



WORKSHOP NO_3

Workshops number 3 took place in Szczecińskie Centrum Edukacyjne Sp. z o.o. on 21st of November. Participants were mainly students from pedagogy faculty, women. The main goal was to acquaint participants with concept of COMING OUT. It's one of the most important experiences for most of LGBT people. Decision of coming out takes often a lot of time and after that strongly influences on private life, family relationships, work and first of all on emotional and mental condition of many gays, lesbians, bi and transsexual people.

After introduction of the trainer and participants agreement on workshop's cooperation rules, participants were asked about their associations with coming out. Most of women (only women attended) didn't have any. One of them wrote something like "exposure of something". Trainer defined coming out, as a phenomenon concerning especially LGBT people. The interesting paradox is, that heterosexual people come out almost every moment, talking about wives and husbands, children, spending time together. Usual questions, like "do you have a boyfriend" – to girls and women or "do you have a girlfriend" – to boys and men, assume that everybody around has to be heterosexual. That way we started a short discussion about heteronormativity and homophobia. There doesn't exist something like heterophobia.

The next question to participants was: do you know personally gay, lesbian or bi person? Result was surprising because only one woman denied. All the rest knew somebody from LGBT group – for example best friend, somebody from family or workmate. Results are surprising if we compare them with opinion poll from 2013, realized among Poles. Accordingly to this data only 25% people admitted that they knew personally gay, lesbian or bi person. Actually everybody knows someone homo/bisexual, but most of people don't know about it. We considered why it's so hard for LGBT people to come out. One of participants told others a story about young man, who wasn't accepted by his mother after he came out. We discussed about mothers' unconditional love – sometimes it excludes child's sexual orientation. What is more, we defined LGBT – LGB as psychosexual (not only sexual) and T as gender identity.

After this kind of introduction we started to watch parts of *Six feet under*. Some of participants heard about this serial, but nobody watched all of it. Trainer offered three scenes to watch – each of them concerned homosexual David Fischer, one of main characters, and his coming out to his older brother, his employee and his mother. Participants received sheet of paper to take some notes. They were asked, how did David/his brother Nate/his employee Rico and his mother Ruth behaved. Answers for those questions supported our discussion about coming out circumstances. The main conclusion was that there were a lot of feelings and emotions. Everybody reacted in different way. In my opinion the most interesting scene for participants was between David and his mother. Earlier he decided to come out, although he had doubts, how she could react. There were few points of our discussion: the very early moments of homosexuality's awareness; hypocrisy of hidden homosexual contacts while somebody lives in heterosexual relationship; different attitude to LGBT people between men and women; family relationships and their influence for openness and trust. Participants were interested in subject and discussion. They had a lot of reflections and thoughts.



In the next part of the workshop trainer asked the group about well-known LGBT people in Poland. They showed some of them and after that trainer read short parts of three books: biographies of Michał Piróg (a dancer, choreographer) and Jacek Poniedziałek (an actor) and foreword to novel *Berek* by Marcin Szczygielski, written by his partner Tomasz Raczek. All of them showed different sides of coming out – their feelings and people’s reactions. Trainer wanted participants to consider, why LGBT people come out; what kind of feelings and emotions attend them before, during and after coming out; what kind of reaction they can expect and why. Statistics show, that Polish society still isn’t tolerant and open for LGBT people. In 2013 only 12% of people said, homosexuality is something normal. By the way we distinguish tolerance and acceptance. Most of Poles think, that talking about homosexuality means “promotion of homosexuality”. We discussed that there can’t exist something like sexual orientation’s promotion – all of people have just right to live their way and be happy. The last question to participants was: what can everybody of us do to let LGBT people live well? Obvious conclusion was – treat them as well, as other people; support them, when they need it.

I hope, that after workshop, every participant knows the concept and circumstances of coming out and knows how to react to someone’s coming out.

Paweł Roszkowski

Trainer of the workshop number 3