

# Queensland Association for Healthy Communities Inc

## Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families Training Resource

Sexuality and Gender Identity Awareness

**qahc**  
Queensland Association for  
Healthy Communities Inc.

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## 1. Introduction to the Training Resource

The Queensland Association for Healthy Communities Inc (QAHC) sexuality and gender identity awareness training focuses upon reorientation of health and health related services to provide inclusive service provision for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) clients. Since 2005 approximately 600 service providers have successfully completed these workshops throughout Queensland. A high level of continued evaluation is undertaken to ensure that QAHC's adult education resources are relevant to the needs of service providers.

This training resource is targeted at service providers who support families, parents and children. The workshop aims to raise awareness of issues that may affect parents in same sex relationships, parents with LGBT children and children with LGBT parents.

This training resource enables services to deliver the eight hour *Working with LGBT Families* sexuality and gender identity awareness training to their own staff. The resource aims to provide mechanisms to assist service providers to deliver inclusive services to members of the LGBT community. The training endeavors to increase the accessibility of mainstream services and the provision of informed and holistic care to LGBT clients in Queensland.

### 1.2 How to use this training resource

#### 1.2.1 Pre-training reading materials

This training resource provides a series of LGBT fact sheets for participants to read before undertaking the training workshop. It is important that participants are familiar with the basic terminology and topics addressed in the workshop before completing the training.

#### 1.2.2 Workshop Power Points and Activities Booklet

The training power point presentation is provided to guide the delivery of the workshop. These power points should be used in conjunction with the facilitator's notes provided in this booklet. The workshop handout and activities booklet sets out the activities delivered within the workshop, in a consecutive order with the power point presentations for each session.

#### 1.2.3 Facilitator's Notes

This booklet provides facilitator's notes on the delivery of the workshop. The notes provide the timeline and purpose of each session, information on each topic covered in the training sessions and an outline on how to conduct the activities in the workshop. Facilitator's should review these notes in conjunction with the workshop power point presentation before facilitating the workshop.

General notes on facilitating sexuality and gender identity adult education, for both LGBT and heterosexual training facilitators, have been provided to raise awareness of issues that may potentially arise during the workshop as well as basic tips on managing training participants. It is recommended that facilitator's review these notes before facilitating the workshop.

## **QAHC Working with LGBT Families Training Resource**

QAHC also strongly recommends that facilitator's undertake this training with QAHC before delivering the workshop within their own service, or that facilitators have previous experience in conducting sexuality and gender identity awareness training in some form.

# Working with LGBT Families Sexuality and Gender Identity Workshop

## Specific Issues

- Understanding Sexuality
- Understanding Gender Identity
- Values, Myths and Stereotypes
- Heterosexism, transphobia and homophobia
- LGBT Health Outcomes
- Service Provision to LGBT clients

## Time Frame

8 hours

## Facilitator's Tools

Group work activities  
Brain storming  
General discussion

## Resources


Data Projector  
Lap top  
Workshop packs with activity hand outs  
White board/butchers paper  
Resources for Activities – scenario cards

## Required pre-reading

1. Australian Medical Association Position Statement on Sexual Diversity and Gender Identity
2. LGBTS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander QAHC fact sheet
3. LGBT Young People QAHC Fact sheet
4. Service Provision to the LGBT Community QAHC fact sheet
5. Social pressures that affect LGBT people QAHC Fact sheet

## Modules Aim

- To have an understanding of:
- Sexual orientation and sexual identities
  - Gender Identity
  - Values, Myths and Stereotypes related to LGBT people
  - Impact of discrimination, heterosexism, transphobia and homophobia
  - Patterns of LGBT Health Outcomes
  - Providing inclusive service provision to LGBT clients

	<p>Queensland Association for Healthy Communities Inc</p> <p>Working with families and young people: Sexuality and Gender Identity Awareness Workshop</p>
9am – 9:30am	Facilitators preparation time
9:30am	Session One
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sexuality</li> <li>▪ Gender Identity</li> <li>▪ Values, Beliefs and Stereotypes</li> </ul>
11am	Morning Tea
11:20am	Session Two
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Heterosexism, Homophobia and Transphobia</li> <li>▪ Coming Out</li> <li>▪ LGBT Families and Parents with LGBT children</li> </ul>
1:20pm	Lunch
2pm	Session Three
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Heterosexism in services</li> <li>▪ Confidentiality</li> <li>▪ Disclosure</li> </ul>
3:30pm	Afternoon Tea
3:50pm	Session Four
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supporting LGBT clients accessing services</li> <li>▪ Inclusive Service Environments</li> <li>▪ Information and Referrals</li> </ul>
4:50pm	Evaluations
5pm	Thank you for attending the workshop

Working with LGBT Families Session One Outline				
Time	Topic	Objective	Activity	Resources
5mins	Introduction	Workshop overview	Facilitators presentation Group Etiquette	Slides 1-2
15mins	Sexuality	Exploring sexual identities & behaviours	Facilitators presentation	Slides 3 -12
15mins	Small Group Activity	Sexuality and Sexual Behaviours: Identifying conflicts	Fantasies – Behaviours – Identities	Slide13 Activity Cards
20mins	Gender Identity	Gender identity disorder & transgender identities	Facilitators presentation	Slides 14 – 24
5 min	Group Activity	Myths, Values and Stereotypes: Labeling	What's in a name? Activity	Slide 25
10 min	Labeling	Why people do & don't identify with labels	Facilitators presentation	Slides 24 -30
20mins	Group Activity	Myths, Values and Stereotypes: Impacts on working with LGBT clients	Barriers Exercise	Slides 31 - 33
Total Time	1 hour and 30 minutes			

## **2. Aim of the Workshop**

This is an eight hour training workshop targeted at health and health related service providers. The workshop aims to provide participants with a basic understanding of sexuality and gender identity. The impact of the social pressures related to sexuality and gender identity on parents of LGBT children, parents in same sex relationships and children of LGBT parents are explored with the workshop. The workshop also identifies inclusive work practices that can be used to break down barriers for LGBT people accessing services and disclosing LGBT issues with service providers.

The nature of the workshop is to build on the issues that are presented in each session. Facilitators may find it useful to refer back to discussion in previous sessions to use as examples for some of the topics that the workshop addresses later.

### **2.1 Introductions, House Keeping and Ice Breaker**

Facilitators should ensure that all housekeeping issues be identified so that participants feel safe & comfortable in the space.

Introduction of facilitators should provide information on the roles & experience of facilitators. Please note:

- Do not profess to be “experts” on the topic
- Be clear & concise on the information being shared
- Encourage participants to be involved in all aspects of training

The purpose of the workshop should be introduced with an explanation of why it is important for mainstream services to have an understanding and an awareness of sexuality and gender identity issues. Before starting the workshop identify some points that we know about LGBT people living in regional areas. These are presented in power points later in the workshop.

We know that LGBT people in regional areas can experience:

- Increased social isolation with fewer LGBT peers
- Less services and support mechanisms that address sexuality and gender identity issues
- Less verbal abuse and more physical abuse on basis of sexuality
- Increased concerns that confidentiality will be breached
- Move to metropolitan areas to explore LGBT issues and lose support networks

Ensure that participants are aware that the purpose of our training is to provide mainstream service providers with knowledge and skills to improve their working practices with the LGBT community.

### 3. Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is an individual's emotional, romantic, sexual and affectionate attraction towards another person. This session aims to emphasize the incongruities between sexual identities and behaviours when addressing sexual orientation and sexuality generally.

- The concept of sexuality/sexual orientation incorporates three inter-related factors:
  1. An individual's desires,
  2. Sexual behaviours and
  3. Sexual identity.

These are not synonymous.

- It is important that participants understand that these three factors may not always be consistent. For example a person may have sexual desires towards the same sex, however sexually identify as heterosexual, while their history of sexual behaviours may incorporate having sex with both men and women.
- These components of sexual identity will be individual for each person.

The heterosexual matrix is used to show how same sex relationships and families with parents in same sex relationships fall outside the socially accepted understanding of heterosexuality, parental relationships and the formation of families. The slide presents a 'tongue in cheek' view at how we are expected to be, how and why families are formed. This slide may provide a useful tool to refer back to throughout the presentation.

#### 3.1 Sexual Trichotomy Model

This model moved away from just looking at sexual behaviour to discuss sexual formation & identity.

- It provides a holistic model that acknowledges internal mechanisms that impact on our sexual formation such as psychological, biological, ethical, spiritual & socio-cultural factors.
  - The model explains the integration between sexual orientation, sexual behaviour & sexual identity.
  - Participants will have a hand out of the sexual trichotomy model.
1. Sexual Orientation: This is who you are attracted to: women only, men only, both;
  2. Sexual Behaviour: This is the sexual contacts that you make, it is only the physical act. This may or may not be congruent with your sexual orientation &/or your sexual identity.
  3. Sexual Identity: This is how you externally & internally identify. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, straight, men who have sex with men, women who have sex with women but do not identify as bisexual or gay/lesbian. This may not be congruent with your sexual orientation &/or your sexual behaviour. Your internal & external identity may also not be congruent – you may identify one way internally but not identify the same way externally.

### 3.2 Sexual Orientation Continuum

The sexual orientation continuum allows movement of sexual experiences throughout a person's lifetime and circumstances.

- This model acknowledges that sexual identities and sexual experiences are not rigid entities.
- They may vary from the spectrum of heterosexuality to lesbianism and gay and everything in between, according to a person's life experience.
- A person's sexual identity, sexual behaviours and desires may change over a person's life time.
- These identities do not have to change rigidly from one to another. They may also go back and forth. The continuum is not rigid in the direction of movement towards a sexual identity or behaviours – a person can move back and forth in regard to sexual behaviours and identities.

The Fantasies – Behaviours – Identities Model allows an individual's sexuality/sexual orientation to be viewed in three distinct factors.

- These factors may oppose each other and/or be aligned with one's sexual identity. These factors (FBI) may be the same or different.
- Each factor forms an essential parts of a person's whole sexuality.
- This model allows people to acknowledge the sexual fantasies and desires of an individual that are a part of an individual's sexuality however opposed to their sexual identity and/or experiences.

For Example:

A woman who has previously been married, sexually fantasises about both men and women however identifies as an exclusive lesbian that would no longer have sex with men.

- Her sexual experience is with both men and women
- Her fantasies are with both men and women
- Her sexual identity is as a lesbian

A man who has only had sex with men, may fantasise about women and identify as a gay man.

- His sexual experience and identity are both directed towards being a gay man
- However his sexual fantasies include having sex with a woman (heterosexuality)

A woman who had sex with men as a teenager, fantasises about two men having sex, now only has sex with women.

- Her sexual experiences have been with men and women
- Her fantasies involve gay men
- Her identity is based upon only having sex with women.

It is important that participants understand how all factors are incorporated into an individual's sexuality. These factors may be opposing or in line with their sexual identity. When working with LGBT clients it is important that participants keep this in mind. A person's sexual identity will not always define their sexual behaviours. A gay men or a lesbian may still be sexually active with members of the opposite sex. This is especially relevant for young people who identify as LGBT.

## Fantasies – Behaviour – Identities Activity

Related Topic: Sexuality and Sexual Behaviours

Purpose of the activity

To provide participants with a framework for understanding the sexual orientation continuum. The aim of the activity is to demonstrate how a person's sexual identity may not correspond to their sexual behaviours or their sexual fantasies – sexual identity vs sexual behaviours.

Outline of the activity

Prepare: Separate situation cards are distributed to small groups. Each card has a scenario of a person's sexual fantasies, behaviours and identities. In small groups ask participants to discuss how each individual's fantasies and behaviours relate to their sexual identity.

This activity can be conducted in a large group format as well.

Process:

- Begin the exercise after completing the training information on the sexual continuum and the FBI model of sexuality.
- Ask the group to discuss the person's sexual identity in regard to their behaviours and fantasies.
- Reassure the group that there are no right or wrong answers, nor does everyone have to have a defined sexual identity. The exercise is intended to show how an individual's sexual behaviours, identities and fantasies may vary over time and may continue to be in opposition to their sexual identities.

Time Frame            Allow 15 minutes for this exercise.

Adapted from the following

Block Out/Challenging Homophobia Education Training Manual By Kenton Penley Miller and Mahamati.  
Affirming Diversity: An Educational Resource on Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Orientations by Sally Liggins, Annemarie Wille, Shaun Hawthorne and Leigh Rampton. Not Round Here: Affirming Diversity, Challenging Homophobia: Rural Service Providers Training Manual by Kenton Penley Miller and Mahamati.

FBI Situation Cards

A man 30 years of age, in jail for 9 years. He is married but the marriage is unlikely to last his prison term. He has oral sex with men in prison and fantasises about women when he masturbates.

FBI Situation Cards

A young woman, 18 years of age, has had no sexual relationships yet. She finds herself attracted to her female lecturer at university and is worried in case she is a lesbian. She is shy when she is around men and generally socializes with women.

FBI Situation Cards

A woman, 35 years of age, and is divorced. She has had short term relationships with men since she has been divorced and frequently goes to single bars. She wants to get re-married.

FBI Situation Cards

A gay man, 33 years of age, is in a ten year relationship with his male partner. He has a crush on his female supervisor at work and fantasises about having sex with her.

FBI Situation Cards

A man, 40 years of age, has had several relationships with women. He fantasises regularly about having sex with both men and women. When he travels interstate on business he frequents gay men's saunas and has sex with men, feeling comfortable that no one he knows will find out.

FBI Situation Cards

A married man, 40 years of age. In his adolescence he had sexual experiences with both boys and girls. He has been married for 20 years and often has sex with men at beats. Because he is married he does not consider himself to be a 'pooffer'.

FBI Situation Cards

A transgender man, 25 years of age, had sex with women before he transitioned to his true gender identity as a man. He is now in a relationship another man and continues to fantasise about women.

FBI Situation Cards

A transgender woman, 45 years of age, transitioned from a man to a woman while she was already married to a woman. She continues to be in a monogamous sexual relationship with her female partner and identifies as a lesbian.

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FBI Situation Cards

A woman, 45 years of age, was in a relationship with a woman for ten years before she married her male partner. She has been married for 5 years and continues to fantasise about women.

FBI Situation Cards

A man, 32 years of age, is in a long term relationship with a woman. He fantasises about other women and watches lesbian pornography with his female partner.

FBI Situation Cards

A woman 25 years of age. Had a lot of sex with boys when she was in high school. She is in her first long term relationship with a woman, and enjoys watching gay male pornography when they are having sex.

FBI Situation Cards

A young woman, 16 years of age, has had oral sex with several boys in her high school. She has never had sex with a woman however she fantasises about being with women and identifies as a lesbian.

FBI Situation Cards

A young man, 17 years of age, has had oral sex with several boys and sexual intercourse with several girls in his high school. He identifies as straight and fantasises about having sex with both men and women.

## 4. Gender Identity

Gender identity is defined as an individual's sense of identity in relation to the categories of man or a woman. Gender is also recognised as the 'performance of gender'. Some recognise gender as the social construction of what our society values as the role and identities of being a male or a female.

When addressing gender identity it is important to differentiate between sex and gender at the beginning of the session. This is important because when explaining transgender issues the role of 'gender' and the role of 'sex' are extremely different and this is a very important point for participants to understand at the beginning of the session.

Basic definitions are:

- Gender Identity: an individual's sense of identity in relation to the categories of man and woman
- Gender: the state of being male or female in the context of cultural and social values
- Sex: the division of male and female on the basis of reproductive organs
- Trans Female: Male to Female transgender/transsexual, FTM
- Trans Male: Female to Male transgender/transsexual, MTF

### 4.1 Gender Identity Disorder

- The medical/psychiatric term used to define a person's overwhelming desire to live as the gender opposite to their birth sex.
- Transsexual is the medical/psychiatric term for an individual with gender identity disorder. Transsexuals may also be referred to as transgender.
- The medical profession considers gender identity disorder to be a psychological condition. However most transgender people consider they were born with the desire to identify as the gender opposite to their birth sex and have always identified as that gender regardless of the physical status of their body. There is debate within the transgender community as to whether GID is a biological or psychiatric condition.
- Regardless of the surgical status of a transgender person, eg whether they have already undergone sex reassignment surgery (SRS), or they have not undergone SRS or they do not intend to undergo the full extent of SRS, transgender people are still recognised, identify as and should be acknowledged as the gender identity they live and present as.

### 4.2 Sex Reassignment Surgery

- This is a medical procedure that aligns the physical/biological body with the correct gender and sex of a transgender person.
- Some transsexual people are not able to undergo sex reassignment surgery due to medical reasons and some people may choose not to undergo this procedure.
- Many FTM do not undergo the procedure of phalloplasty (construction of the penis) as the medical procedure does not have a high success rate.

### 4.3 Transgender

- This is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity falls outside the social norms of gender categories.
- Transgender includes transsexuals, intersex, cross-dressers, drag kings and drag queens.
- Some transgender people may reject the notion of gender altogether and seek to self-identify as a third gender or no gender such as third gender or gender queer.

### 4.4 Sistergirls

- Transsexuals in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are sometimes referred to as Sistergirls. However this term may also be used to describe effeminate men as well.
- Sister Girls are biological men, their sex was male, that identify as women or are effeminate.
- Sistergirls may not necessarily identify with the terminology of transsexuals or transgender, and may not undergo or be interested in SRS.
- Sistergirls are often accepted in the community as women, undertaking women's roles in the community and participating in intimate sexual relationships as the woman.
- Sistergirls' intimate relationships with men are considered heterosexual, not a same sex relationship, as sister girls are seen and accepted as a woman.
- However the roles of sistergirls and levels of acceptance in the community can vary, often related to the influence of religion in the community.

### 4.5 Recognising Gender Identity

Many transgender people recognise that they have gender identity disorder later in life. This is influenced by a range of factors including:

- the lack of awareness of gender identity disorder and transgenderism,
- a lack of social and personal acceptance of gender identity disorder,
- a prior identification with same sex attraction before recognising gender identity issues.

Recent trends are showing that gender identity disorder is being recognised and addressed at a much earlier age than previously. It is suggested that this is occurring due to the increased social awareness within the general community and medical profession.

### 4.6 The process of transitioning

Transitioning is the process of recognizing, accepting and taking steps to live and present as the individuals true gender identity. It may include:

- changing style of dress
- selection of a new name
- requests that people use the appropriate pronoun
- undertaking necessary medical care such as hormone treatment, counseling and/or surgery.

The process of transitioning is recognised as being a highly stressful period for transgender people. This process may be extremely traumatic for some transgender people as a result of experiencing:

- Disclosing and explaining their gender identity to family and friends

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- Being rejected by family, friends and partners, resulting in social isolation
- Disclosing gender identity issues to medical professionals
- Changing legal documentation to their true gender and new name
- Having to leave current employment during the process of transitioning
- Not passing in the general community as their presenting gender
- Personally experiencing transphobia and discrimination within the general community

Transgender mental health is often influenced by the large amount of discrimination and lack of acceptance of transgender people in the general community. Transgender people of experience:

- Higher levels of stress, depression, self harm and suicidal tendencies are present in the transgender community compared to the LGB community.
- This is considered to be influenced by some transgender people's inability to pass in the general community – that is many people will be able to identify that a person is transgender or in the process of transitioning from one gender to another.
- The inability to pass in the general community can mean that many transgender people do not have the choice of disclosing their transgender identity to people as they are easily recognized.
- This often results in transgender people frequently experiencing social discrimination, prejudice and violence. These experiences are considered to occur at far higher rates than lesbians, gay men and bisexuals encounter. This is due to the higher levels of stigma generally associated with transgender people and the ability for some LGB people not to be identified on the basis of their sexuality in the general community.

### 4.7 Gender vs Sexual identity

It is important that participants are able to distinguish sexuality and gender identity as two separate identities and issues.

- Many people get confused and believe that sexuality and gender identity must be inter-linked however they are not.
- Gender is about a person's sense of identity in relation to the categories of man or woman
- Sexuality is about a person's desires, emotional and sexual, towards another person.
- A person's sexuality is not influenced by their gender identity or the fact that they have transitioned from one sex to another. Rather it is based upon the gender of the people they are attracted to.
- The surgical status of a transgender person does not invalidate a person's sexual orientation. For example a pre-operative transgender man can identify as a heterosexual, when he is attracted to women, even though they have not undergone phalloplasty (construction of a penis).
- Transgender people may be heterosexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian just like anyone else.
- Some transgender people will identify as being attracted to the same sex before recognising that they actually identify as the opposite gender to their birth sex.

## **5. Myths, Values and Stereotypes**

To introduce the section on values, beliefs, myths and stereotypes ask participants to identify various other names for LGBT people. Ensure people feel comfortable to identify these names whether they are positive or negative. In identifying and exploring various names for LGBT people we are able to encourage participants to identify the meanings, values and stereotypes associated with them.

## “What is in a name?” Activity

Related Topic: Myths, Values and Stereotypes

### Purpose of the activity

To identify the positive and negative stereotypes related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender identities. The activity aims to breakdown the values and myths related to the stereotypes associated with LGBT identities.

### Outline of the activity

Explain to participants that activity is anonymous & that they need to be honest in their responses. Distribute pieces of paper for participants to write down their answers, which will be collected at the end of the exercise. [Answer sheets are provided below]

Ask participants to write down three alternative names on the paper provided for the following words:

Lesbian  
Gay  
Bisexual  
Heterosexual  
Transgender

Collect responses & redistribute them to participants. Ask participants to call out the responses they have on their piece of paper. Write responses on butchers paper.

Discuss the negative & positive natures of the responses. Identify level of offensiveness of responses. Facilitators ensure that participants have a clear understanding that individuals have different responses to different terminology. Discuss how these labels may impact on different people.

Ask participants the following key learning questions:

- How do these labels affect our practice with LGBT people?
- Ask participants, “in terms of LGBT people feeling safe in disclosing & discussing sexuality issues with workers what can we do (in terms of language/ labeling) to assist this?”.
- Ensure that discussion involves neutral language use when working with all clients addressing relationships, sexual behaviours and partners. Also ensure that participants have a clear understanding that using terminology acceptable to the person they are working with is the most appropriate to use. Once again stress the importance of individualization in working with young people.

<i>What is in a name?</i>		Write Down Three Alternative Names		
Lesbian	Gay Man	Bisexual	Transgender	Heterosexual

<i>What is in a name?</i>		Write Down Three Alternative Names		
Lesbian	Gay Man	Bisexual	Transgender	Heterosexual

<i>What is in a name?</i>		Write Down Three Alternative Names		
Lesbian	Gay Man	Bisexual	Transgender	Heterosexual

## 5.1 The use of terminology and labeling

It is important to note that 'definitions' don't always adequately encompass how individual people really feel and live their lives, or the breadth of diversity.

- How people identify is very contested, therefore it is really important to use language and words that people use for themselves (Samantha McGuffie, KYS, 2004).
- 'Homosexual' is not a term often used by lesbians or gay men.
- How people identify may be influenced by their culture, religion and comfort with their own sexuality and/or gender identity.
- For example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lesbian and gay men will often identify with their culture and community before their sexual identity.

Men who have sex with men (MSM) is a term used for men who engage in same sex sexual behaviours but do not identify or relate their sexual behaviours with their sexual identities. They consider themselves to be straight.

- For example – a married man having sex at a beat or a man having sex with other men while in prison.

Women who have sex with women also do not identify as lesbian or bisexual however they are engaging in sexual practices with other women.

These identities will not only affect how people identify with their sexual orientation but may also impact upon their own understanding of risk behaviours and what constitutes sexual behaviours.

### 1. Sexual behaviours

- MSM and WSW may not identify their sexual activities with members of the same sex as constituting sex per se.

For Example:

- Having sex with women isn't real sex.
- Receiving blow jobs for men doesn't mean I am being sexually active with other men

### 2. Sexual risk behaviours

- MSM and WSW may also not associate risk factors associated with these behaviours

For Example:

- You cannot get a sexually transmissible infection from a woman, so there is no need to use safe sex.
- Only gay men get HIV from sex with men. I am not gay and I don't have sex with gay men, the men I have sex with are straight, so I am not at risk of contracting HIV.

Young people often do not identify as lesbians or gay men until they feel comfortable, confident and safe to express this identity.

- Young women were more likely to identify as bisexual or not identify with any label related to sexual identity than young men
- Young people's reasons for choosing no label were generally because they didn't want to be defined by their sexuality or have their future options curtailed.
- Some young people chose not to have a label because they were still exploring their feelings.

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- However young people in their late teens are more likely to identify with labels relating to their sexuality.

Source – Hillier, L., Turner, A., & Mitchel, A. 2005, '*Writing themselves in again: 2nd Report on Sexuality, Health & Well-being of Same Sex Attracted Young Australians*', Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, Faculty of Health Sciences, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.

### 5.2 The impact of myths, stereotypes, values and beliefs

Use the labeling activity to lead into the next activity. Some of the same myths and stereotypes that were identified through the labeling game may be used in the barriers exercise.

The barriers activity asks participants to identify all of the myths and stereotypes they know about LGBT people. The exercise aims to make participants reflect on how these misconceptions can affect their work with LGBT clients.

The discussion regarding language and work practices may arise again throughout the barriers exercise. However the purpose of the activity is to see the physical barriers that myths and stereotypes can create for LGBT people seeking support.

## Barriers Activity

Related Topic: Myths, Values and Stereotypes

### Purpose of Activity

To highlight the barriers that myths and stereotypes can create for both LGBT people and service providers and others.

### Outline of Activity

Preparation: You will need two volunteers, chairs and the group to either stand at each end behind the volunteers or in a circle around the volunteers. You will need furniture, boxes or bags to place between the volunteers.

Ask for volunteers to sit in chairs opposite each other, a couple of metres apart. One volunteer is the 'LGBT person' and one volunteer is the 'service provider'.

Ask the participants to call out myths they know about LGBT people. Ensure that the group also uses myths and stereotypes about lesbian and gay parenting, children with LGBT parents and parents who have LGBT children.

When each myth is called out a person or the person calling out the myth places a piece of furniture in between the two volunteers sitting in the chairs. (Facilitators to ensure that the items placed in between the volunteers are large enough to form a barrier high enough to block the view of each volunteer from the other).

At the end of the exercise ask participants to look from one of the ends, behind one of the volunteers, to see what they can from each end.

### Ask the group

- What are they able to see?
- Discuss with participants how they felt when they looked over the shoulder of the 'service provider' and the 'LGBT person' and saw the barrier between them.
- What impact would this have on the service provider seeking to support or understand LGBT people?
- What impact would this have on an LGBT person seeking to access services or disclose sexuality or gender identity issues to someone?
- Discuss what influences these myths.

### Debrief, Reflection & Question Time

- Allow time for participants to discuss what they have learnt/ challenged for themselves.

(Activity adapted from De Viell, B, Forbes, T, Kincaid, A & Selkrig, M., 1998, *Are all your clients heterosexual?*, Albury Community Health Service, NSW, Australia.)

### Time Frame

Allow 20 minutes for this activity.

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Session Two Outline				
Time	Topic	Objective	Activity	Resources
5mins	Different types of discrimination	How discrimination occurs	Facilitators presentation	Slide 35
5mins	Heterosexism	Exploring heterosexism	Facilitators presentation	Slides 36 – 38
15mins	Social and internal Homophobia and transphobia	How stigma relates to sexuality and gender identity	Facilitators presentation	Slides 39 – 45
10mins	Coming Out	Incorporating LGBT identities into personal life	Facilitators presentation	Slides 46 – 50
15mins	Introduction to different forms of discrimination that affect LGBT people	Homophobia and Coming Out	Creative Visualisation	Slide 51 Visualisation story
15mins	Factors for coming out, families & children	Factors to be aware of when addressing LGBT issues	Facilitators presentation	Slides 52 - 60
25min	Addressing issues that may arise for LGBT families	Homophobia and Coming Out: Identifying social pressures for families	Working with LGBT Families Case Studies	Slide 61 Case scenarios
20min	LGBT Families	Forming families and having children	Facilitators presentation	Slides 62 - 68
Total Time	2 hours			

## 6. Different Forms of Discrimination that Affect LGBT People

To introduce the session on discrimination start by explaining the different forms of discrimination or phobias, that are related to sexuality and gender identity. Detailed explanations of homophobia, transphobia or internal homo/transphobia or heterosexism are not required at this stage.

Homophobia and heterosexism may present itself in three basic levels

- Interpersonal
- Internal
- Institutional

However all forms of discrimination are informed by the social, cultural and religious values in the community.

Interpersonal discrimination:

- Assuming someone is heterosexual (heterosexism)
- Calling someone a faggot (homophobia)
- Not being able to tell people your friend is a lesbian because you are embarrassed or scared how they will react
- Only addressing heterosexual sexual practices when addressing safe sex with clients

Internal homophobia or transphobia

- Staying in an abusive relationship because you don't think anyone else will love you because you are a transgender person
- Believing that you are a pervert for being attracted to a member of the same sex
- Accepting that the family will not invite your partner to family functions because they are ashamed of their gay son or lesbian daughter
- Not expecting to get a promotion if your work found out that you are a lesbian or gay man
- Accepting health care professionals to being rude, abrupt or dismissive because you identify as an LGB or T person

Institutional homophobia or transphobia

- Legally preventing same sex marriage or same sex couples from adopting children
- Not including same sex partners in a company's carers policy
- Allowing legal discrimination against transgender people to prevent them from working with children
- Not recognising or including same sex partners in school events of their children

### 6.1 Heterosexism

Heterosexism is the assumption that everyone is or ought to be heterosexual and that a person's gender identity will be fixed at birth in accordance to their birth sex.

Heterosexism can present in many ways.

For example:

- Language health care providers use:

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- Health providers asking about a husband or wife, assuming the partner to be of a different sex
- Intake questions that ask about marital status
- Not using gender neutral language.
- Resources only focusing upon heterosexual relationships
  - Domestic violence information only on heterosexual couples
  - Safe sex resources not addressing lesbian sexual practices as well
- Social environment:
  - Product advertising that only shows heterosexual couples
  - Women's magazines that assume all their readers are heterosexual

The affect of heterosexism can make LGBT identities, sexuality and gender identity issues invisible or non-existent.

- It can lead to reinforced feelings of guilt, difference, not being “normal” – this being internalised homophobia or transphobia in the case of a transgender person.
- It can increase expectation of negative reactions or lack of understanding about sexuality or gender identity issues.
- It can increase the fear of rejection by family, friends or service providers on the basis of your sexuality or gender identity.

### 6.2 Homophobia and transphobia

Homophobia is the irrational fear of homosexuals or anyone perceived to be homosexual. These fears are irrational because they are based upon myths and stereotypes.

Transphobia is the irrational fear of people who are transgender or are perceived to be a transgender person. These fears are irrational as they are based on myths and stereotypes.

These beliefs are influenced by our social, cultural and religious values.

- It is important that participants understand that both homophobia and transphobia are experienced on many levels by many LGBT people and have negative affects on all aspects of their lives.

Statistics relating to the experiences of homophobia for young people have been taken from *Hillier L. et al., (2005) Writing Themselves In Again: The 2nd National report on sexuality, health & well-being of same-sex attracted young people in Australia, ARCSHS, La Trobe.* This was an online survey conducted throughout Australia with young people, between the ages of 14 and 21 years, and included 1749 respondents to the survey.

### 6.3 Internal Homophobia or Transphobia

Internal homophobic or transphobic values are formed before an LGBT person realises they identify as LGBT and are values that have been informed by the negative social values and attitudes towards sexuality and gender identity. If an LGBT person is internally homo/transphobic they will accept unequal treatment because of their sexuality or gender identity. For example an LGBT person may:

- Expect and accept being disliked and receiving second class treatment
- Does not challenge the health professional who is physically rough or the person on the front desk who is rude

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- Accepts the family will not invite their partner to family gatherings
- Examples of internalised transphobia for the transgender person may be accepting the diagnosis of a mental illness, being assigned their own separate toilet or colleagues/family/health services deliberately not using their chosen name.

The Cycle of oppression can be used to explain how social beliefs can instill values of lesser self-worth and internal homophobia or internal transphobia.

- Oppression is a process beginning with false belief, prejudice
- Society then develops rules or laws which oppress that group which leads to disempowerment and then internalising the oppression
- An Example: It is a false belief that male homosexuals are paedophiles when the literature reports that 95% of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by heterosexual men. Male homosexuals are then advised not to become teachers or early childhood workers (internalise oppression).
- Consequences are that career choices are limited for the individual, school misses out on having a talented teacher, children are deprived of GLBT positive role models. If children or young adults think that they are gay, they become more isolated and are at-risk of self harming activities or suicide.

Internal homophobia and transphobia can affect LGBT people in a variety of ways:

- An individual's negative attitude to homosexuality and transgenderism may be formed before the person self identifies as LGBT, and is influenced by social values and beliefs that reinforce negative attitudes about same sex attraction and transgender people.
- Internalised homophobia and transphobia can affect the mental health of LGBT people, their ability to accept their own sexuality or gender identity and make the process of coming out more difficult.

## 7. Coming Out

Coming out is a key part of the development of lesbian and gay identity. There are many coming out models.

- Many of the models used to explain coming out assume that a person is either heterosexual or gay, whereas according to Kinsey and the Australian Study of Sexual Relationships only about 5% of the population is exclusively heterosexual or homosexual.
- Such models serve to describe where an individual is in the process, but are not helpful to predict process for the individual. The models can be helpful to assist clients to understand what they are experiencing, and to demonstrate to clients that you have an understanding of the process and are supportive and understanding.
- It is important that participants realise that coming out will be an individual experience for each person with particular concerns and considerations relevant to their individual situation.
- We have provided a four step process of what 'coming out' or accepting one's sexuality generally involves for gay and lesbian people.
- Coming out is a complex process which may, but not always, begin in adolescence and extend into adulthood.
- It is important to recognise that 'coming out' or rather disclosing one's sexuality for a lesbian or gay person is a process that continues to happen throughout an individual's life. For example in a new work environment, with new friends, when share housing or going to school or university.
- It is a process that reoccurs for gay and lesbian people when they are forming new relationships and social environments. The continuing process of disclosing or coming out in new environments is due to the general assumption that everyone will be heterosexual, and many gay and lesbian people will need to confront this assumption.

Being outed by another person, through breaches of confidentiality with service providers or gossip from friends or associates can be a real concern.

- It can be a traumatic experience for an LGBT person and/or it may be an ongoing fear that someone will out them in a particular environment eg family or workplace or swimming team etc.
- Ensure participants understand that it is important to be aware of how comfortable your client is with their sexuality, gender identity or HIV status when addressing these particular issues.
- An individual's comfort level with these issues is likely to affect whether the person has come out to other people, whether or not they are concerned about being outed in the general community, their ability to openly discuss issues related to their sexuality and the importance placed upon confidentiality within the consultation and in accessing the service.

### 7.2 Affects of coming out

It is important that participants are aware that the process of coming out is influenced and affected by other variables such as gender, ethnicity, location (eg urban vs. Rural or remote), society's attitudes and values, state or federal laws, family circumstances, religion, poverty, disability.

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- It is important to emphasize how different aspects of an individual's backgrounds, beliefs and geographical location can impact upon their ability to explore sexuality and gender identity issues and their level of acceptance of these issues.
- Geographical location, cultural backgrounds and personal/religious beliefs can impact upon the levels of internal homophobia, acceptance by family and friends of an individual's sexuality and their health outcomes as a result of these pressures.
- Some people's experience of coming out will be extremely positive and supported.
- Other people's experience of coming out will be stressful and traumatic. Many people experience isolation and rejection from families and friends.
- Part of the stress associated with coming out to people is the fear of rejection or negative reactions that are informed by a lack of acceptance, stigma and myths relating to sexuality.
- Coming out may be a difficult process due to the internal homophobia that an LGBT person has about their own sexuality. These are negative values associated with same sex attraction generally formed before the person has realised they identify as gay or lesbian.

The following creative visualization activity aims to allow participants to put themselves into the shoes of an LGBT person and the different kinds of discrimination and prejudice that is experienced related to a person's sexuality.

- Allow participants to have a snigger and have a bit of a laugh during the exercise as it may seem a little absurd to some participants and that is the aim of the activity as well.

## Creative Visualisation Activity

Related Topic: Homophobia and Coming Out

### Purpose of Activity

Raise the participant's awareness of the isolation of being an LGBT person in our society and the impact of homophobia and heterosexism.

### Outline of Activity

Read the following blurb aloud to the group. This activity only requires participants to listen.

Imagine yourself as a heterosexual in an 'all lesbian and gay' world. Your neighbours are lesbian, your colleagues are all gay and transgender, your employer is intersex and all your sisters are lesbians and your brothers are gay.

Who can you turn to? Who can you confide in to tell your secret? Every time you turn on TV, or go to the movies you see men kissing men and women kissing women. Every magazine you pick up tells you how to score with the same sex. To make matters worse, the government has just outlawed different-sex marriage, so that you will continue to be discriminated against. You over heard both your mum's agreeing that it should have happened sooner.

You have been to the public library to try and get information about heterosexuals. However there is only one public library in your town and the librarian is your Mum's best friend. You are too scared to borrow any books incase your mum found out. However you find a few books and grab them as you quickly walk past the shelf so that no one can see stopping to look at "that" section. You hide in a corner looking up every few seconds, just in case someone you know walks past. In the cafeteria at lunch time you hear people talking about heterosexuals and how disgusting they are. In the toilets someone has drawn a picture of a heterosexual hanging from a noose and someone else has written "good job" under it.

You know you have had these feelings for the opposite sex for as long as you can remember. However you don't know anyone else who feels the same way. You have heard of a couple of people who used to go to your school who are now living in the city in relationships with members of the opposite sex. However you rarely see them back on holidays. Sometimes

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when you have a deep and meaningful with your close friends, you are about to say it, but just don't know how they would react ... and they would probably think that you are in love with them. You are scared that you would lose your friends if you told them.

You have been invited to a gay wedding by someone of the opposite sex. What do you do? You go because you don't want people to think that you are weird or different. Women are dancing with other women and men are dancing with other men. Your date starts snuggling up to you and tries to kiss you. You panic and don't know what to do. What if people notice? They might throw you out or even beat you up, just for a laugh.

Some people say it is a sin to be heterosexual. You hear people at church saying this all the time. People start asking you why you aren't dating, and most of your friends are in relationships and some are having sex.

Recently you were at a local café and saw a newspaper titled "Heterosexual News: Australia's only newspaper of heterosexual expression". For the first time in your life you see something that might tell you something about yourself. You manage to get it home and read it. It talks about a café in town where young heterosexuals meet once a month. One night you get up the courage to go. You are walking down the street and you are sure everyone can tell you are a heterosexual. You stand across the road and watch people walk in, happy and laughing. They don't look weird. You are so nervous, you feel sick.

You get inside and see men and women talking together, holding hands and people are being really friendly to you, and you know that this place feels safe, feels like home, feels like you belong.

You start talking to someone and you really like them and they really like you ... so you arrange to meet them the next week, and the week after that and the week after that.

You start going out together but it is still really hard. You walk down the street holding hands with your partner. People stare, and sometimes they yell obscene things that really offend

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you. It is hard because you love your partner a lot and you don't feel like you are hurting anyone.

You start to feel that you are leading a double life. At home or around your friends who don't know about you, you are living a homosexual life and doing what is expected of you. But when you are with your partner you are free to be just you, and you feel love and pride for who you are and who your partner is.

After you have been going out with with your partner for a while, you decide to get an apartment together. You are careful to always pull the curtains at night, just in case the gay landlords see you kissing and evict you. Or they could tell your employer who you suspect would sack you.

One day your mum pays an unexpected visit to your apartment. Your partner is asleep naked in your bed and before you can do anything she realizes that you are living as lovers. She screams "You are disgusting! You make me sick!" and runs out of the apartment crying. What do you do? You want to talk to her about being heterosexual but you are scared she won't speak to you or let you see your younger brothers and sisters any more.

Time Frame Allow 10 minutes for this activity.

After the creative visualisation activity, ask the participants to discuss some of the concerns you may have about your mother finding out about your sexuality and the consequences this could have?

How could you work to address these issues with your family?

## 8. LGBT Families: Parents and Children

This session highlights some of the specific issues that may affect LGBT people when disclosing their sexuality or gender identity to their parents or when they have children. It aims to provide participants with a range of factors that may be relevant to them when working with LGBT clients, parents with LGBT children and children of LGBT people.

When discussing coming out ensure that participants recognise that every person's experience of addressing sexuality or gender identity will be individual, and reliant upon a series of factors relevant to that person's own family and background.

### 8.1 Factors that can make it difficult to come out to parents

Myths and stereotypes generally play a large role in how well parents are able to understanding their child's sexuality and gender identity issues. Below are a series of factors that may impact upon a parents understanding and acceptance of their child's sexuality and the individual's comfort level or ability to disclose this information:

- Families own values and beliefs
- Families lack of understanding of sexuality or gender identity
- Religious values
- Cultural expectations
  - To get married and have children
- Being financially dependant upon parents
- Threat of family violence
- Threat of being kicked out of home
- Threat of having children taken away from you
- Fear that children may turn against you
- Difficulties maintaining residency with children
- Myths that gay men are paedophiles

Ensure that participants are aware that the families own values and beliefs may also impact upon an LGBT person's level of self acceptance and internal homophobia.

### 8.2 Factors that may impact upon LGBT people coming out when they have children

- Difficulties maintaining residency with children
- Fear that children or family may not accept sexuality or gender identity
- Loss of relationships
- Myths that gay men are paedophiles
- Mum's and Dad's are assumed to be heterosexual

While the sexuality of a parent should not present a great issue within legal proceedings, the threat of having children being taken away, the integrity and ability of an individual's parental skills and the impact of children being raised in single sex family's present real social issues that LGBT parents still have to confront.

There is also a general expectation in the community that people with children are and will be heterosexual. Some people may have had children in previous heterosexual relationships

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before they identified as LGBT. Other people may have felt compelled to fulfill cultural expectations of getting married and having children. These factors will impact greatly upon a person's own coming out experience.

### 8.3 Factors that parents with LGBT children may have to address

Below are a series of factors that parents may have to confront when their child comes to them:

- The expectation their children would be heterosexual or have the correct gender identity
- Accepting their children's relationships and/or gender
- Blaming themselves for their child being LGBT
- A lack of knowledge and understanding of sexuality and gender identity
- Worried about family and friends finding out
  - Encountering a lack of acceptance and understanding of their own children
- Finding support and information about sexuality and gender identity issues

Ensure that participants recognize that parents of LGBT children go through a similar process of 'coming out' as LGBT people do.

1. The realization or confirmed suspicions of their child's sexuality;
2. The process of understanding what this means for their child and themselves as a parent
3. The process of accepting and incorporating this aspect of their child's identity within their own family.

For some parents it will not be an issue whatsoever however for other parents it can be devastating.

Each parent's level of understanding and accepting will be individual.

- The Parents and Friends of Lesbian and Gay (PFLAG) are a national organisation set up to support parents who have LGBT children.
- Support and acceptance of an individual's LGBT identity can have a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of LGBT people.

The *Writing Themselves in Again Report* on same sex attracted youth (SSAY) in Australia showed that more SSAY felt good about their sexuality when they were able to disclose this information and gain support from loved ones, compared to the proportion of SSAY young people who did not have any form of support. This is a very important consideration for parents who are struggling to accept their own child's sexuality or gender identity.

(Hillier L. et al., (2005) *Writing Themselves In Again: The 2nd National report on sexuality, health & well-being of same-sex attracted young people in Australia*, ARCSHS, La Trobe)

The following activity aims to encourage participants to think about some of the issues that their clients may be dealing with regarding their own sexuality, children and family relationships.

## Working with LGBT families – Case Studies

Related Topics: Homophobia and Coming Out

### Purpose of the activity

To raise awareness of some of the social pressures that may affect LGBT people with children.

### Outline of the activity

This activity may be conducted as a small group activity or with the whole group.

Ask participants to get into small groups and provide each group with a case scenario. Ask each group to discuss the scenario and the concerns that each person may have regarding:

1. The person's relationship with their children
2. The impact of stereotypes related to sexuality and gender identity
3. The person's relationship with the child's other parent and extended family.

Ask the group to share the main points that were raised in each scenario and discuss as a large group. As a whole group discuss the main issues raised within the scenarios and how they may affect how you work with LGBT clients.

### Time Frame

Allow 25 minutes for this activity

### Working with LGBT families Scenario One

Justine is 34 years old. She married Ralph when she was 22 years old. She knew that she was a lesbian however she ignored this to please her family and provide grandchildren for her parents.

She now has two children, 4 and 6 years old. Ralph started being physically abusive towards Justine three years ago. However he never touched the children. Three months ago she left Ralph and her children to start her own life and have the freedom to explore her own sexuality.

#### Discuss

How Justine's sexuality could impact upon her access to her children and her relationships with them?

How Justine's sexuality could affect her relationship with her previous partner, her parents and extended family?

### Working with LGBT families Scenario Two

Lesley and John have recently separated. John has moved in with his male partner David and wants to continue to see his two children.

Lesley is refusing to comply with the residency orders and is refusing to allow their children to spend the weekend with John. Lesley is scared that her children are at risk of being sexually abused by John's gay friends. John is not out to his parents and is worried about pursuing legal action against Lesley because his parents will find out about his sexuality.

#### Discuss

How will Lesley's attitudes impact upon John's relationship with his children?

What are the issues John will have to address in seeking to continue to see his children?

### Working with LGBT Families Scenario Three

Gary has a daughter, Lucy who is 7 years old. Lucy's mother died 5 years ago and she has been living with Gary since then. Gary has just started his first gay relationship. His parents and siblings do not know about it.

Lucy has recently been telling her friends at school that she now has two Dads. The teachers have started to question him about what is going on at home. He has avoided disclosing the status of his current relationship and that he is gay to Lucy's teachers. He is worried that his parents would try to gain residency of Lucy if they found out he is gay.

#### Discuss

What are some of the concerns Gary may have with the school finding out about his gay relationship?

Why would Gary be concerned about his family finding out that he is gay and the impact this may have on their attitudes towards him as a father?

## 9. Gay and Lesbian Parenting

The issue of gay and lesbian parenting has recently become more visible in the LGBT community. This may be a result of:

- Children from previous heterosexual relationships
- Increased access to reproductive technology
- Increased acceptance of LGBT people in the general community
- LGBT people not repressing the desire to establish a family

In the past LGBT people often had to suppress the desire to have families due to the stigma attached to homosexuality, transgenderism and the lack of accessible technology to assist reproduction. However these days the recognition of LGBT families has greatly increased.

- Events such as Pride Fair Day are now organized to be family inclusive, recognising the amount of LGBT people with children and also the earlier age LGBT people are coming out.

There is little research to date that has been compiled on the rates of LGBT parenting in Australia. However the information below provides a little insight into the rates of gay and lesbian parenting in Australia.

- A survey of 732 lesbian readers of a Sydney based magazine in 1995 found that 19% of lesbian respondents had or lived with children, and a further 14.5% planned to have children in the next 5 years.  
Lesbians on the Loose, LOTL Sydney, March 1996. Estimates are that between 20 and 30% of lesbians are mothers: see Katherine Arnup, (ed) Lesbian Parenting: Living With Pride and Prejudice, gynergy books, Charlottetown PEI, 1995; Anita Stuhmcke, "Lesbian Access to In Vitro Fertilization" (1997) 7 Australasian Gay and Lesbian Law Journal 15.
- In 1999 a similar Australian survey by Lesbians on the Loose with 386 lesbians found that 12.7% of respondents had dependent children and a further 9.1% had non-dependent children. Moreover a further 19.7% of respondents reported that they intended to become pregnant in the next 5 years. See Significant Others, "Australian Lesbians Get Used to Being Called Mum", Press Release, 30 March 2000; data also reported in Chloe Saltua, "Study Reveals a Lesbian baby Boom" The Age, 30
- A smaller Australian survey of 'homosexually active' men published in 1996 found that 19% of the men had a child or children – however these figures may be inflated by the fact that not all of the men were gay identified and some were living with a female partner. This study was of 695 men who had gay sex, but not all of them necessarily identified as gay.  
P Rodden et al, Regional Differences Among Homosexually Active Men in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong, HIV AIDS & Society Publications, Sydney, 1996.
- The Australian census figures suggest that about 20% of lesbian couples and 5% of gay male couples are raising children in Australia.  
Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005) Same Sex Couple Families, Year Book Australia, p.142.)
- Several large scale studies of gay men in the USA have suggested that around 10% of gay men are parents.

- Of the 3,255 lesbian couples who responded to the first NZ census question on same sex couples in 1996, 21% of them had children. Myra Hauschild and Pat Rosier, Get Used to It! Children of Gay and Lesbian Parents, Spinifex, Melbourne, 1999 at 14.

## 9.1 Forming Families

There are a variety of ways that LGBT families can be formed:

- Same sex couples can have guardianship if it is in the best interests of the child
- May access In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) treatment
  - Clinics can refuse treatment without it being considered discriminatory
- Previous marriages or de facto partners

However lesbian and gay people still face barriers in being able to form families in Queensland

- In Queensland same sex couples are not able to adopt or able to adopt children from overseas
  - Lesbian and gay people can adopt as a single person, very rarely takes place
  - Same sex couples can adopt in Western Australia
- Surrogacy is currently illegal in Queensland however the state government are currently reviewing this legislation and may legalise surrogacy in the future.

## 9.2 Residency of Children from previous same sex or heterosexual relationships

Residency of children, upon the relationship break down, under the Family Law Act (Cth)

- Parents from same sex relationships can make parenting orders regardless of biological or legal relationship
  - Co-mothers, co-dads and donor mums and dads can make parenting orders
- Parenting orders are made in the 'Best interests of child'
  - Best interest of the child to maintain contact with both parents
  - Sexuality is no longer considered a factor against the 'best interests of the child'

*And then the brides changed nappies: Lesbian mothers, gay fathers and the Legal recognition of our relationships with the children we raise, Final Report April 2003 Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby* [http://www.glr.org.au/pdf/major\\_reports/NappiesApril2003.pdf](http://www.glr.org.au/pdf/major_reports/NappiesApril2003.pdf)

There is increasing recognition of LGBT families within the Australian Family courts

- However whether the experience for LGBT people is positive or negative in the Family Court is still reliant upon the legal personnel present, as they must establish what is in the best interest of the child
- The fear and concerns regarding residency, relating to a parent's sexuality and/or gender identity, are still very real for LGBT people.
- This is largely related to the history of discrimination and persecution LGBT people have experienced within the legal system. This is not only based upon an LGBT person's sexuality and/or gender identity, but due to the myths associated with transgender people and homosexuality in relation to children.
- For Example:
- All gay men are pedophiles and children should not be exposed to transgender people

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- In QLD it is still acceptable for employers to refuse employment to a transgender person if it involves working with children

### 9.3 Challenges for LGBT families

Research indicates that children of gay and lesbian parents do not demonstrate any important differences in:

- Development
- Happiness
- Peer relations
- Adjustment

(Jenny Millbank, *Meeting the Parents: A Review of the Research on Lesbian and Gay families 2002*)[http://www.qrl.org.au/pdf/major\\_reports/meet\\_the\\_parents.pdf](http://www.qrl.org.au/pdf/major_reports/meet_the_parents.pdf)

However LGBT families still encounter various myths and stereotypes regarding families and what is best for children. For example children need the influence of both a mother and a father.

- LGBT families do not limit the influences of both sexes
- Many heterosexual families are made up of single parents as well.

With the break down of the traditional family unit and single parent families and blended families are becoming more frequent hopefully further acceptance will build for LGBT families.

Below are a series of factors that parents who are in same sex relationships may experience:

- Being accepted and supported by previous partners and/or extended families and community
- Children feeling different from those with heterosexual parents
  - Impact of lack of acceptance and prejudice towards LGBT families
  - Whether children will be harassed because of their parents sexuality and/or gender identity
- Lack of acceptance and support for Same sex parents
  - Recognition of non-biological parent

Working with LGBT Families Session Three Outline				
Time	Topic	Objective	Activity	Resources
10mins	Heterosexism in services	Identifying the impact on the way LGBT people access services	Facilitators presentation	Slides 71 – 73
15mins	Work practices	Heterosexism and Inclusive Service Provision: Influences on your work practices	Worksheets & group discussion	Slides 74 - 75
20mins	Heterosexism check list	Heterosexism and Inclusive Service Provision	Facilitators presentation and group discussion	Slides 76 – 80
15mins	Confidentiality	What is confidentiality	Facilitators presentation and group discussion	Slides 80 - 83
5mins	Disclosure	Discussing sexuality and gender identity issues	Facilitators presentation	Slides 84 - 85
25mins	Disclosure Client Consultations	Heterosexism and Inclusive Service Provision: Disclosure to service providers	Client and Service Provider Role Plays	Slides 86 - 90
Total time frame	1 hour and 30 minutes			

## 10. Heterosexism in the Workplace

To start this session reiterate what Heterosexism is in the workplace then ask participants to explore what factors impact upon their own work practices.

Heterosexism as well as the previous experience or expectation that service providers will react negatively towards LGBT clients, has produced similar patterns of accessing services and addressing health concerns within the LGBT community.

International and Australian research has highlighted the following patterns of accessing services that create barriers to improving LGBT health outcomes.

- Delayed access to health services compared to the general population
- Delayed access to preventative health care
- Non-disclosure of sexuality & gender identity
- Expected or experienced lack of knowledge of sexuality and gender identity by service providers
- Lack of specific LGBT health promotion

What's the Difference? *Health Issues of Major Concern to GLBTI Victorians*, 2003, Department of Human Services Victoria. [www.health.vic.gov.au/macqlh](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/macqlh)

## What internal & external factors impact on your work practices?

Related Topics: Heterosexism and Inclusive Service Provision

### Purpose of the activity

To raise awareness of the internal and external factors that impact upon our work practices and organizational policies

### Outline of the activity

Provide each participant with a worksheet and ask them to identify what internal and external factors impact upon their work practices from a personal perspective, legislation, organizational principles and cultural/social factors. *Use the suggestions below to guide the discussion as well as participants' responses.* This activity should be followed by a discussion on the practices employed to govern workers & organisations and how the impact upon participants work practices.

#### Personal

- ★ Beliefs
- ★ Values
- ★ Morals
- ★ Experience
- ★ Skill development

#### Legislation

- \* OH&S
- \* Anti-discrimination
- \* Working with Children
- \* Child Safety Act



#### Organisation Principles

- ★ Organisation Policies & Procedures
- ★ Code of Conduct
- ★ Confidentiality
- ★ Code of ethics
- ★ Mission/ Value statement
- ★ Duty of Care

#### Cultural/ Societal

- \* Political environment
- \* Cultural diversity
- \* Socio-cultural changes

What internal & external factors impact on your work practices?

Please identify how factors relevant to the four headings below impact upon your work practices.

Personal

- ◇
- ◇
- ◇
- ◇
- ◇
- ◇

Legislation

- ◇
- ◇
- ◇
- ◇
- ◇
- ◇



Organisation Principles

- ◇
- ◇
- ◇
- ◇
- ◇

Cultural/ Societal

- ◇
- ◇
- ◇
- ◇
- ◇

## Heterosexism Checklist Activity

Related Topics: Heterosexism and Inclusive Service Provision

Purpose of the activity

Raise awareness of the existence of heterosexism in participant's services and work practices

Outline of the activity

After a discussion on work practices ask participants to complete the Heterosexism Checklist based on their own workplace. Go through this with them on the Power points.

- You have special programs, as needed, for LGBT people
- LGBT individuals are listed as your clients in brochures
- LGBT issues and policy are covered in staff orientation & volunteer training
- Periodic training on LGBT issues is part of diversity training programs
- When suicide, alcohol & drug abuse, or sexual risk behaviours are addressed in services provided or policy, the potential connection to sexual orientation is included
- Homophobic or heterosexist comments are not tolerated among staff or clients
- If I were an LGBT client or staff member, I would choose to be open about my sexual orientation
- There have been openly LGBT people on staff
- Forms for clients & family completion take into account diversity of households, including homes with partners of the same gender
- Neutral language is used to describe relationships eg 'partner' instead of boy/girl friend or wife/husband
- Contacts & referrals are made within the LGBT community
- LGBT reading material is available to clients in waiting areas

Discuss issues that arise & discuss the key points of the suggestions raised. Provide participants with list of strategies to make workplace more LGBT friendly (below).

(Adapted from 'Are all your clients Heterosexual?' Training package)

## Strategies and Solutions for supporting LGBT People Accessing Services

### Service Environments

- ☆ Display visual materials that reflect a commitment to supporting LGBT people
  - ★ For Example: Display LGBT friendly symbols such as stickers, rainbow flag, anti-discrimination or anti-homophobia posters
- ☆ Display notices for LGBT community activities & support services on your notice board
- ☆ Provide resources on sexual diversity & gender identity in your workplace
- ☆ Challenge homophobic or transphobic comments from colleagues or other clients

### Client Consultations

- ☆ Use inclusive language that demonstrates you are open to people exploring or identifying that they are in same-sex relationships
  - ★ For Example: Do you have a partner? *rather* than assuming they are heterosexual
- ☆ Incorporate definitions of 'family' that include same sex partners
  - ★ For example: Significant others, relatives by blood, same sex partners, spouses
- ☆ Be aware of the generalizations that you make!

### Staff and organizational structure

- ☆ Use inclusive language in organizational policy, procedures and client related forms that does not assume heterosexuality or exclude transgender people
- ☆ Ensure lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual issues and policy are covered in staff orientation and volunteer training
- ☆ Provide periodic training on LGBT issues to all staff, including reception staff
- ☆ Include LGBT in any resource materials developed that name other populations
- ☆ Include the potential connection to sexuality and gender identity in the services and/or policies relating to suicide, alcohol or drug abuse, or sexual risk behaviours

### Community contacts

- ☆ Develop a list of doctors, counsellors, services and websites that are LGBT friendly
- ☆ Find out what LGBT support or social groups exist in your community, make a positive connection to expand a network of support for service providers and LGBT people
- ☆ Seek information to be able to respond to homophobia or transphobia with education

(Adapted from : 2010 Gay and Lesbian Youth Services, Glebe, NSW and Action Research Training Brisbane June 2002, Vassi Bouzalas (VIC Community Health) & Michelle Parker (2010))

## 10.2 Confidentiality and Disclosure

To introduce this section ask participants to discuss:

- What do you think confidentiality means?
- What policies are in place in your work place around confidentiality?
- How are these policies governed? Is it the individual's responsibility or the organizations/ management?

Discuss with the participants their responses to these questions. If any areas of legislation, ethical practice or breaches identified then ensure these are pointed out. Discuss the difference between individual confidentiality codes & organizational confidentiality codes.

- What impact can each of these have on work practice & disclosure by LGBT people?

Concerns relating to confidentiality are often higher for LGBT people who live in regional areas. This is due to the nature of small towns, the number of family and friends that often work in services and pose a threat to breaching confidentiality. Ask participants to discuss the following issues:

- What influences the importance of confidentiality for LGBT clients?
- How can services make clients feel supported and safe to disclose LGBT issues?

Ensure that group identify the following issues in relation to the importance of confidentiality:

- Levels of homophobia and transphobia in the general community
- Whether or not a client is out to family and friends
- Concerns relating to being outed
- Internal homophobia or transphobia
- Whether or not a client may have family or friends working in the service
- If there are LGBT friendly resources on display in the service
- If there are visible diversity and confidentiality statements in the service

Common impacts of breach of confidentiality by service providers

- Premature homelessness
- Breakdown of family relationships
- Loss of support structures – family, friends
- Fear of accessing services
- Reduced trust in service providers
- Increased drug & alcohol use
- Increased risk of suicide and self harm
- Risk of physical, verbal & emotional violence.

Common impacts of breach of confidentiality by friends/ family

- Loss of friends/ support structures
- Disclosure of sexuality to family – premature risk of homelessness
- Risk of physical, verbal & emotional abuse
- Premature disconnection with school/ education
- Increased use of drug & alcohol
- Increased risk of suicide and self harm

## 10.2 Disclosure to service providers

Disclosure of sexuality and/or gender identity is essential for LGBT people to build an honest sense of self and create greater rapport and support within a person-centered service provision framework.

- Non-disclosure can lead to a range of mental health problems, including social isolation & disconnection from a sense of community belonging.
- Fear & anxiety can occur from not disclosing sexuality to at least some people. Generally young people will disclose to their friends before they disclose to professionals. (Hiller *et al*, 2005)

Many LGBT people do not disclose their sexuality or gender identity issues to service providers.

- It may not always be safe for LGBT young people to disclose these issues to everyone they know and service providers should be aware of the kind of support LGBT clients have when exploring or questioning their sexuality and gender identity.
- While it is important for LGBT people to disclose these issues to family and friends when they are ready to it is important that they are realistic about the potential consequences this may have on their living arrangements, family dynamics and social network.
- However support from both peers and service providers is a crucial element in the health and wellbeing of LGBT people.

It is important to ensure participants understand that individuals will disclose in different ways and to differing levels. For Example:

- Some people may disclose their sexuality family, extended family friends and work colleagues and feel perfectly comfortable with this level of disclosure
- Some people may disclose to immediate family and close friends and be comfortable with that level of disclosure
- Other people may be adamant not to disclose to work colleagues or their extended family
- Other people may only be comfortable with their close friends knowing about

However it is essential that participants understand that disclosure on some level is extremely important for an LGBT person's sense of self and self-acceptance. If these issues are never disclosed it can greatly impact on the health and wellbeing of an LGBT person.

The following role plays aim to exemplify some of the negative and positive strategies service providers may use when working with LGBT clients.

## Disclosing to Service Providers Role Play Scenarios Activity

Related topics: Heterosexism and Inclusive Service Provision

### Purpose of the activity

Raise awareness of the positive and negative responses to LGBT people disclosing sexuality and gender identity issues with service providers. The exercise will highlight how many of the stereotypes can shape the way service providers work with LGBT clients.

### Process for the activity

Ask for 6 volunteers from the participants. Break the volunteers into three groups of two. Each group will have a role card for a service provider and an LGBT person role. Provide the volunteers with their role information and have each group to work present their role play in front of the whole group.

At the end of each role play ask participants to identify five positive aspects of the service provider's response and five negative aspects. Ask participants to call out their answers and put them up on the white board or butchers paper.

At the end of each role play discuss the negative and positive points identified by participants. During the discussion facilitators to ensure that the following issues are identified and discussed:

- The importance of normalizing sexuality & normalising strategies
- Allow clients to speak in their own time – do not presume you know their story.
- Not making everything about being gay – they are young people & will have young people issues. Negative impact of doing this.
- Impact on 'outing' to friends/ family and support people
- 'Outing euphoria' – Young people may feel they can come out to everyone because they have received a positive response from you. The importance of working through the 'coming out' questions before taking that step.
- The impact of having an underlying assumption that being gay will cause the young person to have problems in their future. Yes it is important to be realistic about the consequences of coming out – particularly in a small rural community—but implying that there will be 'problems' from this can result in a negative self-perspective.
- Automatically focusing on sexual practices & safe sex. All young people need safe sex information, young LGBT people are not an exception to the rule, however by focusing on sexual practice it assumes that all gay people are promiscuous and are only defined by sex.

### Role Play 1: Service Provider

A young man comes to speak to you about having sex for the first time. During the role play you will constantly interrupt the person when they are talking. You are very focused on the sexual activity of the person.

You assume that he has been having sex with women. However he discloses he has been having sex with boys and thinks he is gay.

You are visually uncomfortable with this. You focus on the safe sex implications for having sex with men and that there is a risk of contracting HIV when you sleep with men.

You imply that having sex with men is probably just a phase, as many young people explore their sexuality at his age.

You advise him not to say that he is 'gay' until he is really sure of it because you can get harassed by people if they find out that you are homosexual.

### Role Play 1: Young Gay Man

You tell the worker that you have just started to have sex with men and have known that you were gay for some time.

You tell them that used condoms and have already got information about safe sex with other men.

You *really* want to talk about the fears you have about being 'outed' to your friends and family because you have heard about other gay men who have been bashed because of their sexuality.

You don't know any other gay people living in your home town. You don't know anyone else you can talk to about this. While you don't want your friends to know just yet you are really confident about your sexuality.

### Role Play 2: Service Provider

A young woman discloses to you that she is confused about her sexuality and thinks that she may be attracted to other women. You are very comfortable with this disclosure and discuss the issue with her.

You tell her that you think it is great that she is able to be open about being a lesbian and should not be concerned about what other people think. You assure her that she has the same rights as everyone else these days.

When she discusses her concerns about her sexuality you tell her that there really isn't much to worry about. You are confident that her parents will still love her and

She is concerned about the fact that her parents are religious. You tell her that lots of church groups are now supportive of same sex relationships and that it is quite outdated for people to be using religion as an excuse to be discriminatory.

### Role Play 2: Young Person

You disclose to the worker that you think you are starting to question your sexuality.

You tell the worker that you have been feeling really confused lately and think you might be attracted to the same sex. However you would not consider yourself a lesbian and you are not comfortable using such labels.

You tell the worker that you don't know what that means. You don't feel like you can talk to anyone because they will think that you are a lesbian and you are really not sure if you are. You don't want to be known as a lesbian and you don't want anyone to find out about how you feel.

Your family is also very religious & you are fearful of the consequences of being same sex attracted within your religion. You don't think that your family or the church community would accept it and you don't want to lose them.

### Role Play 3: Service Provider

You have been seeing a client for a couple of months. Today she discloses that she believes she has been born into the wrong body and thinks that she should be male.

When she tells you that she has been going out to pubs and clubs dressed as a man you refer to her identity as a 'cross-dresser'. You also refer to her as a transvestite.

You know she is currently in a lesbian relationship and she been struggling to accept her sexuality. You ask her whether she wants to act as a man to avoid being a lesbian and avoid having to accept her sexuality.

You also know that she was sexually abused by a man when she was younger. She still finds it difficult to feel safe and worries about being abused again. You ask her if wanting to be a man is a way to overcome her fear of being sexually abused again.

You tell her that her self harm is more likely to be related to being severely depressed and you think that she should start to go on anti-depressants.

### Role Play 3: Young Person

You have been seeing a counsellor regarding several incidents of sexual abuse in your childhood. During your consultations you have disclosed that you are not comfortable being in a relationship with a woman and find it difficult to accept being a lesbian.

Today you disclose to the counselor that you believe you are transgender, female to male. You tell them that you have been dressing as a male on weekends & going to different places to see how it feels to you. And you it makes sense to you.

You tell the counsellor that you think that you have been struggling with your lesbian identity because you think that you are meant to be a man. This has made identifying as a lesbian really hard because you aren't.

You have had a history of self harming behaviours and you think that this has to do with being frustrated and confused about your body and gender. And that it is starting to make sense to you now.

Working with LGBT Families Session Four Outline				
Time	Topic	Objective	Activity	Resources
15mins	Barriers and strategies to assist LGBT clients access services	Awareness of strategies	Facilitators presentation	Slides 93 - 97
30mins	Accessing services	Heterosexism and Inclusive Service Provision: Access and Disclosure	Case studies	Slide 98
10mins	Information and referrals	Providing information and referring to experienced workers	Facilitators presentation	Slides 99 - 100
10mins	Evaluation of the training day			
Total time	1 hour and ten minutes			

## 11. Factors that make it Difficult for LGBT Clients to Access Services

The purpose of the final session of the workshop is to recap some of the barriers that LGBT people may experience when accessing services. The majority of information in this session will have previously been addressed during the workshop. If the workshop is running behind time this session enables the facilitators to run through the information briefly. This will enable the workshop to be completed on time and prevent the participants from missing any new information.

The power points should provide a summary of issues that have arisen during the workshop.

Factors that make it difficult for LGBT clients to access services:

- The client's degree of self-acceptance and comfort with sexual or gender identity
- Expectations or experiences of discrimination/negative attitudes from service providers
- Social isolation as a result of sexuality or gender identity
- The levels of homophobia or transphobia in the community
- Fear of breaches of confidentiality from service providers
- Fear of being '*outed*' in the community

The following strategies aim to create inclusive service provision to LGBT clients and create a safe and welcoming service environment.

Strategies to improve access to services:

- Ensure service environment is visibly inclusive of LGBT clients
  - Provide visible diversity statements that include LGBT clients
  - Provide LGBT resources in the service
  - Supply LGBT newspapers and press
- Provide visible confidentiality statements in service environment
  - Reiterate confidentiality policy in consultations
- Use gender neutral language that does not assume clients are heterosexual
  - Client in-take forms, consultations when discussing partners, relationships and sexual histories
- Advertise in the LGBT press or local networks
- Have information on LGBT social and support groups
  - Local groups, phone services, internet sites

The following activity will provide participants with an opportunity to address and discuss mechanisms that service providers can use to support LGBT clients disclosing information about their sexuality and gender identity.

## Accessing Services Activity

Related Topic: Heterosexism and Inclusive Service provision

### Purpose of the activity

Highlight some of the barriers that may prevent LGBT people accessing services and addressing sexuality and/or gender identity issues.

### Outline of the activity

Split the group into small groups and distribute one of the case studies to each group. This activity can also be done in a large group. Ensure each group has pens and paper to write down answers. Use a white board or butchers paper to collate each group's responses at the end of the activity.

Give each small group a case scenario. Ask the group to discuss what some of the client's concerns may be about accessing the service and disclosing this information. Also ask participants to write down how both the service and the individual service provider could address some of these concerns.

Allow the groups to discuss these scenarios for 15 minutes and then share their answers with the group.

Write down the clients concerns and service providers' strategies to reduce these barriers when working with LGBT clients and discuss how effective these strategies could be in creating inclusive service provision to LGBT clients. Ensure participants realize these strategies need to be used with all clients as we don't always know if the clients we are working with identify as LGBT.

### Time Frame

Allow 30 minutes for this exercise

## **Facilitators Cheat Sheet**

In all scenarios we are looking at being able to provide inclusive service environments and work practices. These mechanisms are aiming to make it easier for LGBT clients to disclose sexuality and gender identity issues to service providers.

Concerns that clients may have accessing services and disclosing this information include:

- Encountering negative reactions about their sexuality, gender identity and relationships
- Having to rebut assumptions that they are heterosexual
- Breaches of confidentiality resulting in:
  - Losing friends and family relationships
  - Being kicked out of home
  - Loss of employment
- Lack of knowledge of sexuality or gender identity issues
  - Confronting myths and stereotypes about LGBT people and relationships
  - Being judged on negative stereotypes and myths about LGBT people
  - Having to break down stereotypes about LGBT people
- Clients may have to address their own homophobia or transphobia when speaking about these issues
- Service providers may not have worked with LGBT clients before

Mechanisms that the service could use to address some of the concerns clients may have about accessing the service:

- Have a visible confidentiality statement
- Have a visible diversity statement that includes sexuality and gender identity
- Provide an option in their client intake forms for same sex relationships and transgender people
- Provide visible LGBT resources in the waiting rooms
- Advertise in the LGBT press
- All staff to address transgender clients as their presenting gender

Mechanisms that service providers could use to address some of the concerns clients may have about disclosing sexuality and gender identity issues:

- Use gender neutral language when talking about sexual partners and relationships with all clients
- Do not to assume that any client is heterosexual
- Find out how comfortable clients are with their own sexuality and gender identity
- Find out if there are any cultural or religious beliefs that impact upon a clients acceptance and comfort levels
- Reassure clients that you have a duty of confidentiality and make them aware that you understand some of their potential concerns regarding confidentiality
- Have information resources on LGBT issues
- Have links with LGBT support services and information
- If clients are requesting information on issues that you are not familiar with make an effort to find out about your client's concerns
- If the service provider does not understand any of the issues the client is raising ask clients to clarify or explain what they are talking about
- Be aware that social support is very important for people struggling to accept sexuality and gender identity issues

## Accessing Services Scenario One

Martha and Frank have been aware that their son Karmal is gay for the last six years. Karmal came out when he was 16 years old. When he came out Frank, beat Karmal up and told him to leave the house. He lived with friends to finish high school and moved to another city to go to university. Karmal's extended family do not know he is gay, and nor do any of Martha or Frank's friends. Karmal has been attempting to reconcile his relationship with his parents over the last couple of years and has visited them, but rarely discussed his sexuality.

Karmal is back at his parents place for a three week holiday. He has brought his parents into your service to talk about their relationship and his sexuality. He wants to start to build an adult relationship with them but he knows his sexuality is still a big issue for both of them.

### Discuss:

1. The concerns Martha and Frank's may have accessing the service in their home town;
2. Karmal's concerns about accessing a service to talk about his sexuality and its impact on his relationship with his parents in their home town;
3. The strategies the service could implement in the service environment reduce some of these concerns when they enter the service;
4. The strategies could the service provider use to reduce some of the concerns about discussing sexuality issues during the client consultation.

## Accessing Services Scenario Two

Lilly is transitioning from a man to a woman. She has just moved from Charleville where she was living as a man and in a relationship with another man. None of her friends know that she is transitioning to live as a woman. She has not spoken to her family in three years and does not know anyone living in the area. She now lives on a full time basis as a woman and is expecting to undergo sex reassignment surgery in the next 18 months.

She has come to you to talk about her desire to tell her family about her transition and wants them to accept her as a woman.

She first spoke to a counsellor four years ago about wanting to become a woman. The counselor did not believe her and thought she just did not want to be in a gay relationship. In the end she was told that she would have to find another counsellor anyway because they did not know anything about those 'type' of people.

### Discuss

1. The concerns Lilly may have accessing the service;
2. The concerns Lilly may have disclosing this information to the counsellor;
3. The strategies the service could implement within its service environment to reduce some of Lilly's concerns;
4. The strategies the counsellor could use during the client consultation to reduce some of Lilly's concerns.

## Accessing Services Scenario Three

Louise and Sasha have a seven year old son, Isaac. Isaac is being teased at school for not having a dad, although he is not being teased about having two mums. However Louise is aware that a couple of the parents in his class do not approve of her relationship with Sasha and them as parents.

Last year the mother of one of Isaac's friends told Louise that her son could not play at her house. The mother did not want her child around lesbians and expressed concerns about the safety of her child in the company of her gay male friends. Louise agreed to let Isaac play at his friend's house instead. The children never found out about this.

Louise and Sasha both have very supportive and accepting extended families. They are both quite open about their relationship, their sexuality and are visibly identifiable as lesbians in the general community.

They have come to discuss how they can support Isaac if he starts to get teased for having lesbian parents. They want to know how they can best support their son deal with the prejudice and assure him that it is ok.

#### Discuss

1. The concerns Louise and Sasha may have accessing this service;
2. The concerns Louise and Sasha may have about disclosing this information with the service provider;
3. The strategies the service could implement in their service environment to reduce some of their concerns;
4. The strategies the service provider could use during the client consultation to reduce some of their concerns.

## Accessing Services Scenario Four

Sally's daughter, Mary, 22 years old, is a lesbian. Sally has known about her daughter's sexuality for the last six months. Sally is worried that her daughter has chosen to be a lesbian because she had several abusive male partners when Mary was a child, and Mary was also sexually abused by a next door neighbour when she was four. She is also worried how her family will react if they find out Mary is a lesbian. Sally's parents are quite religious and are likely to blame her for her daughter's sexuality.

Sally loves her daughter and wants to support her but is feeling extremely guilty. She thinks that if she had been a better mother Mary wouldn't be a lesbian. She has never spoken to anyone about her daughter's sexuality. She doesn't know anyone else with gay or lesbian children. And she isn't ready for her friends or family to find out.

### Discuss

1. The concerns Sally may have accessing the service;
2. The concerns Sally may have disclosing this information to the service provider;
3. The strategies the service could implement in the service environment to reduce some of Sally's concerns;
4. The strategies the service provider could use during the consultation to reduce some of Sally's concerns.

## Accessing Services

Raising Awareness of mechanisms to support LGBT clients accessing services

From each case scenario write down the following points

What may be the concerns that this person or people may have accessing the service and disclosing their sexuality or gender identity?

- ★
- ★
- ★
- ★
- ★

What strategies could the service use in its service environment and organizational policies to support LGBT clients accessing the service?

- ★
- ★
- ★
- ★
- ★

What strategies could the service provider use to support clients disclosing and discussing information relating to their sexuality/gender identity?

- ★
- ★
- ★
- ★
- ★

## **11.1 Information and Referrals**

In regional areas there may not be specific services that support LGBT people. This is why it is important that mainstream services have an awareness of sexuality and gender identity issues, access to LGBT resources, and are aware of internet based resources. However always check to see if there are any local support groups in your region. Peer based support is important to normalize sexuality and gender identity, break down internal homophobia or transphobia and social isolation. Social support has a major impact upon general health and wellbeing.

- Addressing of internal homophobia
- Normalising of sexuality
- Reduction of isolation
- Connection with support structures
- Support for a positive self image.

Discuss the available referral pathways for participants who want further information to provide to clients on sexuality and gender identity, more in-depth support around these issues than participants are able to available or ways in which young people are able to make contact with other LGBT peers.

When presenting this information in regional areas there may be limited opportunities to access other services or social support groups. In this circumstance information on the internet based resources, websites and online communities should be emphasized as other viable options for LGBT clients.

- Identify that web-based referral points & resources are available to all participants.
- Discuss any concerns that participants have regarding these.
- Identify that the participants have gained extra knowledge & skills from the training, & while it does not make them experts it provides some extra tools for them to employ.
- Discuss the possibility of the participants forming an e-based support network for them to bounce ideas/ strategies off.
- Provide participants with the resources/ referral sheet.

QAHC has provided the QLD LGBT Contact Fact Sheet and the What We Don't See Fact sheet with information on resources and websites.

## Notes for Facilitating Sexuality and Gender Training

These notes have been adapted from Not Round Here by Kenton Miller and Mahamati.

Adult education often raises the possibility of the trainer being called into question over their stance on the issues. Sexuality and Gender Training could be the most challenging you have ever run as a trainer. For some, you may never feel as personally vilified and attacked by your participants; for others, it may compound the attacks that you have already endured in your life, while lessening your capacity to personally defend yourself.

For some participants, this training will not be voluntary. Some participants may feel that their cores beliefs are being challenged. The reality is that for many people their beliefs and behaviours will be challenged by participation in this training.

This training has to be handled thoughtfully; the participants should be treated with respect – even if they seem to be offering none themselves. It's only when an atmosphere of safety has been created that allows participants to speak of these issues that they can be fully addressed.

Hearing the bitter and hateful things people have to say about LGBT people can have a distressing impact on the trainer and other participants. No matter how prepared you feel, you may find yourself deflated after such a session.

As a trainer it is important for you to sort through some of these feelings in advance. If you're lucky, you'll have a supportive workplace that will allow for a pre briefing as well as de-briefing. If not, warn a couple of supportive friends what you're going to do and suggest you may need some quality time afterwards.

*When participants ask 'Why this subject?'*

Your organisation, or you as an employee, need to have good service provision for all and you need to be able to provide a safe place for all clients of the service as well as colleagues. That said, work in this field can feel for some organisations like an *overfocus*. Why do we need to go on and on about 'heterosexual dominance'? There are equally, if not more important things aren't there? Like racism, class issues, what else? What about the huge number of other issues?

Participants could be reminded that their organisation has a commitment to provide services regardless of their sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity, etc. Be clear that this training is to assist the participants to improve their service provision to LGBT people as until now it has been less than acceptable.

*Heterosexuals as trainers*

A point for major consideration is that of disclosure of the trainer's sexuality. Some of the feedback that heterosexual trainers may face include:

- heterosexuals will never fully understand how it is to be LGBT facing the issues
- heterosexuals will never care enough about LGBT to support us anyway.

## Working with LGBT Families Training Resource

While it is important to have good LGBT peers or mentors, it is also important to actively demonstrate that there are heterosexual allies. To have a heterosexual, able to demonstrate good understanding of the issues, running a workshop on gender and sexuality issues provides good role modelling. In addition it is sometimes a necessity, particularly in an area where an LGBT person may not feel safe, to provide the training.

As a heterosexual trainer you may well hear the unedited phobic and heterosexist statements that participants that an LGBT trainer may not. See the section on Getting your Buttons Pushed for further discussion of this.

### *Gay, bisexual, lesbian and transgender trainers*

There are many thoughts around disclosing one's sexuality or gender identity in the context of a challenging homophobia workshop. For most it would be considered a matter of personal choice. There is no right answer, although there is considerable debate. In the end it is the choice of the trainer and must be what they feel most comfortable with in the circumstances.

The trainer should be mindful that the training doesn't cross the line from providing good information to becoming an opportunity for the trainer to get therapy time from the participants.

The assumption of most people entering the room is that you, as the facilitator, are gay or lesbian anyway - at least. You may well be transgender in some eyes – and bisexuality will be suspected at a minimum. At best, some will believe you are more pro-LGBT than they are and are probably out to prove that they are ignorant and hateful. One consideration is that participants may waste valuable workshop time trying to guess your sexuality or gender identity if you do not disclose.

Some participants will be incredibly defensive (ie. 'I'm not homophobic') while others may well be defiant, fearful that you have some magic way of telling what they're *really* like. Establish early on that you're not about judging people.

### *Getting your buttons pushed*

Although many will assume that you are lesbian or gay when they see you facilitating these groups, such thoughts do not guarantee any thoughtfulness around how you may react, as facilitator, to comments the participants make.

The opposite, almost – many people seize the opportunity of being in a group as a chance to 'be heard'. You may be, in their mind, the first gay or lesbian person they've had a chance to talk to.

Participants may feel this is an opportunity for them to share their thoughts and opinions about LGBT people. Some of these will be easier to hear than others. It may well not be the first time that you have heard opinions like this, but it may be the first time that you have to model appropriate responses. Overt homophobic comments may be easier to manage than

## **Working with LGBT Families Training Resource**

the covert homophobia that some participants indulge in – this can be especially hard if you are the only person in the room who is recognising it as such.

To avoid feeling as if you are too sensitive or imagining things, debriefing before and after training sessions is crucial. It also helps to be working in pairs and to plan how you will manage this in a group situation. This could include some simple strategies such as developing a mantra to say in hard moments (this can vary from 'I am proud of my sexuality' through to 'I must not shout at the participants'). For others, briefly excusing yourself to take a quick five-minute walk to regain self-control can save hours of stress.

It is worth reminding ourselves that it's not really us that we're doing the training for – it's the other LGBT people who may one day have this participant as their service provider. If it means that one more person gets appropriate service then it was worthwhile.

### **Keeping Participants Safe**

As a trainer you have a responsibility to provide and maintain a safe training environment for all your participants, LGBT and out, LGBT and not out, questioning and heterosexual. There are of course special considerations for some groups of participants and managing phobic and heterosexist input as it arises will role model appropriate behaviour.

### **Group etiquette**

For a 1-2 day workshop we suggest that the trainer/s take the time to develop the group rules with the participants and that these be written on butchers paper and displayed for the duration of the training. It is important to get group consensus. Ground rules may include:

- One person speak at a time
- Mobile phones off or on silent (this rule will cause the most discussion!)
- Focus on the topic not the person
- Be on time for sessions
- What's said in the group stays in the group
- Accept responsibility for own behaviour
- Disagree agreeably
- Have fun
- Keep hands and feet to yourself (by Caravonica Pre-School)
- Give others a chance to speak

For a short workshop, half a day or less, it is more time efficient to be more directive about the rules. It may be easiest to bring your own list and present those to the group for agreement.