Spiritual Trauma and Mental Health Among LGBTQ People Training Description

Summary: Sparse research and resources exist for care professionals working to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people who have been exposed to negative theological messages and religiously-based family rejection related to their coming out process and/or gender transition. Clinicians often do not receive any kind of training related to religious and spiritual competency, let alone information tailored to LGBTQ identities, despite its potential impact on family acceptance, identity development, mental health outcomes, and social behavior. This workshop explores two concepts--spiritual abuse and spiritual trauma, examining common anti-LGBTQ theological messages and their mental health effects on LGBTQ people. Special attention will be paid to how these damaging messages relate to systemic harm including discrimination, homelessness, and substance abuse. Attendees will share their experiences in small and large groups, explore the clinical and logistical resources available to assist clients and their families, collaborate on a case study, and leave with resources for further exploration.

Learning Objectives: Participants will:

1. Learn about LGBTQ people and religion.
2. Become familiar with the concept of spiritual trauma and negative theological messages about being LGBTQ in major world religions.
3. Identify connections between these messages and negative mental health outcomes.
4. Reflect on their own relationship to religion and spirituality.
5. Consider five principles for religious and spiritual competency in their work.
6. Develop best practices to address religious and spiritual concerns in their individual context.
7. Discover resources to support spiritual resilience and healing for LGBTQ clients.
8. Apply their learning in a case study.

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Bio: Kelsey Pacha is a queer-identified transman who has worked with marginalized populations for 15 years, primarily in non-profit settings. He is a graduate of Northwestern University and holds an M.A. in Religion and Psychology, a Master of Divinity, and a Certificate in Sexuality and Religion from Pacific School of Religion (Berkeley, CA.) He offers LGBTQ inclusivity and cultural humility trainings for clinicians, corporations, non-profits, schools, and other providers. Kelsey serves as the Board President of *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves*, which publishes a 649-page resource guide by and for transgender and gender expansive communities. He is the Religion and Spirituality chapter author and Survey Editor for the second edition of the book, to be released in June 2021. He has presented workshops at the Philadelphia Trans Wellness Conference, LGBTQ Task Force's Creating Change Conference, and Gender Spectrum Family Conference, among others. Kelsey recently co-authored the religion and spirituality chapter in the upcoming textbook *Gender Confirmation Surgery: Principles and Techniques for an Emerging Field*, edited by Loren Schecter. He can be reached at kelsey@kelseypachaconsulting.com.