



**BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES**

*School of Social Work*

# BEING OUT BEING AN ALLY

**IN FIELD INSTRUCTION**



The School of Social Work Office of Field Instruction, our faculty, and our staff are committed to providing and nurturing a “safe zone” for our students.

Boise State has a nondiscrimination policy, which includes a commitment to inclusivity.

# LGBTQ<sup>2</sup> + Allies in Fieldwork

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, and Allies in Social Work Field Instruction



## ON COMING OUT IN THE FIELD

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning (LGBTQ<sup>2</sup>), and ally social work students want a field placement that will provide them with the best educational experience possible. LGBTQ<sup>2</sup> people have the right to a safe and comfortable field environment and may not share personal information because they fear discrimination, rejection, or isolation. Conversely, they may decide to be “out” in all areas of their lives.

“Management of Disclosure” is an individual decision made by each student based on age or stage of life, length of time they have been aware of their sexuality, and level of LGBTQ<sup>2</sup> community connections.

## BE AN ALLY



### FIELDWORK SITE ALLIES

- Have agency-wide diversity and human rights policies.
- Provide an inclusive and physically friendly environment.
- Support and encourage the presence of “out” staff.
- Provide resources for LGBTQ<sup>2</sup> clients.

### FIELD INSTRUCTOR ALLIES

- Assess your knowledge and skills.
- Seek out learning opportunities.
- Assess your agency for LGBTQ<sup>2</sup> friendliness.
- Support diversity in hiring.
- Advocate for equity and justice.



## OUR COMMITMENT

### HOW CAN WE SUPPORT YOU?

Raymond Mullenax, LCSW  
Director of Field Education

As the Director of Field Education, I am eager to hear from all students who may have questions or concerns about:

- LGBTQ<sup>2</sup> friendliness of potential field agencies
- Managing decisions about disclosure to supervisors, co-workers, and clients
- Managing stresses of not disclosing sexual orientation or gender identity, if applicable
- Handling colleagues’ and clients’ discomfort with the student’s gender identity or sexual orientation
- Dealing with assumptions of heterosexuality and gender normativity among agency staff and embedded in agency policies and practices
- Working with supervisors, staff, and clients who may not understand the needs of the LGBTQ<sup>2</sup> community
- Managing inappropriate interactions with supervisors, co-workers, and clients.

# RESOURCES



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY  
PRIDE ALLIANCE

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BOISE STATE GENDER EQUITY CENTER  
[genderequity.boisestate.edu](http://genderequity.boisestate.edu)

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BOISE STATE  
TRANSGENDER ALLIANCE



The Pride Foundation

## REFERENCES

Newman, P. Daley, A. & Bogo, M. (2009). Breaking the silence: Sexual orientation in social work field education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(1), 7-27

Messinger, L. (2013). Reflections on LGBT students in social work field education. *Field Educator*, 3(1)

University of Michigan School of Social Work Office of Field Instruction faculty, staff and students.



**For confidential support,  
guidance, and resources,  
please contact:**

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