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**INTERRUPTING THE SILENCE: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY TO
TRANSFORM A JUVENILE JUSTICE CULTURE FOR LESBIAN, GAY,
BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUESTIONING & INTERSEX (LGBTQI)
YOUTH**

by

Dawn N. McRae

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirement

For the degree of
Doctor of Education

at

Rowan University
December 9, 2015

Dissertation Chair: Ane Turner Johnson, PhD

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation in memory of my sister, Jessica Ashley McRae.

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my sincerest thanks and gratitude to my dissertation committee: Dr. Ane Turner Johnson, Dr. Gloria Hancock, and Dr. Nadine Connell. Dr. Johnson, your knowledge and expertise in research has helped me to become a better student and researcher. Dr. J., YOU ROCK!!! I am forever grateful to have had you as my Chairperson.

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I thank the participants of this study who opened their homes and shared their perspectives about LGBTQI youth issues in the juvenile justice system.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Juvenile Justice Commission, Research Review Board for allowing me to conduct this research study.

Abstract

Dawn N. McRae

INTERRUPTING THE SILENCE: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY TO
TRANSFORM A JUVENILE JUSTICE CULTURE FOR LESBIAN, GAY,
BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUESTIONING, AND INTERSEX (LGBTQI)
YOUTH

2015-2016

Ane Turner Johnson, PhD

Doctor of Education

This action research (AR) study explored practitioners' knowledge of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI) youth issues in a juvenile justice setting. A research and service approach was employed to develop a LGBTQI policy and training. This study was motivated by three research questions. Does sensitivity training increase practitioner knowledge concerning LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice? What are the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting? How can the findings of this study improve support networks for LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting? To examine these questions, pre-test and post-test data were obtained from (N=164) practitioners and interviews were conducted with (N=16) practitioners. The results revealed that practitioner knowledge about LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice increased. The results further indicated that demographic factors were not good predictors of such knowledge increase. Participant narratives highlighted and contested inequalities concerning the care and treatment, climatic conditions and affirming networks for LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system. Implications for policy, practice, and research were discussed.

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Chapter 1

Juvenile Justice Institutions in the United States

In 2011, there were 61,423 juveniles who were committed to a juvenile justice facility as part of a court ordered disposition in the United States (Sickmund, Sladky, Kang, & Puzzanchera, 2013). Statewide in New Jersey, there were 1005 detained juveniles who were awaiting a court hearing, adjudication, disposition or placement elsewhere (Sickmund, Sladky, Kang, & Puzzanchera, 2013). Of those 1005 juveniles, 969 resided in government run facilities, while the remainder was placed in private facilities (Sickmund, Sladky, Kang, & Puzzanchera, 2013). Further, 930 of those detained were identified as male and 75 as female (Sickmund, Sladky, Kang, & Puzzanchera, 2013). Consequently, youth are assigned to facilities based on their anatomical sex, not their gender identity.

Juvenile justice institutions serve to fulfill a juvenile's most important needs (i.e. socialization, housing, food, and services aimed at sustenance or rehabilitation). However, these institutions have not committed to increasing practitioners' understanding of the social realities of varying client groups (Phillips, McMillen, Sparks, & Ueberle, 1997). Juvenile justice institutions were established to protect juvenile offenders from an adult prison population. They sought to focus on rehabilitation to redirect youthful offenders from a future life of crime (Macallair, 1993; Weijers, 1999). Based on the legal doctrine and Latin term *parens patriae*, the state has the authority to serve as the guardian or parent of youth with anti-social behaviors in a juvenile justice system (Macallair, 1993; Mears, Cochran, Stults, Greenman, Bhati, & Greenwald, 2014; Weijers, 1999). Institutions shared the desire to nurture and rehabilitate youth as opposed to imposing

punishment. This approach was customary, with the ultimate goal to guide these youth toward life as responsible, law-abiding citizens (Macallair, 1993; Mears et al., 2014; Weijers, 1999). Bickel (2010) posited that juvenile justice institutions were not merely responsible for regulating the behavior of juveniles accused of wrongdoing or rehabilitating juveniles in need. Instead, institutions were designed to provide the social locations to which juveniles were detained, and were regarded as different and unequal (Bickel, 2010; Mears et al., 2014; Weijers, 1999).

The conventional research on juvenile justice is defined by existing paradigms of rehabilitation and punishment (Bickel, 2010; Mears et al., 2014; Weijers, 1999). In 1824, the first juvenile justice facility was erected in New York; subsequently, other states began to build their own (Mears, Shollenberger, Willson, Owens, & Butts, 2010; Weijers, 1999). In 1899, the first juvenile court was established in Cook County, Illinois (Mears et al, 2010; Weijers, 1999). During the 1960s, a number of Supreme Court cases led to protecting processes in juvenile courts to provide juveniles with the same due process rights as adult offenders (Mears et al, 2010; Weijers, 1999). These procedural changes focused less on the “best interest” of the juvenile and more on reprimanding them in the same manner as adults (Mear et al, 2010; Weijers, 1999). The deinstitutionalization movement of the 1970s saw the implementation of many changes in how children were processed in the juvenile court system and in correctional institutions. These changes were still not in the best interest of the child; rather, they facilitated confrontation and combativeness among court practitioners (Mears et al., 2014; Smith, 2005; Weijers, 1999). Several lawsuits challenged the policies and conditions of juvenile institutions through allegations of child mistreatment and neglect, based on a system that was

modeled for the adult offender. Deinstitutionalization of status offenses restricted juvenile offenses from becoming adult criminal court matters (Nagin, Piquero, Scott, & Steinberg, 2006; Mears et al., 2010; Mears et al., 2014; Smith, 2005; Weijers, 1999). As a result, a series of goals emerged that reshaped the landscape of the juvenile justice system.

In the 1980s, new laws aimed at increasing the punishment of juveniles emerged due to the escalation in violent crime committed by youth (Nagin, Piquero, Scott, & Steinberg, 2006; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006; Weijers, 1999). States across the country began to change the purpose clauses of their juvenile code, with some making punishment the primary objective (Nagin, Piquero, Scott, & Steinberg, 2006; Mears, 2010; Mears et al., 2014; Weijers, 1999). Within the span of 100 years, juvenile justice systems transformed from a focus on rehabilitation and the best interest of the juvenile to a more formal, adversarial, and punitive posture (Nagin, Piquero, Scott, & Steinberg, 2006; Mears et al, 2010; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006; Weijers, 1999).

Butts and Mears (2001) posited that the most effective juvenile justice facilities were grounded in established principles of effective interventions. Over time, huge shifts in operational processes occurred that created more effective approaches to address juvenile crime (Butts & Mears, 2001; Macallair, 1993; Mears et al., 2014; Smith, 2005). These shifts occurred as a result of the number of emotional, environmental, and psychological issues carried by youth into the juvenile justice system (Butts & Mears, 2001; Macallair, 1993; Mears et al., 2014; Smith, 2005). Consequently, many changes within the system were required to ensure that juveniles received adequate care and were protected from the perpetuation of harm to themselves or others (Butts & Mears, 2001;

Macallair, 1993; Mears et al., 2014; Weijers, 1999). These revised rehabilitative efforts ranged from: a focus on the criminogenic needs of youth, an emphasis on cognitive-behavioral treatment, the development of customized intervention strategies, and the provision of comprehensive re-entry services upon release (Butts & Mears, 2001; Howell & Lipsey, 2012; Macallair, 1993; Mears et al., 2014; Nagin, Piquero, Scott, & Steinberg, 2006; Smith, 2005). Thus, to ensure that these interventions were effectively executed, juvenile justice organizations sought to hire individuals who embraced the organizational culture and climate (Butts & Mears, 2001).

Factors such as culture and climate are believed to be central to the efficacy and success of different types of organizations (Glisson & Green, 2006; Moos, 2003). Nonetheless, the culture and climate of juvenile justice institutions are overtly punitive and restrictive due to an ideology that juvenile justice facilities were established to incarcerate or confine as opposed to rehabilitate youth (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Lambert, Hogan & Griffin, 2007; Wilber, Ryan, & Marksamer, 2006). The relationship between juvenile justice organizations and their culture and climate is an important one because it sets the stage for future progress toward service outcomes, staff attitudes, and staff retention (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hemmelgan, Glisson, & Dukes, 2001; Lambert, Hogan & Griffin, 2007; Wilber et al., 2006). Staff burnout has negatively affected the quality of services provided to youth in juvenile justice settings (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hemmelgan et al., 2001; Lambert, Hogan & Griffin, 2007). Such burnout is a result of perceived danger from youth, role stress, staff shortages, low morale, costs, low pay, and increased accountability (Hemmelgan et al., 2001; Lambert, Hogan & Griffin, 2007).

Lee (2002) believed that diverse individuals have identifiable cultures that influence expected behaviors of members within that culture, and diverse cultures influence the climate of an organization. In juvenile justice settings, the cultural backgrounds of juvenile justice practitioners vary and their roles are perceived by some as insignificant because the climate is contextually ambiguous (Moos, 2003). The dynamics between the external groups that shape the institutional infrastructure and the leadership that pilots the shift in the organizational climate make service delivery challenging for juvenile justice practitioners, especially where vulnerable populations are concerned (Glisson & Green, 2006; Heck, Flentje, & Cochran, 2013; Moos, 2003).

Juvenile justice practitioners spend a substantial amount of time working with youth, both individually and in groups, to encourage positive personal and social change (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003). Most of these staff are paraprofessionals and are not trained therapists, counselors, or teachers. There is evidence to suggest that these roles in the traditional sense are inappropriate for juvenile care workers (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003; National Mental Health Association, 2005). Juvenile justice institutions that govern with breakdowns in continuity and consistency undermine operational effectiveness. This subsequently influences practitioners to respond carelessly to those external groups that are forced to conform to the organizational composition (Glisson & Green, 2006).

Juvenile Justice and LGBTQI Youth

Throughout the United States, the number of sexual minority youth adjudicated to the juvenile justice system is prevalent (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hunt & Moodie–Mills, 2012; Irvine, 2010; Mountz, 2010; Paraschiv, 2013; Squatriglia, 2007; Wilber et

al., 2012). This population includes those youth who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning or Intersex (LGBTQI). Within the juvenile justice system, this population has been the most disenfranchised, invisible, and complex to serve because juvenile justice organizations lack an understanding of LGBTQI youth developmental experiences (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hunt & Moodie–Mills, 2012; Katz, 2014; Phillips et al., 1997; Snapp, Hoenig, Fields, & Russell, 2015). LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system routinely experience harassment and abuse; these experiences are magnified because juvenile justice practitioners fail to dismiss their personal biases concerning sexual orientation and gender identity (Hahn, 2004; Phillips et al., 1997). All youth have a constitutional right to safety as wards of the state. However, the constitutional rights of LGBTQI youth are often violated at higher rates than non-LGBTQI youth (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hahn, 2004; Majd, Marksamer, & Reyes, 2009; Squatriglia, 2007).

Recent studies show that 77.9% of LGBTQI youth have frequently heard remarks such as *faggot* or *dyke* in school (Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz, 2009; Hunt & Moodie–Mills, 2012; Majd, Marksamer, & Reyes, 2009; Snapp, Hoenig, Fields, & Russell, 2015). Nearly 63.7% were verbally harassed at school because of their sexual orientation (Greytak et al., 2009; Snapp, Hoenig, Fields, & Russell, 2015). LGBTQI youth were four times more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to attempt suicide; 65.3% had been sexually harassed (Greytak et al., 2009; Proctor & Groze, 1994). Nearly two-thirds (64.3%) of LGBTQI youth felt unsafe in their schools because of their sexual orientation (Greytak et al., 2009; Snapp, Hoenig, Fields, & Russell, 2015). In addition, increased levels of victimization were related to increased levels of depression and anxiety in

LGBTQI youth, as well as decreased levels of self-esteem (Greytak et al., 2009; Hetrick & Martin, 1987). Many LGBTQI youth skip school to avoid victimization, only to find themselves facing truancy assault offenses (Keating & Remson, 2013; Snapp, Hoenig, Fields, & Russell, 2015). Being “out” in school had positive and negative repercussions for LGBTQI youth students. While being out was related to higher levels of victimization, it also contributed to higher levels of psychological well-being (Greytak et al., 2009; Pérez Ambriz, 2015; Snapp, Hoenig, Fields, & Russell, 2015). These facts are rooted in the belief that LGBTQI youth violated socially constructed gender roles by failing to conform to stereotypical notions of what it means to be a male or female (Greytak et al., 2009).

Accordingly, when LGBTQI youth become incarcerated, they enter into a world of even greater intolerance and a climate of enforced security that overrides their need for treatment and positive growth experiences (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006). LGBTQI youth represent approximately 15% of youth detained in juvenile correctional settings (Bosley & Asbridge, 2012; Hunt & Moodie–Mills, 2012). These youth are disproportionately charged with, and adjudicated for, sex offenses that the juvenile justice system typically overlooks when heterosexual youth are involved (Wilber, Brown, & Celestine, 2012). Courts have also ordered LGBTQI youth to undergo sex offender treatment programs based merely on their sexual orientation or gender identity (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Keating & Remson, 2013; Wilber et al., 2012). Similarly, LGBTQI youth are sometimes required to participate in reparative therapy sessions or programs that use deceitful measures in an attempt to force them to change their sexual orientation or gender identity (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Greytak et al., 2009; Keating & Remson, 2013; Wilber et

al., 2012). Markedly, these societal pressures to conform create negative emotional and psychological risks that increase delinquent behavior (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Greytak et al., 2009; Hahn, 2004; Hunt & Moodie–Mills, 2012; Keating & Remson, 2013; Wilber et al., 2012).

In juvenile justice settings, the social stigma attached to living as a sexual minority intensifies when compounded with negative attitudes and behaviors from practitioners who are charged with providing a safe and supportive environment (Hahn, 2004; Hunt & Moodie–Mills, 2012; Wilber et al., 2012). There are few mental health professionals that possess the expertise needed to adequately address the unique issues of LGBTQI youth. There are even fewer resources for families who experience conflict over their child’s sexual orientation or gender identity (Grafsky & Nguyen, 2015; Ryan, 2010; Wilber et al., 2006). Several report findings indicate that juvenile justice practitioners across the country are aware of only a limited number of programs and resources, thus, undermining LGBTQI youths’ prospects for rehabilitation (Hunt & Moodie–Mills, 2012; Nagin et al., 2006; Wilber et al., 2012). The lack of trained professionals and appropriate programs and placements impels LGBTQI youth deeper into the juvenile justice system and subjects them to unnecessary punitive treatment (Hahn, 2004; Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Phillips et al., 1997). Moreover, without proper training and policies, juvenile justice professionals may potentially make inappropriate decisions regarding the classification and housing of LGBTQI youth (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hahn, 2004; Irvine, 2010). Armed with appropriate policies, training, and support, juvenile justice facilities can provide clear standards and promote sound practices for competent and

equitable services for LGBTQI youth (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hahn, 2004; Hunt & Moodie–Mills, 2012; Irvine, 2010; Phillips et al., 1997).

Juvenile justice practitioners struggle to effectively serve LGBTQI youth and risk imposing unfair treatment despite their legal and ethical duty to ensure fair and unbiased services (Hahn, 2004; Meyer, 2003; Phillips et al., 1997). Youth thrive when their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression are affirmed and respected. Conversely, the experience of rejection, hostility, and harassment pose greater threats to the physical and mental health outcomes of youth development (Hahn, 2004; Meyer, 2003).

Problem Statement

For many years, LGBTQI youth have struggled with social isolation, family rejection, damaged self-esteem, anxiety, depression, violence, school failure, truancy, prostitution, substance abuse, and suicide (Cochran & Mays, 2000; Greytak et al., 2009; Hershberger & D’Augelli, 1995; Keating & Remson, 2013; Radkowsky & Siegel, 1997; Ryan, et al, 2010; Snapp, Hoenig, Fields, & Russell, 2015; Wichstrom & Hegna, 2003; Wilber et al., 2006). These pressures are exacerbated by the social marginalization and stigmatization that is communicated by juvenile justice professionals charged with the care and custody of the LGBTQI population (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hahn, 2004; Wilber et al., 2006). LGBTQI youth are routinely exposed to differential treatment, are denied appropriate services, and are not protected from derogatory name calling, demeaning and insulting comments, threats of physical or emotional violence, or other acts of harassment (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hahn, 2004; Snapp, Hoenig, Fields, & Russell, 2015). LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting have been victims of increased societal prejudice due to their sexual orientation or gender identity (Phillips et

al., 1997; Smith, Maume, & Reiner, 1997). Indeed, institutions have perpetuated misconceptions concerning this population which negatively impacts service delivery (Cameron, 2004; Hahn, 2004; Logie, Bridge, & Bridge, 2007; Smith, Maume, & Reiner, 1997).

At first glance, it may appear that these issues are strongly related to the natural succession of adolescent development. However, cultural realities that influence the organizational climate strongly affect human behaviors, which then impact organizational operations (Cameron, 2004; Logie, Bridge, & Bridge, 2007). Effectively integrating services and supports for LGBTQI youth will require a high degree of cultural competence for practitioners because of the complex issues faced by this population. Practitioners will need to identify and address factors that unjustifiably assume that these youth are deviant and pose a danger to others (Hahn, 2004; Smith, Maume, & Reiner, 1997). Most juvenile justice practitioners fail to recognize that to ensure power relations must remain authentic; this requires that they examine their perspectives on those contextual factors that guide their approach to certain social issues (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Moos, 2003).

Successful leadership in a juvenile justice setting requires trust, respect, and competency (Rowley & Sherman, 2003). It is imperative that juvenile justice professionals possess the competency to work with LGBTQI youth, and understand that this population requires a different level of programming than non-LGBTQI youth (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006). In today's culturally diverse environment, juvenile justice practitioners are increasingly engaged in situations for which there are no commonly accepted paradigms for effectiveness (Ohlott, Chrobot-Mason, & Dalton, 2004). Moos

(2003) posited that highly cohesive and structured work environments that lack autonomy leads to conformity and an unwillingness to speak out and challenge the majority.

Heterosexism and homophobia produces a fear that one's own sexuality may be questioned by others based on a guilt-by-association process (D'Augelli, 2003). Unless juvenile justice practitioners reevaluate their personal biases and prejudices, they will never understand the life-threatening consequences that may result from the emotional harassment that LGBTQI youth encounter while in juvenile justice settings (Hahn, 2004; Phillips et al., 1997; Smith, Maume, & Reiner, 1997).

In addition, it is important to examine this topic from these perspectives in order to: a) understand the influences of family, peers, and relationships of LGBTQI youth; b) explore the connotations attached to being LGBTQI; and c) examine the social norms, policies, and laws created by this social issue. The examination of these perspectives will better inform juvenile justice practitioners on the social stigmatization that marginalizes this growing population. Additionally, understanding these perspectives will introduce culturally relevant pedagogy into the juvenile justice system.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile justice setting, specifically in New Jersey. LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice settings are disproportionately labeled pathological, criminalized, and admonished by the broader society's perception of what is normal (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006). This study was conducted using a mixed methods approach. This method of inquiry was selected because it included pilot-testing a training curriculum and conducting interviews to obtain a

holistic and detailed interpretation of juvenile justice practitioners' attitudes concerning LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice. The efficacy of the model was ascertained based on a comparison of preexisting pre-test and post-test data to determine if practitioner competence concerning LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice increased. In addition, interviews were conducted to investigate the nature and extent of practitioner understanding of LGBTQI youth issues within the organizational context. The findings of the study will help to improve policy and practice as it relates to one of America's vulnerable populations.

Research Questions

The primary research questions for this action research study are as follows:

- 1) Does sensitivity training increase practitioner knowledge concerning LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice?
- 2) What are the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?
- 3) How can the findings improve support networks for LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?

To address these research questions, the following sub-questions were formulated:

- a) What are the factors that influence the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the care and treatment of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?
- b) Are these perceived attitudes embedded into the organizational culture and climate?
- c) Are there measures to affirm support networks for LGBTQI youth?

Theoretical Lenses

The theories framing this study are found in social justice literature and queer legal theories. Social justice theory views justice as fairness (Rawls, 2001), deconstructing existing logic, portraying alternative perspectives, and constructing systems and processes for equality (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Freire, 1970; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002; Van den Bos, 2003; Vera & Speight, 2003). Viewing this study through a social justice lens contributes to a desire to take action toward combating injustices that perpetually marginalize LGBTQI youth in and out of the juvenile justice system. Moreover, queer legal theory signifies a self-conscious and self-sustaining body of legal scholarship that voices and pursues the interest of sexual minorities (Valdes, 1995). Highlighting the legal constructs that distort and make problematic sexual orientation is important because of the pervasive systematic ignorance ingrained in the justice system (Valdes, 1995). These theoretical frameworks were selected because they are useful approaches that can influence the manner in which LGBTQI youth are perceived and they can assist juvenile justice practitioners deciphering the meaning of the identity construction and orientation of LGBTQI youth.

The goal of this study was to formulate the most appropriate course of action to improve the experiences for LGBTQI youth in a juvenile justice setting. Social justice embodies the vision of an equitable society by which all members are physically and psychologically safe (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002; Van den Bos, 2003; Vera & Speight, 2003). Eliminating the hierarchical and unequal social groupings that function at the status quo changes how juvenile justice practitioners impart their beliefs and practices toward marginalized and oppressed groups of people.

According to Tatum (1997), dominant groups do not like to be reminded of the existence of inequality because it is easier for them to justify their decision-making to avoid awareness of the issues. Therefore, to promote progressive institutional changes in support of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, the juvenile justice system must reduce the social isolation that maintains a colonized society (Tatum, 1997).

According to Memmi (1965), this void promotes social challenges that could potentially damage a juvenile's developmental experience. Providing LGBTQI youth with a voice through visible LGBT supportive initiatives addresses the challenges they face in juvenile justice facilities. Juvenile justice institutions can foster positive institutional climates that encourage diversity and multi-cultural social norms in order to promote inclusion, exclusive of the one size fits all way of thinking, all while supporting individual, social, and advocacy agendas (Hahn, 2004).

In addition, queer legal theory is a conscious effort to transcend and reconfigure outdated perceptions of identity and identity-based politics (Valdes, 1995). Queer legal theory seeks to overcome divisiveness and debilitation of legal biases based on historical and situational association of sexual minorities (Valdes, 1995). Moreover, the causes of division and differences are interrupted and diverted when practitioners begin to deconstruct and destabilize stereotypes and myths concerning sexual orientation and gender identity in the criminal justice system. Queer legal theory is positioned as a race-inclusive, class-inclusive, gender-inclusive, and sexual orientation-inclusive operation that admonishes degradation (Valdes, 1995). This theoretical framework was selected because it demonstrates how various populations are stimulated by the dominant social and legal forces that follow the status quo of repudiation and stigmatization.

Researcher Worldview

The philosophical underpinning of this action research study is an advocacy and participatory worldview. This worldview maintains that research inquiry should be connected to politics and a political agenda that empowers marginalized people (Craig, 2009). The advocacy and participatory worldview traces back to the works of Marx, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas, and Freire (Neuman, 2000) and, more recently, Heron and Reason (1997) and Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998). The advocacy and participatory point of view emphasizes specific issues that are socially important, such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation (Craig, 2009). Thus, these issues are labeled as the focal point of the study. Through advocacy research, participants become aware of the issues while advancing the change agenda to help improve the lives of others (Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998).

Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) further posited that the advocacy and participatory form of inquiry is recursive and focuses on bringing about change in practices. This form of inquiry begins with an important issue about problems in society and helps to liberate people from the constraints that shape the status quo. It is emancipationist and aimed to create political debate and discussion so that change will occur (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). More importantly, the advocacy and participatory worldview are collaborative because they involve and engage others as active collaborators in the discourse (Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997). This worldview brings about an understanding of one's own practice, how to make one's practice better, how to accommodate outside change in one's practice, and how to change the outside order to improve one's practice (Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998).

Theoretically and Philosophically-Founded Action

Cultural sensitivity training is recognized as an effective practice that is used to change competency levels of practitioners. Sensitivity training provides a basis to bring systematic cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural skill, and cultural encounters to the forefront of a growing phenomenon (Delphin-Rittmon, Andres-Hyman, Flanagan, & Davidson, 2013). Delphin-Rittmon, et al. (2013) and Campinha-Bacote (2003) described cultural competence as the belief that people should not only appreciate and recognize other cultural groups, but also be able to work with them effectively. Accordingly, a modified version of the National Association of Social Workers (2006) *Moving the Margins: Training Curriculum for LGBTQ Youth in Out-of-Home Care* was a viable framework to teach the concept of cultural sensitivity to juvenile justice practitioners. This model encompassed a process designed to enhance cultural competence in order to build practitioner capability, awareness and skill to better serve and respond to the needs of LGBTQI youth. The National Association of Social Workers (2006) suggested that this model be viewed as a process and not an endpoint toward which one continuously strives to achieve the ability to effectively work with an individual, family, or community from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Despite the cultural context, a critical factor to engage relates to the manner by which juvenile justice practitioners bring significance to adolescent developmental processes that may require them to challenge their personal biases. From the social justice lens, it was essential that practitioners supported the differences of all juveniles who entered the juvenile justice system. Moreover, working from the queer legal scholarship perspective, the practitioners captured and understood linkages of relegation that

extended to other groups and generated one conduit to address future encounters that must be nurturing and empowering to LGBTQI youth.

These theoretical frameworks were used as the bases to implement cultural sensitivity training to juvenile justice practitioners. The training drew out greater discussion concerning homophobia and heterosexism in a juvenile justice setting. Research supports that the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth is seen as undesirable and abnormal by the dominant heterosexual society (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hahn, 2004; Hunt & Moodie-Mills, 2012; Mallon & Wonoroff, 2006). Systematic changes are necessary to ensure the proper care of one of society's most vulnerable populations (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hahn, 2004; Hunt & Moodie-Mills, 2012). Therefore, educating practitioners about the social barriers faced by vulnerable groups such as LGBTQI youth may serve as an exemplar for a just society (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Hahn, 2004; Hunt & Moodie-Mills, 2012).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was its attempt to bridge the gap between what is and what should be. As a social worker with a social constructivist ideology, I am bound to advocate, empower, and foster a sense of connectedness to a person(s) or community exposed to social or systematic ills. This research assisted me in performing these roles, as discussed in the study. Social work is a profession committed to the quest for social justice. The goal of social justice is to enhance the quality of life and develop the full potential of individuals, groups and communities. This research was intended to encourage greater discussion among juvenile justice practitioners regarding their perceived attitudes about LGBTQI youth in a juvenile justice setting.

This study is a valuable resource for juvenile justice institutions because they will benefit from the exchange of ideas and experiences shared by juvenile justice practitioners. In addition, the findings support current policy to ensure adequate training of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization and marginalization on LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice settings. LGBTQI youth will benefit from the study because of enhanced knowledge on the part of practitioners concerning the negative, damaging developmental outcomes of youth living as a sexual minority. Accordingly, these inferences are treated as a baseline to improve policy, practice, and research concerning LGBTQI youth in New Jersey.

Policy

The purpose for implementing policy measures concerning LGBTQI youth was to ensure that the agency provided the highest quality of services to juveniles regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The policy measures that had evolved sought to meet the diverse needs of juveniles in a juvenile correctional setting in New Jersey. Future policy provisions may include developing and implementing a resource guide for juvenile justice practitioners to identify community-based resources for re-entry needs.

Practice

This study also had implications that impacted the delivery of service to all agency facilities and personnel, as well as the juveniles. The New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission's current Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI) policy outlines operational provisions that are intended to support those responsible for providing culturally sensitive, high quality care and treatment to

juveniles. These operational provisions specify developing and implementing a curriculum of initial and two-year refresher training for all employees, interns and contracted employees who may come into contact with juveniles. The curriculum covers all provisions of the LGBTQI policy, with an emphasis on employee responsibility, juvenile rights, the juvenile grievance process, and sensitivity training on effective and professional communication with LGBTQI and gender nonconformance juveniles. That being said, the creation of an LGBTQI department and the recruitment of employees to serve as LGBTQI liaisons in each facility endorses adequate service delivery designed to coordinate activities and programs that cultivate LGBTQI cultural awareness both internally and externally.

Research

Research on LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting is limited (Radkowsky & Siegel, 1997). The preponderance of past research concerning this population derived from schools and child welfare agencies (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006). Consequently, additional research is needed to understand the perceived attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners in this area of scholarship. The urgency to aggregate data from juvenile justice practitioners determines the moderating, mediating, or confounding variables that are responsible for maintaining marginalizing and stigmatizing attitudes toward LGBTQI youth in a correctional setting. In addition, future research may involve discourse with LGBTQI youth to determine their experiences in the juvenile justice system. It may also involve the exploration of privately run juvenile justice facilities to discover how they are faring with regard to the attitudes and perceptions of juvenile

justice practitioners concerning LGBTQI youth, as well as the investigation of institutional heterosexism in the policies and practices in juvenile justice institutions.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was designed to understand LGBTQI youth within the context of juvenile justice institutions, to evaluate the services available to LGBTQI youth, and to discover practitioners' perceptions about improving current practice to offer affirming treatment services to LGBTQI youth. However, there are several limitations that impacted the findings of the study. The first limitation was the absence of an LGBTQI youth voice. This limitation was significant because sexual orientation and gender identity are not readily identifiable unless LGBTQI individuals desire to disclose such personal information. Consequently, at the start of the study, there were no known assessment tools to evaluate gender identity.

The second limitation was acting in the role of a practitioner-researcher. Reason & Tolbert proclaimed that second-person researchers have dual roles (as cited in Kinsler, 2010). Practitioner-researchers function as researchers, but share the role of practitioner with those they are studying in the research process. Second-person researchers converge with the targeted population to build the framework for all aspects of the study from start to finish. In the case of this study, this limitation induced research bias because my personal beliefs and values are reflected in the study. To address this limitation, I sought the assistance of critical friends and professionals in the field to ensure that my personal views did not taint the research findings.

Another limitation was in the research design. The explanatory design was administered in two phases; it required time to implement because the second phase

could not be specified before the first phase was completed. Within this design, the criteria to select interview participants were decided after implementing the pre-test and post-test.

Other noteworthy limitations were: determining if the training increased the practitioners' knowledge of LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice, ascertaining whether the participants felt pressured to answer questions, and deciding whether the phrasing of interview questions affected participant responses. A final notable limitation was verifying whether the social threat limitation infiltrated the validity of the study through the completion of the pre- and post-tests and answering the interview questions. To address these issues, I reevaluated the research design and formulated a new research strategy that allowed the study to be carried out in its intended timeframe.

Overview of the Dissertation

This study was designed to understand LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice, to evaluate the services available to them, and to discern practitioners' philosophies on improving current practice within the juvenile justice system. Chapter two of this document explores the scholarship of authors who share similar research interests in the field of juvenile justice and/or concerning LGBTQI youth. In addition, this chapter highlights emerging themes relevant to the topics of interest. Chapter three of this document outlines the methods needed to carry out the study. The selected data collection method for this action research study was a sequential mixed methods research design using pre- and post-tests and interviews. The pre- and post-tests were employed to obtain baseline data at pre-test and to determine if practitioner knowledge of LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice increased at post-test. In addition, interviews were conducted to

gain insight into the unconscious behaviors and predispositions of practitioners. Chapter four of this document offers the findings of the study based on the sequential mixed methods design. Lastly, chapter five draws out the conclusions and implications for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review & Context of the Study

A summation of published research on juvenile justice and LGBTQI youth is provided in this section. The purpose of this summation is to share the increasing volume of literature concerning the health and well-being of LGBTQI youth. It is also intended to highlight what appear to be inconsistencies and contradictions among research findings in the area of juvenile justice practitioners' attitudes in relation to the care and treatment, climatic conditions, and affirming support networks that play a critical role in youth development. Since only a few studies examined the placement experiences of LGBTQI youth (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Smith, Maume, & Reiner, 1997), I will bring awareness to the inequalities that LGBTQI youth face within juvenile justice settings. I will explore practitioner proficiency to draw attention to juvenile justice practitioners' competence about the issues affecting LGBTQI youth. I will examine social climates to examine juvenile justice practitioners' willingness and ability to supervise LGBTQI youth. Additionally, I will assess affirming networks to underscore the importance of creating mutually supportive linkages that foster positive youth developmental outcomes. At the end of the study, a description of the organizational context will be provided to illustrate the structure and practices in a juvenile justice system.

Practitioner Proficiency

Attitudes

Homophobia is used to describe a set of negative attitudes about homosexuality and is therefore better understood as a prejudice rather than as a phobia or irrational fear as the name implies (Haaga, 1991; Herek, 2004). Attitudes are a key component of

culturally competent practice involving sexual minority youth. Anti-gay attitudes, or homophobia, in practitioners and other treatment/service providers can negatively affect LGBTQI youth in a variety of settings, including health care, mental health, correctional facilities, and other community entities (Crisp & McCave, 2007; Ryan & Futterman, 1998). Evidence exists that demonstrates how anti-gay attitudes influence the perceptions of practitioners concerning disciplinary options within the justice system.

Evident in the literature is that those working with sexual minority clients may lack the necessary training to address their clients' needs. Instruction regarding sexual minorities and transgender issues in many formal education programs for substance abuse counselors is oftentimes limited to five or fewer hours or is completely absent, of concern given that these individuals are responsible for working with sexual minority clients (Eliason, 2000; Mohr et al., 2001). Further, there is a disconnect between training and self-concepts of competence as some who have not received training on lesbian, gay, and bisexual identity development perceive themselves as somewhat competent (Rock et al., 2010). Helping students develop more positive attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual individuals is a first step in preparing therapists to work competently with lesbian, gay, bisexual clients (Eliason, 2000; Long, 1996; Long & Serovich, 2003; Mohr, et al, 2001; Rock et al., 2010).

Experience

Accessing experienced practitioners to work with sexual minority clients is lacking in the United States (Majd, Marksamer, & Reyes, 2009). LGBTQI youth have remained a hidden population in the juvenile justice system, where approximately 20% of juvenile justice professionals have indicated that they have never worked with sexual

minority clients and lack awareness concerning sexual orientation and gender identity (Majd et al., 2009). This lack of awareness may cause sexual minority clients to withhold information about their sexual orientation for safety reasons. Sexual minority youth experiences in the juvenile justice system have been described as egregious and the professionals who manage such facilities have been found to dismiss the verbal, physical, and sexual abuse with which these youth often contend (Curtain, 2002; Heck, Flentje, & Cochran, 2013; Majd et al., 2009). Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth experienced added stressors, which emphasized the need for youth-serving agencies to improve their outreach to and work with the population (Curtain, 2002). Even health care providers have yet to fully develop and disseminate a protocol with which to reach this high risk group. A small minority of gay teens received little to no guidance or education regarding sexual orientation, and several obstacles inhibit the discussion of sexual orientation in medical settings (Allen et al., 1998).

Social Climate

The quality of care provided by juvenile justice systems is tied to the cultures and climates of the bureaucracies that provide the services (Glisson & James, 2002). These bureaucracies develop defensive cultures that create barriers to service and a lack of concern, which leads to resistance to improving service outcomes (Glisson & James, 2002). In addition, these barriers include requirements for extensive documentation of processes, micro-management of all decisions, and conformity to a rigid array of strategies meant to serve as protection against intense public criticism, administrative sanctions, and litigation (Glisson & Green, 2006; Glisson & James, 2002). Consequently, little research is available concerning organizational climate as it relates to

LGBTQI youth (Wilber et al., 2006). Therefore, research specific to juvenile justice organizational policies and supervisory support in relation to working with LGBTQI youth is necessary in order to foster a culturally sensitive work environment that is supportive of diversity (Campinha-Bacote, 2003; Phillips, McMillen, Sparks, & Ueberle, 1997). Poteat (2008) found that an aggressive social climate of individual peer groups accounts for the increased use of homophobic epithets over and above bullying behavior, and that the social climate either reduces or reinforces aggressive behavior and homophobic references toward LGBTQI youth.

Organizational Structure

Institutional discrimination is particularly harmful because it denies LGBTQI youth access to much needed resources. Smith, et al. (1997) discovered that the organizational structure of most prisons is hierarchical while the structure of most juvenile institutions is uniform. The goals of the institution affect the social climate indirectly through the organizational structure, in the area of treatment programs, for instance. Accordingly, the social climate will be affected differently if an institution is primarily treatment-focused or if custody is emphasized more (Smith et al., 1997). Singer (1996) explained that balancing custody and treatment presents many challenges because roles are often conflicting. Gordon (1999) examined staff attitudes toward treatment and punishment in a juvenile correctional facility. Noticeable differences between the attitudes of custodial and treatment staff were disclosed. The treatment staff supported that treatment does, in fact, change offender behavior. Further they felt that punishment does not reduce crime, and that a poor environment and lack of resources were not the primary reasons for juvenile crime (Gordon, 1999).

The roles and responsibilities of juvenile justice practitioners control how treatment is delivered in a juvenile justice facility (Gordon, 1999). Research suggests that custody staff tend to experience a greater degree of role conflict than treatment staff because of the dual expectations that are placed on these individuals. Custody practitioners are more organized regardless of the type of correctional facility. These practitioners place more emphasis on obedience and conformity. This is contradictory to treatment oriented practitioners, who tend to be less rigid (Inderbitzin, 2007). As a result, treatment becomes secondary to custody because inherent to a correctional setting, discipline is underscored (Inderbitzin, 2007). Also worth noting, youth suggested that their experiences with juvenile justice practitioners who work in secure or maximum security facilities tended to be constraining and unpleasant; youth who reside in open units or minimally secure facilities, on the other hand, experienced a more congenial environment (Gordon, 1999; Hepburn & Albonetti, 1980; Langdon, Cosgrave, & Tranah, 2004). Additionally, juvenile practitioners who work in minimum secure facilities have reported more favorable attitudes toward a treatment focused ideology, compared to those who work in secure or maximum security environments (Jurik, 1985; Langdon et al., 2004; Tranah, 2004). Defensive cultures and negative climates that are high in emotional fatigue and role conflict promote reactivity rather than responsiveness to the behavioral and emotional problems of youth (Glisson, 2005).

Affirming Networks

Minimal research explores supportive networks for sexual minority youth through the lens of the youth themselves. Further, existing literature that distinguishes the importance of supports for meeting specific needs of sexual minority youth is limited

(Davis, Saltzburg, & Locke, 2009). Most children are socialized in a homophobic and heterosexist culture that directly and indirectly posits that homosexuality is unnatural, sinful, abnormal, and inferior to heterosexuality, i.e. via churches, schools, media (Slayton & Vogel, 1986). When lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth hear derogatory terms such as faggot and dyke, an awareness of the existence of hatred of gays and lesbians is reinforced in their minds (Zera, 1992). Greater self-acceptance is facilitated by support groups (Proctor & Groze, 1994), exposure to good role models (Gonsiorek, 1988), socialization with other sexual minorities (Cass, 1984), and access to resources concerning homosexuality (Hetrick & Martin, 1987).

Affirmation is essential to the development of sexual minority youth. Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, and Rounds (2002) denoted that if the attitudes of practitioners are not affirmative, then youth development is restricted. Social support in sexual identity development consists of four types of behaviors: (a) emotional support (i.e., caring, trust, listening, and affective behaviors); (b) appraisal support (i.e. positive feedback or affirmation); (c) instrumental support (i.e. aid, labor, and time); and (d) informational support (i.e. advice and suggestions) (DiFulvio, 2011; Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002). Social connectedness is the process of affirming the self, finding others that share similar experiences, and moving toward action (DiFulvio, 2011; Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002). LGBTQI youth who were “in the closet” to their parents often had positive parental relationships because they concealed their sexual orientation. Conversely, those who disclosed their sexual orientation to their parents experienced greater familial conflict (Waldner & Magruder, 1999). Many researchers have examined the consequences of disclosure for lesbian and gay individuals. Disclosing one’s sexual orientation can

sometimes be harmful. Disclosure can lead to the experience of homophobic violence and/or alienation from family and/or loved ones (Cohen & Savin-Williams, 1996).

Social Support

Relationships are essential to LGBTQI youths' acceptance of their marginalized status. Lower levels of victimization and suicide among LGBTQI youth were found in schools that established support groups for such youth, and where youth perceived support from staff (Davis et al., 2009; Goodenow et al., 2006). Group membership provides LGBTQI youth with a sense of belonging as connecting with others like themselves facilitates opportunities to make new meaning of personal struggles and establish supportive social connections (Davis et al., 2009; Goodenow et al., 2006). Such connections help LGBTQI youth resist a gender conforming culture (DiFulvio, 2011; Munoz-Plaza et al., 2002) where they often feel separated and emotionally isolated from their peers, and rejected and unsupported by their families (Grafsky & Nguyen, 2015; Mallon, 1997; Ryan, 2010; Savin-Williams, 1994; Waldner & Magruder, 1999). Consequently, victimization and social support mediates the relationship between sexual orientation and adjustment (Williams et al, 2005). Social support specifically related to sexual orientation may be remarkably significant to the justification of stress effects (Meyer, 2003). As a result, social relationships, with both friends and family, lessened anxiety, depression, and conduct problems for youth who had previously attempted suicide (Rosario et al., 2005). Youth who had disclosed their sexual orientations reported higher family support, less internalized homophobia, and less fear about parental rejection than closeted youth (D'Augelli et al., 2005).

Service Accessibility

Sexual minority youth are often seen by counselors for anxiety, depression, somatic disorders, suicidal behaviors and gender-identity issues (D'Augelli, 2003; Mallon, 2001). In an effort to gain a better understanding of the factors contributing to service accessibility for LGBTQI youth, Acevedo-Polakowich, Bell, Gamache, and Christian (2011) identified societal, provider, youth, and resource-related barriers that affected LGBTQI youths' ability to access needed services and supports. These barriers included negative attitudes, a lack of supportive services, and a dearth of general resources to facilitate service access (Acevedo-Polakowich, et al., 2011).

Youth are fearful about disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity to professionals, given the youths' awareness that many professionals lack the skills or knowledge to meet the needs of lesbian, gay and transgender families (Chapman et al., 2012; Grafsky & Nguyen, 2015; Mallon, 1997; Ryan, 2010). Individuals with more support from within the LGBT community reported lower feelings of distress associated with their sexual orientation (Lewis et al., 2006). Coming out at an earlier age has important implications for practitioners who work with children, youth, and families. It impacts how they educate parents, families, and caregivers about sexual orientation and gender identity, and how services are provided that support this unique population and those whom they affect (Grafsky & Nguyen, 2015; Mallon, 1997; Ryan, 2010; SAMHSA, 2001).

Given the lack of research on sexual minority youth in the justice system, researchers suggested the need to examine both the factors that place them at risk of justice system involvement, and their unique experiences upon entering the system (Majd

et al., 2009; Wilber et al., 2012). Many juvenile justice agencies do not collect information about sexual orientation, thus limiting understanding of how many delinquent youth identify as LGBT (Majd et al., 2009; Wilber et al., 2012). The National Center on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD, 2013) had developed a needs assessment for female juvenile offenders called Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS). This assessment captures information about sexual orientation in the context of relationships. The youth are not asked directly about their sexual orientation, but rather whether they have a significant/special partner; this allows them the choice to disclose whether they have same-gender relationships (NCCD, 2013).

Wilber, et al. (2012) recommended the Model Standards Project's (MSP) as a resource for working with sexual minority youth in the juvenile justice system. The MSP is a national initiative designed to disseminate information regarding professional standards for working with sexual minority youth (Wilber et al, 2012). The MSP makes recommendations to improve treatment services, create an inclusive organizational culture, recruit and support competent caregivers and staff, promote healthy adolescent development, respect privacy and confidentiality, provide appropriate placements, and provide sensitive support services (Wilber et al., 2012).

Role Models

According to 16-24 year old LGBT youth, there are a number of barriers in finding accessible gay or gay affirming role models. These barriers include demographic characteristics (gender and race/ethnicity), problem behavior (alcohol/drug use), psychological distress (anxiety and depressive symptoms), and sexual risk-taking consequences (Bird et al., 2012). Role models identified additional barriers associated

with: fear about coming out or being “outed;” the stigma attached to being a sexual minority; potential discrimination from family, schools, and peers; and societal fears and myths about the dangers of encouraging relationships between older and younger LGBT individuals (Bird et al., 2012).

In another study, graduate students had strong positive attitudes concerning the themes of social justice (race, class, language), but lacked competence and knowledge of issues faced by LGBTQI youth. On the other hand, the students conveyed that their colleagues presented indifferent or unsympathetic subjective norms, as well as barriers toward engaging in LGBT advocacy, including a lack of administrative support (McCabe & Robinson, 2008). Although most heterosexual Americans continue to disapprove of homosexuality, it is the condoning of homophobic practices that exacerbates societal fears, thus prohibiting the fostering of healthy relationships between LGBT youth and adults.

Conclusion

There is a common thread linking all research findings regarding juvenile justice practitioners’ attitudes concerning care and treatment for LGBTQI youth. Dominant systems, such as child welfare, law enforcement, healthcare, education, religion, culture, and the media, labor from a heterosexist belief system (Mallon & Wonoroff, 2006). The literature suggests a general lack of training in the cross-cultural context, illustrating the importance for both administrators and subordinates to be aware of the current issues in this field of study (Rogers & Lopez, 2002; Bernard & Goodyear, 1998; Ladany, Brittain-Powell, & Pannu, 1997).

This literature review provided extensive evidence that suggests that juvenile justice practitioners marginalize and criminalize LGBTQI youth for various reasons and that ignorance and intolerance creates an organizational climate that is not conducive to strengthening their emotional well-being (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006). The research suggested that social connections between individuals and larger institutions are important for the overall health and well-being of LGBTQI individuals (DiFulvio, 2011; Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006; Mallon, 1997; Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002; Rock, Carlson, & McGeorge, 2010). Accordingly, if the attitudes of practitioners are not supportive, then youth development is restricted; thereby further marginalizing this vulnerable population (DiFulvio, 2011; Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006; Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002; Rock, Carlson, & McGeorge, 2010). Practitioners must affirm and validate identity development practices to help LGBTQI youth process their thoughts and feelings and to promote positive youth development (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006).

Context of the Study

The Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) is the sole agency within New Jersey state government with centralized authority for planning, policy development and provision of services in the juvenile justice system (NJJC, 2012). The vision of the JJC is to have juveniles involved in the system accept that positive change is achievable, by helping them realize that their futures are determined by their own actions and commitment to success (NJJC, 2012). However, to ensure that these young people are exposed to role models that will provide the leadership skills necessary to motivate them, to enhance their personal skill development, and to strengthen their levels of self-efficacy (NJJC, 2012),

juvenile justice practitioners are charged with the responsibility to ensure that each youth is provided with a range of services that will best facilitate rehabilitation and reintegration back into the community (NJJC, 2012). Juvenile justice practitioners are comprised of teachers, social workers, corrections officers, youth workers, substance abuse counselors, mental health clinicians, and contracted employees.

Following the adjudication of a juvenile by the court, assignment is made to a custody level and treatment program, based on assessments, juvenile justice and child welfare history, and service needs (NJJC, 2012). Upon intake, youth are classified to determine a level of care and appropriateness of an institutional or a structured non-institutional placement. Institutional placement takes place in secure facilities (NJJC, 2012). These facilities are full-care, secure institutions that provide all services within the secure perimeter, including education, vocational programming, counseling, and medical services. Structured non-institutional placements take place in residential community homes (NJJC, 2012). These homes are designed to provide a less-restrictive setting for youth who do not require a secure setting and demonstrate the ability to accept additional responsibility. At any time, if a youth does not perform well in this setting, he/she is reassigned to another facility, more in accord with the individual's needs and behavior (NJJC, 2012).

The Rehabilitative and Treatment Services Unit is charged with the responsibility to ensure that juveniles are provided with an array of therapeutic interventions that commence upon admission and follow them through discharge. These services cover the treatment spectrum from substance abuse, anger management, life-skills, and mental health services, all designed to meet the therapeutic needs of youth involved in the

juvenile justice system. In addition, this unit is responsible to provide professional development training for juvenile justice practitioners and to ensure that the agency has a professionally trained, knowledgeable, and effective foundation of practitioners to carry out the agency's mission.

The mission of the Juvenile Justice Commission is to lead the reform of the juvenile justice system in New Jersey as mandated by N.J.S.A 52:17B-169 et seq. Our agency values and expects its employees and residents to demonstrate leadership, integrity, commitment and respect as we work to protect public safety, reduce delinquency and hold youthful offenders accountable for their delinquent actions by:

- Partnering with local and county jurisdictions in collaborative efforts to prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system and intervene with court-involved youth;
- Providing youthful offenders with a continuum of rehabilitative services and sanctions in appropriate settings that promote positive growth and development opportunities; and
- Assisting youthful offenders to achieve successful reentry back to their communities through a network of support services and personal skill development that strengthens their levels of self-sufficiency (JJC, 2012)

In July, 2014, the demographic of youth adjudicated to the JJC on committed, probationer, or aftercare status was approximately 728 youth. Of those on committed status, 365 youth were male and 14 were female. Of those on probationer status, 93 were male and 6 were female. Finally, of those on aftercare status, 239 were male and 11 were female (JJC, 2014). Currently, there are approximately 1124 employees that provide

direct care and supervision of JJC youth. These direct care workers are committed to providing JJC youth with opportunities for personal growth and skill development through rehabilitative efforts and prevention services.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile justice setting. Through the lens of social justice theory and queer legal theory, this study captured the values and beliefs of juvenile justice practitioners concerning LGBTQI youth. It also explored the connotations attached to being LGBTQI, and examined the norms, policies, and laws created around the social issue. The setting took place at the Juvenile Justice Commission in Trenton, New Jersey. The participants in the study included practitioners who were directly responsible for the care and treatment of youth. Data collection was limited to pre-existing (pre- and post-test) data and interviews.

The primary questions for this action research study were:

1. Does sensitivity training increase practitioner knowledge concerning LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice?
2. What are the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?
3. How can the findings improve support networks provided to LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?

To address these research questions, the following sub-questions were formulated:

- a) What are the factors that influence the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the care and treatment of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?

- b) Are these perceived attitudes embedded into the organizational culture and climate?
- c) Are there measures to affirm support networks provided to LGBTQI youth?

The Assumptions of and Rationale for Mixed Methods Methodology

Mixed methods research includes procedures used to collect, analyze, and combine both quantitative and qualitative data during specific stages in the research process to explore a research phenomenon more completely (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006). Mixed methods are appropriate for this study because neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are adequate enough alone to describe the experiences of the discovered phenomenon (Creswell, 2011, pp12-13). Therefore, the quantitative method uncovered the magnitude of the phenomenon being investigated, while the qualitative data provided a broad range of reasoning for the phenomenon. Jang, et al (2008) posited that one purpose for using a mixed methods research design is to elaborate, clarify and explain experiences by using multiple methods within a single research model. The reason for conducting this mixed methods study was to ensure treatment integrity and assess the trustworthiness of an intervention (Collins et al., 2006; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). The goal of the study was to augment juvenile justice practitioners' thinking patterns (Collins et al., 2006; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006) and to dispel unsubstantiated myths held by the greater society concerning LGBTQI youth. This goal led to an objective aimed at exploring the phenomenon in multiple phases to form a definitive conclusion (Collins et al., 2006; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006).

Research Design

A sequential, explanatory, mixed methods design consisting of two phases was implemented. This design explored the phenomenon utilizing the collection and analysis of quantitative data in conjunction with the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006; Terrel, 2012). This method was selected based on its relatively simple methodological research strategy, defined by clear and distinct stages. Its ease of explanation was also a factor (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2006). Pre- and post-test data and interviews were conducted to obtain practitioner knowledge of LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice. Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) inferred that using results from one phase of the study informs the other phase.

In the first phase of the study, a quantitative approach was employed through the implementation of a training curriculum to identify significant findings from pre- and post-test data. In the study's second phase, data were collected by way of interviews. The interviews were used to connect the results of the quantitative phase to the qualitative phase of the study. The conclusions made in the first phase of the study led to the formulation of questions for the data collection and data analysis performed in the second phase. Final inferences were then based on the results from both phases of the study. Creswell (2011) posited that when used together, the quantitative and qualitative methods balance each other and allow for a more complete analysis of the data (pp 66-68). The basis for the sequential approach provided a universal picture of the phenomenon.

Relationship between Philosophical Assumptions and Mixed Methods Research

The philosophical assumption of this mixed methods research was advocacy/participatory. Approaching the research study from an advocacy/participatory position allowed for a more complete picture of the phenomenon being explored. Advocacy/participatory in a mixed methods study allows for both deductive and inductive logic because data are represented both numerically and textually (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Advocacy/participatory research determined the best way to answer the research questions since both quantitative and qualitative research offer multiple methods to answer the research questions (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). A mixed methods research design allowed for a holistic outlook in breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006).

Mertens (2010) argued that a transformative paradigm is a framework of belief systems that openly involves diverse groups of people to promote a just society. The transformative paradigm operates through one main principle (axiology), which is achieved through three other belief systems (ontology, epistemology, and methodology) (Mertens, 2010). In a transformative paradigm, the main principle of the axiological assumption is that all people are created equal (Mertens, 2010). This study was carried out with the axiological assumption that all youth must be respected regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. This assumption was driven by personal experiences associated with working with diverse populations in the juvenile justice system.

The transformative ontological assumption alludes that there are multiple individual, socially constructed realities but, for a common cause, only one reality is

understood (Mertens, 2010). The epistemological inferences generate questions concerning the study from multiple perspectives. Mertens (2010) posited that transformative epistemological assumptions address key questions concerning issues of cultural competence within the context of the research. Moreover, Mertens highlighted processes essential to prevent bias, improve the study, and relate the data to those who are being studied (2010). These processes were put into operation throughout the study to maintain the integrity of the data.

Finally, the transformative methodological belief system encapsulates the nuances for collecting data ethically to prevent social injustice (Mertens, 2010). This methodological belief system addresses issues of power and questions the research methods and interventions associated with a study (Mertens, 2010). Since this was a mixed methods study, inductive and deductive reasoning was applied for objectivity and to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon. Additionally, the transformational belief system was recurrent and supported collaboration, whereby community members became a part of the cyclical research process and played multiple roles.

Action Research

The term “action research” was first coined by Kurt Lewin in 1946 to symbolize a revolutionary approach toward social research that combined theory with changing the social system through a researcher who functions within the social system (Elliott, 1991; Marrow, 1977; Susman & Evered, 1978). The act itself is presented as the means for both enacting change and generating knowledge about the system (Elliott, 1991; Marrow, 1977; Susman & Evered, 1978). Lewin provided a well-defined depiction of his definition of action research and how action research had opposing views from traditional

science (Marrow, 1977). Between 1944 and 1946, Lewin expressed an urgency to find alternative methods to deal with serious social problems (fascism, anti-Semitism, poverty, intergroup conflict, minority issues, etc.) (Marrow, 1977; Susman & Evered, 1978). Lewin branded action research as “a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action” (Lewin, 1946). The first article containing the term ‘action research’ was entitled, “Action Research and Minority Problems,” signifying Lewin's concern that traditional science was not contributing to the resolution of critical social problems (Elliott, 1991; Marrow, 1977; Susman & Evered, 1978).

Action research (AR) is a research approach where the researcher’s main focus is to improve and increase competence in future practices rather than to engage in a course of reasoning that is often based on inconclusive evidence (Craig, 2009; Elliott, 1991; Lewin, 1946; Marrow, 1977; Mertens, 2010; Susman & Evered, 1978). Increasing competence in future practices implies that the quality of the outcome is driven by enhanced processes and practices by which individuals will recognize, appreciate, and effectively work with members from culturally diverse groups (Craig, 2009; Mertens, 2010). A defining characteristic of AR is that the researcher initiates change based on his or her observation that something needs to change in order to improve human interactions and practices within social situations (Burns, 2005; Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998; Lewin, 1946; Mertens, 2010). Moreover, the researcher seeks to transform beliefs through the research process (Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998; Lewin, 1946; Marrow, 1977; Mertens, 2010; Susman & Evered, 1978). This study, therefore, explored and challenged individual perceptions to

change thinking patterns concerning LGBTQI youth development in the juvenile justice system.

The research team in this study was involved in a series of planned interventions, where specific strategies, processes and activities were employed. Researchers suggested that the researcher may act alone or with a team and function as the facilitator of the planned interventions (Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). In this case, the researcher acted with a team of practitioners who were representatives from the JJC's Offices of Education, Secure Care Custody, Community Programs, and Juvenile Parole and Transitional Services, as well as the Rehabilitative and Treatment Services Unit and JJC Training Academy. This call to action challenged the unwritten rules and cultural norms that practitioners faced individually and collectively in their roles and questioned their knowledge concerning LGBTQI youth "as a way to maximize learning, development, and performance improvement" (Adkere, 2003, p.416).

During this process, researchers posited that the researcher aims to enhance skills while learning with the team (Akdere, 2003; Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). According to Akdere (2003), AR is an influential resource that helps practitioners embrace the constructs of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The researchers led the process of problem identification and addressed realizations concerning training implementation. Drawing upon this process helped the team learn about the financial, political, and social complexities required to carry out the task (Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). The team collaboratively identified which actions to take and jointly analyzed and reflected on the results, subsequently proposing new courses of action as needed (Craig, 2009; Heron &

Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). The courses of actions for this study were reflective and documented in a training implementation plan. This plan was inclusive of all team members and was used to identify the activities and steps taken, delegation of responsibility for task completion, timeline for commencement and completion of activities, resources needed to take action, anticipated constraints, and counter-measures to ensure that there were multi-layered actions for goal completion.

The research team acted together to actualize positive results for change. The team also led each other in task accomplishment, but did not necessarily engage directly in the tasks (Bargal, 2006; Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). Each team member co-facilitated the training sessions and reported back his or her perception of the outcome. In AR, the researchers both observe and participate in the phenomena under study (Craig, 2009). Collaboration in this AR study improved the breadth and depth of the investigation because it provided all team members the opportunity to participate in the teaching and learning activities. Moreover, this strategy allowed all team members to lead the training sessions and to reflect upon their experiences. These continuing processes of reflection developed the research team's capacity to discern the right course of action and to make ethical judgments in the development of future agency trainings (Bargal, 2006; Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998).

AR is recurrent and similar to the problem-solving process. Its sequential description is comprised of a series of planning, action, observation, and reflection in relation to the results of the action taken (Akdere, 2003; Bargal, 2006). AR is a cyclical and iterative process that forms events and activities within the iterations (Akdere, 2003;

Checkland, 1991; Dickens & Watkins, 1999). As such, the LGBTQI research team met monthly to develop new approaches that would enhance sensitivity training and complement the organizational context. Strategic planning was important to the life of this initiative because there were several disciplines representative of the organizational structure that determined the approach a facilitator would use to expedite the training sessions.

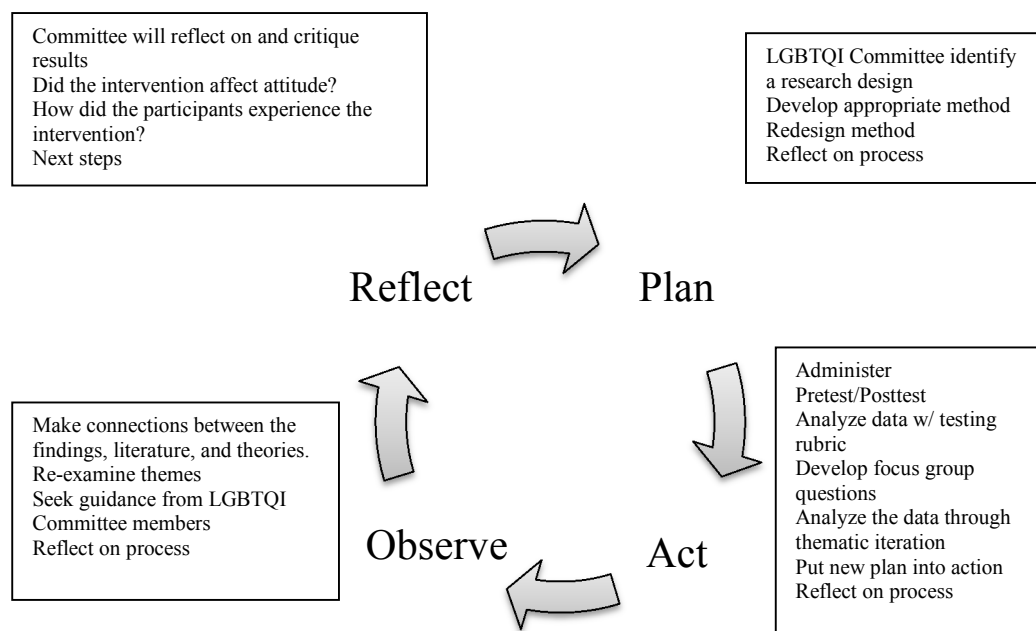


Figure 1. Action Research Model. Illustrates the process for planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

The rationale to conduct AR was to support juvenile justice practitioners in developing alternative ways to provide and enhance quality of treatment services for LGBTQI youth. With this in mind, the goal for LGBTQI sensitivity training was to empower practitioners with the tools needed to properly affirm LGBTQI youth in a juvenile justice setting. Reason and Bradbury (2001) posited that:

Action without reflection and understanding is blind, just as theory without practice is meaningless. Involving all stakeholders makes it possible with, for, and by persons and communities to work toward practical outcomes in the questioning and reflection that informs the research, and in the action which is its focus (p.2).

The actions of questioning and reflecting among community members generated and produced realistic outcomes. Juvenile justice practitioners who participated in this study challenged the traditions and norms that shaped the organizational culture and climate.

Philosophy of Action Research

AR claims to unify inquiry to improve performance and develop persons in their professional roles (Craig, 2009). There are two philosophical values that inspire AR: 1) organizations that design programs should generate data in collaboration with those who are connected to the organization; and 2) research on action should be administered complementary to building knowledge and theory on the effects of said action (Bargal, 2008). AR is a community of practice where people work and consult within the course of a study (Bargal, 2008). Maintaining this community of practice incorporated other points of view as a result of the relationship between the research and people being studied. In this study, reflexivity was used because it represented the people being studied and how they influenced the researcher (Lamb & Huttlinger 1989).

With regard to the formation of this AR study, I initiated the study as a researcher inside of the organizational context. My desire to conduct research concerning LGBTQI youth in a juvenile justice setting stemmed from the detection that there was a need to

generate and publicize information concerning the stigma and lack of support that LGBTQI youth receive in the juvenile justice system. AR was selected as the most appropriate course of action since it involved discovery, co-learning, taking action, and reflection (Craig, 2009).

Participants & Sampling

Juvenile justice practitioners are direct care workers whose daily function is to provide direct care and supervision of youth. These individuals are comprised of teachers, social workers, youth workers, substance abuse counselors, mental health clinicians, contracted employees, food service employees, custody officers, and interns. Direct care practitioners in this context are defined as individuals who engage and involve youth in productive and constructive activities. Being a positive role model is the most important responsibility of a care worker. Modeling good behavior is an essential skill that can positively affect juveniles. Included in this responsibility is setting a positive tone or climate, respecting the youth, administering praise when appropriate, and being consistent and fair (Mixdorf & Rosetti, 1992).

The job description of a direct care worker includes, but is not limited to, behavioral management, crisis intervention, security, safety, custodial care, record keeping, problem solving, and organizational awareness. Roush (1996) describes behavioral management as using behavioral and developmental theories to establish clear expectations for resident behavior and employing immediate positive and/or negative consequences as a result of direct involvement with youth. Crisis intervention requires the use of skill and composure to prevent or minimize physical and emotional harm to residents and other staff when handling a wide variety of crisis situations, such as

physical violence, escapes, riots, and suicidal behavior. Security is essential to a direct care worker's role because this practice relates to implementing the policies and procedures that require institutional security measures for ensuring the physical presence of each resident in the facility. Safety in the role of direct care worker dictates employing knowledge and skills to emergency procedures, such as first aid, CPR, fire safety, and communicable diseases to ensure the well-being of youth. Custodial care requires the proper identification and treatment of problems relating to the physical and emotional health of detained youth, based on knowledge and skills in such fundamental health related areas as: medical and hygiene, adolescent sexuality, substance abuse, physical or emotional abuse, and symptoms of suicidal behavior and emotional distress. Record keeping is another role required to provide accurate and timely written documentation of both routine and special situations regarding residents, staff, and program activities through the use of observation and recording skills. Also, problem solving helps direct workers to create an environment or institutional climate in which a youth's personal, social, or emotional problems are openly discussed, explored, and possibly resolved through effective use of interpersonal relationship skills, communication and consultation with clinical staff, and leadership in group discussions or activities. Organizational awareness gives understanding and support to the organization's philosophy, goals, values, policies, and procedures that represent the daily operations of the facility and identifies and reviews key external issues, such as legal, political, demographic, and philosophical trends, likely to affect the organization (Roush, 1996).

Through the proper training and supervision, direct care workers are groomed to become the guardians, caregivers, counselors, and role models to adjudicated youth.

Their roles and responsibilities engage and involve youth in productive and constructive activities that are most consistent with the agency's mission.

For this study, a purposive sampling frame was used. Purposive sampling implies intentionally selecting individuals to learn about and understand (Teddlie & Yu, 2007) the issues of LGBTQI youth while in a juvenile justice setting. This sampling methodology was selected because the idea was to purposefully identify direct care practitioners who could best answer the research questions and provide rich, descriptive information about their experiences working with LGBTQI youth.

Data Collection

This AR study was conducted using a mixed methods approach. This method of inquiry was selected because it included the completion of a pre- and post-test, training, and interviews to obtain a holistic and detailed interpretation of juvenile justice practitioners' perceptions of LGBTQI youth. The questions were constructed from an understanding of the training curriculum and were pilot-tested. The questions covered familiarity and attitudes regarding LGBTQI terminology, knowing LGBTQI individuals, comfort level around LGBTQI individuals, socialization skills with LGBTQI individuals, information related to training content, and the rights of LGBTQI youth via the JJC's LGBTQI policy.

Survey Methods

According to Gay, Mills, & Airasian (2012), surveys in the form of a pre-test and a post-test are a non-experimental, descriptive research method that is useful when a researcher wants to collect data on phenomena that cannot be directly observed. This survey method was a data source consisting of two exact tests (Gay, Mills, & Airasian,

2012). Six groups of juvenile justice practitioners (N=164) received LGBTQI training at the JJC. The pre-test was given before administering the training; at the conclusion, a post-test was administered to measure the participants' knowledge about LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice. The one group pre-test and post-test design involved a pre-test measure followed by an intervention and a post-test (Creswell, 2011, p.172). A comparison of the data was examined by the responses of multiple subgroups of practitioners in the sample to determine if the training increased their knowledge concerning LGBTQI youth. The results from the quantitative phase of the study informed the qualitative phase of the study. This method aligned with the action construct of the action research cycle.

Interviews

Seidman (2006) and Dilley (2000) posited that interviewing is a highly structured data collection methodology that requires semi-structured, open-ended questions to help understand the meaning of an activity. Also, interviewing requires good listening skills, exploring alternative responses, and follow-up. An interview protocol was created and used to highlight questions related to the study's purpose. Interview protocols are conversational guides created to highlight main questions, follow-up questions, and probes (Dilley, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Creating an interview protocol provided consistency and allowed for flexibility while gathering data during the one-on-one interview sessions. Also, responsive interviewing was conducted. Responsive interviewing involves extended conversations where relationships are formed between the researcher and the interviewee to elicit depth and detail of information (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Within the organizational context, the interviews involved the solicitation of assistance from 16 juvenile justice practitioners who participated in the pilot training to discuss their professional work life in juvenile justice. Through this process, I established an atmosphere of easy discussion into which questions were unobtrusively introduced and important statements were probed for additional information (Tjora, 2006).

Saturation is the point at which no new information emerges from subsequent interviews and is another form of reliability. Accordingly, once saturation was met, the interviews were terminated. The interview data collection method was important to the study since the interviews provided an in-depth look into the research questions, evaluated the training's impact on affirming service delivery for LGBTQI youth, and assessed the atmosphere of the organizational culture and climate. These data collection procedures were established prior to implementing the interviews. Additionally, this method of data collection aligned with the action construct of the AR cycle. During this phase, the interview questions were developed through thematic iterations, which assisted the committee to critically reflect on the research process.

Instrumentation

Pre-Test and Post-Test

The pre-tests and post-tests were used as the quantitative measure to assess the degree to which practitioners were knowledgeable of LGBTQI youth issued in juvenile justice (See Appendix A). The pre- and post-tests were 20-item questionnaires, respectively, that contained a combination of demographic, multiple choice, and open-ended questions. The test was reflective of the LGBTQI training curriculum. The multiple choice questions comprised a combination of the training objectives to ensure

that the participants were knowledgeable of important training concepts concerning LGBTQI issues in juvenile justice. The pre- and post-tests were administered and the data was scored and placed on Scoring Grid (See Appendix B). In addition, the open-ended questions on the pre- and post-test questionnaires were quantized. After all open-ended questions were answered a numerical value of one was assigned for each response. The codes were categorized and placed into themes and were used as the points of reference for the interview questions. The results from the quantitative data, therefore, informed the qualitative questions for the interviews.

Interviews

Interviews comprised the qualitative data. Interviews were conducted after the quantitative data collection phase, utilizing an Interview Protocol (See Appendix C). The interview questions were generated from the themes identified from open-ended questions to gather rich and descriptive information concerning practitioner beliefs and practices about LGBTQI youth in a juvenile justice setting. The interviews were scheduled between the interviewer and the participant. The interviews were held in a location that was comfortable and feasible for the participant to answer a series of questions. The sessions lasted approximately one hour, given the intensity of each question. I presented approximately ten interview questions as they related to the research questions of the study. Each interview was audio recorded to ensure that the participants' dialogue was thoroughly represented for further analysis. During the session, the participants addressed additional thoughts or questions related to the topic. The participants received full disclosure of the research conducted and signed consent forms prior to the start of the interviews.

Field Notes

Field notes were used to clarify notations, interpretations, ideas, and impressions of activities (Glesne, 2006). The field notes included subjective sentences and paragraphs with personal descriptions of what was observed and what it was like to conduct the research study (Saldana, 2009). The subjective responses from the participants' interpretations of the activities generated valuable insights regarding the unwritten rules in the organizational culture and climate.

Data Analysis

According to Stentz, Plano Clark, and Matkin (2012), mixing data determines when and how to integrate the quantitative and qualitative data. For that reason, to analyze this sequential mixed methods design, the quantitative statistical results from the pre- and post-tests were descriptive and were summarized to look for trends and patterns, means, frequencies, and measures of variability. During the quantitative phase, a screening of the data was conducted on a multivariate level (Stentz, Plano Clark, & Matkin, 2012). The multivariate level examined comparisons of multiple variables that emerged. Data screening identified high correlations among independent variables in the pre- and post-tests, and addressed outlying cases that were excluded from the analysis (Stentz, Plano Clark, & Matkin, 2012). Descriptive statistics for the pre- and post-test items were summarized in the text and reported in tabular form (Stentz, Plano Clark, & Matkin, 2012). In addition, frequencies analysis was conducted to identify a valid percentage for responses (Stentz, Plano Clark, & Matkin, 2012). The open-ended questions were examined and coded for themes connected to the research questions (Stentz, Plano Clark, & Matkin, 2012).

Analysis of interview data was similar to analysis of other qualitative data (Creswell, 2007). The interview questions consisted of the themes identified from the quantitative open-ended questions to gather rich and descriptive information. The qualitative results from the interviews were recorded and analyzed to interpret narrative data in the context of the study by focusing on interconnections between statements and events (Creswell, 2003; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Tapes of the discussions were transcribed and combined with field notes during and immediately after each interview.

The content was examined for patterns that emerged and was then arranged thematically using analytic memos. Analytic memos are similar to a researcher journal entry regarding participants, phenomenon, or processes (Saldana, 2009, p.32-33). These memos were written activities designed to critically reflect and challenge assumptions concerning the research process (Saldana, 2009, p.33). The analytic memos were maintained during each phase of data collection. Based on the summarized data, the original questions were answered and any unexpected findings were included in the write-up. The analyzed data was verified through member checking (Krefting, 1991).

Moreover, during the qualitative analysis, a code map was created to underscore the codes that emerged during the first iteration of data analysis. The codes were categorized during the second iteration and themes were identified in the third iteration. These themes authenticated the data collected to determine if they were linked to the research topic. Truscott, et al. (2010) posited that when used together, the quantitative and qualitative methods balance each other and allow for a more complete analysis of the data.

Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) described this process as a partially mixed methods design because both phases are not mixed within or across phases. Instead, both the quantitative and the qualitative elements are conducted sequentially in their entirety before being mixed at the data interpretation phase (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). According to Creswell (2011), sequential mixed methods seek to jointly display both forms of data by effectively merging the data into a single visual in the end (p.223). These strategies created a more comprehensive and transformative analysis of the research study since this research used transformative theoretical perspectives to advocate for social change and give voice to marginalized underrepresented groups (Creswell, 2003; Terrell, 2012). Accordingly, this method aligned with the observation construct of the AR cycle. During this phase, I made connections between the findings, literature, and theories. I reexamined themes and sought direction from both the LGBTQI committee and critical friends to reflect on the process and critique the results. Moreover, reflection occurred during this time. Reflection is the fourth construct of the cyclical process. In this phase, the LGBTQI committee reflected on the research process to consider the change in practitioner knowledge, what could have been done differently, and what more can be done to improve the organization's capacity to learn and grow as one unit.

Rigor of the Study

Designing a mixed methods study required mixing quantitative and qualitative elements to construct validation (Dellinger & Leech, 2007). Reliability is the degree to which a measurement, given repeatedly, remains the same (Golafshani, 2003). The pre- and post-tests were used to provide information about whether or not the participants had learned from the training. Internal pre-testing of the instrument was conducted with 10

staff members to ensure that their understanding of the test questions were the same as I intended. Any suggested adjustments were then made to ensure the reliability of the data collection instrument. After making the changes, the instrument was tested again. Four additional interviews were conducted to ensure reliability of the interview protocol.

Credibility was established to ensure that the results of the qualitative research were valid from the perspective of the participants (Toma, 2006). To satisfy the threat of credibility, therefore, purposeful sampling was conducted to rule out selection bias. The participants selected for the study were an authentic representation of the target population that took part in the first phase of the study. Confirmation determined if the results were verifiable or corroborated by the respondents and not the researcher's personal bias, motivation, and interest (Toma, 2006). The data was checked and re-checked to: search for contradictions from prior observations, examine the data collection and analysis procedures, and make judgments about potential bias and distortion. Member checking occurred throughout the inquiry and was the process by which collected data was 'played back' to the participant to check for accuracy and reactions (Cho & Trent, 2006). The member checks were conducted with practitioners to ensure the participants' realities corresponded with my interpretations of the data. Therefore, confirmation required that I write and record data accurately, seek feedback, and report fully on the data collected.

I also kept an audit trail of documentation, since a description of the research steps taken from the start of the project to the reporting of the findings is required. For this study, I maintained a journal with field notes. Field notes were used to clarify information and highlight interpretations, ideas, and impressions of the study (Glesne,

2006). In the journal, I made regular entries during the research process. I documented methodological decisions and the reasons for those decisions. I documented the logistics of the study and reflected upon what happened in terms of my own values and interests. Moreover, triangulation of the data was administered to ensure that my interpretations of the research process were rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed.

Validity is the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept or construct that the researcher is attempting to measure (Toma, 2006). Content and construct validity of the assessment tool was established prior to implementing the study. Content validity is the extent to which the interview questions represented all possible questions (Toma, 2006). The wording of the interview questions were referred to and examined by the LGBTQI training committee to assess whether they were relevant to the topic, if interviews were a sensible way to gain information, and if any of the questions yielded potential bias. Construct validity sought agreement between a theoretical concept and specific measuring procedures (Toma, 2006). In this case, factor loadings from open-ended questions illustrated a correlation between the identified themes and non-observable latent variables captured in the study.

The reason for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data was to integrate the results of both datasets and to establish triangulation. Triangulation occurs when several data collection methods are used to overcome deficiencies that emerge from one investigation or one method of inquiry (Denzin, 1989). Triangulation therefore enhanced the credibility of the study by providing other methods of producing evidence in support of key claims (Cho & Trent, 2006). Triangulation also determined the accuracy of the data. Since action research is recurrent and iterative, a re-examination of the planning,

acting, observing, and reflection phases was conducted. This pilot LGBTQI training was the first of its kind in the JJC; re-evaluating the method by which the training was carried out is definitely warranted in the future.

Ethical Considerations

Ethically, there was much to consider during the conduction of this research study. Holian and Coghlan (2012) hypothesized that insider action researcher's conduct research while performing as professionals within their organizations, as opposed to researchers who serve as researchers only for the duration of the research study. The authors noted that are three core elements to consider while working as an insider action researcher:

First, the insider action researcher must have pre-understanding of people's prior knowledge and experience about the organization as it relates to organizational culture and what is or is not known (Holigan & Coghlan, 2012). As an insider action researcher, I brought subjective thinking into the study. I have been employed with the organization for over 20 years. The challenge that I encountered with pre-understanding was the possibility that my subjective, personal views and opinions might infiltrate the research process. This quandary could have produced a huge ethical dilemma in this leading role. Having a pre-understanding of the organizational context balanced my role as a researcher and my professional role in the organization. If I were to have lost balance of my role, I could have potentially changed the direction of the study.

Secondly, role duality is another core element of an insider action researcher. Role duality requires a juggling of the role of researcher and employee (Holigan & Coghlan, 2012). I have worked in dual roles in the JJC that have resulted in role conflict.

In this study, role duality could have potentially caused role confusion or conflict since I was amenable to member affiliations (Coghlan, 2001; Holigan & Coghlan, 2012).

Member affiliations are prone to influence relationships and can affect the data while working with others in the organization (Coghlan, 2001; Holigan & Coghlan, 2012).

Over the years, I have acquired relationships that extend from management to those in subordinate positions. My interactions within these affiliations were crucial to the life of this study. Power struggles could have ascended while conducting the study because I was eliciting information concerning the personal values of practitioners in relationship to their professional roles and responsibilities. These struggles could have presented a problem if I was not receptive to the current culture and climate of the organization.

Therefore, it was important that the study was represented in a manner that presented no harm to the livelihood of the participants and the organization. Management support was important to the study because their approval was needed to pursue this educational endeavor. Equally important were those who work in subordinate positions because their experiences form the core of the study.

The third and final core element of an insider action researcher is managing organizational politics. Holian and Coghlan (2012) described managing organizational politics as presenting oneself as politically intelligent in systems functioning. At the very least, the insider action researcher must have an understanding of what research topics are most appropriate and realistic for the organization to accept as a legitimate source of change (Coghlan, 2001; Holian & Coghlan, 2012). It was important that I understood the intricacies of insider and outsider politics within state government. Insider politics are those that are modeled after the organizational culture. For example, if the culture was

closed and intolerant of the research request, this study would not have been approved. Yet, because the organization was open to new methodologies to inform its capacity, I was able to carry out the study. It was, therefore, essential to demonstrate transparency during all phases of the study in order to eliminate any obstacles that would infringe upon completion of the research. Outsider politics are those machinations that are outside of my control. Since I was not seeking state or federal funding to implement this study, there was no reason to concern myself with outsider politics. This study was implemented based on a policy that mandated training.

Coghlan (2001) posited that the insider action researcher must listen, question, foster courage, provoke action, urge reflection, and endorse democratic participation, all of which could be threatening to the organizational norms. I realized that my own background had shaped my interpretation of what I observed and heard as the researcher. I had an ethical obligation to conduct this study with the highest form of integrity. I was aware of my biases and conducted this study with a group of participants who too were cognizant of their biases. This challenge in professional differences did not affect the accuracy of the transcriptions and observations of findings since the research study allowed for constant discovery, co-learning, taking action, and reflection.

To ensure human subject rights, I gained approval from the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and JJC Research Review Board (RRB). The research study was conducted in two phases:

The first phase was quantitative. Quantitative, statistically significant, and key significant predictors were distinguished between groups. Identifying information was collected as part of the quantitative data collection to facilitate the follow-up process and

address any additional ethical concerns associated with this information. During this phase, the participants were informed that they could potentially be contacted in the future to participate in the second data collection phase.

The second phase was qualitative. The plans for the qualitative phase were tentative because they evolved from the results of the study's quantitative phase. The qualitative data consisted of a smaller sample size than the quantitative phase so that meaningful themes could be developed. The quantitative statistical results were used to direct the follow-up sampling procedures for the qualitative phase. The Interview Protocol encapsulated the connection between the research questions and interview questions. Prior to implementing the interviews, Informed Consent was obtained from all participants (See Appendix D).

Upon receipt of Rowan University's IRB decision, this study was submitted to the JJC Office of Research and Integrity, Research Review Board (RRB) for permission to access individuals and conduct research at the site. The RRB panel ensured that the research requests were reviewed and approved to be conducted within the constraints of all organizational and operational rules, regulations and conditions set by the JJC, Department of Law & Public Safety, and state and federal guidelines and requirements.

The RRB review process was conducted in accordance with the provisions and consideration of any other factors it determined to be relevant before the application was approval. The chair of the RRB conducted an initial review of the application to establish the merits and feasibility of the proposed research. The application was then forwarded for further review and discussion by the RRB as required. The RRB then recommended

approval of the research request to the JJC Executive Director, who rendered a final determination of authorization to proceed.

Conclusion

Mixed methods research encourages the use of multiple worldviews and is a practical and natural approach to inquiry. Mixed methods research involves both the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, and also provides strengths to offset weaknesses in both research strategies. By mixing the datasets, the researcher is able to provide a better understanding of the problem than if either dataset had been used alone. Equally important, AR signifies the importance of bringing others together to lay a foundation of planned change within an organizational structure. AR is a circle of planning, action and fact-finding concerning the results of an action. AR is important to this study because it fostered community building and created opportunity to improve the lives of a marginalized group that cannot or will not advocate for itself. In addition, using the pre- and post-test research design as the baseline to extricate data and conducting interviews revealed the hidden nuances in organizational behaviors and practices.

Multiple strategies were undertaken to ensure the reliability and the validity of this study. Quantitatively, the data collection instrument was tested and re-tested to ensure that pre- and post-test questions were intended to be read as they were intended. Qualitatively, conducting multiple interviews with similar participant groups established reliability. Validity was established through purposeful sampling, member checking, audit trails, field notes, and triangulation of the data. Implementing these structures

legitimized the study's purpose and increased awareness for a more culturally competent workforce in juvenile justice.

Chapter 4

Evidential Reasoning

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings generated from data analysis. The focus of this action research (AR) mixed methods study was to examine the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile justice setting. AR is a research approach where the researcher's main focus is to improve and increase competence in future practices where people collaborate (Bargal, 2008; Craig, 2009; Elliott, 1991; Lewin, 1946; Marrow, 1977; Mertens, 2010; Susman & Evered, 1978). Data collection and analysis occurred during this cycle of the AR process. Survey data was collected from direct care practitioners who participated in one of six mandatory LGBTQI pilot training sessions. Pre-and post-test data were compared to measure the degree of change in knowledge that occurred as a result of the mandatory LGBTQI pilot training. In addition, semi-structured interviews were analyzed to provide a glimpse into the practitioners' attitudes concerning care and treatment, climatic conditions, and affirming networks for LGBTQI youth. I will begin by describing the respondents in the study and the extent of their involvement in the AR process at the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC). I will then describe the design of the quantitative phase followed by the quantitative findings. Further, I will describe the qualitative phase followed by the qualitative findings. Finally, I will discuss the integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a more complete picture of this AR study.

Connecting Cultural Insiders

This cycle of the AR process required data gathering and analysis to measure the level of change in participant knowledge of LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice. I

proceeded with data collection and analysis after receiving approval from the Rowan University, Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Juvenile Justice Commission, Research Review Board (RRB). Data were collected over the course of three months: June, 2014 – August, 2014. In order to test whether participation in the training improved practitioner knowledge, a pre- and post-test questionnaire was employed. AR requires that after completing the action, data must be collected to measure and determine the effects of the action (Akdere, 2003; Burns, 2005; Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). The development and design of the pre- and post-test questionnaire was written, guided and implemented by members of the JJC LGBTQI committee.

Collaboration and participation are critical to data gathering, feedback, and validation for improving a system in AR (Akdere, 2003; Burns, 2005; Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). During the first cycle, all members of the LGBTQI committee acted as lead facilitators for one of six mandatory training sessions to build confidence in delivering the curriculum. Facilitators reported back their leadership experience while reflecting upon the sections of the training that warranted improvement. These reflective sessions guided the committee to make modifications as needed to carry out the official training in September, 2014.

Session One: After implementing the action, the facilitators suggested that each training session be limited to no more than 25 people. The facilitators found that it was difficult to deliver all of the activities outlined in the curriculum with a high number of session participants. Also, they asserted that there must be a confirmation of attendance to ensure capacity is not exceeded and to track those individuals who attended the

training. Additionally, the facilitators shared that the bingo activity belabored the training sessions and recommended it be modified to ensure that the training did not surpass the time allowed for completion.

Session Two: I sat with the facilitators to gauge their level of comfort as they put the curriculum into action. The facilitators shared that they felt comfortable with the curriculum, but believed that it could be enhanced with videos to emphasize the goals of the training. As a result, I conducted an internet search and retrieved several videos to use in order to enhance the quality of the presentations. Subsequently, after locating the videos, I met with the LGBTQI committee to arrange a video viewing session to determine which of the four videos would be most appropriate for the training sessions. After obtaining a consensus, two video clips were embedded into the training presentation. The video clips were added to clarify the problem of LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice.

Session Three: The facilitators found that the video clips exceeded time by one half hour. However, this revelation was not an impediment since, on their own accord, the trainees decided to remain for the additional half hour. The issue was brought to the committee's attention and the committee agreed to remove two role-play scenarios to ensure that the time limit did not exceed the allotted time in future training sessions. Sessions four, five, and six ran without fail. The facilitators demonstrated competence of the curriculum and were eager to implement the additional training sessions. These reflective sessions assisted the committee in creating a cohesive training model. Accordingly, the sessions were documented in the researcher journal.

The researcher journal was used during the planning, implementation, and final stages of the training sessions. Glesne (2006) proclaimed that maintaining a researcher journal during the research process stimulates reflective writing. After each session, I sat with LGBTQI committee members to discuss their facilitating experiences. Reflexivity involves self-awareness and self-reflection about potential biases and predispositions that may affect the research process (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In particular, I addressed their level of comfort and whether they thought the training required more or less material. Additionally, we discussed the feedback received from the respondents and how they experienced the training. These conversations occurred with every facilitator and the exchange of information helped us to have an ongoing dialogue while making needed modifications to the training curriculum.

Data Gathering

Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012) declared surveys are a descriptive research method that is useful when a researcher wants to collect data on phenomena that cannot be directly observed. Respondents were asked to complete a pre-test before receiving the training; upon completion, they completed a post-test. The pre- and post-test questionnaire assessed participants' knowledge of LGBTQI youth competence, attitudes, policy, and communication as reflected in the training curriculum. In the first section of the questionnaire, open-ended questions were asked to underscore practitioner competence about LGBTQI terminology. The second section of the questionnaire contained multiple choice questions to emphasize LGBTQI policy specifics. The third section of the questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions that elicited participant perceptions about LGBTQI individuals and how those perceptions are communicated in

the organizational context. The final section of the questionnaire requested demographic information. These questions highlighted gender, age, ethnicity, education level, and title. The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. A scoring grid was also created to record the number of correct test question responses and to determine if each individual score increased or decreased. The scoring grid can be found in Appendix B.

Sampling and Procedures

A total of 164 direct care practitioners participated in the pilot training sessions and completed both the pre- and post-test survey instruments. A number identifier was placed on each pre- and post-test questionnaire to ensure that the tests were administered anonymously. The respondents received both the pre- and post-test questionnaires prior to conducting the training. The pre-test was administered prior to the commencement of training. The respondents were told that the purpose of the test was to evaluate the training and to later determine whether they learned about LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice. Once the respondents had finished testing, all tests were collected by a co-facilitator and placed in an envelope. Also, after each training session, the facilitator engaged the respondents in a discussion to review what was learned, review responses from the test, reinforce appropriate LGBTQI concepts and terminology, and to give feedback about issues requiring further clarification. At the end of the training, the post-test questionnaires were administered and the same method was employed for collecting the data. Attendance data was collected at each of the training sessions to determine the number of respondents who completed the pre- and post-test questionnaires. In this chapter, the quantitative and qualitative results are presented to answer the primary research questions of this study, which are:

- 1) Does sensitivity training increase practitioner knowledge concerning LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice?
- 2) What are the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?
- 3) How can the findings improve support networks for LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?

The quantitative data showed promising results, namely, that participants gained better understanding and knowledge about LGBTQI youth after the training. To address the first, second, and third research questions, data was analyzed; the findings are presented below.

Descriptive Statistics

Participants

The analyzed sample included 164 participants. Data on demographics such as gender, age, ethnicity, educational level, and professional title were collected from the surveys. The distribution of males (51.2%) and females (48.2%) was fairly even. The majority (54.9%) of participants was aged 30 to 49; participants aged 30 to 64 composed 86.6% of the sample. The smallest (2.4%) age group were participants 64 years or older. Participants between ages 18 to 29 composed 10.4% of the sample. In terms of ethnicity, the large majority of participants were Black (54.9%) and White (38.4%). Almost all participants (98.8%) received a high school degree or higher education attainment. About 60.3% attained a college degree or higher. For professional titles, the largest group of participants (39.0%) was Youth Workers. Table 1 presents a frequency table of demographic variables of the respondents in the study.

Table 1

Demographic Variables

	Frequency	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	79	48.2
Male	84	51.2
No Response	1	.6
Total	164	100.0
<i>Age</i>		
18-29	17	10.4
30-49	90	54.9
50-64	52	31.7
65+	4	2.4
No Response	1	.6
Total	164	100.0
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
White	63	38.4
Black or African American	90	54.9
Hispanic or Latino	6	3.7
Native American or American Indian	2	1.2
Other	3	1.8
Total	164	100.0
<i>Level of Education</i>		
SHS	1	.6
HSG	19	11.6
SC	44	26.8
CG	59	36.0
Trade/Tech/Voc	1	.6
SPG	5	3.0
PGD	35	21.3
Total	164	100.0
<i>Professional Title</i>		
Social Worker 1	22	13.4
Social Worker 2	10	6.1
Teacher	12	7.3
Community Program Specialist	5	3.0
Registered Nurse	2	1.2
Supervisor/ Administration	15	9.1
Youth Worker	64	39.0

Table 1 (continued)

	Frequency	%
Substance Abuse Counselor	15	9.1
Chaplin	1	.6
No Response	18	11.0
Total	164	100.0

Note. Demographic characteristics of 164 people participated in the pre-test and post-test.

Results

Measures

Knowledge of participants was measured by each question with a score of 1 for a correct response or 0 for an incorrect response. Questions 1 to 11 assessed the participants' knowledge of LGBTQI youth. The change between pre- and post-test scores was analyzed using McNemar's test in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), in order to test for statistically significant differences between the two questionnaire administrations. The McNemar's test is used to determine if there are differences on categorical, dichotomous variables between two related groups. For this study, the participants took the questionnaire before and after training, producing paired responses. The McNemar's test was appropriate because the scores for each question in the questionnaire are coded as 1 for correct response or 0 for incorrect response and are therefore dichotomous. The McNemar's test revealed whether the proportion of participants who got correct responses on the questionnaire increased significantly or not. Thus, the result showed whether the LGBTQI training curriculum is effective in increasing participants' knowledge of how to work with LGBTQI youth.

A Binary Logistic Regression analysis was employed to predict whether certain demographic variables are predictive of training outcomes for each question. The *Predictive Variables (PV)* included gender, age, ethnicity, education, and professional title. An explanation of the breakdown of the PVs can be found in Table 1 above. The *Dependent Variable (DV)* is the score to each question. The score represented whether participants got correct responses or not to questions. A code of 1 was assigned for participants that had a correct response to a question and 0 for an incorrect response.

Analysis

In order to investigate the impact that the training session had on a practitioner's knowledge, one procedure was used. A McNemar's test was used to examine whether individual perceptions of practitioner knowledge changed after participating in the training session. This method was appropriate because practitioner knowledge was measured at two points in time using the same sample; differences between the two values can be attributed to the experience of the training itself (Paternoster & Bachman 2004). The McNemar test statistic is:

$$X^2 = \frac{(b-c)^2}{b+c}, \text{ where } H_0: p_b = p_c \text{ and } H_1: p_b \neq p_c.$$

The null hypothesis states that the proportion of participants answering the question correctly in the pre-training is equal to post training. The alternative hypothesis states that the proportion of participants answering the question correctly in the pre-training is not equal to the proportion in the post training.

In order to answer the research question, "Does sensitivity training increase practitioner knowledge concerning LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice?" each of the 11 questions in the questionnaire were analyzed using McNemar's test. One-hundred and

sixty-four participants were recruited to take part in a training curriculum designed to increase juvenile practitioners’ knowledge concerning working with LGBTQI youth in a juvenile justice setting. An exact McNemar’s test determined that there was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of participants who answered the questions correctly after training than before training in 10 out of the 11 questions. The one question that participants did not demonstrate a significant improvement in knowledge was number seven, which asked participants to identify the correct term used to describe LGBTQ youths’ experience of rejection and abuse when they “come out.” To reference descriptive statistics and crosstabs for each of the 11 questions, refer to Appendix H.

Table 2 shows the *p*-values to each of the 11 questions:

Table 2

McNemar’s Test Results

Question	N	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)
LGBTQI Acronym	164	26.884	0.000	
Consequences of Isolation	148			.019*
Sexual Orientation	128	8.82	0.003	
Gender Identity	138	15.721	0.000	
Gender Expression	117	22.321	0.000	
Heterosexual Experience Coming Out	131			.049*
Confidentiality Violation	149	0.837	0.36	
Differential Treatment	159	5.921	0.015	
Cultural Competence	150	8.82	0.003	
Unsupportive & Negative Responses	141	9.121	0.003	
	153	21.391	0.000	

Note. Binomial distribution used

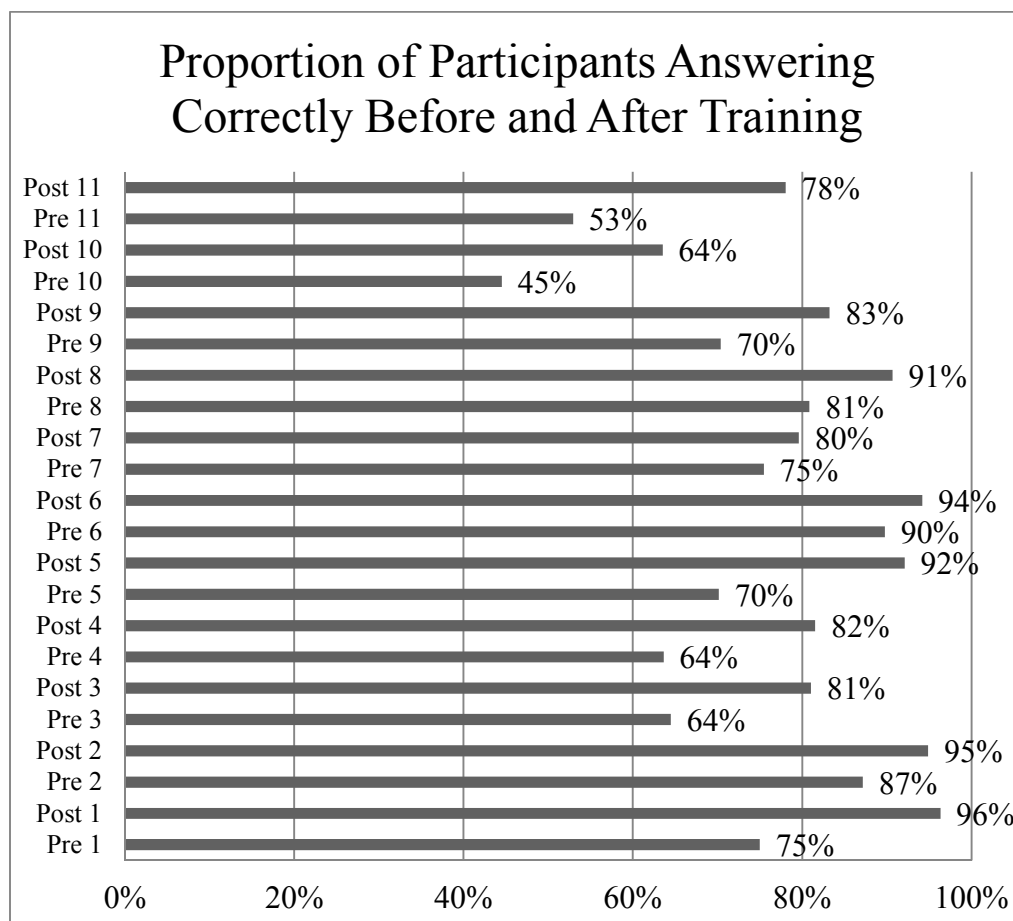


Figure 2. Proportion of participants that answered each of the 11 questions.

As mentioned in the section on Measures above, a Binary Logistic Regression was used. The Binary Logistic Regression was used because the dependent variable is dichotomous. The participants either increased their Knowledge of LGBTQI youth issues after training or they did not. Let us consider a Binary Logistic Regression, using the post-test scores to each of the 11 questions as the Dependent Variables. Each of the Dependent Variables was coded as 1 for correct answers and 0 for incorrect answers. The dichotomous Dependent Variable and the independent variables (gender, age, ethnicity, education level, and professional title) were analyzed using a binary logistic regression

test. Essentially, eleven binary logistic regression tests were performed where gender, age, ethnicity, education level, and professional title remained as independent predicting variables and the responses to each of the 11 questions were alternating dependent variables. The regression model predicts the logistic curve, i.e. the natural log of the odds of having made one or the other decision. That is,

$$\ln(ODDS) = \ln\left(\frac{\hat{Y}}{1 - \hat{Y}}\right) = a + bX$$

The Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients that resulted from the logistic regression analyses yielded a *p*-value greater than a .05 significance level. This showed that the model is not a good predictor of success in knowledge increase. The results demonstrate that gender, age, ethnicity, educational level and professional title are not significant predictors of whether someone will answer the questions in the questionnaire correctly. The only small exception was in the case of question number two in which participants were asked to identify the consequences of isolation. It was found that educational level is a significant predictor of whether participants answered this question correctly. The logistic regression model was statistically significant, $X^2(1) = 9.12, p = 0.003 < .05$. The model explained 17.5% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in knowledge of the question and correctly classified 94.5% of cases. This means that each increase in educational level increased the likelihood of answering the question correctly by 43.2%. To reference the Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients for Education level and the other 10 questions, refer to Appendix I.

Summary

Performance measures on the impact of the training employed pre-tests given prior to the training and post-tests upon completion of the training in an attempt to gauge

changes in respondents' knowledge about working with LGBTQI youth. The paired pre- and post-tests of a sample of 164 JJC practitioners were analyzed using inferential statistics. The sample population included JJC practitioners who have direct contact with youth. They included males (51.2%) and females (48.8%). The majority (54.9%) of participants were ages 30 to 49. In terms of ethnicity, the large majority of participants were Black (54.9%) and White (38.4%). Almost all participants (98.8%) received a high school degree or higher educational attainment. About 60.3% attained a college degree or higher. For professional titles, the largest group of participants (39.0%) was Youth Workers.

Analysis using inferential statistics indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of participants who answered the test questions correctly after training than before. However, there was one question that participants did not demonstrate a statistical significance in knowledge, which was number seven. Question seven asked participants to identify the correct term used to describe when an LGBTQI youth experienced rejection and abuse when they "come out." The multiple choice question called for one of four responses that proposed the terms 'victimization, affirmative practice, homosexual, and emotional isolation.' The practitioners highlighted victimization or emotional isolation as the answer to the question. Although both terms appear representative of a correct response, based on the training curriculum, the correct response was victimization.

Additionally, a Binary Logistic Regression analysis was conducted to check the statistical significance and relative importance of each predictive variable. The regression analysis performed outlined demographic factors (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, education,

and professional title). The regression analysis revealed that the demographic variables are not good predictors to determine knowledge increase. However, question number two illustrated that education level was a significant predictor of knowledge increase by 43.2%.

In addition, the pre- and post-test questionnaire presented four open-ended questions that were analyzed simultaneously:

- a) What are your personal beliefs about LGBTQI individuals?
- b) How are your personal beliefs about LGBTQI individuals communicated in the JJC?
- c) Name three support mechanisms available to LGBTQI youth in the JJC?
- d) What can the JJC do to create an inclusive culture for LGBTQI youth?

The rationale to examine the open-ended questions in this manner was the result of the missing data listed on 90% of the pre- and post-test questionnaires. Each question allowed for three responses; many of the respondents however provided one or two responses on both the pre- and post-tests. So, each response was coded as a separate variable and given a value of one. Quantifying qualitative data enumerates the frequency of themes within a sample, the percentage of themes associated with a given category of responses, or the percentage of people selecting specific themes (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie 2003). In this case, it was essential to find pattern recognition in the frequency of the answers in order to fully describe and interpret the respondents' responses. Sandelowski (2001) asserted that quantifying qualitative data is important to the analysis process for generating meaning, confirming, and testing interpretations. Quantifying requires converting qualitative data into quantitative data by tallying qualitative codes or themes

found in text data. After reading through all of the data, I looked for common answers that used similar words or expressed similar ideas. I looked for least frequent responses and used “other” to get a good sense of the data. In the first iteration, I coded the data using holistic coding (Saldana, 2009). This practice enabled me to comprehend the data. I then used In vivo coding to capture behaviors or processes to obtain a rich description of the categories in order to develop thematic generation (Saldana, 2009). During the second cycle, I combined the original number of first cycle codes and then placed them into a smaller number of codes. I subsequently reanalyzed the data to formulate one general theme. Table 3 highlights the first and second cycle codes.

Table 3

First and Second Cycle Codes

<i>First Cycle Codes</i>	<i>Second Cycle Codes</i>
<i>Personal Beliefs</i>	
Brave- 94	Emotional Well-being
Open-minded- 78	Physical Well-being
Inspiring to others- 12	Freedom
Respect- 186	Support
They are just like me- 26	Non-judgmental
Same rights as everyone else-114	Safety
Free to express themselves- 84	Acceptance
Born that way- 16	Open-minded
Deserve support- 45	Inspiring
Should be accepted- 148	Courageous
Whatever floats their boat- 46	Equality
Needs counseling- 184	Resilient
Happiness- 68	Happiness
Religious values-65	
Physical Safety-115	
Emotional Health- 108	
Family- 167	
No opinion- 29	
Non-judgmental- 102	

Table 3 (continued)

<i>First Cycle Codes</i>	<i>Second Cycle Codes</i>
Other- 174	
<i>Beliefs communicated in JJC</i>	
Same rights as everyone else- 6	Correct stereotypes
Do as I say- 52	Responsibility to assist
Sensitive to needs- 35	Not communicated
Correct misconceptions-87	Consistency
Don't show my personal beliefs- 66	Correct Ignorance
Step up and speak out- 108	Acceptance
Not communicated- 204	Open and receptive
Uniformed policy-26	Responsibility
Consistent decision making-196	Observation
Express support-35	Empathetic
Other- 129	Fairness
<i>Support Mechanisms</i>	
Support groups-59	Literature
Individual counseling- 185	Education
Literature-138	Youth training
Mental health counseling- 88	Trends
SOCC counseling-51	Efficient
LGBTQI Policy-95	Understanding
Social workers-117	Staff support
Mental health department-3	Treatment services
Administration -10	Ensure safety
Social worker meetings- 85	
PREA-116	
Training youth-89	
Staff training- 117	
Know kids rights-74	
Assessments-79	
Acceptance-84	
Create a safe environment-101	
Take concerns seriously-79	
Demonstrate sensitivity- 61	
Separate showers-52	
Religious affiliations- 21	
Other- 182	

Table 3 (continued)

<i>First Cycle Codes</i>	<i>Second Cycle Codes</i>
<i>Inclusive Culture</i>	
Staff education/ training- 127	Respect Confidentiality
Enforce policy- 27	Awareness
No tolerance for discrimination- 54	Access to expert professionals
Support groups- 18	Enforce policy
Access to experts – 116	Counseling
Following PREA- 122	Promote tolerance
Literature- 59	Engage others
Train youth- 69	Training
Protection-79	Safety
Treat everyone the same- 32	Equality
Know kids rights-29	
Awareness- 32	
Respect differences- 37	
No isolation-17	
Level the playing field- 51	
Counseling-135	
Understanding-24	
Same as I said before- 107	
Other- 145	

Note: Summary of First and Second Cycle Codes

Values Clarification

The first open-ended question prompted the respondents to describe their personal beliefs about LGBTQI individuals. I referenced beliefs as emotional wellbeing, physical wellbeing, safety, acceptance, support, courage, equality, self-expression, and happiness. These interrelated responses support a healthy LGBTQI youth’s personal identity. Therefore, practitioners must recognize that LGBTQI youth should be celebrated for who they are, free from discrimination, harassment, and abuse, to ensure the development of a healthy identity. The secondary codes were highlighted as the theme ‘values clarification.’ Values clarification suggests that when LGBTQI individuals value their membership in a group, their status as members must be affirmed and supported. Thus,

service delivery, supportive resources, and opportunities that advance the well-being of LGBTQI youth are believed to be important. Values clarification is critical to a practitioner's professional growth since personal beliefs are characterized by who an individual is, and is driven by how that individual lives and the decisions they make. As a result, gaining new knowledge that is not grounded on biased individual assumptions rejects judgmental beliefs that are rooted in the juvenile justice system.

Interpersonal Assessment

The respondents were asked to describe how their personal beliefs are communicated in the JJC. Communication was referenced as fairness, non-judgmental attitude, responsibility to perform duties at top levels, speak-up, correct stereotypes, correct ignorance, assist, consistency, fairness, open and receptive, responsibility, and empathy. These secondary codes are acknowledged as the theme 'interpersonal assessment.' Interpersonal assessment is the process by which an individual is received by others without being targeted for harassment or discrimination. Interpersonal assessment speaks to how the respondents assess their own biases and judgments when interacting with others. This assessment emphasized how individual attitudes are carried into the workplace and are reflected and projected onto the youth served. Assessing oneself can help practitioners create practices that generate unbiased, consistent, and reliable decision-making.

Professional Development

Additionally, the respondents were asked to name three support mechanisms for LGBTQI youth. The respondents referenced support mechanisms as individual and group counseling, specialized treatment, monitoring latest trends, literature, treatment, youth

rights, confidentiality, understanding, safety, efficiency, and training resources. The secondary codes referenced the techniques used by practitioners to provide culturally competent care. These codes are endorsed as the theme ‘professional development.’ Professional development is essential for practitioners because it is an education framework that includes an array of strategies to support practitioner competence and professional growth. In other words, professional development focuses on increasing a practitioner’s capacity to adequately assess and effectively treat LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system.

Collective Understanding

Lastly, the respondents were asked to answer the question, “What can be done to create an inclusive culture for LGBTQI youth?” The strategies referenced by respondents suggested staff education and training, policy enforcement, safety, confidentiality, access to professionals, and zero tolerance for discrimination. These secondary codes were ascribed as the theme ‘collective understanding.’ Collective understanding values the contributions of all members of the organization. Accordingly, all stakeholders must be invited to participate in creating the vision for the agency. Collective understanding promotes the process of sharing, growing, and learning as one unit. These attributes of understanding are meaningful to this study since creating an inclusive culture suggests establishing a climate in which respect, equity, and positive recognition of differences are nurtured. When organizations commit to developing these characteristics, they are promoting a functional and healthy culture and climate. Moreover, these characterizations empower respondents to improve their practice and gain a better understanding of the system within which they work.

Overall, the pre- and post-test data reported increased levels of practitioner competence in their ability to serve LGBTQI youth in the JJC. The McNemar's test illustrated statistically significant data suggesting that LGBTQI youth training increased practitioner knowledge concerning issues affecting such youth in juvenile justice. The open-ended questions illustrated that the respondents' personal beliefs do not inhibit them from working with LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice. Additionally, based on the evaluations, the respondents indicated that they will use the information taught and the tools distributed from the training in their work. These findings illustrated that the respondents found the training to be useful to their professional performance needs. Moreover, as the number of LGBTQI youth increases in the JJC, it is likely that respondents will require additional training to follow trends.

Action Application

The action construct of AR involves a process of planned interventions with concrete activities (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007). The intervention in this case was a mandatory LGBTQI training. In AR, the action occurs as a response to a difference in ideals and what people in the social context perceive as being in need of change (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007). The LGBTQI pilot training was developed in partnership with Lambda Legal Defense Fund. The curriculum was created to improve out-of-home care for LGBTQI youth. The curriculum was intended to build the capacity, awareness, and skills of social workers and other child welfare practitioners in order to better serve and respond to the needs of this population.

In module one, the respondents began their journey toward cultural competency. The training started with an explanation of the reasons why the JJC needed an LGBTQI

policy and training. The training goals and objectives introduced the respondents to both the issues faced by LGBTQI youth in out-of-home care and cultural competence. The activity for this module was to create agreed upon expectations regarding behavior during the training. The goal of the working agreement was to provide the respondents with an environment in which they would safely and respectfully share common and conflicting opinions, values, beliefs and ideas. This agreement entailed: respecting differences in beliefs, opinions, and values; using “I” statements when voicing opinions; stepping up to share ideas or stepping back to ensure that others could express themselves; giving everyone a right to pass; and encouraging everyone to express feelings, questions, and concerns. Since confidentiality could not be a requirement, the respondents were reminded that they were to voice their concerns accordingly.

Module two: the respondents increased their understanding, empathy and knowledge about the unique stressors often experienced by sexual and gender minority youth and their families. The objective was to demonstrate increased understanding of the issues involved in “coming out” and how they might affect youth in care. Further, recognizing that coming out is not about sexual behavior, but are statements of identity and relationships, both of which were critical to emotional and social development in youth, was hoped to be realized. In addition, the respondents were to articulate the potential consequences of social and emotional isolation on LGBTQI youth. The activity explored was the “Impact of Silence,” an interactive activity where respondents wrote on index cards answers concerning the most important relationships in their lives, the places that have special significance to them, life events or topics discussed with friends, and hobbies or leisure time activities they enjoyed. Without discussing what was written on

the index card, each respondent paired up with a partner and was asked to have a conversation with that partner. This activity was an opening exercise to provide the respondents with understanding the negative impact of imposed silence on LGBTQI youth and to highlight potential risks associated with social isolation that many of these youth experience.

Module three increased the respondents' knowledge regarding current definitions about sexual orientation, sex and gender. The objective was to demonstrate increased understanding of the differences between sexual orientation, sex, and gender. The respondents participated in an interactive "Bingo" game. The game was similar to the original bingo board game. The facilitator called out definitions of key LGBTQI terminology and the respondents were required to match the definition with the proper term as recited. Once a respondent exclaimed "Bingo," he or she was to accurately define and name the recited selection. If the accurate name and definition was not established, the game would continue until someone won. This activity was used as a means to increase competency in using culturally competent terminology.

Module four helped the respondents explore their personal views and values regarding sexual orientation and gender. The respondents explored common myths and stereotypes about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and identified strategies that they could use to balance their personal views with professional responsibilities. The objective of this module was to enable the respondents to gain clarity regarding their personal, religious, cultural beliefs, and values regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, and reduce adherence to stereotypes and myths regarding LGBTQI people. The activity for this module was "Concentric Circles."

The Concentric Circle required the respondents to face each other in the form of a circle. The facilitator asked the respondents a series of questions to explore their personal views and values. During this activity, the respondents could not respond to, comment on or challenge other respondents' views or values. The purpose of the Concentric Circle illustrated to the respondents that they all have received messages about LGBTQI people, as well as cultural and racial identities. Some of the messages were either positive or negative, but were beyond their control. This activity enlightened the respondents about how their personal beliefs inform their decision-making in the workplace.

Module five provided the respondents with a hands-on experience in dealing with the issues and concerns they would most likely face in their professional roles. In this module, the respondents identified situations and scenarios associated with sexual orientation or gender. Role-plays were the activity for this module. The role-play scenarios included staff interventions when LGBTQI youth are harassed by other youth, a co-worker's personal beliefs that interfere with their professional roles, a transgender youth requesting to wear gender congruent clothing, and a youth who discloses his or her identity to a staff person. The activity provided practical skills for handling LGBTQI-related situations that the practitioners may encounter while performing their duties. Moreover, it suggested techniques for presenting themselves as affirming and supportive allies.

Module six provided the respondents with concrete next steps to develop culturally competent practices with LGBTQI youth. The respondents identified three to five affirmative actions to which they would commit themselves and implement over the next two week period. They also shared their action plan with others around them. The

respondents suggested safe-zone stickers, LGBTQ friendly stickers, an LGBTQ resource guide, and recruiting experts in the field to increase knowledge. Individually, the respondents committed themselves to understanding the connections between anti-LGBTQ bias and racism, sexism, and classism, challenging biased remarks regardless of the source, and seeking to understand that questioning, exploration and fluidity are normal for adolescents.

Module seven reinforced the learning and provided the respondents with opportunities to offer feedback on their experience in the training. The activity was a quick review of the materials and provided another opportunity at the completion of the session to discuss what was learned.

The rationale to capture the action after drawing upon the quantitative results was to illustrate how the activities from the LGBTQI training raised the level of consciousness among the trainees. The pre- and post-test data demonstrated an increase in trainee knowledge; however, it was important to delve deeper into practitioner perceptions of what should be considered as legitimate goals for professional development when working with LGBTQI youth. During the first cycle, the planning, action, observation, and reflections constructs were highlighted to inform the second cycle of data collection. The findings revealed that further action and observation is needed to develop perspectives about the social context and to improve practices in juvenile justice.

Emergent Discoveries

Since AR takes a subjective approach, it aims to investigate issues of practical importance using systematic data collection procedures (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark,

& Morales, 2007). Qualitative research is a method of inquiry to explore, explain, or describe a phenomenon of interest (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007).

The qualitative sample consisted of five male and 11 female respondents. The interview respondents varied in terms of race and ethnic identities, and included eight Black/African Americans, four Hispanics, and four White/Caucasians. Their working professional titles were social worker, instructor counselor, youth worker, substance abuse counselor, and educator. Seven respondents had more than 15 years working in the JJC. Five respondents worked between 10-14 years and four respondents were employed at the JJC for less than 10 years. Table 4 reports the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 4

<i>Demographics (N=16)</i>		
	N	%
<i>Gender</i>		
<i>Male</i>	5	31.25
<i>Female</i>	11	68.75
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
<i>White</i>	4	25
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	4	25
<i>Black/AA</i>	8	50
<i>Years of Experience</i>		
<i>15+</i>	7	43.75
<i>10-14</i>	5	31.25
<i>Less than 10</i>	4	25
<i>Professional Title</i>		
<i>Social Worker 1</i>	6	37.50
<i>Social Worker 2</i>	2	12.50
<i>Teacher</i>	2	12.50
<i>SAC</i>	3	18.75
<i>Youth Workers</i>	2	12.50
<i>Instructor Counselor</i>	1	6.25

Note. Demographic characteristics of interviewed respondents.

During the second cycle, data was collected via semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions. Seidman (2006) posited that interviewing is a highly structured data collection methodology that requires open-ended questions to help understand the meaning of an activity. Semi-structured interviews are carefully designed to elicit an interviewee's perceptions on the topic of interest, as opposed to leading the interviewee toward preconceived choices (Seidman, 2006). I created an interview protocol to organize the interview questions in order to solicit thoughtful responses. An interview protocol is a conversational guide used to highlight main questions, follow-up questions, and probes (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The interview protocol provided consistency and allowed for flexibility while gathering data during the interview sessions. The interview protocol was created to achieve depth from the respondents' perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about LGBTQI youth in the JJC. Also, I used responsive interviewing, which are extended conversations that allow relationships between the researcher and the interviewee to be formed in order to elicit depth and detail of information (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The responsive interviewing techniques captured additional information to follow-up and clarify responses with the respondents.

A solicitation letter was emailed to all respondents requesting their participation to take part in the study (See Appendix D). This method ensured that each participant received the invitation simultaneously. It also allowed each of them to reply at their leisure. The inclusion criteria for participating in the interviews were that the respondents: a) were employed with the JJC; b) were direct care practitioners; c) were not contracted employees or interns; and 4) were willing to spend approximately one hour answering interview questions. Inclusion criteria are a set of predetermined

characteristics used to identify participants in a research study (Spitzer, Endicott, & Robins, 1978). The first 16 respondents who answered this call for action were selected to be interviewed. The interviews were scheduled and conducted on a first come, first served basis. I conferred with each participant on dates, times and locations that were feasible to permit them to take part in the interview. Prior to conducting the interviews, I posed several background questions. The respondents were asked their years of experience in the field, job title, and tenure with the JJC. These questions were asked to help the respondents get into a conversational mindset in an attempt by me to develop rapport. After, I discussed informed consent and confidentiality, I had each respondent sign two consent forms to take part in a research study (See Appendix E), two forms to be interviewed (See Appendix F), and two forms to be audio recorded (See Appendix G). Each respondent received one copy of the signed documents for their records. Also, the respondents received full disclosure of the research conducted.

I conducted 16 face-to-face interviews in the respondents' homes. The questions focused on cultural norms, JJC culture and climate, LGBTQI youth in JJC, and JJC policies. The questions were broad enough to allow the respondents latitude to construct an answer of substance. For example, the first question asked the respondents to describe the messages received from family and friends about sexual orientation. This question was further elaborated upon when the respondents were asked if their views remained the same or whether they changed over time. Probing questions were used to obtain more in-depth responses. During each interview, the respondents had the opportunity to address additional thoughts or questions related to the study. Each interview lasted approximately

25-40 minutes. Immediately after each interview, I reiterated the issue of informed consent and confidentiality.

I reflected upon the conversations, tested the recorder to ensure that the entire interview was captured, and filled in any gaps of data. Moreover, journaling guided the process for documenting my thoughts, observations and feelings about the interview sessions and how I should proceed in the research process. My initial motivation for the researcher journal was to document the progression of the training and how I would carry out the tasks identified in the implementation plan. During this cycle, I found the journal to be most useful. After completing the interviews, the journal was essential for creating additional questions to enhance the interviews when I conducted member checks.

All interview data was uploaded to an Indoswift drop box for transcription. Indoswift Transcription Service Company is a transcription service outsourcing company. Once the data was transcribed, all data were saved in Dedoose. Dedoose is a cross-platform application that is designed for analyzing qualitative data. In Dedoose, I was able to store and code multiple sources of data. Coding was used to organize observations, statements, and other data based on common patterns and themes (Creswell, 2007; Saldana, 2009). To set up Dedoose and begin the coding process, I first coded my data using holistic coding in the first iteration (Saldana, 2009). Holistic coding helped to conceptualize my data. Then, I used Invivo coding to capture behaviors or processes to obtain a rich description of the categories and identify and develop themes (Saldana, 2009). I collapsed the original number of first cycle codes into a smaller number of codes, and then reanalyzed the data using one key code to develop themes in the second cycle analysis.

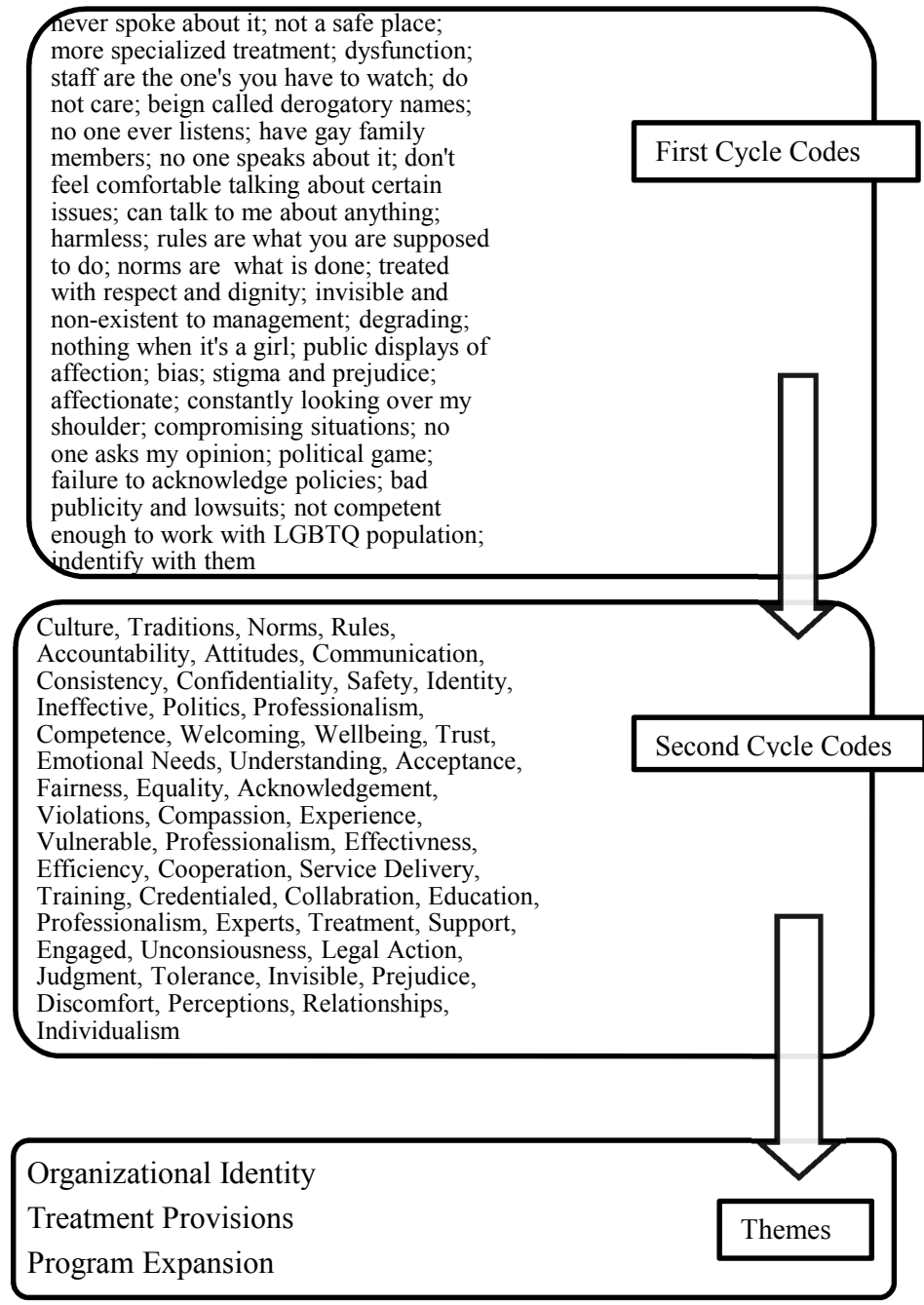


Figure 3. Respondents' response rate of the first and second cycle codes and theme generation.

The themes identified in this analysis were organizational identity, treatment provisions, and program expansion. Examining the themes with the existing research authenticated the data and linked the themes to the literature.

The interview protocol included 11 semi-structured questions designed to assess respondent views regarding LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice. The question format remained open-ended to allow for further probing when appropriate. I had the interview questions reviewed by the LGBTQI committee to determine if the questions posed any risks or threats that could potentially generate opposition or impose a hardship on the respondents. I reviewed the protocol with critical friends for suggestions to improve the line of questioning and to solicit a more complete dialogue with the respondents. The critical friends were the most helpful because they viewed the interviews questions as outsiders of the juvenile justice system. They elicited clarification and additional information in areas of the protocol that appeared disconnected from the study.

The first series of questions I posed were about the cultural norms associated with forming stereotypes and bias toward LGBTQI youth. I began each interview by asking, “What messages did your family and friends give you about sexual orientation?” Respondents interviewed indicated that sexual orientation was never discussed in their homes. One respondent stated: “My brother is gay and my parents were accepting of him. It was a little hard on my dad at first, because it is son. He was supposed to play baseball, but eventually he got over it.” I then probed further and asked whether those views remained the same, and what messages were received from that experience. The respondent shared:

“When I think back to how I grew up, my views are the same. I am supposed to love everyone. My brother was my first exposure to a gay individual and I love my brother to death. He is my best friend. I don’t view gay people differently.”

Another respondent shared:

“My mother always says they (gay people) need prayer and only God can save them.” When probed about whether those views remained the same or changed over time: “I don’t particularly care either way. It does not bother me.” When further probed the respondent stated: “Whatever floats their boat, if they like I love it. It is not me. I am an accepting person. I know get along with plenty of gay people.”

Another respondent expressed:

“I grew up in a very Catholic family that loathes homosexuality, but for some reason I never followed their views because while I was in college I had my first lesbian experience. It was my first time and I never did it again. When I told my mom about it though she went crazy and we never spoke about it again.”

When further probed:

“It was a one-time experience. I get along with everyone. The way I grew up was different, but when I left the nest I was exposed to other diverse cultures and I explored and experienced life like all college kids should do.”

Cultural norms involve a number of personal values and social situations that may clash based on assumptions derived from individual attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

Although the respondents’ personal values vary across cultures, biases can easily form if they are not open to differences. As a result, ethical dilemmas may arise if their personal

values are challenged by competing values. The reality is that personal values, beliefs and biases shape experiences and are carried into the workplace. When there is incongruence between personal and professional values, resistance is usually formed and reflected in the workplace.

I then posed the second question: “What were the rules in your family regarding gender?” Several respondents shared that there were no rules. However, there were gender transgressions that were consistent in growing up. One respondent shared: “Girls could wear all colors, but boys could not wear pink.”

The respondents indicated that their parents’ house rules were that girls could not wear pants. They should only wear dresses and that they had to wash and set the dinner table for the family. Another respondent stated: “The only chore my brother had was taking out the trash. I hated cleaning up after him but my mother would say, stop complaining this is what you are supposed to do.”

When further probed about what gender transgressions makes them uncomfortable, the respondent was more reflective and shared:

“My mom was old fashioned. She raised me and my siblings the old-fashioned way. My father worked fulltime and she maintained the house. I rebuked those values. They are so out dated. Both my daughter and son take out the trash. I allow my daughter to wear pants and actually my son owns a few pink shirts. So you can see how my values have changed over the years.”

The respondents shared that the transgressions they experienced growing up were being told that boys played sports and girls must present themselves as ladies.

Understanding the cultural norms that groomed the respondents into the individuals they are facilitates a reflection of their values and beliefs. Therefore, having the respondents reflect on their personal values and belief systems clarified how they carried out their professional roles in the workplace.

Organizational Identity

I then moved the focus of the interviews specifically to the culture and climate in the JJC. Organizational identity is a relational process formed in interaction with others (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Hatch & Shultz, 2002). The relational process requires drawing upon relationships with all stakeholders in the organization. I asked the respondents to describe the typical facility experience for LGBTQI residents compared to non-LGBTQI residents, particularly as it related to their physical safety and to what extent they are supported. All of the respondents revealed that the JJC is not a safe place for any youth, especially for those that identify as LGBTQI. When probed further, respondents indicated that, “The youth who come into the system require specialists who can properly treat LGBTQI youth.” When probed for additional information, the respondents shared that the JJC is relevant, because the Department of Corrections and the Department of Children and Families are not interested in taking on “the problems that we deal with.” Another respondent shared: “Safety is a huge issue here, safety for the residents and the staff. If I have to constantly worry about my safety, how can I make sure the residents are safe especially LGBTQI youth. They are the most vulnerable, but you do have some that know how to take care of themselves.” When probed further, the respondent shared: “You know, most gays can fight.”

In this respect, organizational identity draws upon the relationships between the internal stakeholders and the culture and climate of the organization. Safety is important for everyone, not just for the individuals served within the organizational context. Given the complexities involved in the respondent's roles, the culture and climate of JJC is one that requires a redefined process to ensure that practitioners feel safe in their work environment. The respondents that value and commit to their roles are a direct reflection of the organizational structure. The respondents revealed that working in a juvenile justice facility is a challenging task. Therefore, if organizational leaders are not providing security provisions by which individuals can feel safe, then neither the culture nor the climate will change. Accordingly, change only occurs when organizational leaders identify the fragmented gaps in services.

The next question asked the respondents to share their thoughts about the experiences of residents who are perceived to be, but may not identify as, LGBTQI. One respondent in particular stated:

“The JJC is a dumping ground for those youth who have exhausted all community resources and if they are openly gay they can forget it. They will be treated like second class citizens. The issue isn't really the residents, it is the staff. The staff is the ones you will have to watch. No one holds them accountable for mistreating residents. If a resident acted in a manner that even looked like he was gay, the staff at my facility are very unwelcoming. It is a shame. When one of those kids sues then the JJC will see that this is not a joke. The staff does not care. I see them give those gay kids such a hard time.”

Another respondent expressed similar sentiments:

“How can administration expect me to ensure the safety of LGBTQI youth when they don’t ensure my safety. I know this is my job, but I can’t count on the officers I work with. These officers are the most homophobic people that I’ve ever worked with.”

When probed further, the respondent shared:

“The JJC talks about ensuring the physical safety of all its staff and residents, but as a front line staff I hear all of the derogatory comments all of the time. There are several gay kids at my facility. You would never know unless you had a genuine conversation with them.”

When asked to explain, the respondent shared:

“I would have reported the name calling to my supervisor, but no one ever listens. I was told by another staff member that I need to be careful because if the officers ever found out that I reported them, they would give me problems.”

With additional probing the response was more explicit:

“If there was a code in my classroom they (officers) will take their time to respond. So, my safety is always at risk. I would like to do more, but I don’t have the support from administration.”

Several respondents shared similar sentiments about the experiences of residents who are perceived to be, but may not identify as, LGBTQI. Although these claims were hostile and unaccommodating, the statements were profound since they spoke to the culture and climate of the agency. Also, the statements illustrated a breakdown about how youth are cared for in the organizational structure. The perceptions of the respondents with regard to the organizational identity illustrates that safety is of paramount concern.

The next line of questioning requested that the respondents identify factors that influenced their attitudes toward LGBTQI youth, and if their attitudes were a direct result of personal or professional experiences. More than half of the respondents revealed that their attitudes concerning LGBTQI youth were a result of personal experiences.

Respondents indicated that they know of someone very close to them who identifies as LGBT. Respondents indicated that they also have gay family members. A respondent shared: “Being gay was accepted in my household. I remember my uncle bringing his partner to the family gatherings. No one really spoke about it.”

Another shared:

“Gay people are harmless. Back in the day, I used to hang out in the East Village in NYC. I had the best time of my life hanging with the men and women in drag. Those were the good days.”

Another stated:

“In my unit, I approach all of my kids with respect. Respect for who they are, what they do, and how they feel. I make sure that my kids feel like they can talk to me about anything. It is a part of my job wish I could say the same for the people who are running this place.”

On the other hand, several respondents reflected differently: “I got to be honest. I really don’t like to be around gay people. They make me uncomfortable. I just don’t like it.”

When probed further, the respondent shared: “Don’t get me wrong, I really don’t care what they do as long as I am not affected by it. They are not taking money out of my pocket so I treat them as I would treat anyone else.”

Another respondent asserted:

“No one is paying me extra to do anything outside of my job title. If I don’t feel comfortable talking about those issues, I will send the resident to their social worker.”

The respondents’ experiences were commonly expressed because the same sentiments were shared by others. Creating a working environment supportive of LGBTQI youth begins with the process of respecting individualism and understanding cultural norms. Since conflict between personal and professional values are common practices in the workplace, it is important to acknowledge that these conflicting experiences have huge implications for the population being served. As such, the organizational structure must reevaluate the daily routines of the practitioners’ rules of conduct in order to improve the manner by which they are to respect differences.

The next question requested that the respondents describe the JJC’s culture or the unwritten rules, and explain what would happen if they are violated. Four of the respondents shared that their initial perception of being gay was tainted by traditional family and role values. Over time, their perceptions changed to become more fluid because of their chosen profession. Another respondent was more candid, implying that:

“In the JJC there are rules and there are norms. The rules are what you are supposed to do. The norms are what are done. I work for an agency that thrives in a culture of norms. The rules are that kids should be treated with respect and with dignity, but the norm is that the gay residents are invisible and is non-existent to management.”

In addition, a respondent shared:

“They (LGBTQI residents) are invisible to administration, especially if they male. For some reason, being gay or perceived to being gay is nothing when it’s a girl, but when it’s a boy everyone goes crazy. They (residents) are always degraded by the staff and their emotional needs go unmet.”

To help me understand, I requested that the respondent elaborate about the belief that if a male was gay then everyone goes up in arms more than if it were a female.

“As a gay male, I have seen how my peers have responded to male-to-male public displays of affection. I know the agency promotes a hands off environment however when the boys are observed sitting in between each other’s legs or getting their hair braided, I am told by my superiors to watch them closely. However, when girls demonstrate this type of behavior they are being affectionate. There is a double standard here.”

In the JJC, this form of gender bias is prevalent since being LGBTQI is a controversial topic among staff.

Since the inception of the Federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), the consensus has been that anyone who is openly gay is perceived to be a sexual predator. The respondents asserted that the JJC is only concerned with PREA. One respondent highlighted: “All they (JJC) do is talk about, PREA, PREA, PREA. PREA is a good thing, but only a small percentage of kids are classified as sex offenders.”

Another respondent shared:

“We have all of these policies and procedures. More recently, we received the PREA policy. PREA is strongly recognized here because I think it is a federal

mandate. We have signs posted everywhere, but I don't think administration see the affect that it has on the staff."

I then probed for additional information about their experiences. The respondent communicated:

"I am constantly looking over my shoulder trying to make sure that I do not place myself in a compromising situation. By this, I mean I have seen residents make false allegations against my colleagues because they just didn't like them. Those types of allegations are nothing to play with. I have seen colleagues investigated by internal affairs because a resident lied. This is a dangerous game. Don't get me wrong, I have heard about staff mistreating youth, but not to the extent of rape. When these types of accusations are made about staff and no one is held accountable who suffers. The residents suffer because the staff loses motivation to perform at the highest levels. People livelihoods are at stake and are affected by the lies that some of these kids tell. It is a dangerous game. The pressure is too much. It wears you out, especially for me since I work in a secure facility."

These assertions are very important to acknowledge because PREA largely focuses on safety for the prevention of sexual abuse in prison and not for youth developmental outcomes. The respondents revealed that when allegations of abuse are formed, the procedure for handling them is one that not only creates a level of stress for the staff being accused, but also the entire facility. Another respondent shared: "Kids are coming out (disclosing their LGBT status) younger and younger and the staff needs to know how to work with them."

The respondents shared similar testimonies concerning how practices affect their commitment and loyalty to the JJC. They shared that the JJC administration must ensure that all of its employees are equally allowed and supported to take on leadership roles in an effort to preserve cooperative behaviors. Consequently, without the support from administrators, the cycle of powerlessness is maintained. The JJC must recognize that service delivery is impacted when efforts are not made to share and negotiate its core values.

Treatment Provisions

The service coordination and service responsiveness of the practitioners' willingness and readiness to provide quality care in support of LGBTQI youth should be evaluated to ensure it is of the highest quality for LGBTQI youth. The shift from institution to the community can be a difficult transition for this population. Therefore, the goal of service coordination and responsiveness must connect LGBTQI youth to highly trained and skilled professionals. These coordination efforts should range from linking the resident to LGBTQI-affirming educational and vocational facilities, independent living services, and mental and physical healthcare providers. I then moved the focus of the interviews to discuss ways in which LGBTQI youth are a part of the JJC's mission and vision and how so. The respondents shared that the mission and the vision of the JJC promotes itself as one that is highly structured and fosters rehabilitation, but lacks in communicating with staff about their needs to effectively perform their duties. One respondent shared:

“This is the first time that I was able to offer my opinion on issues related to our kids. These are my kids. However, we (JJC) still conduct business as usual and

continue to violate resident's rights. The residents are offered a resident handbook which has rights in it, but at times it is not thoroughly explained or it is left up to the resident to read it at their leisure. You know most of our residents are reading on a 4th grade level. Do you think they really understand, I don't think so"

Another shared:

"No one ever asks my opinion about anything. Since I've been here, we have had three executive directors and none of them have addressed my concerns. What's the use of having an employee suggestion box when no one ever responds?"

When probed further: "I don't think they care. It's always a political game when it comes to these folks. We have a mission. I see the vision, but we are not successful in what we do."

Another respondent shared:

"How are we going to properly treat our youth if we don't know what is going on. The LGBTQ policy training was the best training that I had in years. It was very informative. We need more trainings like that and our kids need it too because teaching compassion is a part of the rehabilitation process."

The JJC offers a number of internal and external supportive services for youth as required by legislative frameworks and policy guidelines. However, regular steps must be taken to improve the quality of such resources. The JJC must look for information about the real, underlying needs of all youth served; moving away from a one-sized fits all mentality. For example, LGBTQI youth require diverse service needs that differ from youth who do not identify as such. Improvement processes must be developed to eradicate the adverse mindsets of those practitioners who are not affirming. When

practitioners are reluctant to execute conversations with LGBTQI youth, it infringes upon the organization's core values and encumbers service delivery.

The respondents were then asked to describe the policies, programs, and practices that include and affirm the identity of LGBTQI resident's. All of the respondents shared that the only policies they could think of were the PREA policy, Harassment and Discrimination policy, and the LGBTQI policy. One respondent shared: "We have so many (policies), I don't think I could tell you much about them with the exception of PREA because that's all we talk about."

This failure of policy acknowledgment is discouraging because the policies are written as the framework to guide practitioners to properly care for youth.

Respondents were asked how policies and expected practices are communicated in the JJC and how are they communicated to other staff and residents. They shared that the JJC's process for communicating policies is primarily by way of staff meetings. One respondent shared: "We are given policies to sign off on with the intention that they are understood." Another shared:

"We have a policy, we are told what it is for, but it is always left up to our interpretation as to how to implement it. I think this approach is stressful because we are expected to know how to carry out policies."

Another respondent revealed: "The JJC is good for distributing policies and having you sign it to say your received it, but never officially train you on it."

Another expressed similar sentiments: "The policies are discussed briefly in a staff meeting, we sign that received them then it's trashed." When probed, the participant shared in more detail: "We talk about the policy in a staff meeting and the superintendent

gives the directive to do it. They (superintendent) leave and it is left up to us to decipher it.” When probed further: “I think that if the JJC really enforces their policies everyone will fall in line, sometimes I feel that these policies are only enforced when it appears that the agency will receive some bad publicity or a lawsuit.”

Another respondent highlighted:

“The JJC will pay now, or they will pay later. The policy training was overdue because kid rights are being violated left and right in my facility. You would think with Rutgers filing lawsuits the ignorance would stop, but it doesn’t.”

The respondents shared their thoughts about ongoing litigation due to violations of resident rights, which are a result of maintaining old practices that generate financial risks. The respondents’ assertions illustrate the cultural values rooted in the organization’s traditions and norms. Consequently, these standard policies, practices, and procedures are historical forces that have influenced the maintenance of the status quo, thereby impeding how youth are cared for in the midst of attempting to change the culture and climate.

Respondents were asked what JJC policies, practices, and supports help to create a safe and affirming environment for residents. The respondents underscored that the PREA policy was a policy that affirmed residents. Although noteworthy, it is essential to recognize that the PREA policy only addresses the sexual and physical abuse of residents. It does not address the psychological and health-related outcomes that are prevalent among LGBTQI youth while in confinement. In addition, respondents shared that the LGBTQI policy was a policy that affirms residents. In response to that, one respondent shared: “In my opinion, it doesn’t matter whether we have an LGBTQI policy or not

because it really depends on the attitudes of the staff. The staff is the ones who will be forced to implement it.”

Another respondent asserted:

“I make sure all the kids who are on my caseload feel welcomed and cared about. This is my job, my passion, I love kids. If my child was in a JJC facility I would hope that my child is being treated with respect. Unfortunately, I wish I can say that for many of the kids here. I have seen personally where officers constantly picked with kids and created problems on the unit.”

Similar sentiments were expressed by another respondent:

“If I didn’t get the resource guide during training, I wouldn’t know where to start. How am I supposed to know what is out there. I work in the community and I don’t know of all of the services. I know of many programs that we send kids to, but I am not sure whether they have experience in working with gay kids.”

When asked to elaborate:

“I think that it takes a different level of expertise to work with LGBTQ youth and the providers that the counties fund are not competent enough to work with that population. They can barely work with the kids we send to them now. They don’t know what to do if a youth comes out to them. What I mean by that is... are they going to blow the kid off and re-traumatize them or are they expert enough to engage the kid to identify with who they are.”

The respondents were consistent in their opinions about conflicting processes for implementing policy. They revealed that in every JJC community program and secured facility, there are standard operating procedures (SOPs) that are used as a means to

control work. Each facility superintendent ensures that policy distribution is communicated to practitioners. Yet, there are taken for granted suppositions that they have the working knowledge to carry out the directives without fail. They shared that they are held to high standards in performing their responsibilities, but there is a false sense of assumption among managers and supervisors that execution is understood. They stated that the rhetoric used to persuade them to work in solidarity with the given directives is double-speak since past practice has demonstrated a lack of culpability when operational problems arise. Additionally, they inferred that the people who create the standards have lost touch with how to best oblige youth.

Program Expansion

Program expansion promotes program recovery, resource allocation, and maintaining discretion. The respondents disclosed their concerns regarding the processes and practices that are normal structures in the JJC. This next line of questioning asked the respondents to expound upon the activities that the JJC does beyond the policies that foster a safe and affirming environment. The respondents shared that the JJC has to reevaluate and reconnect with the front-line staff to develop a culture and climate that cuts across the organization and brings together individuals with different points of view.

One respondent suggested:

“Why can’t they (JJC) just give us what we need to effectively do our jobs? We talk about treatment and rehabilitation, but how do we show our support for the gay kids when the managers demonstrates their non-existence in the facilities. You lead by example. If our head is distant from this reality, then what does that say about the rest of us?”

Another respondent communicated: “Now that we had the training what are we going to do. We still need to do more. What I mean is the kids going to receive the training.”

When probed further: “Are we going to begin creating a program specifically for them? Are we going to get those signs, magazines, and the resources we talked about in the training?”

Another respondent expressed: “I believe that confidentiality is important, but here (JJC) you can find where resident’s offenses can be seen on their face sheet. This is a violation of confidentiality.” When probed for additional information: “We are supposed to protect these kids and I see staff using the kid’s information against them all the time.”

Another respondent disclosed:

“We do a terrible job with keeping things confidential. There are some things that don’t need to be seen, but I work for a group of smart people who feel that it is important for everyone to know all of these kids’ issues.”

When asked to expound on this statement, the respondent shared:

“We are told to document everything. I have seen how kid’s information is used against them. I think it is a blatant form of disrespect and a major breach of confidentiality.”

In the same manner, another respondent revealed:

“You hear staff talking about residents personal issues all the time. It’s like water cooler conversation. On a few occasions, I heard staff talking about residents to other residents. It kills me when they do this. That’s why the agency needs to hire

more credentialed, professional staff to engage youth because we are doing a disservice to those that is here.”

Another interviewee communicated: “We are told to document everything they see and hear so everyone to see.”

These excerpts are clearly confidentiality violations. The respondents shared that the standard practice is to ensure that an activity log is kept to track supervision of residents, to document significant events, and for practitioner accountability.

Consequently, they communicated they have used the log to document whether a resident is LGBTQI or is perceived to be LGBTQI. This failure to maintain confidentiality is problematic and violates the LGBTQI policy provisions. A youth’s sexual orientation or gender identity should not be highlighted in a daily log book, progress notes or face sheet. This disregard of confidentiality has significant ethical implications and must be acknowledged by management.

Moving to the next line of questioning, respondents were asked about their thoughts concerning JJC policies and practices and how helpful they are to residents. Every respondent expressed a desire that that all JJC policies require in-depth training. A respondent stated: “The LGBTQI training was the best training that the agency could have done to help improve how to care for the residents.”

Another imparted:

“I really don’t think the JJC is ready. We need more than a day of training. People need to feel comfortable with discussing LGBTQI issues. The more we talk about it, the more people will begin to feel comfortable with working with the population.”

The respondents expressed concern about their inability to properly care for and treat LGBTQI youth in the JJC, more so the need to locate LGBTQI affirming services in the community. These concerns present serious ethical challenges since LGBTQI youth are under the care of a state agency with legal responsibility to protect them from abuse and neglect. Comprehensive information on available programs and services are absent in the JJC and must be available for practitioners to effectively perform job related functions. In reflecting on the data collection process, three themes were revealed: organizational identity, treatment provisions, and service expansion. The data illustrated each respondent's perceptions about the care and treatment, climatic conditions, and affirming networks for LGBTQI youth in the JJC. These illustrations helped to answer RQ2 and RQ3 and sub-questions 2A, 2B, and 2C.

The standards that guide the culture and climate of the JJC reflect the organization's identity. The generalizations formed by the respondents were universal, as similar opinions were shared. The respondents encountered varied situations whereby their identities were tested and challenged. One respondent's decision to not to speak out and act for fear of retaliation was a result of the institutional pressures perceived and exerted by members in power positions. Another interesting occurrence was the need to feel heard. Several respondents asserted that they are silenced when they voice their concerns regarding the care and treatment of youth. Notably, the respondents shared that those challenges influence their work behavior, making it difficult for them to carry out their duties.

The disconnection between the organizational rhetoric and a practitioner's reality necessitates some form of professional accountability when policy directives are blurred.

Within the organizational framework, accountability to standards suggests that the actions taken and the decisions made by practitioners are driven by policies and procedures that must be explicitly clarified in order to perform their roles effectively. The respondents shared that they are often penalized for misinterpretation of policies and procedures which occurs because they are not explained with clarity. They revealed that those delivering new communication fall short in guaranteeing that the new rules are understood. Moreover, they shared that the procedural manual used to assist them with executing their responsibilities is ambiguous.

A sub-theme of organizational identity is cost avoidance. This sub-theme captured the fundamental changes that require efforts to redirect policy implementation from one that maintains old practices to one that is effectively operational in its meaning. Since the inception of this study, the JJC has demonstrated a commitment to recognizing the presence of LGBTQI youth in its system. The JJC has proactively enacted an LGBTQI nondiscrimination policy and training initiative to educate practitioners on how to effectively work with the population. The policy and training initiative provided direct care practitioners with extensive knowledge regarding the proper care and treatment of LGBTQI youth. Moreover, the training expanded upon LGBTQI youth rights to safe conditions, restrictive conditions of confinement, mental and physical healthcare, confidentiality violations, and disclosure dilemmas to establish effective practices among practitioners. The actions of the JJC are commendable; however, the organization must consider modifying therapeutic programs to ensure that educational tools (e.g books, magazines, signage, etc.) are available to assist the practitioners in complying with the standards.

The theme ‘treatment provisions’ emphasize service coordination and responsiveness to identify LGBTQI relevant industries. The respondents communicated that they do not have the appropriate resources to carry out their roles. Therefore, service coordination and responsiveness requires that all practitioners receive training to gain a greater understanding of their professional obligations concerning LGBTQI youth. Additionally, a service directory of LGBTQI affirming mental and physical health providers, housing options, family-centered services, and vocational and educational services is necessary to expand service provisions and to coordinate and monitor agency efforts in locating local and county LGBTQI resources for youth.

The theme ‘program expansion’ infers improving service delivery for LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system. Meeting the needs of LGBTQI youth is a complex task because professing homosexuality is stigmatized in a heterosexist society (Crisp & McCave, 2007; Mallon & Wonoroff, 2006). The respondents shared that continuity of care for LGBTQI youth is delayed because they are faced with inadequate rehabilitative supports to accurately assess and serve youth. For that reason, inter-agency and intra-agency collaboration is necessary to coordinate appropriate treatment efforts among service providers and to ensure the treatment is not marginalized because of deficiencies in service provisions.

The respondents revealed the JJC is an organization that is guided by rules that are enforced with minimal proof that practitioner understanding of policies has been achieved. This lack of communication creates debate, discord and lowers staff morale. Moreover, this consequence is strong evidence to support the assertion that clear articulation and demonstration of policies and SOPs requires a well thought out training

plan to impart the most appropriate language for carrying out directives and to resolve the lack in understanding of policies. The LGBTQI training ensured that all practitioners were knowledgeable of LGBTQI policy concerning youth issues in the JJC.

Integrating the Findings

This section will highlight the central findings that emerged from this AR study. During this cycle, the quantitative data supported that sensitivity training is important for juvenile justice practitioners in order to create a welcoming and affirming environment for LGBTQI youth. For example, at post-test, practitioner knowledge increased and was statistically significant. This significance suggests that the training achieved its intent, which was to increase practitioner knowledge concerning LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice.

The quantitative data revealed that there was a deficit between the knowledge and skill levels of the practitioners concerning the care and treatment, climatic conditions, and affirming networks for LGBTQI youth. For instance, the quantitative results illustrated an increase in practitioner knowledge from pre-test to post-test concerning LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice. The McNemar's tests showed that the pre- and post-test scores were statistically significant. Logistic Regression analysis confirmed that demographic factors (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, education, and professional title) were not good predictors to determine knowledge increase, but there was one small exception. Education level was found to be a significant predictor as it related to question two, which was a multiple choice question that asked participants to select the 'Consequences of Isolation.' The results revealed that the higher the education level of the participant, the more likely that individual would answer the question correctly. Moreover, an

assessment of the coded, open-ended questions revealed that the themes - values clarification, interpersonal assessment, professional development, and collective understanding - are the constructs to improve the culture and climate in the JJC for LGBTQI youth.

The interview reports offered insight into the experiences of the respondents' perceptions concerning their world of work. The qualitative data revealed a body of evidence evoking conflict between their personal values and professional roles. The respondents shared that the reoccurring dysfunction is due to administrative posturing by those in managerial roles. Despite best efforts, the personal and professional disruptions in the organization mirror a more complex reality. One of the most consistent, underlying assumptions of questionable practice is practitioner knowledge of JJC policies. Implicit in this view is the assumption that JJC practitioners are knowledgeable about how to carry out their professional roles. This contradiction, however, creates greater pressures and risks to the organizational culture and climate when there is a lack of knowledge or misinterpretation of policies that are enforced by supervisors and managers.

This study required internal and external support for successful execution. The internal backing from the JJC administration laid the foundation to develop a LGBTQI policy and to carry out LGBTQI training sessions. In order to support the change effort, reinforcement was needed from administrators. The internal backing received from the administration illustrated to practitioners that the vision was clear and the direction the agency was heading toward was one of inclusiveness and affirmative practice.

Externally, collaboration with Lambda Legal was significant to the life and success of the trainings. Lambda Legal provided its expertise in advocacy, training and

technical assistance to guide the LGBTQI committee in flushing out the curriculum to model the LGBTQI policy. These active discussions were very important to the integrity and trustworthiness of the data and aligned with all constructs of the AR cycle. During the trainings, conference with Lambda Legal was highly necessary to develop a training curriculum that was suitable to the needs of JJC practitioners. Moreover, this collaborative effort afforded me the opportunity to participate in an LGBTQI Youth in Juvenile Justice, Listening Session in Washington, D.C., hosted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. At the listening session, I collaborated with expert LGBTQI advocates who actively work in the field of juvenile justice. The sessions' focus was to highlight policy development and training in an effort to create a best practice model for LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system.

Reflection on Action Research Process

As I reflect on the AR process, knowledge was gained and offered through a variety of methods. The pre- and post-test questionnaire was essential because it sought to measure practitioner knowledge of LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice. The interviews were equally important because they provided reflective practitioner experiences while working in the field. The researcher journal also helped to capture the interrelated, identifiable and interactive experiences taken from this study. The planning construct of AR highlighted the operational constraints that required a strategy to effectively carry out the study. These constraints necessitated access to training respondents for six hours of a work day. Initially, JJC administrators believed that six hours of training was excessive due to the practitioners' work shifts. However, the obstacle was surmounted since there was a clearly defined and well-written implementation plan that outlined the course of

action to be taken and ensured that all practitioners could be trained without disruption to the daily operation of the facilities. In AR, planning requires a diagnosis of the problem while considering the environment, culture, time and costs it would take to carry out the study (Adkere, 2003; Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998).

The action construct was facilitated by executing the established implementation plan. The action construct in AR illustrates actual change when moving from one phase to another and entails reorganizing structures, policies, and processes while supporting new behaviors (Adkere, 2003; Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). This was best demonstrated through the process of moving from the quantitative data collection phase to the qualitative data collection phase. During the quantitative phase, the LGBTQI training was introduced. The activities presented encouraged a mutual understanding of knowledge that already existed; it also revealed new knowledge that informed the learning process. These activities helped the respondents to step outside of their comfort zones and immerse themselves in the training. On the other hand, there were several respondents who required redirection. The redirection was a result of personal biases that impeded their ability to look beyond societal norms concerning LGBTQI individuals. The observable opposition was not a distraction, but was used rather as a learning tool for practitioners to recognize that bias is real and exists within the system in which they work. Overall, the respondents were engaged and committed to maximizing their knowledge of these complex issues.

During the qualitative phase, interviews were introduced. The observable, non-verbal communication elicited frequent probing to correct misconceptions and misinterpretations. These observable experiences were comparable to the AR observation

construct. The observation construct approaches and documents the informed action, its effect, and the context of the situation with an open mind (Adkere, 2003; Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). Recognition of the bias confirmed that LGBTQI youth were marginalized in the JJC. The JJC can use that information to create and monitor improvement efforts in policies and practices that will serve to increase practitioner knowledge and performance in work with marginalized populations.

Lastly, the reflection construct of AR is informative and thought-provoking. In AR, reflection is making sense of the issues and circumstances surrounding the problem (Adkere, 2003; Craig, 2009; Heron & Reason, 1997; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). The reflection construct helped to make sense of the problems, practices, and constraints that were revealed as the study progressed. In the JJC, communication among practitioners must be improved upon. The interviewees articulated these failings, as underscored in their claims. One interviewee revealed that the “JJC does a poor job in maintaining confidentiality of youth records.” Another interviewee asked the question, “How are we going to properly treat our youth if we don’t know what is going on or have what we need to do our jobs?” These assertions were stakeholder concerns that must be acknowledged in order to render mutually satisfying outcomes organization-wide.

The interviewees emphasized a need to hire more credentialed staff to work with LGBTQI youth. Although credentialing is important, it does not guarantee a level of experience and/or expertise that one may have over a non-credentialed individual. Perhaps, creating partnerships with experts in the field to assist practitioner enhancement of knowledge and skill will support the practitioners’ efforts to empower others. By doing

this, the JJC can leverage several gains for use of and access to effective services for LGBTQI youth without compromising the current system of care.

The juvenile justice system is an accommodation with sanctioned court-ordered mandates that is responsible to create interventions and programs to rehabilitate youth. The LGBTQI pilot training served as one element toward the reduction of a service system gap while improving coordination between the organization and its subordinates. The pilot training helped the practitioners examine the nature and purpose of delivering competent care for LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice. Additionally, they examined the personal experiences that guided their decision making while working with marginalized populations. Some participant feedback suggested that the LGBTQI training attempted to change their personal values. However, they were able to assess their personal values and relate them to their scope of work following participation. Overall, the training activities created an open learning environment within which they safely explored their personal views and articulated their professional responsibilities without judgment and/or fear of retaliation.

In reviewing the data through the lens of social justice and queer legal theory, the past practices, traditions, and norms of the organization were critically examined and assessed to support diverse sexual orientations and gender identities in the juvenile justice system. This study was a catalyst for organizational change since there was no uniform procedure that specifically addressed the needs of LGBTQI youth. In collaborating with the LGBTQI committee and Lambda Legal before, during, and upon completion of the study, a best practice framework was developed to assist practitioners in providing competent care to youth. The exposure not only elevated and advanced practitioner

knowledge of LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice; it increased confidence and competence to work with individuals who share different values.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this action research (AR) study was to examine the attitudes of direct care practitioners concerning the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth in the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC). This study consistently demonstrated the cycles of planning, action, observing, and reflecting. These cycles highlighted how JJC practitioners, policies, and practices oppressed rather than liberated LGBTQI youth. The JJC previously implemented a new training and policy initiative that governed practices for all direct care practitioners that work with LGBTQI youth. An LGBTQI committee was formed to lead the initiative and to ensure that the tasks identified in the implementation plan were carried out without fail. The pilot training offered a platform for practitioners to share their experiences while working with this young population, more specifically LGBTQI youth. The activities presented during the training introduced a new JJC LGBTQI policy into the organization's capacity. The policy training required JJC practitioners to assess those biases that may be carried into the workplace.

The study examined three main research questions and three sub-questions:

- 1) Does sensitivity training increase practitioner knowledge concerning LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice?
- 2) What are the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?
- 3) How can the findings improve support networks for LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?

- a) What are the factors that influence the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the care and treatment of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?
- b) Are these perceived attitudes embedded into the organizational culture and climate?
- c) Are there measures to affirm support networks provided to LGBTQI youth?

In the following discussion, I will demonstrate how these questions were answered and compare the findings with contemporary literature to arrive at interpretations of practitioner perceptions of and biases toward LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice.

Discussion

Social justice theory and queer legal theory were the lenses used to implement this study. Within this context, social justice theory guided the change process to ensure that JJC practitioners critically examined their personal values when executing their professional roles. To do this, the practitioners reflected carefully on how to ensure that their actions and decisions were socially just. During the training sessions, the practitioners were taught how to affirm behaviors, recognize marginalizing behavior, and ensure that LGBTQI youth are not isolated, victimized, segregated, displaced, criminalized, disrespected, or labeled pathological. The practitioners learned that in their practice they must question every decision made to ensure that LGBTQI youth are acknowledged and are not invisible. Moreover, they learned that they must support dialogue about sexuality when it occurs naturally in therapeutic settings. If, in fact,

practitioners create conditions under which some youth feel they must suppress who they are and what their circumstances are, the practitioners, therefore, are denying those youth the opportunity to be a part of the treatment process; they will clearly impede that process. Social justice in this sense helps practitioners to reject pathological behaviors that are difficult for them to acknowledge, in part, because they have not learned to distinguish between understanding legitimate differences. Therefore, in order for them to understand their pathologies, it is important that they challenge the status quo by critiquing the ways in which they internalize and put their practices into operation.

Queer legal theory was the other lens by which this AR study was guided. In this context, the philosophy of queer legal theory dismantles the hetero-normative frames used to oppress LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system. In the JJC, the social relations that shape the social order are institutionalized through policy and practice. This lens was found most appropriate, therefore, because it captured the struggle against powerlessness, marginalization, and degrading hierarchies and exclusions. The queer legal lens helped JJC practitioners to understand the layers of injustice and oppression that are embedded in organizational policies and practices. For many, institutionalized homophobia or heterosexual privilege is either conscious or unconscious and can manifest itself positively or negatively, especially in cultures and people. Privilege was discussed in detail, in terms of dominant or majority cultures and the resulting advantages. Therefore, having the practitioners assess the JJC's cultural, legal, and political directives allowed them to be exposed to the norms, processes, and institutional hierarchies that impede juvenile rights in the juvenile justice system.

Sensitivity Training

The first research question asked, “Does sensitivity training increase practitioner knowledge concerning LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice?” The pre- and post-test data from the pilot trainings increased practitioner knowledge of LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice. The training guided practitioners through a series of culturally competent activities that engaged them in the learning process. During the training, the practitioners discussed the most common myths and stereotypes concerning sexual orientation and gender identity. Examples included: their perceived assumptions that openly gay residents were sex offenders, impromptu referrals to the Sex Offender Classification Committee, resident isolation referenced as voluntary protective custody, or referencing same sex relations as a mental illness or a communicable disease. In juvenile justice literature, these operational practices mirror the experiences of LGBTQI youth. The conditions of confinement for LGBTQI youth are unreasonably restrictive and unconstitutional for purposes not justifiably associated with the security of the facility (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Heck, 2004; Squatriglia, 2007). Systematic discrimination supported by institutional policies and unconscious bias (Williams & Rucker, 2000) hinders practitioner effectiveness. Accordingly, the practitioners confronted their biases and perceived stereotypes about LGBTQI individuals. Affirmative practice in cultural competence literature acknowledges LGBTQI as a positive experience to heterosexual identity (Crisp & McCave, 2007; Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Van Den Bergh & Crisp, 2004). Therefore, affirmative practice normalizes the multiple identities of LGBT to challenge homophobic and heterosexist messages. In other words, professional development training coupled with supervision reinforces knowledge and skills to

develop a culturally competent workforce (Rogers & Lopez, 2002; Bernard & Goodyear, 1998; Ladany, Brittain-Powell, & Pannu, 1997). Practitioner knowledge in fact increased when culturally competent interventions were used to teach sensitivity about LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice. The research suggested that practitioners make appropriate decisions for rehabilitation when they are equipped with therapeutic interventions that support competent and equitable care (Crisp & McCave, 2007).

LGBTQI youth are an over-represented and invisible population in juvenile justice (Hunt & Moodie-Mills, 2012; Irvine, 2010; Keating & Remson, 2013; Marksamer, 2008). LGBTQI youth enter the juvenile justice system as a direct result of delinquent behavior. However, traumatic experiences that occurred in familial, social, and community settings also had a direct effect on their wellbeing (Hunt & Moodie-Mills, 2012; Keating & Remson, 2013; Marksamer, 2008). In general, the pilot training provided appropriate strategies to help practitioners modify service delivery for LGBTQI youth in the JJC. The practitioners were exposed to a number of interactive activities which introduced them to: a) empathy and knowledge stressors experienced by LGBTQI youth; b) an understanding of the differences between sexual orientation, sex, and gender; c) an assessment of personal, religious, cultural beliefs, and values regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression; d) ways in which to reduce stereotypes and myths regarding LGBTQI people; e) how to identify situations and scenarios most likely faced in their current professional roles; and f) how to develop concrete next steps for providing culturally competent services to LGBTQI youth. Research has found that sensitivity training expands the knowledge of delivering competent care (Campinha-Bacote, 2003; Delphin-Rittmon, Andres-Hyman, Flanagan, & Davidson, 2013; Keating

& Remson, 2013). The LGBTQI training was a supplemental resource inclusive of LGBTQI policy implementation. The activities presented during the training sessions were used to motivate and engage practitioners, which may account for the positive feedback received from them at the completion of the training sessions.

Practitioner Perceptions of LGBTQI Youth

The second research question asked, “What are the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?” The practitioner attitudes about the stigma of LGBTQI youth varied. As seen in the qualitative findings, the practitioners emphasized value-laden thought processes that directly and indirectly interfere with a resident’s treatment. As such, these personal perceptions may lead to inappropriate choices in therapeutic interventions, non-compliance with treatment, and an indirect extension of denial as to the uniqueness of these youths. In this finding, the practitioners explored their unexamined personal values, beliefs, and biases toward LGBTQI individuals. Their attitudes varied concerning how LGBTQI youth, or any youth for that matter, are cared for in the JJC. While several practitioners disavowed same sex relations, others accepted and affirmed those who identified as LGBTQI. The research shows that if the attitudes of practitioners are not affirmative, then youth development is restricted (Crisp & McCave, 2007; DiFulvio, 2011; Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006; Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002; Rock, Carlson, & McGeorge, 2010). Above all, many practitioners acknowledged that the affirmation of youth is essential to positive growth and development regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The role of the practitioner is to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all youth. However, morality positions such as religious doctrines

restrict rehabilitative efforts when the practitioners fail to balance their personal values and professional roles. In the same way, lost opportunities to demonstrate unconditional, positive regard is formed when the youth are confronted with these morality positions within the helping relationship.

The practitioners learned that when they were able to find connections between what they thought were unconnected practices in their roles they were more receptive to receive new information about heterosexist assumptions in the juvenile justice system. In addition, they made meaning of LGBTQI terminology and concepts and were amenable to confronting their personal values and biases (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006). Helping practitioners develop a positive attitude toward LGBTQI individuals is a starting point in preparing them to work competently with LGBTQI youth (Eliason, 2000; Long, 1996; Long & Serovich, 2003; Mohr et al., 2001; & Rock et al., 2010). Valdes (1995) asserted that outdated perceptions of identity must be challenged to eliminate suffering from covert social hierarchies. Therefore, the practitioners were introduced to real life scenarios of relegation in order to illustrate the overt and covert actions that marginalize LGBTQI individuals. This approach enabled practitioners to assess their views about LGBTQI individuals and begin to develop strategies to balance their personal values and professional obligations in the workplace. For instance, when the practitioners explored the personal messages received from family, friends, and community about LGBTQI individuals and other cultural and racial identities, they found that most of the information they received was inaccurate.

Practitioner Attitudes in the Organizational Culture and Climate

The third and fourth research questions asked, “What are the factors that influence the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the care and treatment of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting,” and, “Are these perceived attitudes embedded into the organizational culture and climate?” These questions provided an overall assessment of the organizational culture and climate and how it influences practitioner attitudes. Organizational culture research suggests that if a work environment is non-supportive, impersonal, and stressful, interactions with those in that environment will reflect the lack of support, depersonalization, and stress (Argyris, 1994; Chen & Huang, 2007; Hemmelgarn, Glisson, & James, 2006; Glisson & James, 2002; Jaw & Liu, 2003; Sveiby & Simons, 2002). The practitioners were candid in their assessments of the organization’s culture and climate. They expressed feeling powerless and fearing retaliation because they voiced their concerns about organizational practices. They described feeling dismissed when they addressed management about the organizational dysfunction. Further, they shared that when verbalizing issues concerning common practices (e.g. viewing a resident’s confidential information in progress notes or placing residents in isolation and documenting it as voluntary protective custody), they are placed in situations that result in confidentiality violations and disclosure dilemmas. For example, the practitioners revealed that disclosing a youth’s sexual orientation or gender identity affects the daily operations in the facilities because practitioners routinely assume that being openly gay is a communicable disease.

Other individuals who participated in the study shared that the LGBTQI training increased learning opportunities that they rarely receive. Argyris (1994) posited that

opportunities for communicating and learning minimize defensive routines when knowledge is gained to improve performance. Organizational culture and climate literature declares social interaction among organizational members as a critical role in the process of exchanging and sharing knowledge (Chen & Huang, 2007; Hemmelgarn, Glisson, & James, 2006; Sveiby & Simons, 2002). The JJC is a work environment where the culture and climate is restrictive due to the organizational structure (law enforcement) and the population served (at-risk youth). The training presented practitioners with learning opportunities where they could share their experiences working with LGBTQI youth. They were encouraged to ask questions and examine the communication lines that hindered their ability to carry out their roles. More importantly, they developed strategies for lowering organizational dysfunction.

The practitioners shared their disapproval regarding policy distribution and implementation. They revealed that policy violations regularly occurred, but policies were not enforced because the individuals either had no knowledge of the policy or it was outdated. This example demonstrates that standards of accountability and behavior must be clearly documented to establish appropriate boundaries. Accountability through policy provisions ensures that the actions of practitioners are executed in accordance with clear and consistent guidelines to direct decision-making. However, when there is a disconnect in policy and practice, the norms override the rules, thus illustrating the contrast between what the agency says it does and what it actually does. Consequently, this disparity is problematic especially when managers and supervisors enforce behavioral expectations. For example, the practitioners communicated that when addressing behavioral expectations, it is argued that “we’ve always done it this way” or “do as I say.” As a

result, distrust is formed and the discovery of new knowledge is minimized. Argyris (1994) proposed that this form of defensive thinking limits learning opportunities and reinforces defensive reasoning to protect and legitimize one's own power structure. In fact, the practitioners expressed being treated with hostility by managers and supervisors because the administrators perceived that their leadership and integrity was being questioned.

Additionally, organizational change efforts alter cultural norms and guarantee flexibility, motivation, and behavioral expectations (Hemmelgarn, Glisson, & James, 2007; Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998; Glisson & James, 2002). JJC practitioners expressed trepidation and doubt when instructed to implement new policies because they felt that if the policies were not appropriately executed, they ran the risk of rebuke. The JJC must assess the cultural norms that guide the organizational structure and remove contradictory policies and practices from its capacity. Nonetheless, if the JJC continues to uphold a broken system, the end result may produce less operational continuity, facilitate high staff turnover rates and instill poor work attitudes. Therefore, changing the policies and practices that uphold old processes will shift the culture and climate from one that is perceived as threatening, to one that is more open to building trust. In addition, when the cultural norms are altered, all youth are positively impacted.

Measures to Affirm Support Networks

The fifth question asked, "Are there measures to affirm support networks for LGBTQI youth?" The practitioners who participated in the study communicated an absence of support networks for LGBTQI youth in the JJC. They conducted assessments of their professional roles, and discovered a lack of knowledge concerning LGBTQI

youth development and available supportive resources. They also referenced their responsibility to report demeaning and ridiculing behavior from the staff and other residents. For confined youth, affirming support networks should include using preventive measures and protective regulations to safeguard LGBTQI youth from being victimized (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Heck, 2004; Paraschiv, 2013; Squatriglia, 2007). The JJC practitioners shared that LGBTQI training provided affirmative resources to help them better plan for a youth's return home. Moreover, they welcomed the idea of receiving ongoing professional development training to stay abreast of latest trends.

The research illustrated that like all youth, LGBTQI youth need protection, safety, affirmation, and guidance for a successful transition to adulthood (DiFulvio, 2011; Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006; Mallon, 1997; Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002; Rock, Carlson, & McGeorge, 2010). The practitioners received a resource guide to assist them with locating relevant LGBTQI services and beginning the process of community building. The resource guide lists national, state, and local LGBTQI affirming providers that publicize LGBTQI competent treatment services. Additionally, the guide offers legal and advocacy assistance, religious and spiritual membership, sports and recreational social activities, and a host of books, videos, and films. The research suggested that without LGBTQI affirming therapeutic interventions, LGBTQI youth will receive the same treatment as other youth (Daley, 2010; Godfrey, Haddock, Fisher, & Lund, 2006; Grafsky & Nguyen, 2015; Mallon, 1997; Tasker & McCann, 1999). This limitation in practice presents a disservice to LGBTQI youth because each identity has needs that are specific to that identity. A knowledge of LGBTQI affirming resources will provide legitimacy and credibility to the mission and

vision of the JJC, which is to provide youthful offenders with a continuum of rehabilitative services and sanctions in appropriate settings that promote positive growth and development opportunities.

Furthermore, JJC practitioners were knowledgeable about the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) policy, due to consistent monitoring by the federal government. Many of the study's participants believed that PREA was the policy that affirmed LGBTQI youth because it references LGBT youth as a vulnerable population in the criminal justice system. Queer legal scholars underscore identifying and contesting the discursive and cultural markers found within both dominant and marginal identities and institutions that prescribe and reify hetero-gendered understanding and behavior (Cohen, 1997; Valdes, 1995). Unfortunately, the PREA policy was the starting point used to assist practitioners with understanding the difference between sexual abuse while in confinement and sexual orientation and gender identity.

Throughout the study, the practitioners referenced PREA as a policy that supported LGBTQI youth development. Although significant, the PREA policy does not reference the social, emotional, and relational issues of LGBTQI youth. PREA does not discuss continuation of such transgender-related medical care as hormone therapy nor does it address gender non-conforming youth. The PREA focuses solely on practices for identifying and reporting sexual abuse while in confinement. Researchers confirmed that due to misinformation and prejudice, practitioners in many youth-serving facilities wrongly assume gay youth are sexual predators or they desire to have sexual relations with other youth (Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Keating & Remson, 2013; Stotzer, 2015). Cultural competence training about sexual orientation and gender identity corrects these

misconceptions about LGBTQI individuals and creates awareness, knowledge, and skills to interpret accurate viewpoints about diverse cultural groups.

Valdes (1995) asserted that there must be a restructuring of social, legal, and economic conditions to eradicate the burden of exploitation based on racism, sexism, homophobia, and similar ideologies of prejudice. In particular, JJC practitioners learned that the PREA policy and the LGBTQI policy are separate policies that support two different initiatives. The PREA policy addresses actionable processes for addressing sexual abuse while in confinement, while the LGBTQI policy addresses those developmental social, emotional, and relational issues with which LGBTQI youth regularly contend.

Improving Affirmative Practices

The sixth question asked, “How the findings improve support networks for LGBTQI youth in a juvenile correctional setting?” The JJC practitioners that participated in this study provided all-encompassing descriptions about service system gaps. The practitioners highlighted the limited financial and political support from administrators relative to their commitment as practitioners and advocates for youth. Although critical, the practitioners’ assessments were reflective of the organization’s culture and climate. This study illustrated that the goals of the organization becomes destabilized when knowledge is limited. Quality service delivery is a result of formal and informal training to help practitioners operate at their fullest potential. Consequently, service delivery is thwarted when the culture and climate of the organization inhibits its stakeholders from learning (Argyris, 1994). With that in mind, the JJC must work to create a culture that supports all stakeholders in the organization. Therefore, instituting an internal reform of

policies and practices to improve and increase practitioner competence places emphasis on carrying out their roles effectively.

Cultural competence researchers suggest that knowledge and awareness of cultural diversity convey understanding and appreciation for differences (Rogers & Lopez, 2002; Bernard & Goodyear, 1998; Ladany, Brittain-Powell, & Pannu, 1997). Cultural competence training generates awareness regarding stereotypes, biases, and misconceptions so that practitioners to effectively serve diverse populations. Accordingly, designing therapeutic communities that provide culturally diverse, comprehensive, and coordinated programs of service promotes positive youth development and encourages practitioners to work at higher performance levels.

Limitations and Delimitations

As with any study, there are limitations associated with the data that hinders the quality of the findings. I was aware of these limitations throughout the research process and I attempted to address them with the assistance of the LGBTQI committee. This study used quantitative data from a pre- and post-test questionnaire and qualitative data from practitioner interviews. The LGBTQI committee ensured that the survey items were representative of all possible questions concerning LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice. The wording of the pre- and post-test items were examined by the committee to assess whether the questions were relevant to the training and if a survey instrument was the most sensible way to measure practitioner knowledge. The committee found agreement between the curriculum concepts and the measuring procedures used for the data collection instrument. The findings illustrated that from pre-test to post-test, the respondents' knowledge increased concerning LGBTQI youth issues in juvenile justice.

Researcher bias occurs when the researcher interprets findings based on his or her own values and selective observation at the expense of other data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I highlighted this threat because, if unmonitored, it could affect the fidelity of the data. Re-assessing my role as the researcher and as a member of the organization was critical to the outcome of the study. Therefore, I examined my personal assumptions and found strategies for challenging my biases. I consistently redirected myself from appearing intimidating or intrusive in my line of questioning, while documenting those experiences in a researcher journal. I reflected on those actions that occurred before, during and upon completion of the training session. I assessed what drew me to the topic and my personal investment in the research. In view of that, I checked and rechecked the data to search for contradictions from prior observations. I examined the data collection and analysis procedures. I reevaluated whether surveys and interviews were the most appropriate methods for this study. In addition, I made judgments about potential bias and distortion of the data.

I further examined the threats of reliability and validity. The ability to confirm was examined to determine if the results were verifiable to the extent to which the findings of the study were driven by the respondents and not by the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Toma, 2006). Respondent limitations are important to acknowledge since their responses drive the results of the study. For instance, if a respondent deliberately withheld information or responded to the questions in a manner that served to distort the truth, those responses could skew the results and affect the integrity of the study. I was therefore very clear on the nature of the research, my role as the researcher, and how I was going to collect and report the data.

Validity is the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses specific, measurable concepts or constructs (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Toma, 2006). The LGBTQI committee assessed the content of the questionnaire and interview protocol to ensure that they were congruent with the training curriculum. Content validity is the extent to which the data collection instruments were representative of all possible questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Toma, 2006). The LGBTQI committee examined the wording of the questionnaire and interview questions to determine whether the questions were relevant to the topic and to examine if any of the questions yielded bias. Also, the training curriculum was used to establish construct validity. The curriculum was the framework to develop the questionnaires and interview protocol. To this end, the data collection instruments were reflective of the content under study for both questionnaires.

The delimitation in this study was credibility. I used a purposive sampling framework to satisfy this limitation. Strategically, I chose direct care practitioners who would share their experiences about working directly with youth. The respondents' professional roles varied which complemented and strengthened the basis of the study. I collected and analyzed data until I achieved saturation. Also, I relied on the respondents' knowledge and experiences to drive the data collection process. The purpose of the interview data was to gain an understanding of the organizational culture and climate for LGBTQI youth. The focus of the interviews was on the authenticity of experiences, not the reliability and generalization of the data. As such, the interviews were terminated when the respondents offered no new information about their experiences.

Sixteen respondents were interviewed (10% of the 164 respondents who participated in the LGBTQI pilot training), as requested by the JJC Research Review

Board (RRB). Initially, I requested to conduct 10 interviews. However, the RRB suggested the study should involve more than 10 interviews. The RRB recommended that I increase the number to 50 respondents based on the number of the JJC employees. After negotiating, the RRB approved the request to conduct the study with 16 practitioner interviews because the entire agency did not receive LGBTQI training. This number is consistent with qualitative standards for conducting homogeneous sampling since the participants were very similar in experience, perspective and/or outlook (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Accordingly, I advised the RRB that the request would be noted as a limitation in the study.

Credibility ensures that the results of the qualitative data are credible from the perspective of the respondents being studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Toma, 2006). The targeted population for the study was JJC direct care practitioners. This included social workers, youth workers, teachers, chaplains, administrators, and medical staff. After reviewing the transcripts, I conducted member checks in order to gather additional information concerning the practitioner responses from the interviews, to search for any disagreements in the data collection procedures, and to document my observations from the training and the interview sessions. I also took copious notes during every committee meeting, after every training session, and after every interview for later reflection on the research process and to document my thoughts. In addition, I compared the results to the literature, research questions and the theories to search for agreement.

Unfortunately, fiscal constraints precluded the inclusion of custody officers in the data set. The agency would incur over \$1 million in overtime (Deputy Executive Director, personal communication, February 3, 2015) in order to conduct a full day of

LGBTQI training for custody officers. I assume that this budgetary constraint is beyond the JJC's current capacity and may be tabled for another time. However, this limitation is problematic because custody officers experience the most role conflict and would, in fact, benefit the most from the study. The custody officers at the JJC refer to themselves as "cops," which is disparaging since 13 to 15% of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile justice facility have had negative experiences with law enforcement (Hunt & Moodie-Mills, 2012; Majd, Marksamer, & Reyes, 2009). The custody officers' role is synonymous with a police officer, but maintains the added responsibility of work within the scope of a social worker and/or case manager. The research has proven that some officers tend to place more emphasis on discipline as opposed to rehabilitation (Majd, Marksamer, & Reyes, 2009; Mears, et al., 2010; Squatriglia, 2007). Therefore, without equipping these practitioners with the appropriate tools to carry out their roles, it may be difficult for them to maintain an inclusive environment for LGBTQI youth. In fact, providing custody officers with a generic overview of the training reinforces the misconceptions and biases that LGBTQI youth encounter while in juvenile justice. Without the proper training, the JJC administrators must consider that custody officers are not equipped to provide best interest representation for LGBTQI youth in JJC facilities.

The JJC is a juvenile correctional setting charged with planning, policy development, and provision of services for at-risk youth in New Jersey. With a flexible range of services, the JJC strives to provide high-quality treatment in its secure care and community program facilities. For those reasons, the social context threat is important to reference because it mirrors the culture and climate of the organization. During the interviews, the respondents shared that communication between administration and the

practitioners is weak. They shared that there is a low level of trust due to a lack of cooperation and a failure to address unacceptable behaviors. Additionally, they voiced that they feel no pride in working for the JJC. As a result, the practitioners' values and actions model their behaviors in the workplace. This consequent misalignment in organizational values presents a serious threat to the validity of the study. However, these characterizations are important to acknowledge since it provides a glimpse into what the practitioners experience in their roles.

Moreover, I used a triangulated approach to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings. I used a survey research design, purposeful interviewing data, and journaling. The survey data offered representation and generalization, while the interview data allowed for a greater contextualization of the experiences. Through journaling, I conducted an examination of my personal assumptions, biases and values, and documented the research process all while reflecting on the JJC's processes and practices.

Implications

The results of this AR study have implications for policy, practice, research, and leadership and are directly applicable to improving the care and treatment, climatic conditions, and affirming networks for LGBTQI youth. These implications are directed at all services levels in the juvenile justice system, including court systems, JJC administrators, policy makers, practitioners, and LGBTQI youth. The findings of the study revealed that the practitioners gained knowledge of key LGBTQI inclusive terms, concepts, and strategies to utilize in their professional roles.

Policy

When accompanied by training, coordination at all service levels increases. The JJC has limited opportunity to investigate the issues and dispel erroneous labels when there is little visibility of LGBTQI resources. Advocating for accurate and honest LGBTQI educational resources will minimize the effects of the societal stigma attached to sexual orientation and gender identity differences. Providing practitioners and LGBTQI youth with a network of LGBTQI affirming contacts encourages positive service outcomes to address youth needs. Moreover, creating a public awareness campaign concerning LGBTQI youth issues in the juvenile justice system and planning events to support the LGBTQI community benefits the practitioners and the youth, and creates an affirming and accepting environment.

The operational policies that apply to LGBTQI youth apply to all youth. Researchers do not encourage assigning transgender youth to sex-segregated facilities solely based on their anatomical sex (Majd, Marksamer, & Reyes, 2009). Housing decisions based on the physical and emotional well-being of LGBTQI youth demonstrates competent and equitable care and treatment. In particular, practitioners often make assumptions and regard all gender nonconforming youth as gay, without considering the distinguishable difference between who they are attracted to or how they identify. In making these assumptions, practitioners fail to recognize the needs specific to a youth's sexual orientation and gender identity. Reevaluating youth developmental policies to include the needs of all residents' therefore ensures inclusiveness and best interest representation.

On a broader note, federal mandates similar to the PREA ensures operational compliance in juvenile justice facilities nationwide. With this in mind, passing legislation will guarantee compliance that all juvenile justice facilities and other youth serving providers will implement and rigorously follow federal mandates. Moreover, including policy provisions in the regulations that are specific to the needs of transgender youth will provide these young people the preference to be assigned with their heterosexual peers or reside in separate facilities designed to meet their needs.

Practice

This study is a valuable resource for juvenile courts, detention centers and community youth-serving agencies, given their relationships to the juvenile justice system. The study should influence an exploration of practitioner attitudes within these contexts. These extensions of the juvenile justice system can benefit from this study since the leading juvenile justice state agency has incorporated an LGBTQI policy and mandatory cultural competence training into its capacity. Policy development and mandatory training at all service levels of the juvenile justice system demonstrates an inter- and intra-agency commitment among practitioners concerning the care and treatment, climatic conditions, and affirming networks for LGBTQI youth. Therefore, incorporating a LGBTQI policy with required training will ensure that all youth serving agencies in the New Jersey are equipped to respond appropriately and effectively to LGBTQI youth.

Family reunification is critical for LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system. Many studies infer that family rejection leads to negative outcomes and impacts such youths' development. Family acceptance significantly affects a youth's social, emotional,

and physical well-being. Unfortunately, many families have difficulty coming to terms with their child's sexual orientation and gender identity. The research suggests that when LGBTQI youth are rejected by family members, their confidence level, access to social support, and life satisfaction are all negatively affected (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2005; Long & Serovich, 2003; Paraschiv, 2013; Ryan, 2010; Ryan et al., 2010; Squatriglia, 2007; Waldner & Magrader, 1999). Direct care practitioners must have the knowledge and the skills to act effectively as mediators for LGBTQI youth and their families. In that role, the practitioners must become impartial third-party facilitators to deal with emotions, brainstorm ideas, evaluate options, and create agreement for a positive outcome on all accounts. Ongoing professional development training therefore offers practitioners the resources to understand the root causes of the youth and family dynamic. It will also facilitate strategies for effectively talking through conflicts between a youth and the family and will help families identify supportive behaviors to protect against risk and to promote their LGBTQI child's well-being.

Conducting intake assessments is important to the development of individualized treatment plans for youth. The aim of the assessments is to gather substantial demographic, mental health, and educational information to formulate individualized, identity-focused treatment plans at the first point of contact with the facility. Coren, Coren, Pagliaro, and Weiss (2011) asserted that when evaluating for risk factors, practitioners must be mindful that LGBTQI youth may already feel stigmatized so, when confronted with a sensitive line of questioning, may intentionally report misinformation. Accordingly, practitioners must demonstrate subtlety and compassion in their line of questioning in an effort to elicit thoughtful and honest responses. When practitioners

struggle to connect with LGBTQI youth, they may project unintentional biases that may either victimize or re-victimize the youth. Therefore, from the point of a youth's intake into the system, it is essential that practitioners are not condescending or patronizing since it is during this time when a youth may feel most vulnerable to the juvenile justice system.

Reconvening roundtable discussions to provide practitioners with a venue to communicate and collaborate with administration regarding issues that may affect the agency as a whole is encouraged. Each month, the JJC held 'brown bag luncheons' in different regions of the state to allow administrators and direct care practitioners the opportunity to dialogue about events that affect the agency's structure. One of the basic principles of AR encourages collaboration to explore other perspectives in order to reap the greatest benefits for change. For this reason, these information sessions were effective for giving and receiving feedback, engaging in detailed discussions, and meeting with other practitioners who shared similar if not the same interests. It is noteworthy that this study was birthed from an idea presented at a brown bag luncheon.

Organizational change is the result of those adjustments that occur in organizational functioning or staffing to increase or enhance effectiveness (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Change was a focus during all phases of the study, particularly as it related to building relationships and establishing trust amid JJC stakeholders. For example, the LGBTQI committee shared power and maintained transparency to establish trust and credibility to drive the change effort. Weick and Quinn (1999) emphasized change is either episodic or continuous and varies based on the level of analysis conducted by the change agent. Episodic change requires some form of outside intervention (Weick &

Quinn, 1999). In this case, episodic changes occurred when Lambda Legal was requested to assist the LGBTQI committee with the development of a policy and creation of a training curriculum that were suitable for the JJC. Lambda Legal was instrumental in training the LGBTQI committee to act as facilitators for the new policy training curriculum. Continuous change alters and strengthens the existing organizational structure (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Continuous change materialized when the LGBTQI policy was approved by JJC administrators. The LGBTQI training policy required an initial training session, followed by a two-year refresher training for all service providers that come into contact with youth. The training curriculum encompassed provisions of the LGBTQI policy, with emphasis on employee responsibilities, juvenile rights, the grievance process, and sensitivity training on communicating effectively and professionally with LGBTQI and gender nonconforming youth. These change efforts focused on one agenda, which was to promote equality and inclusiveness for LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice. Therefore, incorporating LGBTQI inclusive language in all training agendas promotes LGBTQI awareness. Also, conducting a review of all organization forms addresses the barriers in service delivery for LGBTQI youth in JJC programs. Lastly, intervening quickly to correct misinformation and call attention to inappropriate and disrespectful behavior are all key processes that encourages an inclusive environment for LGBTQI youth.

Research

Further research is necessary to understand the experiences of LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system. LGBTQI youth make up 15% of the total population in the juvenile justice system (Hahn, 2004; Hunt & Moodie-Mills, 2012; Irvine, 2010; Mountz,

2010; Wilber et al., 2012) and, as a result, their voices must be heard to improve service outcomes. With this in mind, understanding their lived experiences as LGBTQI youth equips juvenile justice agencies with the tools to better serve and facilitate culturally competent interventions in support of sexual orientation and gender identity development (Coren, et al., 2011; DiFulvio, 2011; D'Augelli, 2003). LGBTQI individuals routinely experience prejudice because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. These prejudices often make it difficult for them to disclose for fear of differential treatment. Therefore, research that welcomes and supports the voices of this population affirms their identity and provides outlets where they can offer their insight concerning their physical and emotional well-being in the juvenile justice system.

In the study, the largest perceived gap involved the JJC's inability to internally and externally evaluate its program of services. This research must continue to examine service coordination and service responsiveness through LGBTQI specific programming on the state and local levels. Service coordination and responsiveness are critical to a LGBTQI youth's social, emotional, and relational needs. A lack of effective rehabilitative service efforts impedes the JJC's ability to provide competent care to LGBTQI youth. Therefore, developing a referral list of LGBTQI affirming professionals will address the challenges of coordinating and responding to youths' social, emotional, and relational needs.

Leadership

Juvenile justice leaders must strive to support the differences in all youth to achieve a socially just environment. Leaders who support social justice initiatives work to change conditions by enacting systemic processes that discourage a structure of social

injustice (Van den Bos, 2003). Leaders supporting social justice efforts must be aware of the complexities that promote identity-based, civil rights movements. When the social stress and stigma associated with being LGBT is not addressed, society further marginalizes and debilitates youth growth and development (Bosley & Asbridge, 2012; Cochran & Mays, 2000; Estrada & Marksamer, 2006; Greytak et al., 2009; Hahn, 2004; Irvine, 2010; Keating & Remson, 2013; Phillips et al., 1997; Radkowsky & Siegel, 1997; Wichstrom & Hegna, 2003; Wilber et al., 2012). Therefore, building an organizational capacity that demonstrates understanding, kindness, and empathy eradicates discriminatory practices that are viewed as the norm.

Bias and discrimination are socially constructed and grounded in the assumption that they can be unlearned. Rudman, Ashmore, and Gary (2001) asserted that training can enable the unlearning of both implicit and explicit biases, if it promotes an appreciation for diversity. Changing the organizational culture and climate from one that supports traditional ideals, values and beliefs of prejudice and discrimination, to one that promotes and reinforces transformation fosters a caring and safe environment for youth and practitioners, and establishes an appreciation for diverse cultures (Cannon, Dirks-Linhorst, Cobb, Maatita, Beichner, & Ogle, 2014; Greytak et al., 2013). Managing change is accomplished in stages (Kotter, 1996) through working to motivate individuals to overcome apprehension. Managing change is also driven by superior leadership, not excellent management (Kotter, 1996). Bennis (1987) noted that, “Leaders are people who do the right things, managers are people who do things right.” Although JJC stakeholders suggested that organizational leaders have lost sight of rehabilitative efforts, the agency has worked diligently to develop a best practice model that is inclusive of all youth. At

any rate, leadership that asserts a commitment to foster a culture of change must present its ideas with clarity. It must trust in its ideas, focus on building stronger relationships, share and scrutinize information, and respect resistance all while seeking to maintain consistency (Fullan, 2001, pp13-49). The JJC has indeed demonstrated these practices and has achieved positive outcomes on its way to becoming a strong ally to the LGBTQI community.

Action research is learning by doing. I have documented the causes that dictated the use of AR and the implications that the study has on other juvenile justice institutions and programs nationwide. AR is an open-ended process that facilitates ongoing inquiry to action-oriented practices. I used AR while working in collaboration with other stakeholders. As a result, the experience sanctioned the stakeholders to reconnect with their purpose for working with youth and to assess their biases. In particular, the process encouraged stakeholders to reflect upon and share their ethical concerns as experienced in the workplace. The LGBTQI committee meetings, the training sessions, and the one-on-one interviews revealed data that exposed organizational dysfunction at all service levels.

Conclusion

Despite the JJC's efforts to endorse an LGBTQI policy, there is much work left to be done. The JJC's LGBTQI policy was written as an extension of the federal PREA policy. The LGBTQI policy seeks to educate practitioners while exploring youth development for all youth in the juvenile justice system. By contrast, the PREA policy speaks to the prevention of sexual abuse while in confinement and ignores the guiding principles and core concepts of youth identity and social transformation. The major themes that emerged in this study were communication, education and community

resources. It was pointed out that when, in fact, administrators reinforce standards of accountability and behavior, they will move away from upholding a broken system and will change the system to one that is less threatening to and more trusting of its stakeholders. In other words, the JJC must redirect organizational change efforts from one that maintains poorly designed policies, programs, and practices, to one that is effectively operational in its meaning, all while ensuring best interest representation of youth.

All in all, this research was conducted to ensure that cultural sensitivity was inclusive and affirmative in a juvenile justice system. Social justice advocates emphasize the need for prevention work at the micro- and macro-levels to reorganize structures, policies and processes for all multicultural groups (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002; Van den Bos, 2003; Vera & Speight, 2003). The intergroup relations of homosexuality and gender nonconformity are a result of the social norms associated with the institutional criminalization of marginalized populations (Mountz, 2010; Majd et al., 2009). In other words, disregarding the universal processes, policies, and practices that support structures of social injustice reduces oppressive conditions that contribute to biased and discriminatory decision-making (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997; Van den Bos, 2003). Queer legal theorists purport that opposition to all forms of subordination conveys a sense of political resolution that appeals to activism and democracy (Valdes, 2002). This research captured the signs and symptoms that cause psychological distress and dysfunction to a marginalized and invisible population in the juvenile justice system.

Accordingly, the JJC is one of many juvenile justice pioneers in recognizing LGBTQI youth as a vulnerable population. This study illustrated how policy

development, coupled with professional development training, provided preventive measures and protective regulations to ensure the care and treatment of all JJC youth. In fact, when the practitioners were able to conduct a critical assessment of the policies and practices that unconsciously dehumanized and stigmatized youth, it exposed them to a variety of experiences that LGBTQI youth encounter while under the care of the juvenile justice system. More importantly, the study captured organizational change efforts toward the effective delivery of culturally competent interventions to meet the cultural, social, and emotional needs of LGBTQI youth.

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Appendix A

LGBTQI Pre-Post Test

1. What does the acronym LGBTQI stand for?

L _____

G _____

B _____

T _____

Q _____

I _____

2. What are potential consequences of Isolation?

- a. Depression
- b. Risky Sexual Behaviors
- c. Homelessness
- d. All of the above

3. Sexual orientation is

4. Gender identity is

5. Gender expression is

6. Heterosexual is

7. Many LGBTQ youth experience rejection and abuse when they “come out”. This is called _____

- a. Victimization
- b. Affirmative Practices
- c. Homosexual
- d. Emotional Isolation

8. A confidentiality violation is:

- a. Disclosing a youth’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

b. Policies that address confidentiality around sexual orientation and gender identity

c. Lack of skill in handling a youth's disclosure in group

d. Personal beliefs and attitudes toward LGBTQI youth.

9. Differential treatment is:

a. Youth are subjected to multiple placements due to a lack of staff acceptance.

b. Having a difficult time accessing LGBTQ affirmative health and mental health services

c. The assumption that LGBTQI youth are predators if they are engaging in sexual behaviors with a same sex peer.

d. All of the above

10. Lack of cultural competence is:

a. Knowledge of LGBTQI resources

b. Transgender youth using their preferred name.

c. Transgender youth inappropriately placed in settings that are incongruent with their gender identity.

d. None of the above

11. Unsupportive and negative responses to a youth's disclosures by professionals, peers and families are:

a. a disclosure dilemma

b. competent social work

c. a gradual exploration of sexuality

d. a confidentiality violation

The next few questions are related to your personal attitude and assessment of LGBTQI youth.

12. What are your personal beliefs about LGBTQI individuals?

a.

b.

c.

13. How are your personal beliefs about LGBTQI individuals communicated in the JJC?

- a.
- b.
- c.

14. Name three support mechanisms available to LGBTQI youth in the JJC?

- a.
- b.
- c.

15. What can the JJC do to create an inclusive culture for LGBTQI youth?

- a.
- b.
- c.

16. What do you identify as:

Female

Male

17. What is your age: ▯

18-29

30-49

50-64

64+

18. Please specify your ethnicity:

White

Hispanic or Latino

Black or African American

Native American or American Indian

Asian or Pacific Islander

Other

19. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Some high school

High school graduate

Some college

Trade/Technical /Vocational School

College graduate

Some post graduate work

Post graduate degree

20. What is your title _____

Appendix B

Scoring Grid

Participant #

Date:

Question	Before Training	After Training	Difference
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			

Yes/1

No/0

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

1) What messages did your family and friends give you about sexual orientation?

Probe: Have those views remained the same or have they changed over time?

Probe: What messages did you receive from that experience?

2) What were the rules in your family regarding gender? (For example, only girls wear pink and boys wear blue.)

Probe: What gender transgressions make you feel uncomfortable?

3) How would you describe the typical facility experiences of LGBTQI residents compared to non-LGBTQI residents? Particularly, relative to their physical safety and the extent to which they are supported by staff.

Probe: Are they similar or different? How so?

Probe: How about the experiences of residents who are perceived to be, but may not identify as, LGBTQI?

4) What are the factors that influence your attitude toward LGBTQI youth?

Probe: Is your attitude a result of a personal or professional experience?

5) How would you describe the JJC's culture regarding sexual and gender minorities?

Reframe of question, what are the unwritten rules at the agency?

Probe: What happens if someone violates them?

6) In what ways are LGBTQI youth a part of JJC's mission and vision? How so?

7) Are there particular policies, programs, and practices that you think help to include and affirm the identity of LGBTQI residents in the JJC? Please describe if so.

8) How are JJC policies and expected practices communicated to you (e.g., staff meetings, email communication from the JJC broadcast)?

Probe: How do you communicate these policies and expected practices to other staff and residents?

Probe: How about emotional safety?

9) From your perspective, what are key JJC policies which help to create a safe and affirming environment for residents? For example, what policies help residents to feel welcomed?

Probe: For each policy, how has the policy been implemented in the JJC?

Probe: Have there been any challenges to implementing these policies? If so, what has helped?

Probe: What has influenced implementation of the policy?

10) What does the JJC do beyond policies to foster a safe and affirming environment, such as programs and other supports (i.e., its practices)?

Probe: For each practice, when, why, and how did it come about?

Probe: What are your thoughts about these policies and practices?

Probe: How helpful are they?

Probe: In what ways, if any, do you think they are important for residents?

11) Is there any other information you would like to share about how the JJC support residents and create an affirming environment, in particular for LGBTQI residents?

Appendix D

Interview Solicitation Script

Good morning (afternoon),

My name is Dawn McRae, and I am a doctoral student pursuing an Ed. D. degree in Educational Leadership @ Rowan University. I am being supervised by Dr. Ane Turner Johnson, who is an Assistant Professor within the Educational Leadership department.

You are being asked to take part in a research study that will examine the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the care and treatment, climatic conditions and affirming networks for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI) youth in a juvenile justice setting. The focus of the interview is to obtain a holistic and a detailed interpretation of your experiences working in the juvenile justice system and with LGBTQI youth.

This evite is a request for your voluntary participation in this study. If you choose to volunteer, your responses will remain completely confidential. Involvement in this study will require audiotaped interviews. All recordings and transcriptions will be kept securely locked within a locking cabinet. As the primary researcher, I will be the only person with a key to the cabinet. By participating, there is little or no foreseen risk to you since all identities will be kept anonymous. Each interview should take approximately 1 hour of your time. You are free not to answer questions you may find objectionable and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Moreover, I will conduct your interviews personally to ensure proper anonymity and confidentiality.

At your earliest convenience, I will be happy to schedule a date, time, and location feasible for us to speak openly and honestly about your experiences.

Best,

Dawn McRae

Appendix E

Consent to Take Part In a Research Study

TITLE OF STUDY: Interrupting the Silence: An Action Research Study to Transform a Juvenile Justice Culture for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTQI) Youth
Principal Investigator: Ane Turner Johnson, Ph.D.

This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide information that will help you to decide whether you wish to volunteer for this research study. It will help you to understand what the study is about and what will happen in the course of the study.

If you have questions at any time during the research study, you should feel free to ask them and should expect to be given answers that you completely understand.

After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.

Ane Turner Johnson, Ph.D. or Dawn N. McRae will also be asked to sign this informed consent. You will be given a copy of the signed consent form to keep.

You are not giving up any of your legal rights by volunteering for this research study or by signing this consent form.

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization of LGBTQI youth in a juvenile justice setting. This study is being written as a part of my dissertation requirements for Rowan University, College of Education.

You have been asked to participate in this study because as a direct care practitioner your experiences and ideas will be a valuable resource for understanding the current culture and climate for LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice and you had participated in the Juvenile Justice Commission's mandatory sensitivity training concerning LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system.

This study will include all direct care practitioners who engage in productive and constructive activities with adjudicated youth. Those employees excluded from this study are support staff, interns, and contracted employees.

This study will take place over a period of six months. There will be approximately 10 participants selected for the interview component of the study. As a participant, I will ask you to spend 1 hour participating in an interview for the interview component of the study.

This study will take place on a date, time, and at a location that is feasible for you.

If you choose to take part in this research study you will be asked to answer a series of questions about your awareness and skills about your role as a practitioner working with LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system.

If you take part in this study, the risks and discomfort of being embarrassed and stigmatized is common and may result in harassment and hostility from others. However, the State of New Jersey has enacted legislation that prohibits and protects individuals from harassment and discrimination that protects individuals against harassment and discrimination regardless of sex, race, religion, and actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity expression.

The benefits for taking part in this study will add to the body of knowledge currently available concerning LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice. More importantly, the exchange of ideas and experiences that practitioners will share will increase the depth and breadth of the study. However, it is possible that you might receive no direct personal benefit from taking part in this

study. Your participation may help us understand which can benefit you directly, and may help other people to create a platform and have the conversation concerning LGBTQI youth in juvenile justice more candidly.

There are no alternative treatments available. Your alternative is not to take part in this study.

During the course of the study, you will be updated about any new information that may affect whether you are willing to continue taking part in the study. If new information is learned that may affect you, you will be contacted.

There is no cost to participate in this study.

You will not be paid for your participation in this research study.

All efforts will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential, but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Your personal information may be given out, if required by law. Presentations and publications to the public and at scientific conferences and meetings will not use your name and other personal information. All signed consent forms, interview transcripts, field notes, analytic memos, tapes, and flash drives will be stored and retained under lock and key in a secured file cabinet and on a password protected computer. In addition, in the published document all participants will be referred to by pseudonyms. Paper records, such as interview transcripts, field notes, and analytic memos will be shredded and burned. Records stored on a computer hard drive, flash drives, and audio recordings will be erased using commercial software applications designed to remove all data from the storage device

and physically destroyed. Records will be kept highlighting what records were destroyed, and when and how it was accomplished. All research records will be maintained and disposed of six years after the day of completing this study to uphold the integrity of the research process.

This study will pose not greater than minimal risk.

If you display signs of emotional distress or anxiety they can be referred to the State of New Jersey, Employee Assistance Program. The Employee Assistance Program provides confidential services in assisting employees and their families experiencing behavioral or personal problems with the most effective methods of identification, intervention, and resolution of these problems to enhance their health, wellness, and productivity. This program is free of charge to all enlisted and civilian personnel and their family members who work for the State of New Jersey.

If at any time during your participation and conduct in the study you have been or are injured, you should communicate those injuries to the research staff present at the time of injury and to the Principal Investigator, whose name and contact information is on this consent form.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may change your mind at any time.

If you do not want to enter the study or decide to stop participating, your relationship with the study staff will not change, and you may do so without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may also withdraw your consent for the use of data already collected about you, but you must do this in writing to Ane Turner Johnson, Ph.D. Rowan University, College of Education, 225 Rowan Boulevard, Glassboro, New Jersey, 08028.

If you decide to withdraw from the study for any reason, you may be asked to participate in one meeting with the Principal Investigator.

If you have any questions about taking part in this study or if you feel you may have suffered a research related injury, you can call the study doctor:

Ane Turner Johnson, Ph.D.
Education Department
856-256-4500 x3818

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can call:

Office of Research
(856) 256-5150 – Glassboro/CMSRU

You have the right to ask questions about any part of the study at any time. You should not sign this form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have been given answers to all of your questions.

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read this entire form, or it has been read to me, and I believe that I understand what has been discussed. All of my questions about this form or this study have been answered.

Subject Name: _____

Subject Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Consent:

To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the full contents of the study including all of the information contained in this consent form. All questions of the research subject and those of his/her parent or legal guardian have been accurately answered.

Investigator/Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING SUBJECTS:

Translation of the consent document (either verbal or written) must have prior approval by the IRB. Contact your local IRB office for assistance.

Appendix F

Informed Consent for Interviews

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

You are invited to participate in a research study about understanding the attitudes of juvenile justice practitioners concerning the stigmatization of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI) youth in a juvenile justice setting. This study is being conducted by researchers in the Department of Education at Rowan University.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate in this study, you would be interviewed for about 1 hour.

There is little risk in participating in this study; after the interview, you may have questions about your responses which will be answered immediately by a member of the study team.

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number that is unique to this study. No one other than the researchers would know whether you participated in the study. Study findings will be presented only in summary form and your name will not be used in any report or publications.

Participating in this study may not benefit you directly, but it will help us learn how juvenile justice practitioners bring significance to adolescent developmental processes that may require them to challenge their personal biases and beliefs in a juvenile justice setting. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate in this study, this will have no effect on the services or benefits you are currently receiving. You may skip any questions you don't want to answer and withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

If you have any questions about this study, please the Principal Investigator, Ane Turner Johnson, 856-256-4500 x3818. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Rowan University SOM IRB Office at (856) 566-2712 or Rowan University, Chief Research Compliance Officer Glassboro/CMSRU IRB at 856-256-5150.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM WHETHER OR NOT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE.

If you agree to participate in this study please sign on the next page. Thank you.

Social and Behavioral IRB Research Agreement

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Name (Printed) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix G

Audio/Videotape Addendum to Consent Form

You have already agreed to participate in a research study conducted by Dawn N. McRae/ Dr. Ane Turner Johnson. We are asking for your permission to allow us to audiotape (sound) as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used for:

- *analysis by the research team;*
- *possible use as a teaching tool to those who are not members of the research staff (i.e. for educational purposes)*

The recording(s) will include identifiers. Your name will not be associated with the study.

The recording(s) will be stored and retained under lock and key in a secured file cabinet and labeled with an identifier and on a password protected computer with not links to your identity. All recordings will be erased using commercial software applications designed to remove all data from the storage device and physically destroyed. Records will be kept highlighting what records were destroyed, and when and how it was accomplished. In addition, in the published document all participants will be referred to by pseudonyms. All research records will be maintained and disposed of six years after the day of completing this study to uphold the integrity of the research process.

Your signature on this form grants the investigators named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigators will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix H

McNemar's Test Results

Variable	Pre-Test			Post-Test			Percentage Change
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Question 1	164	.75	.434	164	.96	.188	28
Question 2	156	.87	.335	156	.95	.221	9.195
Question 3	138	.64	.480	153	.81	.393	26.563
Question 4	143	.64	.483	157	.82	.389	28.125
Question 5	124	.70	.459	152	.93	.260	31.429
Question 6	137	.90	.304	155	.95	.222	4.444
Question 7	155	.75	.432	157	.80	.404	6.667
Question 8	162	.81	.395	161	.91	.292	12.346
Question 9	152	.70	.458	161	.84	.369	18.571
Question 10	146	.45	.499	159	.64	.483	42.2
Question 11	153	.53	.501	164	.78	.415	47.17

PRE1 & POST1

PRE1	POST1	
	0	1
0	2	39
1	4	119

PRE2 & POST2

PRE2	POST2	
	0	1
0	3	15
1	4	126

PRE3 & POST3

PRE3	POST3	
	0	1
0	10	36
1	14	68

PRE4 & POST4

PRE4	POST4	
	0	1
0	14	35
1	8	81

PRE5 & POST5

PRE5	POST5	
	0	1
0	7	27
1	1	82

PRE6 & POST6

PRE6	POST6	
	0	1
0	1	13
1	4	113

PRE7 & POST7

PRE7	POST7	
	0	1
0	12	25
1	18	94

PRE8 & POST8

PRE8	POST8	
	0	1
0	4	27
1	11	117

PRE9 & POST9

PRE9	POST9	
	0	1
0	9	36
1	14	91

PRE10 & POST10

PRE10	POST10	
	0	1
0	38	41
1	17	45

PRE11 & POST11

PRE11	POST11	
	0	1
0	21	51
1	13	68

Appendix I

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients Education Results

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients				
		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	9.119	1	.003
	Block	9.119	1	.003
	Model	9.119	1	.003

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP (B)	
							Lower	Upper
Step 1a Education	-.840	.336	6.249	1	.012	.432	.223	.834
Constant	7.490	2.110	12.603	1	.000	1790.468		

Appendix J

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients Results

Question	Chi-square	<i>df</i>	Sig.
Post Acronym	14.022	16	.597
Post CI	1.467	1	.003
Post SO	24.833	16	.073
Post GI	15.658	16	.477
Post GX	16.029	16	.451
Post Hetero	19.823	16	.228
Post Come Out	20.174	16	.213
Post Con Vio	10.945	16	.813
Post DifTx	9.439	16	.894
Post CC	10.345	16	.848
Post UNR	19.412	16	.248