

Gay-Affirmative Public School Teachers/Curricula May Influence Brain Maturation In Teens

By Frank York

Dr. Sander Breiner, a member of NARTH's Scientific Advisory Committee, recently expanded upon a paper on "Adolescent Homosexuality" he presented at the November, 2004 NARTH conference in Washington, DC. (Dr. Breiner's paper is currently posted on the NARTH web site.)

Sexually questioning youth are vulnerable to the derailment of their normal heterosexuality, Dr. Breiner asserted, when they are urged to consider the possibility of being same-sex attracted.

Dr. Breiner's paper dealt with the current scientific knowledge on the development of the brain during pre-teen and teen years as it relates to hormones and emotional maturity. One of the sources for this paper was a book edited by Dr. Ronald Dahl for the New York Academy of Sciences on Adolescent Neuroscience. Dr. Dahl is at the University of Pittsburgh and has written extensively on adolescent brain development.

Breiner noted that neuroscientists are convinced that the developing brain during the teen years is significantly influenced by external emotional and social factors. Stress factors, nutrition, and exercise can have an effect on the reproductive function that can lead to a suppression of ovarian and testicular functions. According to Breiner, "If the stress is chronic there can be a significant suppression of this reproductive axis."

Gay-Affirming Teachings Can Impact Brain Development

In an interview with NARTH's Editorial Director, Dr. Breiner notes that teens typically face stresses and confusion about their sexuality. Teaching gay-affirming ideas to teens can add to the problems they already face. The child who is taught that he or she may be homosexual can be stressed and may react in the following negative ways: hurt self esteem; poor body image; likelihood of depression; anxiety about how they will function socially; and a delayed response in functioning as a heterosexual, which makes their social skills even more limited. Gay-affirming materials "won't make someone homosexual, but certainly will contribute to problems in their development," said Breiner. "Adolescents have enough problems in establishing gender roles and this will increase these problems."

According to Breiner, this isn't simply a social or psychological threat to children but is a neurological problem as well. Actual brain changes take place. He notes that there

is a strong connection between hormonal development and neurotransmitters that send messages for hormonal development. "If the wrong message gets sent, as is likely to occur when external messages are coming from teachers, then the child may experience a delay in proper sexual development."

Dr. Breiner observes that neuroscience studies are clear on this subject yet nothing has appeared yet in the psychiatric or psychological literature to deal with the connection between external gay-affirming messages and brain development.

"I am convinced that gay affirming materials are injurious to children and will add to the psychological problems they already have as a normal part of development," said Breiner. "It is wrong to say that homosexuality is a viable alternative to heterosexuality. If teens are to be protected, they must be given the facts about homosexual behavior, not fantasies from the gay community."

In discussing the development of homosexuality in general, Dr. Breiner observed: "Human homosexuality is a symptom of some unresolved conflicts in a child's development psychologically. It is determined before the age of five, and usually between 1 1/2 to 3 years of age. If the individual has a neurosis, it was organized between ages 3 to 6. If they are of a borderline psychological organization, it was between ages 2 to 3. If they are psychotic, the psychological organization is under 2."

In the conclusion to his paper on "Adolescent Homosexuality," Dr. Breiner observes:

The brain that is developing (pre-puberty to adulthood), particularly in the area that deals with emotional and sexual development, is affected organically by social and physical stress. Homosexual indoctrination (direct or subtle), coercive or seductive can organically affect brain and sexual physiologic development to a modest or minimal degree. It cannot permanently produce homosexuality. However, it can certainly lead to a variety of difficulties commonly including hurt self-esteem, distortions in living, depression, selection of life goals, and other problems. Though the individual may eventually select a heterosexual life position, the preceding years of difficulties in developing and organizing one's life are likely to have more permanent deleterious effects. Therefore, any attitude by society and particularly educators that homosexuality is a reasonable or alternative lifestyle can significantly contribute to psychopathology in this vulnerable age.

Gay Psychologist Urges Associates To Use Psychology As A Liberationist Tactic

The Fall, 2004 issue of the APA's *Division 44 Newsletter*, includes an essay by Judith M. Glassgold, Psy.D. urging her colleagues to think of psychology as a liberationist tactic to fight against social oppression and for social justice.

In an article entitled, "In dreams begin responsibilities': Psychology, agency, and activism," Glassgold suggests that therapists must make psychology "a liberatory experience, to be among those who offer solutions to problems of social justice."

She urges gay psychologists to adopt the philosophy of Liberation Psychology (Martin-Baro, 1994), which is rooted in ideologies from South American countries.

Psychologists must reject seeing individual personal problems and be willing to see these problems as the consequences of social injustice, says Glassgold. Psychotherapists must revise deterministic theories of social issues and "incorporate contextualist models that better explain concepts such as social power, freedom, agency, and resistance."

Gay psychologists must view the world as an oppressive place, and they must resist efforts of outside forces to label them. The goal should be to "create new meanings" and "social definitions" in order to liberate others from social structures that define what is normal or abnormal.

Glassgold believes that any system that says one sexual identity is normal and others are not, is oppressive and must be resisted. "Systems that attempt to define what is 'normal' are systems of stasis that attempt to limit human potential. ... our theories must be embraced tentatively, as metaphors, not reified as truth or normalcy."

"We must focus on making psychology and psychotherapy more than just a Band-aid for broader social problems, but as an intrinsic part of social and personal liberation."

Judith M. Glassgold, Psy.D., "In dreams begin responsibilities': Psychology, agency, and activism," *Division 44 Newsletter*, Fall, 2004, pgs. 5-8.

Science Or Politics?

A friend of mine teaches a course in human sexuality at a large urban university. He told me that a student approached him, told him that he was gay, and asked if he could be helpful in some way. For example, could he introduce the professor to other gay students, whom the professor might want to interview before his class? My friend said he accepted the offer and met with half a dozen or so gay and lesbian students who offered to be interviewed before his class.

"I deliberately chose a husky, very rugged gay man, and a very feminine lesbian."

"In other words," I replied, "You chose an atypical individual to represent each group. Is that good science?"

"I was trying to make a point."

"A scientific point or a political point?"

We have been good friends for many years, and I am sure our friendship will survive this moment of disagreement.

—Louis A. Berman, Ph.D.

Selected Quotes From NARTH Collected Papers, 2004

"The individual's right for self-determination sexually, or for sexual autonomy, is, I am happy to see, inherent in NARTH's position statement: 'NARTH respects each client's dignity, autonomy, and free agency ... every individual has the right to claim a gay identity, and to develop their heterosexual potential. The right to seek therapy to change one's sexual adaptation is considered self-evident and inalienable.'

"I subscribe fully to the aforementioned NARTH position statement. By the same token, it should be unmistakably clear that I harbor no enmity toward gay men and women, none whatever. I respect their right to choose, and I also respect NARTH's mission statement: 'We respect and understand that all individuals have the right to choose their own destiny. NARTH offers hope to those who struggle with same-sex attraction. We disseminate educational material, conduct research, and offer a nationwide referral service. Our goal is to provide accurate information and therapeutic referrals to dissatisfied homosexual individuals, to educate the public, and to promote family reconciliation.'" — Robert Perloff, Ph.D. "Free To Choose," keynote speech, NARTH Conference, Washington, DC, November, 2004