Administration of LGBTQ+-Affirming Prevention Organizations

Adapted from "A Provider's Introduction to Substance Abuse for YMSM and LGBT Individuals"

Second Edition

Learning Objectives

By the end of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- *Identify the need for LGBTQ+-affirmative policies and procedures in an organization's structure.*

- *Understand the need for alliance-building and strategies for doing so effectively.*

- *Consider perspectives shared by young LGBTQ+-identified adults about their positive and challenging interactions with prevention organizations.*

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Opening Polls

- How long have you been working in prevention?
- How inclusive and welcoming is your prevention program or coalition of LGBTQ+ individuals?

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Creating a LGBTQ+ –Affirming Prevention Organization

Why LGBTQ+-Affirming Organizations?

- Welcoming and respectful environments are essential

- Reducing stigma and discrimination decreases risk of HIV infection, depression, suicidal behavior, smoking, and substance use disorders
  - *Heightened risk comes from stigma and discrimination faced due to sexual orientation and/or gender identity, not from anything inherent about having an LGBTQ+ identity.*

- Participating in prevention programs can mitigate some risk factors and bolster protective factors

(Grant, et al., 2011; Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Graham, 2011; Legal, 2010; Moe, 2015)

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Aligning Prevention Values

- **Social Justice and Equity:** Creating an inclusive environment helps alleviate health disparities and inequities faced by LGBTQ+ individuals

- **Program Sustainability and Capacity Building:** LGBTQ+-affirming organizations are the preferred providers of choice for LGBTQ+ participants and staff.

- **Ethics:** Our non-discrimination ethics principle charges us with the responsibility of providing prevention services free of prejudice and bias, as well as confronting discrimination when we see it occurring in our work.
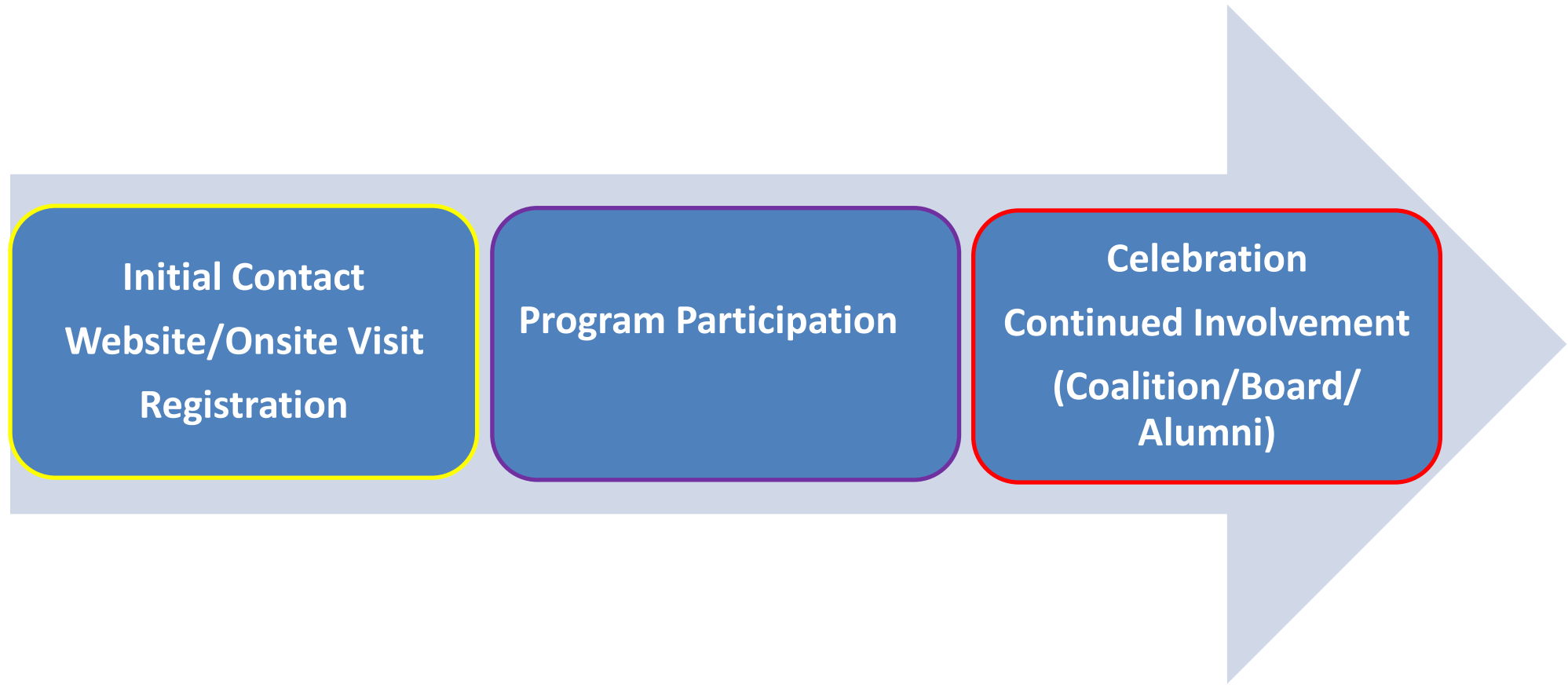
(Davis, et al., 2010; Erdley, et al., 2014)

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Equity as Policy

- Create LGBTQ+-specific administrative policies and procedures to ensure cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness.

  - *These are critical to prevent discrimination and harassment, and how grievances and complaints are handled.*

- Build the delivery of fair and equitable prevention services to everyone into the fabric of an organization, not an add-on.

(Wilkerson, et al., 2011; Meservie, 2013; Legal, 2013, SAMHSA, 2001)

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Inclusion Throughout Programming

Initial Contact

Website/Onsite Visit

Registration

Program Participation

Celebration

Continued Involvement

(Coalition/Board/Alumni)

Statements of Support

Add affirming statements to the mission, vision, and organizational values and/or goals:

– *Example: "At every level of our programming, we are affirming and supportive of the LGBTQ+ members of our community."*

(Wilkerson, et al., 2011; USAID, 2014; Legal, 2013; Winfeld, 2014; SAMHSA, 2001)

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Training Throughout the Organization

- Regularly train all organization affiliates on anti-discriminatory policies and operational procedure updates

- This includes, but is not limited to:

  – *Employees (e.g., front desk, administrative staff, maintenance, board members, etc.)*

  – *Volunteers and interns*

(Wilkerson, et al., 2011; USAID, 2014; Legal, 2013; Winfeld, 2014; SAMHSA, 2001)

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Community Engagement

Involving the Population

- Adopt an inclusive and participatory approach to programming and interventions focused on positive outcomes for LGBTQ+ individuals

- "Nothing about us, without us."

- This approach to community engagement is informed by the principles of community-based participatory research.

(Minkler & Wallerstein, 2011; Israel, et al., 2013)

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Six Strategies for Community Engagement

COMMUNITY AS A UNITY OF IDENTITY

BUILD ON STRENGTHS AND RESOURCES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

ENSURE COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

LGBTQ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FACILITATE A COLLABORATIVE AND EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIP IN ALL PHASES OF ENGAGEMENT

FOCUS ON LOCAL RELEVANCE OF PROGRAM OR AREA OF INTEREST TO LGBT COMMUNITIES

FOSTER COLEARNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING AMONG LGBT COMMUNITY

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(Minkler & Wallerstein, 2011; Israel, et al., 2013)

Strategies 1-3

- Recognize community as a unit of identity
- Build on strengths and resources within the community
- Facilitate a collaborative and equitable partnership in all phases of community engagement

(Minkler & Wallerstein, 2011; Israel, et al., 2013; Rhodes, et al., 2013)

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Strategies 4-6

- Foster co-learning and capacity building with LGBTQ+ community
- Focus on local relevance of prevention programs and initiatives to LGBTQ+ communities
- Ensure commitment to sustainable engagement
  - *Inclusivity in programming should not be negatively impacted by changes in leadership and/or program personnel*
  - *Outcomes for LGBTQ+ program participants should be monitored and evaluated for short- and long-term effectiveness and positive change*

(Minkler & Wallerstein, 2011; Israel, et al., 2013; Rhodes, et al., 2013)

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Outreach and Promotional Materials

- Involve and engage LGBTQ+ staff and participants in the development of all LGBTQ+-related materials.

- Ensure that LGBTQ+ people of color, varying body types, and ages are represented.

- Use language that specifically identifies LGBTQ+ individuals as people your programming is attempting to reach.

- Include testimonials written by LGBTQ+ alumni, coalition members, etc.

(SAMHSA, 2001; Morales, 2009; Drumheller & McQuay; 2010; Ciszek, 2014)

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Community Relationships

- Include LGBTQ+ speakers/panelists in sharing the work of your organization
- Make an effort to get to know the LGBTQ+-specific organizations in your community (e.g., PFLAG, Outright, planners of local Pride celebrations)
- Celebrate outcome evaluation highlights of LGBTQ+ program participants

(Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2007; McKay, 2011; SAMHSA, 2001)

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Community Engagement Opportunities

- Support LGBTQ+-related events in the community through staff/volunteer support, advertising and distribution of announcements, and by co-sponsoring their events

- Provide an information booth at LGBTQ+-related events

- Provide evidence-based substance misuse prevention programming that has demonstrated effectiveness for LGBTQ+ participants
  - *Or work with an evaluator/university/etc. to evaluate a program for its effectiveness with this population*

(Graham, 2011; Joint Commission, 2011)

Resources for Evidence-Based Interventions

- U.S. Department of Education Toolkit: Creating Inclusive and Nondiscriminatory School Environments for LGBTQI+ Students

- Georgetown University's National Center for Cultural Competency: Practice Brief #1

- Proud & Empowered: 10-session school-based curriculum for LGBTQ+ high school students

  – *Reduction of mental health symptoms*

  – *Increase in coping skills and strategies*

Administrative Role in Creating Safe and Affirming Organizations

Administrative Responsibilities

Administrators have a responsibility to:

– *Create an institution that is safe and affirming for all LGBTQ+ participants and staff/volunteers*

– *Have LGBTQ+-affirmative policies and procedures*

– *Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the agency's policies, and are committed to the ethical responsibility of eliminating discrimination, both overt and covert*

(Wilkerson, 2011; Atkins, 2014; Klotzbaugh, 2013)

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Hiring

- Job listings should explicitly state that LGBTQ+ individuals are encouraged to apply

- Prospective employees should be made aware that the organization is LGBTQ+-affirming
  - *Include "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" in non-discriminatory employment policy*

- Assess prospective employee's understanding of this commitment to inclusivity before making hiring decisions

(Schmidt, et al., 2012; Atkins, 2014; Wilkerson, 2011; Vohra, et al., 2015)

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Recruitment

- Recruit out LGBTQ+ members to serve on the board of directors and in other leadership positions

- Employ LGBTQ+ individuals as staff and consultants

- Recruit and retain LGBTQ+ volunteers

(Thompson, 2015; Schmidt, et al., 2012)

Inventory of Policies and Procedures

- Create or confirm the existence of agency policies regarding freedom from discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender, and cultural background.

- Review all operational and programming procedures to ensure that heterosexual bias has been eradicated and inclusive terms are available as options.

(Atkins, 2014; Schmidt, et al., 2012; Vohra, et al., 2015)

Safe Reporting Policies

- Establish policies that describe an organization's response if a participant/staff member or volunteer is being abusive or discriminated against, or if allegations of abuse or discrimination are brought to the attention of the agency.

- Enact policies addressing how participants/staff should be supported if they report discrimination.

(Klotzbaugh, 2013; Wilkerson, 2011; Schmidt, et al., 2012)

Tracking Participant Gender

Consider your organization's program registration or enrollment processes. Under gender, are there only two options (male or female) to identify one's gender?

- *Example: You can include F-to-M, M-to-F, Intersex, Gender non-Conforming, or "please write your gender in the space provided_____."*

(National LGBT Health Education Center, 2015; Thompson, 2015; Legal, 2013)

Tracking Partner/Spouse Gender

If relevant, ask the gender of one's spouse or partner, rather than make assumptions:

– *Example: "Married: _____ (write identified gender)"*

"Partner:_____ (write identified gender)"

(National LGBT Health Education Center, 2015; Thompson, 2015; Legal, 2013)

Respecting Gender Identity

- Encourage all staff to include pronouns in their online footprint, if they are comfortable
    - *email signature, Zoom display name, etc.*
- Include ways for staff, volunteers, other coalition members, and participants to identify and share their pronouns
    - *Name tags, verbal introductions, etc.*

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Recommendations

Assessing Our Progress

- What process and outcome measures are in place to ensure personnel and programs are responsive to the needs and challenges of LGBTQ+ participants?

  - *If none at this time, what are the next steps to developing them?*

- Are there assessments or tools being used to evaluate staff and volunteers? In what way is cultural sensitivity towards LGBTQ+ participants and community members being measured?

Summary Reminders

- Some accrediting bodies and training agencies offers frameworks to help organizations develop these standards for quality improvement.

- Once the agency has made a decision to move forward with strengthening LGBTQ+ representation and programming, a workgroup can be formed, inclusive of the focus population.

- This is an excellent opportunity to learn, grow, and refine your organization as a valued resource in the community.

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Resources

- National LGBTQ+IA+ Health Education Center
https://www.LGBTQ+iahealtheducation.org/

- Center of Excellence on LGBTQ++ Behavioral Health Equity
https://lgbtqequity.org/

- PTTC Network's Prevention Resources for the LGBTQ++ Community
https://pttcnetwork.org/centers/mountain-plains-pttc/news/pride-month-2023-lgbtq-prevention-resources

- "Assessing Our Organizations" activity for board, staff, and/or volunteers
https://www.d5coalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AssessingOurOrganizationsBTW.pdf

Polls from "Assessing Our Organizations"

- Program
- Power
- Policy
- People
- Culture

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