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Investigating the Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ Identity and Content in Occupational Therapy Curricula

Despite being positioned to offer comprehensive support in the intersection of healthcare and sexuality, there is limited evidence as to how LGBTQIA+ content is integrated into existing Occupational Therapy (OT) program curricula. The aim of this study was to assess if, and how, entry-level OT Master's and Doctoral programs have integrated LGBTQIA+ content into their curricula, and to use this data to aid SUNY Downstate's OT program in incorporating this content into its curriculum. A mixed methods electronic survey designed by the students in phase one of this project was administered to OT program chairs across the United States using Qualtrics. Despite the lack of Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) standards, most OT program chairs reported incorporating a limited number of hours of LGBTQIA+ content in their curricula. How this content has been integrated in curricula, as well as the methods of delivering and assessing students in this content, varies widely across programs. The program chairs who reported not incorporating LGBTQIA+ content expressed a lack of instructors' knowledge of LGBTQIA+ content as a major barrier for inclusion. Most SUNY Downstate faculty do not incorporate LGBTQIA+ content in their courses, and also report a lack of knowledge of this content as a significant reason for its exclusion. Due to the small response rate it is difficult to generalize the findings of this survey to all entry-level OT Master's and Doctoral programs in the US, but these findings may provide a starting point for future research to better understand LGBTQIA+ content inclusion in OT curricula.