

Supporting the Behavioral Health Workforce to Implement Best Practices for LGBTQ+ People

All behavioral health care organizations provide services to LGBTQ+ people and their families, regardless of the organization's size, location, or type of service provided. Therefore, it is imperative for organizational leadership to put policies and practices in place that affirm LGBTQ+ people. This tip sheet outlines actions leaders can take to support their workforce in being more welcoming and inclusive. For more tools and educational resources on best practices for serving LGBTQ+ people, visit lgbtqequity.org.

#1

If your agency is providing LGBTQ+-affirming care, be sure to openly advertise it through symbols, images, and messaging in spaces where all clients will see them, i.e. in your waiting areas and on your website. If your agency is in the process of training the workforce on how to be affirming, then at minimum, ensure you have client resources and education such as brochures that are inclusive of LGBTQ+ people.

#2

Consider implementing a climate survey among your workforce that would measure their readiness and attitudes towards serving LGBTQ+ people. Then follow through to improve the climate by creating an action plan that addresses any concerns identified by the survey.

#3

If you have satisfaction surveys that clients fill out, add in questions about biases, assumptions, respect, acknowledgment of identity, and other questions that would measure the client's experience around affirmation.



#4

Create opportunities for frequent, mandatory trainings on LGBTQ+ identities to help advance staff's knowledge and keep information up-to-date. This includes adding scenarios with LGBTQ+ people into other trainings. For example, if your agency is offering a training on trauma-informed care, include a scenario about someone who identifies as LGBTQ+. This ensures people will hear the information in more than one place and will be able to implement their learning in various contexts.

#5

Provide coaching to your workforce which allows them to discuss concepts they learned in trainings and get support if they are experiencing challenges implementing best practices. For example, staff might need coaching to help build confidence in asking about pronouns or intervening when they witness harassment. Coaching could be provided by identified and competent champions or by an outside agency that has expertise in serving LGBTQ+ populations.

#6

Involve everyone in your plan to create a more welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ people, including volunteers, administrative staff, custodians, and security personnel as well as partner organizations to ensure clients feel safe and respected in every interaction and setting of their care.



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