

# **A QUEER PEER PERSPECTIVE: SEEKING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

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# TRAINING AGENDA

- Queer 101
- Challenges Seeking Providers
- Importance of Self-Advocacy
- Creating a Safe Space
- Scenarios
- Providers' Roles & Responsibilities



# **QUEER 101:** Who is the LGBTQ+ Community?



# ***LGBTQQIAAP2S***

**L**esbian

**G**ay

**B**isexual

**T**ransgender

**Q**ueer

**Q**uestioning

**I**ntersex

**A**sexual

**A**gender

**P**ansexual

**2-S**pirit

*Glossary of LGBT Terms for Health Care Teams* [PDF]. (2017, June). Boston, MA: National LGBT Health Education Center. <https://www.lgbthealtheducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Glossary-2018-English-update-1.pdf>





# SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- Gay
- Lesbian
- Queer
- Bisexual
- Straight/Heterosexual
- Questioning
- Asexual
- Pansexual




# GENDER

- Transgender
- Nonbinary
- Agender
- Intersex
- Gender fluid
- Cisgender
- Questioning
- 2-Spirit
- Genderqueer


# BASIC TERMINOLOGY





- **Lesbian:** A woman emotionally & sexually attracted to other women
- **Gay:** A person emotionally & sexually attracted to people of the same gender


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- **Bisexual:** A person emotionally & sexually attracted to people of the same gender & people of other genders
  - **Transgender (Trans):** A person whose gender & assigned sex at birth do not correspond



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- **Queer:** People whose sexual orientation or gender is outside societal norms. More fluid & inclusive than traditional categories for sexual orientation and gender
  - **Questioning:** An individual who is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation and/or gender

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- **Intersex:** Group of individuals whose reproductive organs & genitals do not develop as expected
  - **Asexual:** A person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to others - not the same as celibacy
  - **Agender:** A person who identifies as having no gender

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- **Pansexual:** A person who is emotionally & sexually attracted to people of all genders.
  - **Two-Spirit:** A person with both a masculine and a feminine spirit. A culture-specific term used by some Native American, American Indian & First Nations people.

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- More than just labels like LGBTQ!
  - Other identifying terms: Bear, Twink, Butch, Femme, nb/enby, SGL, mlm/wlw, QPOC or QTPOC, etc.
  - Other language specific to the queer community: Binding, Tucking, AMAB/AFAB, Dysphoria, HRT, slurs, etc.
  - “Ally” is not a part of the community!

# TERMINOLOGY & LANGUAGE CHANGES

- Not every person will use the same language to describe themselves.
- Others may define terms in different ways.
- Respect who the person is -  
do not deadname or misgender.





# CHALLENGES SEEKING PROVIDERS



# OVERCOMING STIGMA

- Negative assumptions, misunderstanding & judgment about people who:
  - 1) Are queer
  - 2) Receive mental health services
  - 3) Have a mental health disability



# OTHER BARRIERS

- Self-Stigma: When a person believes the negative perceptions & attitudes others have about them
- Low self-confidence & self-esteem
- Lack communication & self-advocacy skills
- May prevent many from getting treatment



# IMPORTANCE OF SELF-ADVOCACY

- Learn how to advocate for yourself
- Know what you want & have the ability & confidence to ask for what you need
- Develop a plan & skills to take action
- Successfully reach your goals





# STEPS TO SELF-ADVOCACY

- Identify your Needs & Goals
- Develop a Plan
- Learn Self-advocacy Skills
- Take Action
- Outcome – did you get what you want?
- Evaluate & Adjust strategy
- Try Again





# FINDING A PROVIDER

- Referrals from friends, family & other providers
- Websites & Social media
- LGBT Centers
- Queer media
- Support groups
- APA referral list
- Yelp





# **ARE THEY A PEER?**

- Do they have to be queer?
- Are they out?
- Do they have to be the same gender?
- Do they have to have the same life experiences?

# DO THEY:

- Understand difference between gender & sexual orientation
- Make false assumptions about gender & gender expression
- Respect a person's sense of self



# UNDERSTAND DISABILITY & SEXUALITY/GENDER?

- Being queer is not a disability
- A disability is not a result of being queer
- Interaction between queerness & disability
- Self-stigma

# DO THEY UNDERSTAND:

- Social & Political Climate
- Stigma & Discrimination
- Our Legal Rights
- Coming out Challenges





# QUEER = ?

- It is not our responsibility to educate you
- Ask what being queer means to us and it's role in our sense of self
- Ask how being queer may specifically impact our unique life experiences





# **PROVIDERS' ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**



# CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS & CULTURAL HUMILITY

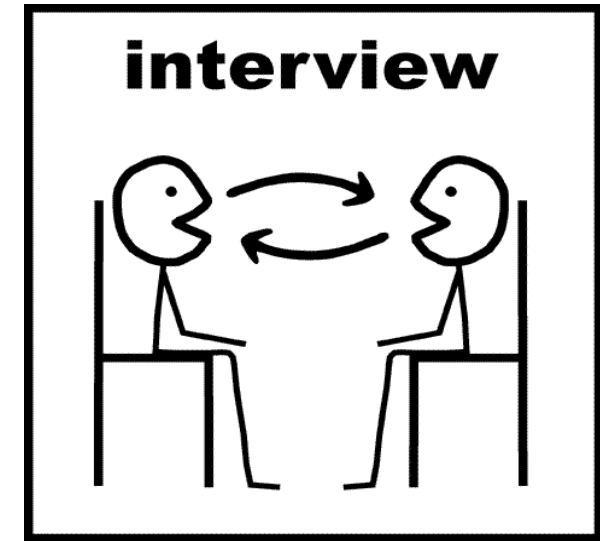
- Aware & Informed about the queer experience
- Acknowledge you may have different life experiences, yet listen to their experience of being queer
- Listen, Accept & Respect

# CREATING A SAFE SPACE

What do you think a “safe space”  
for queer clients looks like?



Transparency: Personal background, experiences, perspective, values, self-identity, pronouns, etc.



Knowledge: Do not ask or expect us to educate you; do your own research; ask clarifying questions (what being queer means to them)

Self-Disclosure: Being “out”, pros & cons, potential consequences

Consultations: Who is interviewing Who?



Physical Office Environment: Rainbow flag, “safe space” sign, waiting room, privacy, reading materials

Intake Forms: Name, Pronouns, Accessibility



# WHAT ARE YOUR PRONOUNS?

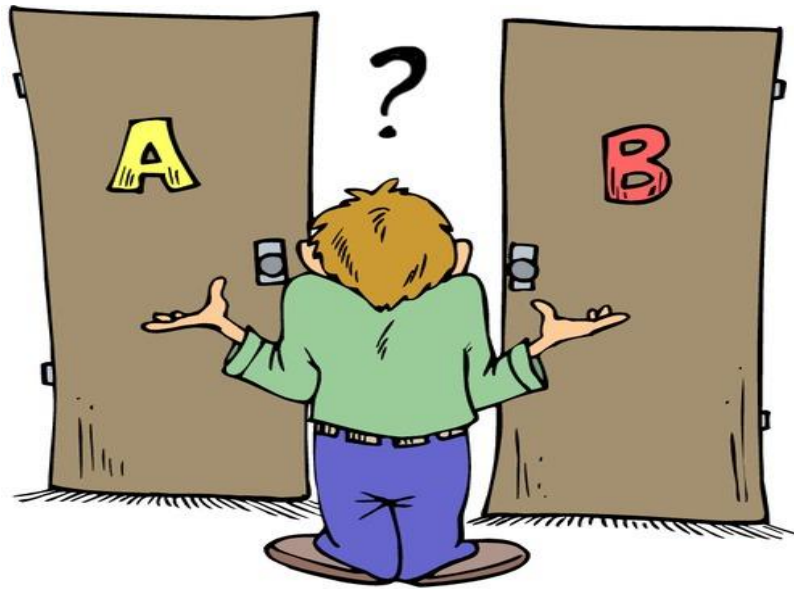
1	2	3	4	5
(f)ae	(f)aer	(f)aer	(f)aers	(f)aerself
e/ey	em	eir	eirs	eirself
he	him	his	his	himself
per	per	pers	pers	perself
she	her	her	hers	herself
they	them	their	theirs	themself
ve	ver	vis	vis	verself
xe	xem	xyr	xyrs	xemself
ze/zie	hir	hir	hirs	hirself



# RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING REFERRALS:

- Evaluate bond between client & provider (from their & your perspectives)
- Provider's knowledge
- Comfort discussing sexuality, intimacy & relationships
- Responsibility to refer out & knowledge about other providers

# SCENARIOS







# **KNOW THE LAWS & INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS**


- Discrimination based on a person's disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are protected by certain federal and state laws.
- State laws related to these protected classes may differ.



# KNOW A CLIENT'S RIGHTS TO:

- Receive services voluntarily
- Receive culturally responsive services
- Ask questions & understand their treatment options
- Receive information in a language they understand



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- Privacy & confidentiality
  - Reasonable accommodations
  - Expressed wishes vs. best interests
  - Refuse treatment
  - File a complaint & Appeal the decision

# MENTAL HEALTH PARITY

- Federal & State laws differ
- Medical necessity
- Prior authorization requirements
- Types, frequency & number of services provided
- Maximum lifetime benefits
- Copayments
- Prescription Drugs





# **FOR CLIENTS ON MEDI-CAL**

- Parity doesn't apply
- Determination of Medical Necessity (opinions may differ between client & provider)
- Covered benefits
- Outpatient & inpatient services



# **KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-ADVOCACY**

- What is it? What does it involve? Know the steps
- Help your clients learn it
- Encourage & empower them to advocate for themselves
- Be a consultant & guide – you are a team!






# **BEST INTERESTS vs. EXPRESSED WISHES**

- Best Interest: Someone believes they know what is “best” for us.
- Expressed Interest: Only we truly know ourselves & what might be helpful. We make the final decisions about what treatment & service providers we want.

- Respect the person for who they are – meet them where they are at
- Refrain from judgment
- Ask for & use their pronouns
- Ask how the person feels
- Listen to & hear what they say



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- Acknowledge & support their interests, desires & goals (expressed wishes vs. best interests)
  - Ask them what they need & want
  - Ask how you can best help & support them
  - Make the space safe



**RESPECT.**

***YOUR  
QUEER CLIENTS***



## **FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US AT:**

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