice facilitation. By training school staff and providing them with resources and ongoing support, our intention is to raise awareness of relevant GSA topics and issues and introduce advisors to beneficial ways of exploring them (Lapointe & Crooks, 2018).

Quality Implementation Framework

Meyers et al. (2012) crafted the Quality Implementation Framework to outline steps and actions (i.e., assessment, collaboration and negotiation, monitoring, and self-reflection) that can be harnessed to design and deliver successful innovations. This framework can be used strategically to plan for, offer, and improve interventions that aim to bolster positive mental health and wellbeing among LGBT2Q+ youth. Quality implementation "…is a systematic process that involves a coordinated series of related elements" (p. 468) to ensure that desired outcomes are met. According to Meyers et al. (2012), there are four phases in this process: 1) *Initial Considerations Regarding the Host Setting;* 2) *Creating a Structure for Implementation*; 3) *Ongoing Structure*

Once Implementation Begins; 4) *Improving Future Applications*. This framework stresses the importance of partnership development, initial and ongoing training, and support and monitoring to increase the likelihood of an innovation's success.

Meyers et al.'s (2012) Quality Implementation Framework provided a lens to identify, interpret, and critique decisions and actions related to structured GSA programming. We drew on this scheme to plan for, support, and reflect on our intervention's successes and challenges. We made sense of data collected vis-à-vis this four-phase model to highlight strategies that may support the successful implementation of our program with GSA members. The following outlines each stage of the framework and describes how they relate to our current study.

In the first phase of this model, developers must ensure that there is a fit between the host organization and an innovation (e.g., a youth program). Of primary concern is determining whether, for example, a community agency is willing and able to offer a designated program. Furthermore, the setting where an intervention takes place must have the required resources (e.g., staff, skills, space, schedule, support, etc.) to provide the foundation for implementation. Of utmost importance is garnering engagement and support from key organizational leaders. In terms of unveiling a structured program within GSAs, important questions to consider include: Do administrators and educators acknowledge and understand issues facing LGBT2Q+ youth? Are staff already equipped and skilled at meeting LGBT2Q+ students' programming needs? Do students desire to engage in structured GSA programming and if so, in what ways (e.g., biweekly, after school, during class, etc.)? Is the GSA the right venue to deliver manualized mental health promotion and healthy relationships sessions? For more information on the fit and feasibility of formalized GSA programming, please see Heck (2015) and Lapointe and Crooks (2018).

The second stage of Meyers et al.'s (2012) framework calls for strategic planning whereby two essential questions must be tended to: "(1) Is there a clear plan for what will happen, and *when it should occur* [emphasis added]; and (2) who will accomplish the different tasks related to delivering the innovation and overseeing its implementation?" (p. 471). In this phase, it is essential to determine a realistic and concrete action plan, which considers the timing and staffing required to introduce an intervention. It is important to understand the particularities of introducing and delivering a program, such as when implementation will commence, what time frame it will be offered, how often it will be delivered, and who (e.g., single GSA advisor, co-GSA advisors, GSA advisor in partnership with guidance counselor or mental health practitioner, GSA member, supported by their advisor, etc.) will be responsible for planning for and facilitating it. In terms of implementing structured GSA programming, it is important to consider the form of functioning of individual GSA clubs. For example, in what ways does the club primarily function: social, support, education, and/or advocacy (see Lapointe, 2018). If a group gravitates towards advocacy (e.g., lobbying for an all gender washroom), structured programming may not fit the needs and desires of group members.

Meyers et al.'s (2012) third framework phase is integral to an innovation's success. This entails providing ongoing assistance, monitoring implementation, and creating feedback mechanisms to cultivate quality innovations. Rather than expecting that a singular training (e.g., two-day GSA and program implementation session) will suffice in terms of enhancing GSA advisors' capacity to support LGBT2Q+ youth and facilitate LGBT2Q+ youth programming, it may be productive to offer further implementation scaffolding, such as one-on-one check ins, site visits, program delivery assistance, and/or specific and detailed feedback on facilitation style and techniques. This paper spotlights how GSA advisors may be supported in this third phase of the

Quality Implementation Framework and it describes participants' recommendations for *Creating a Structure for Implementation* (i.e., the second phase). These insights and learnings were shared at a focus group (i.e., the fourth phase - *Improving Future Applications*). During this final phase, facilitators and barriers to instituting an innovation are explored by key stakeholders, such as program facilitators in this instance. As such, reflections on one's actions and their impacts are explored and critiqued, and feedback is generated on how to improve the process and product moving forward. By gathering together to debrief individual and/or collective experiences, stakeholders may learn how to better implement an intervention. By answering questions posed during a focus groups, study participants are afforded a venue to reflect on their experiences, learn with and from each other in terms of which programmatic strategies are promising, and offer recommendations for improving program supports and delivery to their colleagues and future facilitators.

Methods

This study generates knowledge on how structured GSA programming may be supported and implemented in school communities. It produces new insights into how educators, who rarely receive LGBT professional development (Taylor et al, 2016), may serve the needs of gender, sexual, and romantic minority youth by receiving formal training and ongoing support to deliver a structured program in GSAs. Drawing on Patton's (2002) methodological understandings, we explore the lived experiences of school staff and share their reflections on how to best implement a program for LGBT2Q+ youth in school-based GSAs.

Participants

Six secondary school educators from one large publicly-funded school board, two staff members from a publicly-funded rural school board, and two community youth group workers –

one of which is also an educator - delivered the program in 2016-2017. These participants self-selected to attend a one-day program training session that was offered to local school staff and community partners. After the training, these individuals elected to implement the program in their GSA or youth group setting. Of these 10 individuals, eight provided detailed feedback on program delivery during a single two-hour focus group that was facilitated by author one, and two others, who could not attend (participant nine and ten), submitted written responses to the focus group questions. Self-identified demographic information was not collected for these 10 participants, which limits how the data can be interpreted vis-a-via their individual interlocking subjectivities. Since we did not inquire about facilitators' self-identifiers, we use them/them/their pronouns in conjunction with participant numbers. Participants had varying levels of expertise and experience with advising GSAs or facilitating LGBT2Q+ youth groups and many participants described supporting clubs from a position of allyship. Although the program was delivered in two different contexts, schools (e.g., GSA) and a community youth group, the implementation insights of the two youth workers may be transferable to educational settings, especially since one was also an educator.

Procedure

A large, publicly-funded secular school board sent an email to all GSA advisors in their secondary system to invite them to a full day training session in October, 2016. The authors also invited a few GSA advisors, who were readily identifiable based on their public teaching profile, from another small, publicly-funded secular school board. An email invitation was also sent to facilitators at a local LGBT2Q+ youth group to offer them program training. Participants were encouraged to introduce the program to GSA or LGBT2Q+ youth group members, and complete the initial session, which outlines the 18 sessions and probes youth to voice their interest it each.

All school staff and community partners who attended the training delivered a variable number of sessions (mean = 11), based on the needs and desires of LGBT2Q+ youth in their care. The community agency also delivered a couple of sessions during the late spring/early summer of 2016. All protocols received ethical clearance from the authors' institutional review board as well as school board research officials. There was no formal ethics process in place at the LGBT2Q+ community-based organization that hosted the youth group, but the director of educational programming approved our research request.

Data Collection

To gather feedback on how to best support the delivery of structured programming with GSA members, the first author led one focus group with program facilitators in June, 2017. We used this data collection method since it allows for the generation of "…high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others" (Patton, 2002, p. 386). As Meyers et al. (2012) contend, practitioners' reflections "…can illuminate what lessons have been learned about implementing [an] innovation that can be used to improve future applications…" (p. 477). The focus group was audio recorded to document and preserve participants' experiences and perspectives (Patton, 2002). Discussion topics included: fit and feasibility of the program; in/effective sessions, topics, or activities; and advice and suggestions for future facilitators. The specific questions that were posed during the focus group are listed in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

The first author began to loosely make sense of the data by recording insights during the facilitator focus group (see Patton, 2002), noting what conversational topics aligned with Meyers et al.'s (2012) four thematic phases: assessment, collaboration and negotiation, monitoring, and

self-reflection. The two-hour focus group was audio recorded and transcribed using Trint voice-to-text software. The transcript was then reviewed and edited by the first author to ensure that it accurately represented communication exchanges. Thereafter, analytic memos were scribed to further interpret the data (Patton, 2002). Once again, the four phases of Meyers et al.'s model were used as a scheme to group participants' programmatic planning and delivery reflections into similar categories. As such, these reflections set the stage for identifying commonalities within the data. Thematic analysis was employed to document reoccurring information (i.e., patterns) and determine overarching themes "…across stories, experiences, and perspectives" (Patton, 2002, p. 6). This involved grouping similar actions and ideas together to decipher broad-based themes across participants' insights and experiences. The transcript was reviewed initially and then two additional times by the first author to confirm data allocation into the distinct phases of the Quality Implementation Framework. The second author contributed to the study design and an earlier draft of the paper, in addition to providing feedback throughout the revision process.

Results

In this section we describe factors that promote the successful implementation of formalized programming in school-based GSAs. We outline how the following supports and strategies may assist club advisors build their comfort, confidence, competence with delivering structured LGBT2Q-focused sessions: preparing and planning for program delivery; potentially offering the program outside of regularly-scheduled club meetings (e.g., after school); garnering support from colleagues and administrators; building ongoing professional learning networks; being mentored by experienced facilitators; expanding program training; and receiving ongoing support from program developers.

Proposing Program Delivery: Phase One

In terms of ensuring there was an alignment between the school board and community agency officials' desire and capacity to facilitate the program (i.e., phase one of Meyers et al.'s quality implementation framework), we contacted board employees who oversaw the equity and inclusion portfolio in one large publicly-funded school district, and the Educational Director at a local LGBT2Q+ youth group to garner their support for program delivery. With their support and permission, we then contacted GSA advisors within the school board and connected with youth group leaders at the community organization to determine their willingness to facilitate a structured program. We did not contact administrators directly to discuss the program or co-develop an implementation strategy because: 1) the school board supported this initiative and individual GSA advisors, who were already developing/delivering LGBT2Q+ programming, elected to attend the training and implement the program – after consulting with youth in their clubs. The program itself was designed to complement standard GSA programming, not replace it entirely; and 2) educators, as frontline service providers, were in direct contact with administration at their schools (e.g., requesting permission to remove students from class to engage in the program during class time). Communicating with administration about the clubs' functioning may be beneficial because, according to Meyers et al. (2012), administrative support is essential to successful interventions (Meyers et al., 2012) and it is also associated with greater well-being among GSA members (Poteat et al., 2015).

Planning for Program Delivery: Phase Two

In terms of answering the 'who,' 'what,' and 'where' of the program (i.e., the intervention), we encouraged GSA advisors deliver the program via standard club meetings and youth workers facilitate sessions during regular group time. Both GSA advisors and youth group facilitators were

asked to use their professional discretion to determine when it was feasible to implement selected

sessions. In general, GSA advisors facilitated the program on a biweekly basis during the school

year, whereas youth group leaders delivered the program more sporadically throughout the

calendar year.

Offering the Program Outside of Regularly-Scheduled Meetings

In terms of enhancing implementation – phase two in Meyers et al.'s (2012) Quality

Implementation Framework, some facilitators opted to change the time and location of program

delivery by offering it outside of regularly-scheduled GSA meetings. That is, rather than delivering

the program during lunch time, some advisors offered it during regular-scheduled class time, after

school, or multiple times per week. Participant nine noted:

> One thing that worked really well for me was getting release time to deliver the
> program. We used a full day, but a half day would be effective as well. It allowed us
> to cover a group of sessions and our discussions could be more in depth without time
> constraints. The sessions held at lunch were still very good, but we felt less free to
> allow discussions to go into side topics that would come up.

Similarly, participants three and two excused students from class to engage in the program, which

offered more time for in-depth discussions. This structure may help avoid interruptions that

commonly occur during lunch meetings (e.g., announcements) (Lapointe & Crooks, 2018), as

participant three expressed:

> …to have them come out of class would be doable. If like, I got an on call for it or
> something. Or even just, like, I was able to have it on my prep and not have people
> knocking on the door all the time or having announcements going on while GSA was
> happening…to have that separate time, I think would be way more beneficial than just
> to do it at lunch time.

To circumvent potential disruptions, participant two explained that they facilitated the program

during third period: "What I ended up doing was once a month…I had set aside a two-hour window

where they would all miss third period…we'd have the whole group together." Offering structured

GSA programming within class time must be met with caution though. This time frame could also

serve as a deterrent for some youth who are not 'out' to their teachers/peers – if they feel pressured

to disclose the specificities associated with their absence and/or educators demand to know their

whereabouts or are unforgiving when they miss class, or for those who cannot afford to be absent

from class (i.e., academic obligations, such as presentations or tests).

Although some parents, guardians, teachers, and administrators may object to removing

students from (hetero/cisnormative) classes because it is thought to impede their academic success,

many LGBT2Q+ youth already avoid school due to safety concerns or disengage in class because

they do not see themselves reflected in curricula (Kosciw et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2011).

Research indicates that LGBT2Q+ students' attendance and academic performance are hindered

by experiences of abuse, rejection, discrimination, and marginalization in the education system

(McCormick, Scheyd, & Terrazas, 2018). GSA participation not only counteracts the impacts of

school-based oppression by helping to improve LGBT2Q+ students' grades and school attendance

(Kosciw et al., 2014; Walls, Kane, and Wisneski, 2010), but the "…quality and amount spent in

GSA activities" is likely to promote psychological well-being (Ioverno et al., 2016, p. 11-12).

Consistent with this research, some participants believed it was promising to offer the program

outside of regular GSA meetings (e.g., during class, after school, additional meetings, etc.). For

example, participant four exclaimed: "…that sounds like a perfect situation…to meet once a month

out of one hour of class. I think it's a fantastic idea."

Aligned with LGBT2Q+ youth's requests for additional and longer strength-based sessions

(Craig & Furman, 2018), one advisor elected to hold two GSA meetings per week rather than one

to expand the time club members had to explore session content: "…we tried to do the structured

lesson on a Wednesday and then Friday give them time to chew on it a little more or they could

really have their own time on that…" By structuring program delivery this way, youth had

extended periods of time to share their insights and experiences with their peers – a particularly

significant aspect of the program according to youth participants (Lapointe & Crooks, 2018).

Providing a flexible schedule may also encourage program participation for youth with scheduling

conflicts (Craig & Furman, 2018; see also Lapointe & Crooks, 2018).

Garnering Support from Administrators and Colleagues

Participants voiced the importance administrators supporting program delivery, whether it is

offered during regular GSA meetings (i.e., lunch or after school) or official class time. Consistent

with Meyers et al.'s (2012) writing on the first phase of their framework, which suggests that

"…steps should be taken to foster a supportive climate for implementation and secure buy-in from

key leaders and front-line staff in the organization/community" (p. 468), participant two believed

that it was imperative to have the principal's support for delivering the program during class:

> …it wasn't that [the principal] was opposed to it. I think he was just thinking through
> that it might annoy staff…But, then as I just explained to him that it's hard when
> you've got the juniors one lunch, the seniors…[another]…But, like [participant 3]
> was saying, you want those life experiences from the seniors to help out the juniors
> and get the conversations going. So, I just explained that to him, 'I need this group
> all together.' It's really difficult to do.' Our lunches are 40 minutes...So, it took a little
> pushing, but he eventually - and honestly just having the manual, like, this is a legit
> thing.

Here, participant two described how they strategically delivered the program during third period

because their school had two lunches that problematically divided junior (grades 9-10) and senior

(grades 11-12) students; this left the GSA separated by grade and consequently, life experience.

They believed that it would be a more enriching experience if all GSA members could gather

during a common time to participate in the program. In this instance, securing approval from

administration to excuse GSA members from class echoed Poteat et al.'s (2015) findings, which

stipulate that administrator support greatly affects club resources and activities (see also Steck &

Perry, 2016).

Beyond ensuring that administrators understand an innovation's purposes and benefits and involving them in the implementation process (Meyers et al., 2012), a few participants expressed the importance of raising awareness of the program with their colleagues. Participant six stated, "Wouldn't it be nice to have a session for us to deliver in staff meetings, so we could do an education piece?...perhaps there could be something in there for educators to help educators..."

Participant two pushed the conversation forward by explaining that some of their colleagues related, "'…that's so cool that you got to go to this training. It's so neat that there's this sort of community [of] educators who got together.'" When colleagues discovered that participant two attended a training session with other GSA advisors and received a program designed to support LGBT2Q+ youth, participant two voiced that "...the overall message was that [the program] is important, and it matters." As such, participants suggested that program developers prepare information for GSA advisors to share with staff members to help them justify the need for it school communities:

> …if it was in sort of…'This is the program that we're implementing.' For one, it would validate taking them out of class and why that's important to this community, right? So, if we need to take them out of a third period, they're not going to grumble about it. But also, it just reminds them of the need for it.

Here, participant two insisted that facilitators could help champion the program and promote unified support for LGBT2Q+ youth with more guidance from program developers and supervising staff. According to Meyers et al. (2012), "…identifying champions for the innovation who will advocate for its use and support others in using it properly" (p. 470) is an essential component in phase one of the Quality Implementation Framework. In this way, foundational training and coaching is necessary to provide school staff with the knowledge and tools necessary to advocate for LGBT2Q+ youth, especially since GSA advisors' express self-doubt regarding their ability to provide trainings on sexual and gender diversity (Watson et al., 2010).

Mentorship

Participant three and four described how program delivery could be further supported by

pairing returning facilitators with new facilitators. Participant three explained:

> I think if you buddied up a new teacher with someone who's done it before for their
> first session or the first two sessions. And then they can see…maybe you should watch
> one and then facilitate and then have a discussion afterwards. So, kind of, it's like that
> teacher mentorship program. But, it's like, 'I did the session before, like, I'll be glad to
> walk through'…it's the same as teaching a new course. You want to speak with a
> teacher who's done it before. And then you can kind of talk with them about what
> works, what didn't work.

Consistent with Meyers et al.'s (2012) framework, participant three shared the importance of

"…creating feedback mechanisms so involved parties understand how the implementation process

is progressing" (p. 471). They discussed how mentoring new facilitators (i.e., session observation,

practice facilitation, personal reflection, and structured debriefing) can develop facilitators'

skillsets. Participant four pushed the conversation forward by adding that, just as educators must

familiarize themselves with the official curriculum, facilitators "…have to get comfortable" with

the program. By participating in the focus group, facilitators not only provided feedback on the

program, but they also benefited from hearing each other's experiences and perspectives in relation

to program delivery. By gathering and sharing their learnings, participant four noted, "I'm going

to do this so much better next year." Considering this revelation, providing ongoing opportunities

for facilitators to touch base, share their triumphs and challenges with one another, and receive

feedback will likely enable school staff to grow into their role as program facilitators. This strategy

is supported by Poteat et al.'s (2015) research, which found that "Advisors with longer service

may have more learned experience in navigating the politics and dynamics of their school in ways

that benefit youth" (p. 18).

Expanding Program Training(s) and Providing Ongoing Support: Phase 3

Program training included foundational content in the areas of: mental health and wellness; LGBT2Q+ topics and issues; program development and sessions; and practice facilitation. All participants voiced that their training was beneficial since it helped them develop their facilitation skills in a safe environment, debrief their experiences, and receive feedback from supervising staff. For example, participant four exclaimed, "…the training you guys gave us was awesome because we had to physically - we had to go through the motions of it… it was really helpful and made me feel a lot more confident." Despite receiving positive feedback, the authors believed that the training length should be expanded to two days to engage GSA advisors in foundational conversations about GSA formation and functioning (e.g., recruitment, structure, etc.) before they are introduced to the program. This recommendation is rooted in empirical studies, which indicate that educators often lack exposure to LGBT2Q+ issues through preservice training and/or inservice professional development (Green et al., 2018; Johns et al., 2019). This call for change also reflects Meyers et al.'s (2012) recommendation to not only identify qualified individuals and determine their readiness to facilitate a program, but to build their capacity to deliver it.

Beyond participating in initial training and obtaining program materials, it became clear that facilitators required ongoing guidance and assistance "…to maintain the self-efficacy and skill proficiency that were developed through training" (Meyers et al., 2012, p. 477). Drawing on Meyers et al. (2012) third phase of considerations for new innovations, GSA advisors may need to receive ongoing mentorship and guidance to support their role as program facilitators. This may involve biweekly check-ins (i.e., email, phone calls, face-to-face site visits), facilitation support, and/or regular exchanges with colleagues who are also delivering the program. During regular check-ins, facilitators can share implementation updates and receive troubleshooting strategies

from supervising staff, ask clarifying questions, and receive individualized support and constructive feedback. For example, participant ten insisted that it was essential for program facilitators to know how to steer conversations when they stated, "Try not to let the conversation get too off-topic…unless it's useful or relevant," but many GSA advisors still need to develop this skillset, as participant eight related:

> Everybody [should receive] training on how to navigate difficult conversations or when the train is going off the rails how to steer, you know, what happens if you start going into terrain that you're not prepared to go into. And maybe it's a gradual release of responsibility. And not just sort of dunking somebody in the deep end.

By routinely conversing with fellow facilitators, school staff can share significant advice and learn from one another's triumphs and challenges. Supervising staff may also visit, observe, or co-facilitate sessions to model and encourage effective facilitation skills, and coach new facilitators. Building in mentorship opportunities for new or less experienced facilitators is likely to enhance the quality of program delivery.

GSA advisors can also invite knowledgeable postsecondary volunteers to help them deliver the program because youth may prefer facilitators closer to their age (Grafsky & Gary, 2018):

> I wonder even if a co-facilitator, like, a [university] student could support?...I had a former student who has since transitioned to male and so has a lot of life experience and who some of these guys know…I just felt so much comfort having [the former student] there as another adult in the room. And I said right off, 'if you think I'm off track here or this conversation is going somewhere where you could pick it up better than I could...' And I just...the comfort in having another adult in the room for me, but also somebody who is part of the community was really helpful for me. So, unfortunately [the former student] couldn't come back to any of the other group meetings, but there was something to having someone else there who I was confident could add to the conversation and they could ask questions too.

Here, participant two described how having youthful LGBT2Q+ people serve as a sounding board would curb their apprehension or discomfort with facilitating the program. Having members from

rainbow communities' attend and co-facilitate may also compensate for LGBT2Q+ knowledge

disparities among staff (see Green et al., 2018).

GSA advisors may also benefit from regular gatherings with other program facilitators. To

build supportive ties where school staff may share insights and strategies, debrief experiences, and

develop programmatic competencies, participant two proposed that all facilitators should meet (at

least) halfway through program delivery:

> …even though it's hard to get everyone together…maybe if you could add another
> [meeting] mid-year...because then you can get ideas, which sessions went well or
> ideas moving forward. It would just sort of motivate you. Because now with the ones
> I didn't do as I'm hearing about them, I wish I had gotten to them. So maybe like a
> mid-program day together…To get the feedback part way and motivate them…you
> would get a chance to hear what went well; especially in a similar type school, like,
> maybe somebody would take that idea of doing a two hour one, right?

Ensuring that facilitators have opportunities beyond initial training to meet and converse with one

another may enrich program implementation. For example, at the focus group some educators

voiced their discomfort with and inability to lead discussions on problematic substance use and

harm reduction. They were concerned that students may disclose things that could put them in a

compromising position. In response, participant seven offered insights into their professional

responsibilities as educators:

> You don't have to report the drug use…I'm the guidance counselor and they can tell
> me what they do, and I don't report it unless they say they're going to hurt themselves,
> they're going to hurt someone else, or someone is hurting them. Other than that - and
> you could even say I shoplift. You're like, 'ok.' You know, you don't rat on them. If
> it's, unless it's one of those three. And it can be awkward, and you can be like, 'don't
> tell me' you know or whatever…

Conversely, youth may not have used drugs or alcohol or be accustomed to having honest and

open conversations about harm reduction with educators; thus, their responses may reflect

engrained 'just say no' sentiments, as participant five suggested: "I wonder with our youth if some

of it was, you know, 'well, this is what I've heard from parents' or…'this is bad and this is

dangerous'…I don't know that many of the youth have had personal experience." To promote authentic and meaningful conversations, school staff may encourage youth to reflect on and discuss topics that are relevant in their lives. Facilitators can develop this skillset by continuously reflecting on their beliefs and practices, and receiving ongoing support, mentorship, constructive feedback, and coaching from supervising staff, fellow facilitators, and postsecondary volunteers - all of whom may provide advice that aids program implementation (see Meyers et al., 2012).

Discussion

Grounded in Meyers et al.'s Quality Implementation Framework:1) *Initial Considerations Regarding the Host Setting;* 2) *Creating a Structure for Implementation*; 3) *Ongoing Structure Once Implementation Begins*; and 4) *Improving Future Applications*, this paper provided an exploration of conditions and supports suggested by educators and youth workers to improve the implementation of a mental health and healthy relationships promotion program for LGBT2Q+ youth within the context of school-based GSAs. It stressed the importance of attending to preparatory and implementation considerations, such as program proposal (phase one), intervention planning (phase two), ongoing program supports (phase three) and reflection, consolidation, and development (phase 4). We used Meyers et al.'s four-phase model as a means to organize participants' experiences and insights, which were voiced during a facilitator focus group.

This study is limited in that is relies on data from one focus group with 10 program facilitators. A more robust research design and additional data collection measures (e.g., implementation support notes, program session tracking sheets, etc.) would likely increase the trustworthiness of the findings. Data analysis was solely conducted by the first author and thus multiple or alternate explanations of the data may have been overlooked. Due to the small-scale

nature of this study and its reliance on qualitative methodology, results cannot be generalized to additional populations or programs. It is also important to note that the program was delivered in two venues: multiple schools across two public secular school boards, and one community-based LGBT2Q+ youth group. The lessons learned and suggestions provided by employees of the community organization may not be transferable to school communities (e.g., policies, rules, and 'norms' may differ from these sites, as well as across school sites).

Consistent with Green at al.'s (2018) research on creating safe and supportive schools for LGBT2Q+ youth, results emphasized the importance of ensuring site readiness for programmatic intervention. This includes ensuring administrators and school staff are interested and invested in an innovation (phase one) and have the expertise and means to institute it (phase two) (see Meyers et al., 2012). Participants' feedback occupied much of the third phase of Meyers et al.'s (2012) framework, which describes the merits of providing ongoing structures to support program delivery. Participants shared how they adapted program delivery to best meet the needs of youth in their care. One prominent way that educators attempted to (or suggested might) increase the successful delivery of structured GSA programming was to adjust implementation times and locations. In offering sessions outside regular meeting times (e.g., during class, after school, extra meetings), some participants believed that they might reach more students and create opportunities for youth to partake in valuable in-depth discussions (see Lapointe & Crooks, 2018). The value of offering the program, either through regular GSA meetings or alternative ways, cannot be understated because program participation has been found to benefit youth. Research suggests that:

> From participating in the program within their GSAs, youth reported discussing sexual and gender diversity in-depth, sharing and learning from each other, and building supportive networks with those with similar experiences…validate[ing] and affirm[ing] their identities and expressions…confront[ing] and process[ing] minority stressors, and develop[ing] essential coping strategies to bolster their well-being and manage toxic relationships (Lapointe & Crooks, 2018, p. 315.)

Considering that many LGBT2Q+ students feel unsafe and dismissed at school and experience hetero/cisnormative curricula and educational practices (Kosciw et al., 2014; Kosciw et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2016), we encourage administrators and educators to actively listen to and respond to GSA members' individual needs (Steck & Perry, 2016), which may include occasionally excusing them from class so they may participate in LGBT2Q-affirmative programming. Being exposed to inclusive educational content, such as affirmative LGBT2Q+ programming, is an important protective factor for rainbow youth (Johns et al., 2018); furthermore, GSA presence and participation helps youth feel safer and more welcomed at school, which may empower LGBT2Q+ students to reach their academic potential (see Meyer, 2014).

Although removing students from class to participate in LGBT2Q+ programming may be both purposeful and promising, it is far less common than excusing students for other extracurricular activities (e.g., athletic competitions, drama performances, etc.) Some curricular absences are taken-for-granted, universally sanctioned, and systematically supported than others (e.g., track meets, sickness, football games, bereavement). With respect to LGBT2Q+ interventions, youth who miss class to participate in GSA programming are arguably no less disadvantaged than athletes who miss class for sporting competitions. Each students' needs are unique; some students have more protective factors than others (i.e., internal assets – personality characteristics and individual skills; and external resources – supportive families/friends) (Johns et al., 2018), and thus, these students may not need to prioritize LGBT2Q+ affirmative extracurricular programming above their formal schooling. Regardless of individual student needs, all school staff should recognize the health-related benefits of evidence-informed/based LGBT2Q+ youth interventions offered in (Heck, 2015; see also Lapointe & Crooks, 2018) or

beyond (Austin & Craig, 2015a/b; Craig, 2013; Craig, Ashley, & McInroy, 2013) schooling and raise awareness of them among staff and students. To this end, it may be advantageous for GSA advisors to receive targeted support from program developers and fellow facilitators to develop their toolbox for navigating challenging conversations with school staff and for championing the LGBT2Q+ programming at school.

Providing initial program training (i.e., mental health, well-being, and LGBT2Q+ content; program overview and initial session observation; practice facilitation; and debriefing and feedback) and ongoing mentorship and guidance (i.e., professional learning networks; individualized feedback, etc.) may build the qualifications necessary for GSA advisors to successfully deliver LGBT2Q+ focused sessions. Building school staff's readiness and capacity to deliver the program is clearly essential (Meyers et al., 2012), but more preparatory work is required to ground GSA advisors' understandings of LGBT2Q+ topics and issues and club development and functioning. This work is imperative since GSA advisors often have minimal supervisory experience (Poteat et al., 2015a) and limited knowledge and training with respect to LGBT2Q+ topics and issues (Graybill et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2016; Swanson & Gettinger, 2016; Watson et al., 2010). As such, study findings helped us refine and expand our training to meet educators' needs. In terms of improving future applications – the fourth phase in the Quality Improvement Framework, we expanded our training to two days. Day one now explores LGBT2Q+ topics and issues and GSA formation and functioning, and day two examines program content and provides participants with opportunities to engage in/debrief practice facilitation. To bolter phase three of Meyers et al.'s (2012) framework - providing ongoing structure during an innovation, we recommend that GSA advisors receive continuing mentorship and guidance (e.g., bi-weekly check-ins, facilitation support, face-to-face or online facilitator meet-ups, etc.) to support their role

as both GSA advisors and program facilitators. In particular, the potential benefits associated with ongoing knowledge exchanges between and amongst veteran and novice GSA advisors cannot be overstated enough. Future research should examine to what extent LGBT2Q-focussed trainings, resources, and professional networking communities support GSA advisors' vital work in school communities. Likewise, research should continue to document the impacts of structured GSA programming on club members (see Lapointe & Crooks, 2018; Heck, 2015).

Appendix

Appendix A: Facilitator Focus Group Questions

1. Can you comment on the program's fit for your group (e.g., structured program in GSA, time, youth's interest in the program, etc.)?

2. What sessions, topics, or activities did you find were most effective? Why do you suppose they were effective?

    a. How did students' respond to these sessions, topics, or activities?

3. Have you had the opportunity to see students use any skills outside of the program (e.g. assertive communication, apology, help seeking, etc.)?

4. What sessions, topics, or activities did you find were less effective?

    a. Why do you suppose they were less effective?

    b. How might these issues be addressed?

    c. What specific suggestions do you have for revising the sessions?

5. Do you have any suggestions that would help new teachers deliver the program?

6. Is there any other feedback that you want to give us to make the program better?

Figures

Figure 1. Program Sessions

Session Number	Session Topic
Session 1	I Have a Voice: Introduction to the Program
Session 2	Mine to Name: Identities/Ways of Being
Session 2	Recognize and Respect: Values and Boundaries
Session 4	My Journey: Coming Out
Session 5	My Mind Matters: Mental Health and Well-Being
Session 6	In the Know: Impacts of Substance Use and Abuse
Session 7	I Belong: Communities and Connections
Session 8	My Super-Power: Coping with Challenges
Session 9	We All Have a Say: Rights / Responsibilities / Consent
Session 10	My Voice, Your Voice: Active Listening and Communication
Session 11	Right and True: Communication Styles
Session 12	Words and Actions: Communicating Through Conflict
Session 13	Ships: Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships
Session 14	(Re)Building Ties: Addressing Relationship Violence
Session 15	My Safety: Exits and Safety Plans
Session 16	Allies: Being There for Others
Session 17	The Concluding Circle: Share and Celebrate

References

Austin, A., & Craig, S. L. (2015a). Transgender affirmative cognitive behavioral therapy;

   Clinical considerations and applications. Professional Psychology: Research and Practice,

   46(1), 21–29.

Austin, A., & Craig, S. L. (2015b). Empirically supported interventions for sexual and gender

   minority youth. Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work, 12(6), 567–578.

Chong, E. S. K., Poteat, V. P., Yoshikawa, H., & Calzo, J. P. (2018). Fostering youth self-

   efficacy to address transgender and racial diversity issues: The role of Gay-Straight

   Alliances. *School Psychology Quarterly*. doi: http://dx.doi:org/10.1037/spq0000258

Collin, R. (2013). Making space: A Gay-Straight Alliance's fight to build inclusive

   environments. *Teachers College Record*, *115*(8), 1-26.

Craig, S. L. (2013). Affirmative Supportive Safe and Empowering Talk (ASSET): Leveraging

   the strengths and resiliencies of sexual minority youth in school-based groups. Journal of

   LGBT Issues in Counseling, 7(4), 372–386.

Craig, S. L., Ashley, A., & McInroy, L. B. (2013). Affirmative supportive safe spaces and

   empowering talk (ASSET): Leveraging the strengths and resiliencies of sexual minority

   youth in school-based groups. Journal of LGBT Issues in Counselling, 7(4), 372–386.

Craig, S. L., & Furman, E. (2018). Do marginalized youth experience strengths in strengths-

   based interventions? Unpacking program acceptability through two interventions for

   sexual and gender minority youth. *Journal of Social Service Research*, *44*(2), 168-179.

Craig, S. L., McInroy, L. B., Eaton, A. D., Iacono, G., Leung, V. W. Y., Austin, A., & Dobinson,

   C. (2019). An affirmative coping skills intervention to improve the mental and sexual

health of sexual and gender minority youth (Project Youth AFFIRM): Protocol for an

implementation study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *21*(6), 2015–2017.

https://doi.org/10.2196/13462

Fixsen, D., & Showers, J. B. (2002). Student achievement through staff development (3rd ed.).

Scientist Knowledge Translation Training. Toronto, ON: Sick Kids.

Grace, A. P., & Wells, K. (2015). *Growing into resilience: Sexual and gender minority youth*

in Canada. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Grafsky, E. L., & Gary, E. A. (2018). What sexual minority youths want in a program to assist

with disclosure to their family. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, *30*(2), 172-

191.

Graybill, E. C., Varjas, K., Meyers, J., Dever, B. V., Greenberg, D., Roach, A. T., & Morillas, C.

(2015). Demographic trends and advocacy experiences of Gay-Straight Alliance advisors.

Journal of LGBT Youth, *12*(4), 436-461.

Griffin, P., Lee, C., Waugh, J., & Beyer, C. (2004). Describing roles that Gay-Straight Alliances

play in schools: From individual support to social change. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian*

Issues in Education, 1(3), 7-22.

Green, A. E., Willging, C. E., Ramos, M. M., Shattuck, D., & Gunderson, L. (2018). Factors

impacting implementation of evidence-based strategies to create safe and supportive

schools for sexual and gender minority students. Journal of Adolescent Health, 63, 643-

648.

Heck, N. C. (2015). The potential to promote resilience: Piloting a minority stress-informed,

GSA-based, mental health promotion program for LGBTQ2 youth. *Psychology of Sexual*

Orientation and Gender Diversity, *2*(3), 225-231.

Ioverno, S., Belser, A. B., Baiocco, R., Grossman, A. H., & Russell, S. T. (2016). The protective role of Gay-Straight Alliances for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning students: A prospective analysis. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 3*(4), 397-406.

Johns, M. M., Poteat, P., Horn, S., & Koseiw, J. (2019). Strengthening our schools to promote resilience and health among LGBTQ youth: Emerging evidence and research priorities from the State of LGBTQ Youth Health and Wellbeing Symposium. *LGBT Health 6*(4), 146-155.

Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Palmer, N. A., & Boesen, M. A. (2014). *The 2013 national school climate survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools*. New York, NY: GLSEN.

Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Giga, N. M., Villenas, C., & Danischewsk, D. J. (2016). *The 2015 national school climate survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools*. New York, NY: GLSEN.

Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Zongrone, A. D., Clark, C. M., & Truong, N. L. (2018). The 2017 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer youth in our nation's schools. New York, NY: GLSEN.

Lapointe, A. (2018). Gay-Straight Alliances and student activism in Ontario public secular and Catholic high schools. *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository*. 5248. https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/5248

Lapointe, A., & Crooks, C. V. (2018). GSA members' experiences with a structured program to promote well-being. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *15(*4),300-318, doi: 10.1080/19361653.2018.1479672

Lapointe, A., Dunlop, C., Crooks, C. V. (2018). Feasibility and fit of a mental health promotion program for LGBTQ+ youth. *Journal of Youth Development*, 13(4), 100-117. doi: https://doi.org/10.5195/jyd.2018.585

Lapointe, A. (2016). Queering the Social Studies: Lessons to be learned from Canadian secondary school Gay-Straight Alliances. *The Journal of Social Studies Research, 40*(3), 205-215. doi:10.1016/j.jssr.2015.07.004

Lapointe, A. (2015). Standing 'straight' up to homophobia: Straight allies' involvement in Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA). *Journal of LGBT Youth*. *12*(2), 144-169. doi:10.1080/19361653.2014.969867

Lapointe, A. (2014). Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) members' engagement with sex education in Canadian high schools. *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning*, *14*(6), 707-717. doi:10.1080/14681811.2014.914024

Lowry, R., Johns, M. M., Gordon, A. R., Austin, B., Robin, L. E., & Kann, L. K. (2018). Nonconforming gender expression and associated mental distress and substance use among high school students. *JAMA Pediatrics.* doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2018.2140

Mayo, C. (2017). *Gay-Straight Alliances and associations among youth in schools*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mayo, J. B. (2013a). Critical pedagogy enacted in the Gay-Straight Alliance: New possibilities for a third space in teacher development. *Educational Researcher*, *42*(5), 266-275.

Mayo, J. B. (2013b). Expanding the meaning of social studies education: What the social studies can learn from gay straight alliances. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *41*(3), 352-381.

Mayo, J. B. (2015). Youth work in Gay-Straight Alliances: Curriculum, pedagogy, and activist

    development. *Child & Youth Services*, *36*(1), 79-93.

McCormick, A., Scheyd, K., & Terrazas, S. (2018). Trauma-informed care and LGBTQ youth:

    Considerations for advancing practice with youth with trauma experiences. *Families in*

    Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services, *99*(2), 160-169.

Meyer, E. J. (2014). Supporting gender diversity in schools: Developmental and legal

    perspectives. In E. J. Meyer, & A. P. Sansfacon (Eds.), Supporting transgender and

    gender creative youth: Schools, families, and communities in action (pp. 69-84). New

    York, NY: Peter Lang.

Meyers, D. C., Durlak, J. A., & Wandersman, A. (2012). The quality implementation framework:

    A synthesis of critical steps in the implementation process. *American Journal of*

    Community Psychology, *50*(3-4), 462-480.

Miceli, M. (2005). *Standing out, standing together: The social and political impact of gay-*

    straight alliances. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Qualitative research & evaluation methods (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA:

    Sage.

Poteat, P. V., & Scheer, J. R. (2016). GSA advisors' self-efficacy related to LGBT youth of color

    and transgender youth. Journal of LGBT Youth, 13(4), 311-325.

Poteat, V. P., Heck, N. C., Yoshikawa, H., & Calzo, J. P. (2016). Greater engagement among

    members of Gay-Straight Alliances: Individual and structural contributors. *American*

    Educational Research Journal, *53*(6), 1732-1758.

Poteat, V. P., Heck, N. C., Yoshikawa, H., & Calzo, J. P. (2017). Gay-Straight Alliances as

     settings to discuss health topics: Individual and group factors associated with substance

     use, mental health, and sexual health discussions. *Health Education Research*, *32*(3),

     258-268.

Poteat, V. P., Yoshikawa, H., Calzo, J. P., Gray, M. L., DiGiovanni, C. D., Lipkin, A., Mundy-

     Shephard, A., Perrotti, J., Scheer, J. R., & Shaw, M. P. (2015). Contextualizing Gay-

     Straight Alliances: Student, advisor, and structural factors related to positive youth

     development among members. *Child Development*, *86*(1), 176-193.

Steck, A. K., & Perry, D. R. (2016). Fostering safe and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ students:

     Phenomenographic exploration of high school administrators' perceptions about GSAs.

     Journal of LGBT Youth, *13*(4), 352-377.

Swanson, K., & Gettinger, M. (2016). Teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and supportive behaviors

     toward LGBT students: Relationship to Gay-Straight Alliances, antibullying policy, and

     teacher training. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *13*(4), 326-351.

Taylor, C., Peter, T., McMinn, T. L., Elliott, T., Beldom, S., Ferry, A., Gross, Z., Paquin, S., &

     Schachter, K. (2011). *Every class in every school: The first national climate survey on

     homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools*. Toronto, ON: EGALE

     Canada Human Rights Trust.

Taylor, C. G., Meyer, E. J., Peter, T., Ristock, J., Short, D., & Campbell, C. (2016). Gaps

     between beliefs, perceptions, and practices: The every teacher project on LGBTQ2-

     inclusive education in Canadian schools. Journal of LGBT Youth, 13(1-2), 112-140.

Watson, L. B., Varjas, K., Meyers, J., & Graybill, E. C. (2010). Gay-Straight Alliance advisors:

Negotiating multiple ecological systems when advocating for LGBTQ youth. *Journal of*

LGBT Youth, *7*(2), 100-128.