

Post-Conference Report

Raise Your Voice

April 19, 2018

Introduction

The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity and the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board were proud to partner again for the 4th annual Raise Your Voice Conference. The KPRDSB and the CCGSD have been partnering for four years to bring equity and inclusivity training to their schools, which include many rural and small city schools. The training is invaluable to these students who wouldn't otherwise be exposed to this type of knowledge transfer. We are thrilled to continue this partnership and would like to thank our volunteers and staff for making this event a continued success.

On April 19, 2018, 250 students from the KPRDSB met at Bowmanville High School to learn from service providers, teachers, and advocates from Peterborough, to Cobourg, to Oshawa. Students were able to meet other like-minded peers and gain useful skills and knowledge on LGBT inclusion, safe sex, coming out, and media representation.

Schedule

8:00 - 9:00am - Arrival/Registration

9:15 - 10:35am - Welcome and Keynote Presentation

- Sabrina Kayed (CCGSD)
- Jamie Patanell (Principal of Bowmanville High School)
- GetREAL Movement

10:45 - 11:45am - Workshop Session 1

11:45 - 12:45pm - Lunch/Resource Fair

12:55 - 1:55pm - Workshop Session 2

Workshops

Keynote : GetREAL Movement; thegetrealmovement.com

The GetREAL Movement spoke to the students in attendance about how to create LGBTQ2S+ inclusive spaces. They spoke about the challenges that people faces, how to create inclusive spaces, and the mistakes that they have made in the past.

Intersectionality: The Crossroads of Life : Sabrina Kayed (CCGSD) ; ccgsd-ccdgs.org

Armed with a comprehensive, and ever-growing list of gender and sexual identities, the participants were invited to engage in a discussion about: sexual, romantic, and platonic attractions; gender, sex, and the gender binary; the fluidity of identities, and how all identities are valid. The group discussed how we each hold a multitude of identities, and what it looks like when those intersect. Participants were encouraged to abandon assumptions about gender and sexuality, and to learn to embrace their own, regardless of what that may be.

LGBT 101 : Zindzi Makine (CCGSD) ; ccgsd-ccdgs.org

The goal is to expose people to the infinite variations possible and normalize LGBTQ+ experiences/identities by explaining the following topics: gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, and romantic orientation.

LGBT Media Representation : Jeremy Piamonte (CCGSD) ; ccgsd-ccdgs.org

This workshop explored LGBT representation in the media, specifically television and film. Students were brought through current trends in media and how LGBT folks were portrayed in mainstream stories. They were asked to analyse clips of media and critique how the representation was handled by the creators.

Trans Identities : Drew Whatman (Canadian Mental Health Association) ; cmhahkpr.ca

A look at the history of trans identity, and gender non-conforming people. Students discussed what transgender means, and what life is like when one doesn't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, whether that means living inside or outside of male and female binary. Participants went away with real action steps on how to improve the lives of their trans peers, how to speak about trans people respectively inside and outside of school, and how they can pursue more information, and conduct individual research on the topic.

A Guide to Gayness: Keep Queerful in the Face of Anxiety : anya gwynne (PARN) ; parn.ca

In this workshop developed by youth for youth, students discussed the unique factors that can stress us out and how to find ways to keep it all together. Sometimes it is hard just getting through the day, let alone being queer.

Coming Out: Being Your Authentic Self : Amy Nagel and Jodi (Carea Community Health Centre) ; careachc.ca

Students participated in an open discussion about coming out. They explored ideas about when to come out, how and to who. How can these experiences be different for folks with varying sexual or gender identities? Students talked about safety, what to do if someone comes out to you, and what resources are there for support. Finally, they heard about real life experiences from someone who has been there.

Mental Health Talk Circle : Ashley Bouman (PFLAG Cobourg)

This workshop was an open discussion forum where students were encouraged to share their knowledge and experiences in regards to LGBTTQI2-S issues. This was a safe space where students are encouraged to speak candidly about their experiences in their schools , with their friends/family, and how they feel in their community.

Healthy Sexuality : Kyana Graham (AIDS Committee of Durham Region) ; aidsdurham.com

This was an interactive workshop on how to decrease your chances of contracting a Sexually Transmitted Disease. Students were given the tools and knowledge to make safe-sex choices and avoid risks.

The Queer University Experience : AJ (Trent Queer Collective) ; trentqueercollective.com

Students were brought through personal stories and experiences of queer students in post-secondary. AJ went through what their challenges were at the beginning and how they overcame them to thrive as a healthy and happy queer university student.