



## Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling of Alabama

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Division of Alabama Counseling Association

### **Public Relations Committee Policy Statement**

#### **Purpose**

To specify policy, procedure, guidelines, and standards of practice for the Public Relations Committee of the ALGBTICAL division, including its publications, publicity, newsletter, correspondence, announcements, list serve, social media, website, and other public relations activities.

To ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of information disseminated on behalf of the ALGBTICAL division. To maintain the quality and effectiveness of the services provided by the ALGBTICAL division. To protect the professional integrity and ethical reputation of the ALGBTICAL division.

#### **Website Disclaimer**

ALGBTICAL (Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Issues in Counseling of Alabama) owns and operates this website and is solely responsible for its content.

ALGBTICAL maintains this website as an educational service and information resource for counselors and their clients. While we make no guarantees that the information is error-free, it is our sincere intention to provide accurate, up-to-date, research-based material to raise awareness and understanding, and to assist in the dissemination and advancement of knowledge in the area of sexual minority (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) issues and concerns.

To this end, a wide variety of well-considered resources is offered through this website and through the links to other websites on the internet. At times, articles may contain frank discussions and explicit descriptions involving matters of human sexuality. While we make every effort to ensure the validity and appropriateness of the material accessed through our website, ALGBTICAL is not responsible for the content of websites users may visit via the links we provide. It is not the intention of ALGBTICAL to feature any lewd or pornographic subject matter.

It is not our intention to advance or promote any particular political or religious cause. Nor is it our intention to criticize any particular political or religious cause. While our subject matter oftentimes overlaps into political and religious areas, we will make every effort in our reporting to be unbiased.

It is not our intention to endorse any particular product or service. We do not provide advertisements or referrals, nor do we make any claims regarding the quality or effectiveness of any product or service. Nothing contained herein constitutes, nor is intended to constitute, an offer, inducement, promise, guarantee, or contract of any kind.

## **Publications/Communications Guidelines**

### *Objective*

Through its Public Relations Committee, the ALGBTICAL division offers educational services and information resources for counselors and their clients. We provide accurate, up-to-date material to raise awareness and understanding, and to assist in the dissemination and advancement of knowledge, in the area of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues and concerns.

### *Definition*

All “content” under discussion in this policy is relevant to “subject matter, information, communication, material, topics, themes, messages, remarks, comments, language, verbiage, pictures, and images.”

### *Staff*

Individuals serving on the Public Relations Committee should meet the following criteria:

- Official member in good standing of ALCA/ALGBTICAL
- Approved member of ALGBTICAL Executive Board (by vote or affirmation)
- Active, ethical, and LGBT affirming counselor or counseling student
- Knowledge and understanding of counseling profession and LGBT issues
- Skills in writing, editing, researching, and graphics
- Understanding of public relations, communications, correspondence, and media

### *General Content*

The subject matter of the ALGBTICAL division publications and communications should be relevant to the following categories of information:

- Information about the ALGBTICAL division and its activities, announcements, and reports
- Information from ACA, ALCA, and ALGBTIC as it relates to the ALGBTICAL division and LGBT topics
- Information from mental health, healthcare, human services, and social activist organizations as it relates to the ALGBTICAL division and LGBT topics
- General information about the counseling profession as it relates to LGBT clientele
- Scholarly information about counseling research, theory and practice as it relates to LGBT clientele
- Educational information about the LGBT population
- General information, resources, and services related to LGBT topics, issues, and concerns
- Appropriate LGBT news, activities, current events, and human interest stories

### *Mechanics*

The subject matter of the ALGBTICAL division publications and communications should adhere to the following structural rules:

- Use proper grammar
- Use correct writing mechanics
- Avoid misspelled words and typographical errors

- Present information in a contextual and organized manner
- Be mindful of the audience and target content accordingly
- Maintain a professional look, mature writing style, and consistent brand

### *Content Concerns*

ALGBTICAL division publications and communications should avoid (or remove) subject matter in the following categories:

- General information that is false, incorrect, and inaccurate
- Any information that is incompatible with the ACA Code of Ethics or LGBT Counselor Competencies
- Specific technical or academic information that is not research-based, scientifically sound, or grounded in solid theory
- Primary information containing prejudiced, bigoted, sexist, racist, ageist, homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic language
- Politically, religiously, or ideologically biased information
- Information that directly criticizes or expressly endorses a particular political, religious, or ideological cause
- Information that is harmful or threatening to LGBT people
- Lewd, vulgar, pornographic, or gratuitously sexual information
- Information that is inappropriately or gratuitously profane, offensive, opinionated, derogatory, insulting, insensitive, explicit, distressing, disturbing, or controversial
- Information that is completely irrelevant to LGBT or counseling topics
- Information that expressly promotes or endorses a particular product or service

### *Ethics*

ALGBTICAL division publications and communication should follow these procedural rules:

- Ensure all information and subject matter is consistent with the ethical standards, professional image, and official message of the ALGBTICAL division
- Ensure the accuracy and truthfulness of all information and subject matter
- Protect the privacy and confidentiality of division members and guard against access to the division member database
- Observe general journalistic objectivity
- Be open to opposing viewpoints, feedback, and criticism
- As appropriate, observe standard practice regarding quotation, attribution, and citation
- Avoid blatant plagiarism and copyright infringement

### *Priorities*

Decisions regarding appropriateness of ALGBTICAL division publications and communication should also be subject to the following general criteria:

- Does the news story advance the cause of LGBT rights and concerns?
- Is the news story reported in a balanced and objective manner?
- Is the social, political, or religious overlay of the story relevant to the LGBT cause?
- Is the social, political, or religious overlay of the story presented in a sensitive manner?
- Does the story contribute to the wellness of LGBT clients?

To guide content decisions in terms of public exposure, the following communication venues are ranked in order of sensitivity:

- 1 - Newsletter
- 2 - Facebook (and other social media)
- 3 - List Serve Announcements
- 4 - E-Mail Correspondence to Members
- 5 - Website

Priority for exposure and criteria for appropriateness are along a continuum. More strict sensitivity to content is applied to the number 1 item. More leeway for content is given to the number five item.

### *Review*

ALGBTICAL division publications and communication should be subject to editing, proofreading, critique, evaluation, and general review by the following division members:

- ALGBTICAL President
- ALGBTICAL Public Relations Chair

When encountering questions or concerns, editors, writers, designers, and creators engaged in any aspect the public relations activities of the ALGBTICAL division may seek guidance and advice as needed from the following division members:

- ALGBTICAL President
- ALGBTICAL Public Relations Chair
- ALGBTICAL Officers
- ALGBTICAL Executive Board