

referrals to other medical professionals, family sessions, guidance in the name change process, letters of readiness for hormone therapies and blockers, and letter for gender affirming surgeries. For immediate information, check out thelistforus.com, a resource website created by Ari, for trans and GNC folx and the people who support them, within Chicagoland.

Ari also offers consultation and training services on a variety of queer topics. Trainings can be customized to fit your audience. Some examples of existing trainings are: Gender Affirming Letter Writing 101, Pronouns 101, Working with Parents of Trans and Non-Binary Youth in a Clinical Setting, and Coping at the Intersection of Gender Dysphoria and other Mental Health Diagnoses.

INTERVIEW

Open Doors: Ari, welcome to Open Doors. Of the many services you offer, you are uniquely focused on supporting and uplifting the LGBTQ+ community as well as focusing specifically on trans clients and their families. How has your practice evolved over time?

Ari Groner: I only just opened my own practice, Sunny Days, this year, so there hasn't been quite enough time for evolution yet, but I can speak to the evolution of my clinical work over the last decade. Right out of grad school, I took on mostly adolescents, but did not necessarily have a queer specialty yet. I did tend to get more queer client referrals, but I think that was just because I was affirming, generally knowledgeable, and queer identified myself. Over time, I really felt that working within the LGBTQ+ community was my calling. I began only taking on queer clients, or folks exploring their gender and/or sexuality. I attended more queer specific trainings and learned about a variety of diverse intersecting identities. I continue to learn from trainings and from my clinical work, so that is an ongoing evolution.

One other thing that has changed is the ages of my clients. I used to work a lot more with little kiddos, but I have found that this is not very successful via telehealth. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, I was only in-person, but now I am fully remote. This has actually allowed me more space to work with adults, including parents of LGBTQ+ youth, which I really enjoy.

OD: We are all concerned with the backlash against our trans loved ones. While we are lucky to live in Illinois, are your clients experiencing distress from the ongoing attitudes and



challenges within society at large? Are you seeing clients from other states where services may be shrinking?

AG: You are so right! We are lucky to live in an area that is more progressive, but that certainly does not mean trans folks are exempt from societal discrimination. I see a range of distress levels among clients, with this distress connected to other intersecting identities or privileges (ex: skin color, socio-economic status, and family support).

Since I am only licensed in IL, I don't see clients from other states, but I have been contacted a couple of times from parents with trans children who have decided to move to IL due to their states passing anti-trans bills. It's horrific that families need to uproot themselves just to feel safer, but I hold hope that the ones that are able to do this, find community and support here.

OD: You have a real passion project you have spearheaded - **The List**. Congratulations on a tremendous effort to bring this invaluable resource to life. How did the idea come to fruition? I know you involved many contributors over the years. How did you mobilize such a vast network? I understand you also had graduate students who you mentored participate in the creation and expansion of The List. Where can we find this tremendous resource?

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