

Supporting LGBT people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

Introduction

This paper has been produced to guide the development of actions and services by QAHC to work with and support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

The term LGBT is used in this paper, however we recognise that for some people this is a western term and may not be the way individuals and communities identify and talk about their own sexuality or gender identity. We recognise that there is a diversity of cultural understandings of sexuality and gender identity. QAHC will be inclusive in our approach and not seek to impose western values, identities or ways of working.

The term CALD is used to describe people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This includes people from different countries and regions of the world, as well as people with different journeys to Australia (e.g. second⁺ generation, recent immigrants, refugees, temporary students/workers). QAHC will be inclusive of LGBT people from a variety of backgrounds and residency status.

Purpose:

The outcomes that QAHC is seeking to achieve in its work with LGBT people from a CALD background are:

- Empowerment of CALD LGBT people
- Self determination in setting priorities and directions by CALD LGBT people
- CALD/multicultural services that are inclusive of LGBT people
- That QAHC is inclusive of CALD people through reorienting existing services
- Effective partnerships between QAHC and ethnic minority/CALD organisations, groups etc

Issues for LGBT People from a CALD Background

A range of issues have initially been identified through QAHC's existing work and personal connections with LGBT people from a CALD background. Through this process of developing our services, we will test out and expand our understandings of the range of views, issues, hopes, expectations and challenges of CALD LGBT people and the services that support them. Issues identified to date are listed below.

Country/Family of Origin:

- Obligations to the family (e.g. financial support)
- Fearful of government agencies, authorities
- Isolation – away from family, support network
- Family values (separate from cultural values)

Newly Arrived:

- Lack of understanding of laws in Australia/Queensland re: sex and sexuality/gender identity
- Lack of knowledge/experience of western LGBT identities
- Newly arrived students/refugees/migrants – access to services, awareness of local ‘culture’
- Trying out new things, period of transition and growth

Cultural Differences/Perspectives:

- Diversity of CALD communities
- Cultural norms – heterosexist
- Roles (e.g. gender)
- Religion
- Language issues
- Communication styles – between individuals, communities, organisations
- Financial concerns – poverty, deprivation
- Various cultural understandings of sexual and gender identities
- Internalised homophobia

LGBT Community:

- Reluctance to be visible part of LGBT communities
- Sexual stereotyping by gay men of ethnic minorities
- ‘Racist’ behaviours in gay community

Services/Support:

- Lack of/knowning of opportunities for referral
- CALD services/individual workers not inclusive of sex and gender diversity issues
- Lack of examples/ positive role models – breaking ground
- Lack of data capture re: LGBT CALD
- Racism – in wider community, services
- Double minority

Sexual Health:

- Low testing rates for HIV/STIs
- Lack of access to HIV treatments in Australia under PBS and Medicare
- Travelling home to high prevalence areas
- Perception of low level of HIV in Australia
- HIV not a priority (against other issues/challenges)
- Impact/understanding of HIV – may differ (e.g. folk understandings, treatments)

QAHC:

- Level of cultural competency in QAHC
- Don't see themselves in our work
- Homophobia within CALD communities – affect how QAHC viewed
- Inclusiveness rather than otherness

Potential Actions for QAHC

The following actions have been identified to progress the development and delivery of services by QAHC with LGBT people from CALD backgrounds. As we continue to consult with individuals and services these actions may change, be removed or new ones added.

In keeping with QAHC's overall approach to health promotion, we will explore actions within the framework of the Ottawa Charter:

- strengthen community action
- create supportive environments
- build healthy public policy
- reorient health services
- develop personal skills and knowledge

This means our actions will not just be limited to traditional 'health education' interventions (e.g. printed resources and workshops). Health promotion action aims to reduce differences in health status and ensure equal opportunities and resources to enable people to achieve their fullest health potential. This includes a secure foundation in a supportive environment, access to information, life skills and opportunities for making healthy choices. People cannot achieve their fullest health potential unless they are able to take control of those things which determine their health.

There is unlikely to be the resources or critical mass of LGBT people to target people from specific countries. A regional approach may be more likely to succeed (need to test this proposition).

- South East Asia (e.g. Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, China)
- South Asia (e.g. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka)
- South America
- Africa
- Middle East
- Europe

Intelligence Gathering:

- Literature review (perhaps a student project)
- Environmental scan – what is already out there for CALD LGBT people (or potential)
- Look at other CALD LGBT projects in Australia
- Collate existing (Australian) resources for LGBT CALD people
- Engage/consult with CALD LGBT people
- Consult CALD community leaders

- Map CALD communities in Qld

QAHC Accessibility:

- Promote QAHC services to CALD & HIV services
- Translation of QAHC website into key community languages
- Professional development for QAHC staff on CALD issues/cultural competency
- Use different imagery, colours and languages in resources
- Show CALD people in QAHC resources
- Encourage CALD people to apply for positions at QAHC (diversity of workforce)
- Review of and training on QAHC use of interpreter policy
- Review of specific programs within QAHC (e.g. sexual health, LGBT health)

Projects/Approaches:

- Raising visibility of CALD LGBT people as part of communities “I’m gay, Chinese & proud”
- Take a whole of community approach
- Target places/settings where there are high numbers of CALD people (e.g. universities)
- Partner with universities re: research opportunities
- Community events that promote inclusiveness e.g. ‘chilli & chocolate’ (Brown Sugar)
- Develop and run workshops for specific cultural groups (perhaps in partnership with ethnic minority orgs)
- Promote and/or target Healthy Community Fund grants to CALD purposes (or a specific round)

Current Activities at QAHC

- Consultation forums with CALD LGBT people in 2008 (forum in partnership with LGBT student group, ‘Fabuloso’ Pride event)
- Inclusion of people from CALD backgrounds in campaign imagery.
- Adaptation of ‘Creating Inclusive Services’ (LGBT awareness) training for use in CALD/ethnic minority organisations.
- Two factsheets for LGBT people from CALD background on services in Australia and organisations around the world
- Ongoing support for 2 Asians gay men’s groups – ‘Project Asia’ (Gold Coast), ‘gen-A’ (Brisbane)
- Free access to interpreters for non-English speakers making contact with QAHC
- Funding applications to Multicultural Affairs Qld for a campaign promoting LGBT inclusion and a resource for newly arrived LGBT people.

Next Steps:

1. Send this document to staff for comment.
2. Form LGBT CALD Action Group from within QAHC, LGBT CALD people and ethnic minority/CALD organisations.
3. Group to review paper and develop action plan, including:

- actions for QAHC
 - actions for the Group
 - actions for LGBT CALD people
 - actions for ethnic minority/CALD organisations
4. Identify/source human and financial resources to implement action plan.

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