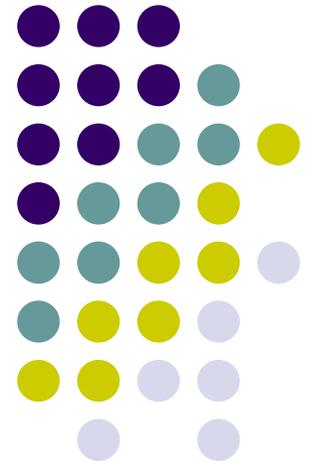
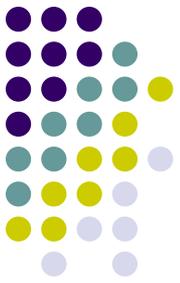


Responding to Sexual Diversity: A Catholic Perspective

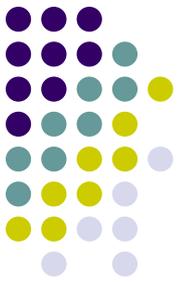
Fr Kevin McGovern,
Caroline Chisholm Centre for Health Ethics:
CHA Ethics Education Seminar,
Polding Centre, Sydney - 6 May 2015



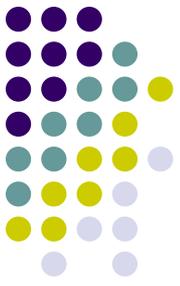


- This issue can make us feel very uncomfortable:
 - On one side is an impression of Catholic teaching about homosexuality.
 - Some of us are not sure that we agree with the Church about this issue.
 - And yet in Catholic organisations we must be faithful to Church teaching.
 - Others of us do accept Church teaching about this issue.
 - When other people do not agree with this teaching, that can make us very uncomfortable.
 - On the other side is an impression of LGBTI activists.
 - We might not even be sure that we know all the right words!

Terminology



- LGBTI
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex
 - Diverse (biological) sex
 - intersex
 - Diverse sexual orientation
 - lesbian or gay
 - bisexual
 - Diverse gender identity
 - transgender
 - cross-dresser, drag performer, gender queer
 - transsexual
 - transwoman
 - transman



Overview

SEE

- LBGTI experience in Australia

JUDGE

- Catholic teaching

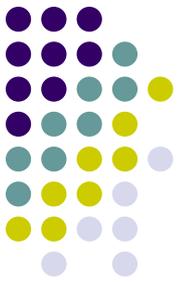
ACT

- What should we do?



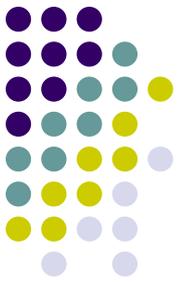
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‘No need to straighten up’



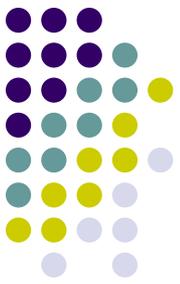
- 12 participant interviews in 2012-2013
- Participants aged 65+, from VIC, WA & QLD
- “Older LGBTI people’s sense of who they are was shaped by the... discourses of the 1950s and 60s that defined them as sick, immoral or criminal.”
- “A strong sense of fear weaved its way through many of the participants’ stories. Participants reported living in fear of ridicule, bullying, physical violence, being outed, losing the life they had built, losing family and of people using their sexual orientation or gender identity as a ‘weapon’ against them.”

‘No need to straighten up’



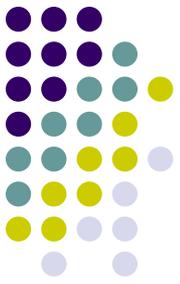
- “Many of the participants expressed a fear that ageing and disability will again expose them to institutionalised heterosexism in the provision of aged services. Many were concerned that accessing aged services means that they will need to straighten up again and return to the closet.... Two participants were receiving home services and had not disclosed their sexuality to service providers.”

‘Depression and Anxiety in GLBTI People’ (beyondblue)



- “People who report being homosexual/bisexual have higher levels of anxiety disorders than people who report being heterosexual (around 31 per cent vs 14 per cent), depression and related disorders (around 19 per cent vs 6 per cent) and substance use disorders (around 9 per cent vs 5 per cent).
- “[A]lmost 90 per cent [of transgender people] had experienced at least one form of stigma or discrimination, including verbal abuse, social exclusion, receiving lesser treatment due to their name or sex on documents, physical threats and violence.”
- “[A] round 60 per cent of intersex people reported having depression...”

Australian Government's National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy



GOAL 1: Equitable access for LGBTI people

GOAL 2: Proactively address needs of older LGBTI people

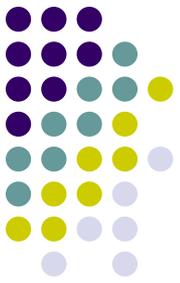
GOAL 3: Deliver LGBTI-inclusive services

GOAL 4: Skilled and competent workforce

GOAL 5: (Older) LGBTI people engaged in planning,
delivery and evaluation of services

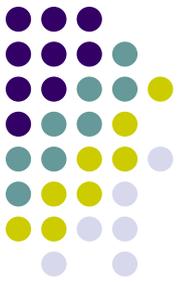
GOAL 6: Research

LGBTI Sensitivity Training



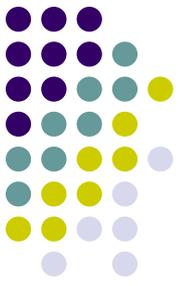
JUDGE

Catholic Teaching



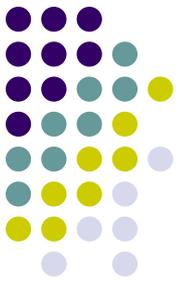
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics (Persona Humana)* (29 December 1975), #8.
- CDF. *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (Homosexualitatis Problema)* (1 October 1986).
- CDF. *Some Considerations Concerning the Response to Legislative Proposals on the Non-Discrimination Of Homosexual Persons* (1992).
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2357-2359, 2396 (1994; revised in 1997 with an alteration to #2358).
- Pontifical Council for the Family. *Family, Marriage and 'De Facto' Unions* (26 July 2000).
- CDF. *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons* (3 June 2003).

Catholic Teaching (cont'd)



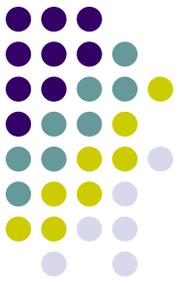
- 1) There are persons with a stable homosexual orientation.
 - There are indeed “homosexuals who are definitely such.” (*Declaration*, #8)
- 2) Being homosexual is not a sin.
 - “The particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin.” (*Letter*, #3)
- 3) Homosexual persons have human dignity and human rights.
 - “Homosexual persons, as human persons, have the same rights as all persons, including the right of not being treated in a manner which offends their personal dignity.” (*Non-Discrimination*, #12)

Catholic Teaching (cont'd)

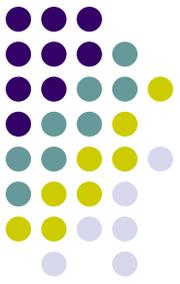


- 4) The Catholic Church commits itself to the pastoral care of homosexual persons.
 - “The phenomenon of homosexuality... is a proper focus for the Church’s pastoral activity. It thus requires of her ministers attentive study, active concern and honest, theologically well-balanced counsel.” (*Letter, #2*)
- 5) Homosexual sexual intercourse is morally wrong.
 - “A person engaging in homosexual behaviour acts immorally. To choose someone of the same sex for one’s sexual activity is to annul the rich symbolism and meaning, not to mention the goals, of the Creator’s sexual design. Homosexual activity is not a complementary union, able to transmit life; and so it thwarts the call to a life of that form of self-giving which the Gospel says is the essence of Christian living.... When homosexual persons engage in homosexual activity they confirm within themselves a disordered sexual inclination which is essentially self-indulgent.” (*Letter, #7*)

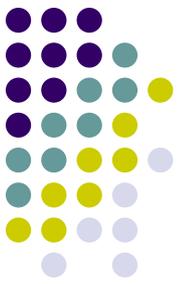
Catholic Teaching (cont'd)



- 6) Being homosexual is itself objectively disordered.
 - “Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.”
(*Letter*, #3)
- 7) There should not be legal recognition of homosexual unions.
 - “Legal recognition of homosexual unions... would mean... the approval of deviant behaviour.” (*Considerations*, 11)



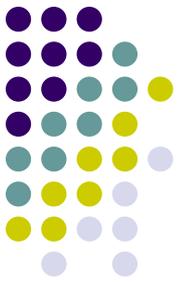
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What should we do?

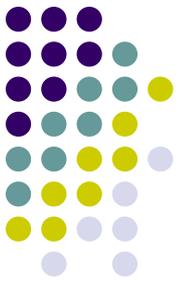
- If there were external LGBTI sensitivity trainers you did not know well, I would not invite them to deliver training in your organisation.
- If train-the-trainer sessions were available, I would send two senior staff and ask them to prepare and deliver training in your organisation.
- Some messages for staff training:
 - All people including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex will be cared for with respect, compassion and sensitivity.
 - What behaviours or attitudes might constitute homophobia or transphobia? These behaviours will not be tolerated.
 - What to do if you encounter homophobia or transphobia.

What should we do? (cont'd)



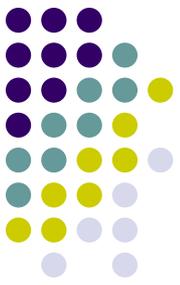
- Decide on a case-by-case basis about shared accommodation for same-sex couples.
- Affirm whatever is positive in same-sex relationships.
- Call transgender persons by their desired name and identify them by their desired gender.
- Where appropriate, provide appropriate support for depression or anxiety.
- Advance Care Planning (including the appointment of a substitute decision maker) can be very important for LGBTI people.
- Offer pastoral care and spiritual care.

Pope Francis and Diego Neria Lejárraga



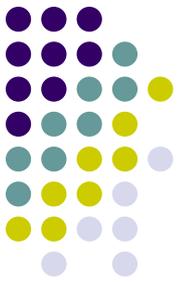
- 48-year-old Spaniard
- a devout, practising Catholic
- a transman who had gender reassignment surgery 8 years ago
- his bishop was supportive of him
- a priest called him the “daughter of the devil”
- other parishioners told him that he shouldn’t receive Communion
- he wrote to Pope Francis to ask if there was room in the Church for him

Pope Francis and Diego Neria Lejárraga



- the phone rang on 8 December 2014
- “Soy el Papa Francesco”
- “God loves all his children, however they are; you are a son of God, who accepts you exactly as you are. Of course you are a son of the Church!”
- Pope Francis invited Diego with his fiancée Macarena to meet him at the Vatican: “If you have no money, when you’re both here I’ll give you an envelope to cover your expenses...”

Pope Francis and Diego Neria Lejárraga



- Pope Francis met them on 24 January 2015.
- Diego did not give details of the meeting, insisting it was private.
- It is reported that the Pope hugged him.
- Diego did say, “The meeting was a wonderful, intimate, unique experience that changed my life. Now I am finally at peace.”