

BUTTON ASSIGNMENT

I have 2 buttons. 1 of them is larger and says "Hate Free Zone" and the second one is smaller and says "some girls like girls". I decided to take two pins because the `Hate free zone` is a great pin, but I feel like it is not necessarily speaking in regards to LGBT matters. So I chose to take another small pin that I think would be able to produce more feelings, conversations, reflections etc.

1. The first say that I got these buttons I kept them both pinned on my jacket for the rest of the day. At first I kind of forgot that I was wearing them until I started noticing a couple different looks I was receiving from some people. These were people that were in our V.I.U. cafeteria and some other people while I was at the grocery store later on. Although they were slightly odd looks that I saw, I felt more comfortable about wearing the pins at school than I did in the grocery store. When I was in the store and there were families shopping and standing behind me in the line up, I admit that I did feel a little weird, slightly awkward wearing the "some girls like girls" pin. After I got home, I took a second to reflect on the feelings that I had in the grocery store. I asked myself, why am I feeling this way. Is this what lesbians feel like...? I would like to say that ``I don't care what people think of me.`` But, After having those feelings I had after receiving those looks, then I suppose I do actually care. I was feeling a little anxious after people were looking. I thought to myself, `geez, I hope I do not see my parent's friends in here!!` If I did, I'm not sure if I would have the urge to tell them I was wearing the pins because of

a school project, or just not say anything at all and let them have their own opinions.

Either way, after wearing it in the grocery store I was surprised about the feelings that were developed.

2. The next day was our teaching at Bayview Elementary. I was just about to leave the house that morning and I saw the buttons sitting there and thought to myself, `should I wear my buttons today?

I thought to myself for a moment and decided against it. I feel like it would be quite unprofessional to be teaching while wearing these. After I got to the school and had a few minutes as we were transitioning I stopped to think about the scenario. I thought it was a little odd that I would not feel like it is appropriate for the elementary school although this is exactly what we were discussing in class, fully accepting everyone no matter what their sexual orientation is. I thought that no one is going to ask me take off my Hate Free Zone button. I was slightly confused about these mixed feelings I had. I understand we are going to be accepting educators and I realize that yes, some girls like girls. We have to make those people feel comfortable and safe. I feel like buttons like the ones I had should be fine to wear to school just as it should be fine for a GLBT...etc to come to school. However, when I thought about our assignment I thought to myself and asked a question, ``would I be making a statement about this topic? Would I be promoting LGBT in schools? Hmmm... well what are my intentions...? I feel like I wish it would be totally acceptable to wear buttons like that without getting questioned or receiving weird, odd looks. I suppose this is where educators are aiming to reach this

level of safe acceptance in the schools.

3. A few nights later I was going over to a friend's house that was having some people over for a glass of wine. I thought to myself about this assignment and thought yes, I am going to wear the buttons. Well, why wouldn't I wear them?

I arrived at the house almost forgetting that the buttons were on. I considered maybe earlier that no one will even notice. Not even being in these for 5 minutes I had friends joking around with me about the buttons, especially "some girls like girls button. They were saying things like oolala. I just chuckled and said you like my buttons?

I felt the urge to tell them the assignment from school but I decided not to. I felt like the guys at the house made a bigger deal about the button. I have a feeling that they like it that some girls like girls. I did not have much to tell them other than yes, these buttons are still on my jacket from last time. The subject was quickly changed when we were all having a toast to mid semester. About an hour had passed and we were sitting around in the living room and people were talking about exams and projects. I took a moment to consider telling the group about our button assignment as I thought it would be interesting to get their opinions and to hear what they had to say. I did end up telling them what it was all about and we chatted for about 20 minutes about the topic and dealing with the LGBT in schools and making it a safe place. I was happy to hear that everyone was more or less on the same page as I am about being truly accepting of everyone. Later when I got home I took off the buttons and stopped immediately and thought back to the conversation we had in our class about the fact that a lesbian or

GBT... cannot just take that label off whenever they want like I could just take the button off when the day was done. As I pondered about the whole scenario my heart went out to all those people out there that have difficulties dealing with their sexual orientation or identity. I can see more clearly the importance of having a safe, accepting school.

4. The last time I wore the pin was when I was in the bank. It actually was quite busy, mid day on Saturday. There was several seniors in the bank and the lady behind me definitely noticed the buttons and looked at me and looked at them and would sort of look down and then would stare at me. It did make me feel a little awkward. I thought, once again, how a lesbian might feel if she was in here. There a strong possibility that no one would even know that she is a lesbian. But, if they could, it's unfortunately to think that she would be ostracised simply because of her sexual orientation.

After I finished all four of the scenarios I spent some time reflecting about everything. I was a little disappointed by some of the feelings I felt when I had just a small glimpse at the realities that LGBTQ students face. There are many struggles that go along with it this that I have not paid a whole lot of attention to as an educator. I feel a little narrow minded for not ever spending that much time to even consider what it must be like for someone of these identities. This was a big wake up call for me. I need to be aware that there are people that fall into these groups wherever I go. This has helped me, as an Educator, feel more empathy for these students, have even a little bit better of an idea of where these students might be coming from. I now feel that I have

more awareness of the diverse student identities in the schools. I will push for more acceptances in all opportunities.