

Dr. Andre Grace: 2019 Keynote Speaker

Biography



André P. Grace, PhD is Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Sexual and Gender Minority Studies (Tier 1) in the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta. His research focuses on the comprehensive health, educational, and cultural concerns of sexual and gender minority (SGM or LGBTQ+) youth. Currently, he also directs the Comprehensive Health Education Workers Project for vulnerable SGM youth in Edmonton. Dr. Grace has served as a member of the Canadian Teachers' Federation's Panel of Academic Experts for Sexual and Gender Minority Issues. With Dr. Kristopher Wells, he co-authored *Sexual and Gender Minorities in Canadian Education and Society (1969-2013): A National Handbook for K-12 Educators*, which the CTF published in 2016. His work advancing the need for greater synchronicity among research, policy, and practice informs

his book *Growing into Resilience: Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 2015). In 2017, Dr. Grace received the Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Community Justice Award in the Innovation Category for his extraordinary contributions promoting community safety through crime prevention for the province's SGM youth. In 2018, he received the CAFA (Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations) Distinguished Academic Award for his work linking his CRC research program to advocacy and action that recognize and accommodate SGM youth. For more information on his research and books, please visit <https://www.andregrace.com>.

Abstract for Keynote Presentation, with Readings

Advocacy, Accommodation, and Agency: The Quest for a Healthy and Full Life for Every Sexual and Gender Minority Youth

I begin this presentation with an overview of the resilience typology I developed to focus on recognizing and accommodating sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth. This typology is detailed in my book *Growing into Resilience* (University of Toronto Press, 2015). In engaging the typology, I focus on understanding resilience as a process and outcome that involves examining stressors, risk taking, asset building, and indicators of thriving in the lives of SGM youth dealing with adversity and trauma. I also speak to the

importance of situating the typology within an ecological framework that surveys complexities impacting how these youth, who live in intersections with racial, cultural, and other differences, grow into resilience. Drawing on this way of knowing SGM youth, I then consider the state of their sexual health within a broader focus on the sexual health of all Canadian youth. Next, I overview the Comprehensive Health Education Workers (CHEW) Project, an urban community-based educational and social outreach project that I established in Edmonton in 2014 to provide a vehicle for education and intervention to inform and accommodate vulnerable SGM youth in schools and the larger community. I discuss how this project primarily serves youth who have histories of living with adversity and trauma induced by stressors like homo/bi/transphobia, estrangement from family, street involvement, homelessness, and involvement in sex work. I consider how we use the CHEW Project to assist the young people we serve to build capacity and agency grounded in concerns with democracy, freedom, equity, and social justice. This work involves locating young people as whole persons, providing comprehensive sexual health education (CSHE) in tandem with solutions-based intervention and outreach focused on their individual development, mental and sexual health, and meeting their physical, safety, and social needs. I conclude with a focus on advocacy, grounded in hope and strategic possibility. Here I relate how the CHEW Project also aims to help young people transgress systems and structures that failed to provide them with adequate and appropriate recognition and accommodation of their needs in individual, social, institutional, and civic contexts.

Readings

Grace, A. P. (2018). Alberta bounded: Comprehensive sexual health education, parentism, and gaps in provincial legislation and educational policy. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 41(2), 472-497. Go to <http://journals.sfu.ca/cje/index.php/cje-rce/article/view/3153>

Grace, A. P. (2018). Learning for life, living with hope: The comprehensive health education workers project. *Proceedings of the 48th Annual Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults*. Sheffield, UK: University of Sheffield.

Grace, A. P. (2016). Shaping community-based comprehensive health education for sexual and gender minority youth and young adults as lifelong learning as critical action. *Proceedings of the 35th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education* (2,890 words). Calgary, AB: University of Calgary.