Working with LGBTQ Clients

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Agenda

* LGBTQ Terms: What does it all mean?

* Common Barriers to Service

* Tips and Best Practices for LGBTQ clients

* Resources and steps moving forward

Activity: Impacts of Silence

Please list:

1) 2-4 important relationships in your life
2) 2-4 places of personal significance for you
3) 2-4 Common "life topics" that you discuss with your family/friends
4) 2-4 Hobbies and/or leisure time activities

* **How did this activity make you feel?**
* **What did you think about?**
* **Other discussion**

SEX
Body / Biology

GENDER
Culture

SEXUAL ORIENTATION
Attractions / Relationships

LGBTQ Language and Concepts

* What is **Sex**?
  * Category assigned to each of us at birth based on a variety of physical and biological characteristics

* *Variations*
  * Female
  * Male
  * **Intersex**

* *Components*
  * Chromosomes
  * Genitals
  * Hormones
  * Reproductive Organs
  * Secondary Sex Characteristics

LGBTQ Language and Concepts

* **GENDER:** The wide set of characteristics that are constructed to distinguish between the two institutionally recognized sexes of male and female.

* **Gender includes 3 major components:**
    * **Physical Markers,**
    * **Role/Expression, and**
    * **Gender Identity**

LGBTQ Language

L Lesbian (sexual orientation)

G Gay (sexual orientation)

B Bisexual (sexual orientation)
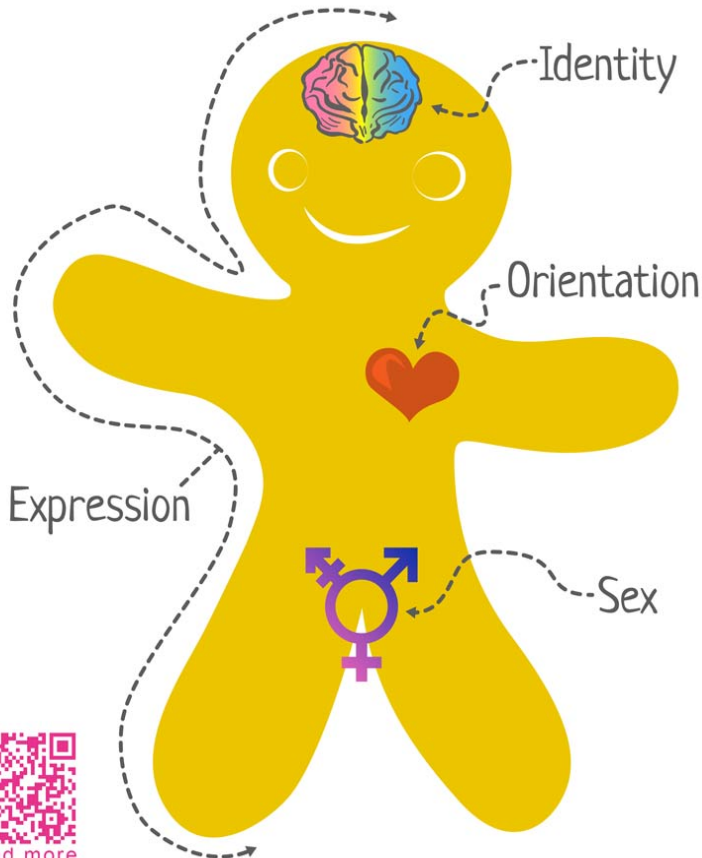
T Transgender (Gender Identity)

Q Queer (sexual orientation, gender and/or cultural identity)

Q Questioning (sexual orientation and/or gender identity)

GenderBread Person

LGBTQ Language and Concepts

* Transgender is the state of someone's own gender identity (Self-identifying as a woman, man, neither or both, queer) that doesn't match their **assigned** sex (the assigned sex that we are given at birth of male, female or intersex).

* Cisgender (non-transgender) is a gender identity where someone's identity of their gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth

LGBTQ Language and Concepts

Gender Pronouns

The pronoun or set of pronouns that an individual would like others to use when talking to or about that individual

LGBTQ Language and Concepts

Homophobia

Stereotypes, negative feelings, attitudes, behaviors, fear, and/or hatred of lesbian and gay people.

Bisexual and queer people can also experience homophobia when they are perceived as lesbian or gay and/or when in a relationship with others of the same gender and/or sex.

LGBTQ Language and Concepts

Biphobia

Stereotypes, negative feelings, attitudes, and behaviors against and/or active fear and hatred of bisexual people.

Transphobia

Stereotypes, negative feelings, attitudes, and behaviors against and/or active fear and hatred of people who transgress social expectations of gender conformity.

LGBTQ Language and Concepts

Cisgender/Non-transgender Privilege

The basic civil rights, social privileges, and status automatically awarded to people whose gender identity aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth, and that are automatically denied to transgender and gender non-conforming communities.

NOTE: *Cisgender/non-transgender privilege assumes that all people express their gender presentation to their sex assignment given to them at birth. This privilege can also mean the ability to dress without worrying what it represents, or use of a restroom free from harassment.*

LGBTQ Language and Concepts

Heterosexism

The belief that male/female sexuality is the only natural or moral mode of sexual behavior. It is a form of discrimination and oppression that reinforces the belief in heterosexual superiority and validity over LGBTQ orientations and gender identities.

LGBTQ Language and Concepts

Internalization of Phobic Messages

The process of claiming bias/hate-based social and cultural messages as internal/core truths without seeing the root of those messages as methods to maintain control by those in positions of power and the goal of those messages being to limit or deny access

LGBTQ Communities and Service Providers

Need for Services: Poverty Ranges

* Same-sex couples and their children are significantly more likely to be poor than heterosexual married couple families

* Overall, lesbian couples have much higher poverty rates than either different-sex couples or gay

Source:
http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/q4ej/pages/22/attachments/original/1375201902/qejtidalwave.pdf?1375201902

Poverty Cont.

* People in same-sex couples who live in rural areas have poverty rates that are twice as high as same-sex couples who live in large metropolitan areas

* People in same-sex couples in rural areas are also poorer than people in different-sex married couples who live in rural areas.

Need for Services: Homelessness

* 40% of the homeless youth served by agencies identify as LGBT

* 43% of clients served by drop-in centers identified as LGBT

* 30% of street outreach clients identified as LGBT

* 30% of clients utilizing housing programs identified as LGBT

Source: http://nationalhomeless.org/issues/lgbt/

Need for Services: Drug and Alcohol Use/Abuse

* Studies estimate that between 20-30% of the LGBTQ population abuses drugs or alcohol

* That's compared to roughly 9% of the general population

* Rainbow Health Initiative has found that the MN LGBTQ population uses tobacco at nearly twice the rates of the straight population

Need for Services: Suicide Risks

* LGB Youth are more than twice as likely as the straight population to attempt suicide

* Face higher rates of bullying

* More research is needed for transgender individuals but some studies estimate that up to 40% of transgender people attempt suicide

Need for Services: Intimate Partner Violence

* Prevalence = **1 in 4** (or 25-33%)
* Trans Folks=misrepresented:
    * Very few studies have been done on relationships involving Transgender individuals, and
    * Statistics are insufficient in capturing DV in these communities
* Bisexual individuals=misrepresented
    * are often lumped into categories of lesbian women or gay men

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Discussion – Threats and Intimidation

Transgender survivors are 2 times more likely to face intimidation in violent relationships.

DISCUSSION:

* Is this a myth or fact?

* Discuss two reason how this statement specifically impacts LGBTQ survivors

* Free think: How could I address this issue in my service area?

Discussion – Emotional Abuse

Bisexual people want the best of both worlds.

DISCUSSION:

* Is this a myth or fact?

* Discuss two reasons how this statement specifically impacts LGBTQ people seeking services

* Free think: How could I address this issue in my service area?

Discussion - Isolation

LGBTQ people have the same access to shelters, Orders for Protection, police and other systems, including medical or mental health services.

DISCUSSION:

* Is this a myth or fact?

* Discuss two reasons how this statement specifically impacts LGBTQ survivors

* Free think: How could I address this issue in my service area?

Understanding Barriers to Services

- Outing
- Fear of homophobic responses
- Heterosexual focused climate
- Fear of reprisal from family and friends
- Having to educate those they reach out to
- Being seen as a traitor to their friends or community
- Fear of not being taken seriously

- Belief in societal myths about being LGBTQ
- "Gay-bashing" is still fairly accepted in our society
- Using the system may be a major life decision
- Less resources/ systemic support

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Overcoming the Barriers

Overcoming the Barriers

* **Do not assume anything!**

* Assess your own comfort level in working with community

* Assess the stereotypes and myths that you have believed in the past or currently believe

* Do you have safe workplace climates that support identity without making sexual orientation/gender identity the primary focus?

* Appreciate the risks that LGBTQ people take when they come out.

* Know that someone who is absolutely comfortable with their trans identification may be fluid in their sex/gender identity

* Check out your bathrooms!

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Overcoming the Barriers

* **Do** ask "How do you identify?" when appropriate. *Check out **why** you need to know this information. Is it for you or to truly provide better consumer services?*

* **Do** pay close attention to pronouns and names. *Always use the name and pronoun that you are given.* Use the client's preferred terminology and pronouns

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Inclusive Services

* **How does someone know from their first contact that you are safe and respectful?**

* **Have you completed a program assessment?**

* **Have you considered:**
    * Gender neutral language in your forms and publications?
    * Community outreach completed to my communities
    * Staff are trained and comfortable with LGBTQ identities
    * Books and resources that include LGBTQ survivors

Inclusive Services

This > rather than

Partner > boyfriend, husband

They > he/she

Person > man, woman

Relationship status > marital status

Parent, guardian > mother, father

Overcoming the Barriers:
Safer and Supportive Workplaces

* Adjust organization statements and other relevant documents to include an affirmative nondiscrimination clause concerning membership, hiring practices, and the communities served.

* Use inclusive language and content in organization structure and meetings.

* Welcome persons in your organization's brochures.
* Create an environment in which people feel comfortable to come out at work.
* Interrupt homophobic remarks/jokes.
* Put up posters from LGTB organizations, events.

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Resources and Support

CONCLUDING POINTS

* Current research suggests that LGBTQ communities experience poverty at great rates than the general public

* LGBTQ communities also face increased risks of homelessness, substance abuse, and suicide

* LGBTQ people can face a host of barriers to accessing safety, healing and services

* There are many concrete things service providers can do to create more access for LGBTQ survivors

CONTACT OutFront Minnesota's Anti-Violence Program!

www.outfront.org

(612) 822-0127/(800) 800-0350, option 3

* **Client services** such as:
    * Crisis /short term counseling
    * Advocacy
    * Support Groups
  * **Advocacy with other agencies or systems**
  * **Community organizing/outreach/education**

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Other Organizational Support Programs

* National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs: www.ncavp.org
  * 212-714-1141 (hotline), 212.714.1184 x50
* The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force: www.thetaskforce.org
  * 212.604.9830
* National Center for Lesbian Rights: www.nclrights.org
  * 415.392.6257
* National Center for Transgender Equality: http://transequality.org/
  * (202) 903-0112