



Inclusion of the LGBTQIAPN+ Theme during the undergraduate course and in public policies in Speech-Language Pathology

Inclusão da temática LGBTQIAPN+ na formação acadêmica e nas políticas públicas em Fonoaudiologia

Inclusión de la temática LGBTQIAPN+ en la formación académica y políticas públicas en Logopedia

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Dear Editors,

This letter addresses Speech-Language Pathologists, coordinators and professors of Speech-Language Pathology undergraduate courses, students, and other healthcare professionals. It was formulated considering two crucial topics for advancing Speech-Language Pathology and Hearing Sciences: the need to include the LGBTQIAPN+ theme in undergraduate courses, and the importance of implementing inclusion policies within healthcare institutions, and private practices.

Education and Professional Training

Training Speech-Language Pathologists students is fundamental to the quality of care provided to trans LGBTQIAPN+ people. However, the education received during the undergraduate courses often does not adequately address the diversity and specific needs of the LGBTQIAPN+ population^{1,2}. This can result in significant gaps in the services offered to these individuals, especially those who are in the process of gender transition.

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The undergraduate curriculum of Speech-Language Pathology courses must include content addressing the specificities of LGBTQIAPN+ voices³. This includes understanding the vocal variations within the community, as well as the challenges faced by transgender individuals, transvestites, or those with gender variability. Including these topics during the undergraduate course and continuing education enables more sensitive, ethical, competent, and humanized care³.

We understand that changing a pedagogical project and curriculum structure involves bureaucratic logistics. However, implementing workshops, scientific seminars, study groups, elective courses, or specific modules focusing on the relationship between voice, body, personality, and gender identity can be an effective approach to fostering reflection and learning. Encouraging research and extension projects applied to college education must provide a solid foundation for developing effective and inclusive follow-up protocols⁴.

Inclusion Policies in Healthcare Institutions

In addition to formal education, healthcare institutions should adopt clear and comprehensive inclusion policies. Such policies involve creating guidelines that ensure all individuals, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, receive respectful and appropriate care⁵.

Inclusion policies must address issues such as the correct use of pronouns and social names, respect for gender identity preferences, and the implementation of clinical practices that recognize and respond to the specific needs of the LGBTQ-IAPN+ population. Regular training for the entire team, including receptionists, assistants, and other healthcare professionals, is essential to ensure a welcoming and safe environment.

Moreover, the presence of an inclusive physical environment is also vital. Informative and educational materials that reflect diversity, inclusive signage, and the availability of safe spaces for private discussions are essential. Complaints should not be underreported and measures need to be considered to avoid harm to the people being cared for. Notifying complaints contributes to more comprehensive, integrated, and humanized care, in addition to reducing costs for the health system.

Finally, we emphasize that including the LGBTQIAPN+ theme in Speech-Language Pathology undergraduate courses and public health policies is not only a matter of social justice but also a way to improve the quality of care. Well-educated and well-informed professionals and prepared institutions are better equipped to provide more effective care that respects and meets the specific needs of the individuals under their care. By integrating these aspects into Speech-Language Pathology practice, we move toward a more integrative and equitable field where every voice is recognized and valued for its uniqueness.

We appreciate the opportunity to share these considerations and hope this letter contributes to an ongoing dialogue about the importance of inclusion and respect for diversity in the Speech-Language Pathology field.

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