

COMPONENTS OF AN LGBTQ-FRIENDLY AGENCY

Organizational policies and culture

- Solicit top management's commitment to making your services anti-racist and LGBTQ-friendly for clients, employees, and volunteers.
- Include sexual orientation and gender identity in your agency's non-discrimination and sexual harassment policies.
- Recognize that a non-discrimination clause is not enough.
- Establish a zero-tolerance policy toward homophobic and transphobic comments. Recognize that such attitudes in the agency support the use of homophobic and transphobic tactics by abusers/offenders.
- Create a culture in which staff can safely come out; celebrate them when they do.
- Celebrate significant events in LGBTQ staff members' relationships.
- Develop working relationships with LGBTQ service providers in your area and with organizations specifically serving bisexuals and transgender people.

Let Clients know that your agency is committed to working with all LGBTQ people

- Include LGBTQ perspective related to DV/SA in all agency publications, and make sure all print materials for clients explicitly include LGBTQ issues.
- Use inclusive language in speech and on agency forms. (Print materials on LGBTQ issues must address the entire LGBTQ community, talk about gender identity as well as sexual orientation, and address LGBTQ people of color as well as white people.)
- Develop specific materials for LGBTQ clients.
- Put up multicultural posters aimed at LGBTQ clients.
- Develop support groups for LGBTQ victims.

Ensure that staff and volunteers have opportunities to learn about LGBTQ issues, and the attitudes, knowledge and abilities to serve LGBTQ clients

- Provide anti-homophobia/transphobia and heterosexism training for all staff and volunteers.
- Train all staff and volunteers on LGBTQ DV/SA. Don't assume that learning about lesbian DV/SA is sufficient.
- Ensure that LGBTQ programs continue by having various staff involved in them; don't refer all LGBTQ clients to the one known LGBTQ staff person.
- Provide opportunities for all staff to attend LGBTQ-related conferences.
- Provide opportunities for LGBTQ staff, especially staff of color to present at conferences and to represent the agency publicly.
- Inform staff of LGBTQ-affirmative resources in your community.
- Educate staff on issues facing specific groups of LGBTQ people; recognize that one size does not fit all.

Ensure that staff and volunteers reflect the community the agency serves

- Recruit LGBTQ staff, but don't make them totally responsible for LGBTQ programs.
- Encourage LGBTQ people, especially survivors, to take leadership roles.
- Develop strategies for preventing LGBTQ abusers/victimizers from gaining admission to shelters.
- Develop relationships with organizations serving the LGBTQ community.
- Develop strategies for better serving LGBTQ victims of color.
 - Educate white staff on how racism keeps people of color from seeking services.
 - Involve LGBTQ communities of color in making **policy**, not just providing services.
 - Provide LGBTQ-affirming interpreters for client who do not speak English.
 - Provide culturally and linguistically sensitive support groups.
 - Do outreach through community organization of African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, or other ethnic groups in your area, in order to reach LGBTQ people who do not identify with or participate in the LGBT community.

Develop appropriate services for LGBTQ people

- Organize support groups for LGBTQ victims.
- LGBTQ-affirming shelter.
- Develop shelter options for male and trans victims.

Many of the above points can be used to evaluate whether an agency is likely to be a safe and helpful referral for your LGBTQ clients.