

Equality & Diversity Fact Sheet 4

Considering Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans People in Healthcare

Language

1. Listen to how people describe their own identity, gender partners and relationships and reflect their choice of language.
2. Avoid making assumptions about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity: use gender neutral terms such as partner(s)
3. A cautionary note, some LGBT people may have reclaimed derogatory words such as 'dyke', 'fag', 'queer', or 'tranny', to describe themselves but it isn't appropriate for our organisation to use these words to describe people. As a general rule people should also avoid using the label 'homosexual' as it is still viewed negatively. Most people are happy with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Trans but if in doubt – ask! Please note some 'lesbians' do not identify with this description and class themselves as gay women.

Policies

4. Display the Trusts Equality Statement 'Working towards achieving equality & diversity for all' (posters available through the PPI team (telephone: 01782 275026 2026) which clearly sets out the trusts commitment to ensuring that our services are fair, accessible and responsive to all and zero tolerance to any form of discrimination..
5. Monitor the sexual orientation of all staff and service users, in line with confidentiality and data protection protocols and with an opt out option for those who prefer to disclose this information. This enables you to identify gaps in service provision and staffing balance, Any form used needs to state clearly what the information will be used for and how long it will be kept. Without this monitoring LGBT people's exclusion will continue to be ignored.

6. Ensure confidentiality to all staff and service users, unless they personally choose to be 'out' themselves. Confidentiality can be a matter of personal safety rather than purely about privacy. Explore ways of creatively integrating LGBT issues into your work rather than separating them out or having them as an add on.
7. LGBT people come from all sectors of the Community. Good access principles still apply – ensure you provide appropriate access in terms of all equality issues (i.e. religious, cultural, social etc)
8. Encourage all staff and volunteers to challenge negative comments and jokes about LGBT people and or LGBT issues and ensure that people know that this is their responsibility.

Staff

9. Encourage staff members to report incidents of homophobic transphobic abuse, whether they occur within or outside the workplace, take any reports of homophobic/transphobic behaviour within the workplace seriously, and act on them promptly. Ensure that information about reporting hate incidents to the Police or to a third party reporting centre is readily available.
10. Information about staff member's sexual orientation and gender identity should be considered strictly confidential and should be treated as such by HR departments.
11. Support role models: for example LGBT staff who are 'out'. Staff should be encouraged to attend organisational LGBT networks/support groups/ in paid time. Display posters which publicise such groups and or which feature positive images of or statements about LGBT people.
12. Keep up to date information about local LGBT groups and organisations and other relevant resources, this will assist with staff awareness, referrals and networking.

Involvement

13. When publicising events and consultations remember that many LGBT people do not go to 'gay' venues. Publicise events and services in mainstream venues and publications as well as in specialist areas.
14. If you are using community groups to assist you in consultation or involvement work, support them either by providing administrative support or paying for their work.
15. Consider using a neutral venue for meetings, or a place where LGBT people feel safe to be open such as a LGBT Centre.

16. When working with LGBT people it is important to remember that they are least likely to be 'out' in the place they live because of the possibility of harassment and compromising personal safety. This may be a particular issue in neighbourhood and community work.
17. Whilst there is commonality between lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans people, some issues will be specific to individual communities. It is also important to remember that being Trans is about gender identity and not sexual orientation. Trans people can be LGB or straight (heterosexual).

Information and Visibility

18. Having LGBT information on display creates a welcoming atmosphere. This could include LGBT posters showing people from the diverse communities in which we live
19. Use images of LGBT people in a wider range of your publicity materials, not just the documents which are specifically aimed at the LGBT community. This sends out a clear message that you recognise the positive contribution that LGBT people can make to our society and that the entire organisation is welcoming to LGBT people.
20. Ensure that posters and information are clearly visible and that they remain on display.
21. Support LGBT communities by advertising and promoting the Trust LGBT publications, sponsoring LGBT events or working in partnership with LGBT organisations.