EXPANDING ACCESS
TO LGBTQIA COMMUNITIES
Outreach, Marketing and Internal Development to Promote Inclusive Agencies

More about us...
Why there is a need:

• There are about 9.5 million people in the U.S. who identify as LGBTQIA
• LGBTQIA people experience significantly higher rates of sexual and domestic violence, including sexual harassment and physical abuse
• LGBTQIA people of color experience sexual assault at much higher rates than others
• 50% of transgender individuals experience some form of sexual violence at some point in their lives

Why we’re here:

THE PROBLEM:

• Service providers may encounter challenges when promoting safety and community reconnection for LGBTQIA survivors
• LGBTQIA survivors struggle with systematic oppression and discrimination IN ADDITION to the aftermath of sexual and domestic violence

THE SOLUTION:

• We must create culturally relevant, LGBTQIA-affirming services. This is crucial.
OK... are you ready to have your mind blown?

Here’s how we think we’re providing services to LGBTQIA survivors:
But the reality sometimes looks more like this...

What do survivors see?

• When a survivor needs services from your program, what do they see?
  • Website and/or hotline?
  • Brochures, publications, and documentation?
  • Who is there to provide services?
What do survivors see?

- Why are the assumptions we make about survivors who come through the door problematic?
- How does this make a survivor feel?

What does a survivor know about you?

**Externally:**
- Name of your agency
- Brochures
- Website
- Hotline/Helpline
- Imagery
- Programs and Services
- Word of mouth
What does a survivor know about you?

Internally:

• Staff, volunteers, and board members
• Posters and imagery inside your office
• Documentation
  • Name, Pronouns, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, etc.
• Agency Policies
• Gender neutral bathrooms
What does a survivor know about you?

**Internally**: Direct Services & Advocacy

- Coming Out is not a one-time process
- **Do** ask (questions) and **do** tell (why)
- Not every LGBTQIA person is out about their identities
  - This may differ based on environment (home, work, school, clubs, events, faith based spaces)
  - When someone shares an aspect of their sexual and/or gender identity, respond appropriately

Some ways to respond...

**Embrace....**

- Thank you for sharing that with me.
- Keep it confidential—don’t share with others without the person’s consent
- Reflect client’s language
- Ask how you can best support them

**Avoid.....**

- not acknowledging what was shared
- “That doesn’t matter to me”
- “I treat everyone the same”
- “I don’t see ______”
How do we move away from the heteronormative?

Externally:

• Name of your agency
  • Including tagline that state you serve individuals of all genders and identities
• Hotline/Helpline
  • Assume nothing! (This includes pronouns, sexual desires, behaviors, identities and number of partners)
How do we move away from the heteronormative?

Externally:

Anti-Violence Prevention Work

- Use examples that include LGBTQIA identities
- Lobby against anti-LGBTQIA policies
- Include positive examples of LGBTQIA healthy relationships
- Work with family members on education and acceptance
- Interrupt problematic behaviors
  - This includes staff, stakeholders, even survivors
  - Active bystander
How do we move away from the heteronormative?

Externally (continued):

• Website and social media
  • Imagery that is inclusive of LGBTQIA communities, gender-inclusive language, highlight LGBTQIA partnerships
• Build relationships
  • LGBTQIA resources and inclusive providers in your region/state

Highlight local LGBTQIA folks in campaigns (Mpowerment, Iowa City)

We get tested for HIV because...
How do we move away from the heteronormative?

Internally:

• Staff, volunteers, and board members
  • Is there diverse representation?
• Intake forms and documentation
  • Avoid the gender binary
  • Ask about gender identity, pronouns, and partners openly
  • Don’t make assumptions based on looks
  • Only ask questions you need to know, and explain why
How do we move away from the heteronormative?

Internally (continued):

• Training
  • Include LGBTQIA examples that are relevant
• Referrals to LGBTQIA resources
  • The importance of co-advocacy!
• Policies
  • Are they inclusive?

What’s the public message?

• Language is a critical step in ensuring you’re being inclusive
• Never make assumptions about survivors and/or their experiences
• Key statement: “Sexual violence affects people of all genders and all identities”
• Intersectionality exists within the LGBTQIA community; other identities (race, ethnicity) could (even should) change your messaging, engagement, and outreach
Show your pride!

• Attend community events:
  • Outreach plan should include LGBTQIA survivors
  • Have LGBTQIA-specific brochures and materials that are culturally relevant
  • June is LGBTQIA Pride Month! Find out what’s happening in your community!

Networking with other organizations

• *Take time to build intentional relationships.*
  • What other organizations can you reach out to that already work with LGBTQIA folks and/or survivors?
  • What are some of the rewards and challenges of working with LGBTQIA survivors?
Networking with other organizations

- Take the time to listen (especially before offering solutions)
- Be open to, and solicit, feedback
- Show up and follow through
  - Make the relationship mutually beneficial
  - Don’t ask for things without giving back in some way

Co-advocacy is your friend

- **Co-advocacy**: a collaborative process of improving how agencies work together to ensure that they are providing appropriate resources and services to all survivors.
- Helps to ensure survivors will have their needs met and possess the knowledge to meet those needs based on the understanding of an individual’s cultural and historical trauma.
- In other words... **co-advocacy is awesome-sauce!**
What are some opportunities for co-advocacy?

• Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April)
• Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October)
• Queer History Month (October)
• Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20)
• National Coming Out Day (October 11)
• LGBTQIA Pride Month (June)
• And more...! (Google is your friend.)
Some points to remember…

• Assess for readiness
  • Examine your own feelings, bias & misconceptions individually and as a staff about sexuality and gender
  • Talk with local LGBTQIA leaders to assess communities’ readiness
    • Do they consider sexual violence to be an issue?
    • What strategies do they already employ?

Some points to remember…

• Have regular trainings (more than 1x/year!)
• Self-education is crucial
• Language is both powerful & meaningless
• Use the skills you already possess & don’t “re-create the wheel”
Resources, materials, and so much more!

- Handouts including:
  - Summary of Presentation’s Key Points
  - Resources for staff development
  - LGBTQIA Terminology and Statistics
  - Gender Pronouns Chart
  - LGBTQIA Power and Control Wheel

Contact us

Avinder Deol, Transformative Healing
avi@iowacasa.org or (515) 850-8081
www.thiowa.org

Matty Smith, Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault
communications@iowacasa.org or (515) 244-7424
www.iowacasa.org