



Los Angeles County
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

**Providing Effective Services to Members of the LGBTQI2-S Community Following Disasters,
Public Health Emergencies and Mass Fatality Events**

December 12, 2017

Providing Culturally Competent Disaster Services

Disaster of all types disproportionately impact people in underserved and marginalized communities. Terrorist incidents such as the Pulse Night Club Shooting in June 2016 highlight the importance that emergency managers and all disaster responders increase their efforts to provide culturally competent disaster assistance to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Queer, Intersex, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQI2-S) community; particularly if the LGBTQI2-S community is targeted or impacted by a particular disaster.

Barriers the LGBTQI2-S Community May Experience and How You Can Help

The LGBTQI2-S community may experience barriers to accessing resources, such as shelters and/or other disaster recovery services. Here are ways you can help:

1. Disaster response agencies should partner with and include LGBTQI2-S community service organizations in their disaster planning efforts, drills, exercises, and disaster volunteer programs so that organizations who already serve the LGBTQI2-S community can be activated to assist with the provision of culturally competent disaster services.
2. The LGBTQI2-S community may be reluctant and/or cautious to engage service providers due to prior incidents of discrimination, victimization, and/or trauma. Please remain non-judgmental, compassionate, and caring in all interactions.
3. The LGBTQI2-S community needs to feel safe, especially during a disaster. Please be familiar with LGBTQI2-S terminology and remember that each letter in the L-G-B-T-Q-I-2-S acronym is unique and different from the others.
4. The LGBTQI2-S community may not have disclosed their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and their medical history (such as HIV) to family members. Please don't share any personal information without consent and reassure confidentiality.
5. The LGBTQI2-S community has "safe" support systems that often include a "chosen family", which may not be the family of origin. Please ask and ensure travel arrangements and communications with the "chosen family" are respected and honored.
6. The LGBTQI2-S community may require deployment of Spiritual Care and/or Clergy providers who are supportive of LGBTQI2-S people and their families. Please ask what is helpful and supportive.
7. It would not be appropriate to ask a non-trans person (cisgender) about the appearance or status of their genitalia, and it is not appropriate to ask a trans (non-binary) person that question either. If a transgender person is concerned over these issues, let them bring it up.

Using the Right Language

If you don't know what pronouns to use, ask:

- Just like with someone's name, you should never assign or assume a person's pronouns based on appearance or limited information.
- No matter the legal name that may be on their Identity Documents (ID), use the person's chosen name.
- It's best to first state your own name and pronouns, then ask for the other person's.
- Be polite and respectful when you ask a person which pronoun they prefer. Then use that pronoun and encourage others to do so.
- Not everyone is comfortable with English as a first language. Plan ahead to have all key documents and forms translated in the 13 threshold languages for Los Angeles County.

Helpful Resources/Links

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES	WEB LINK
Advocates for Youth	http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/
American Psychological Association	http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/sexual-orientation.aspx
APAIT	http://apaitonline.org/
Center for Disease Control and Prevention	http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm
Center for Health Justice Los Angeles	http://centerforhealthjustice.org/
Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network	http://www.glsen.org/
Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network	http://www.gsanetwork.org/
Human Rights	http://www.humanrights.gov/dyn/issues/lgbt.html
Human Rights Campaign	http://www.hrc.org/
LA Youth Resources	http://www.layouth.com/resources-for-lgbtq-teens/
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Disaster Services	http://dmh.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dmh/our_services/disaster_services
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Suicide Prevention Program	http://dmh.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dmh/our_services/services_detail/?current=true&urile=wcm:path:/dmh+content/dmh+site/home/our+services/our+services+detail/partners+in+suicide+prevention
Los Angeles LGBT Center	https://lalgbtcenter.org/
National Alliance to End Homelessness	http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/national-recommended-best-practices-for-serving-lgbt-homeless-youth
National Disaster Interfaith Network – LGBT Needs & Disaster	http://www.ndin.org/ndin_resources/tipsheets_v1208/25_NDIN_TS_LGBTNeeds.pdf
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays	http://community.pflag.org/
San Francisco State University-Family Acceptance Project	http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States	http://www.siecus.org/index.cfm
Stop Bullying	http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/lgbt/index.html
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/PEP14-LGBTKIDS/PEP14-LGBTKIDS.pdf
The Wall Las Memorias Project	http://www.thewallasmemorias.org/
The Red Circle Project @ APLA	http://redcircleproject.org/
The Trevor Project	http://www.thetrevorproject.org/
Transgender Law Center	https://transgenderlawcenter.org/
University of California, Los Angeles	http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/