

LGBTQ Domestic Violence
Technical Assistance & Training Project

Addressing Homo/Bi/Trans-
Phobia & Heterosexism
Among Clients & Others



W e l c o m e !

- Today's call will be facilitated by Lisa Fujie Parks from California Partnership to End Domestic Violence.

Part I: Opening



Teleconference Call Objectives

By the end of the call participants will:

1. Be familiar with basic terms to describe oppression based on sexual orientation and gender identity (isms) and how they are expressed as internalized, interpersonal and institutional oppression
2. Have a few ideas of how to apply 3 strategies for addressing isms: promotion, prevention and response
3. Be familiar with the seven steps to responding to every day bias.

Agenda

- I. Opening
- II. Quick Review of Basic Terms
- III. The Impact of Oppression
- IV. Three Strategies for Addressing Isms
- V. The Speak Up! Approach to Addressing Everyday Bias
- VI. Next Steps and Closing

Discussion

Getting Started...

Please tell us:

- A situation you've witnessed where someone expressed something biased toward or about LGBTQ people

-- OR --

- Something you hope to learn today.



Part II: A Review of Basic Terms



What is homophobia?

- The fear of feelings of love for and/or sexual attraction between members of the same sex.

Examples:

- *Two women hug and quickly pull away, saying, “People are going to think we’re a bunch of lesbians!”*
- *People use the term “that’s so gay” or “that’s so queer” to put something down.*

What is biphobia?

- The fear of feelings of love for and/or sexual attraction to both sexes.
- ✓ Note: Homophobia and biphobia refer to the many ways that people are oppressed on the basis of sexual orientation.

What is transphobia?

- The fear of people who transgress social expectations of gender conformity.
- ✓ Note: Transphobia refers to the many ways that people are oppressed on the basis of gender identity and expression.

What is heterosexism?

- The presumption that everyone is heterosexual. *Example: When a woman is going on a date, people may ask, “What’s his name?” assuming it is a heterosexual date.*
- The belief that heterosexuality is naturally superior and/or morally preferable to homosexuality or bisexuality. Also refers to discrimination and prejudice based on this belief against gay, lesbian and bisexual people. *Example: Prohibition of same-sex marriage.*

The Three “I”s of Oppression

- **Internalized:** Within the oppressed individual. *Ex: A gay man sees two men holding hands in public and feels ashamed.*
- **Interpersonal:** Prejudice and discrimination across individuals. *Ex: A transgender woman is rejected by her friends and family after transitioning from male to female*
- **Institutional:** Oppression that is encoded into and characteristic of the major social, cultural, and economic institutions of society. *Ex: Businesses refuse to hire transgender individuals.*

Part III: Three Strategies for Addressing Isms



Three Strategies for Addressing Isms

- 1. Promotion:** Promote a healthy, affirmative and inclusive environment for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities
- 2. Prevention:** Proactively work to prevent bias against LGBTQ people
- 3. Response:** Respond effectively to acts of bias and discrimination



We will focus today on 3.

Strategy 1: Promotion

Promote a healthy, affirmative and inclusive environment for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities

- ✓ See “Fostering a Welcoming Environment” presentation and handout materials
- ✓ See “Case Management” presentation and handout materials

Policies of non-discrimination

A policy that encourages respect for all and specifically addresses bias based on sexual orientation and gender identity:

1. Have all employees and volunteers sign statement that they understand and will abide by these policy
2. Display the policy
3. Talk about the policy when describing the agency, what it stands for and the services it provides (e.g., website, presentations, etc)

Policies of non-discrimination

- 4. Routinely provide to all staff and clients before they interact with other staff and volunteers.**
5. Open support groups and workshops with group agreements about respect and inclusion.
6. Make it clear to people that by choosing to participate in the services, they are agreeing to respect diversity and support an inclusive environment.
7. If someone does not want to agree to the policy, you can help them get connected to other services. This will help reduce the likelihood that someone will need to be exited from services in the future.

Sample Policy Language for Clients

- X agency is committed to providing the best possible services to all domestic violence victims/survivors regardless of age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability/disability and health/mental health status.
- I understand that X agency welcomes all survivors of domestic violence to access services, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people....
- I understand that X agency values diversity and respects participants', staff' and providers' cultures, needs, etc.
- I understand that comments and actions that put downs, stereotype, discriminate against or otherwise demean a person because of their racial, cultural, religious background, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, ability, health or mental health status will not be accepted.
- I understand that I am expected to respect the diversity of staff and clients at X agency.

Gay Affirmative Practice

Gay affirmative practice, “...*affirms a lesbian, gay or bisexual identity as an equally positive human experience and expression heterosexual identity* (Davies, 1996) [1].”

[1] As cited in Crisp, C. (2006.) The gay affirmative practice scale: A new measure for assessing cultural competence with gay and lesbian clients. *Social Work*, 51(2): 115-126.

Gay Affirmative Practice

Gay affirmative practitioners...

“*...Celebrate and advocate the validity of lesbian, gay and bisexual persons and their relationships...[and go] beyond a neutral or null environment to counteract the life-long messages of homophobia and heterosexism that lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals have experienced and often internalized (Tozer and McClandahan, 1999) [2].*”

[2] As cited in Crisp, C. (2006.)The gay affirmative practice scale: A new measure for assessing cultural competence with gay and lesbian clients. *Social Work*, 51(2): 115-126.

Strategy 2: Prevention

Proactively work to prevent anti-LGBTQ bias.

1. Implement training for staff, volunteers and Board members. See “Improving Access to Services for LGBTQ DV Victim/Survivors” Training of Trainers presentation and handouts
2. Invite LGBTQ organizations/leaders/etc. to speak to your staff, volunteers and clients.
3. Collaborate with other organizations in activities to promote positive visibility of LGBTQ persons (e.g., Pride activities, National Coming Out Day, etc.

Strategy 2: Prevention

4. Provide opportunities for open dialogue and education with clients on LGBTQ issues:

- Ensure that all staff are prepared to do this
- Modify the basic elements of the presentation covered at the Regional “Training of Trainers” to be appropriate for a more informal dialogue with clients
- Focus the education on improving understanding and respect, not on trying to change any particular person’s belief system
- Integrate into prevention education, life skills education, parenting classes, etc.

Discussion

- **Does any of your agencies have these in place?**
 - Policy of nondiscrimination specifically addressing sexual orientation and gender identity
 - LGBTQ-welcoming agency/shelter environments
 - LGBTQ affirmative case management practices
 - Training for staff, etc. on LGBTQ issues
 - Client education on LGBTQ issues
 - Participation in Pride celebrations, etc.
- **Do they help with promoting an inclusive environment and preventing anti-LGBTQ bias?**

Strategy 3: Response

Respond effectively to acts of bias and discrimination.

1. Train staff and volunteers to respond effectively and be allies to one another
2. Create organizational guidelines and scripts for all staff to use to respond consistently

Part IV: The ‘Speak Up’ Approach to Responding to Bias



“Six Steps for Speaking Up Against Everyday Bigotry” from the Southern Poverty Law Center’s “Teaching Tolerance” project.

Examples of Anti-LGBTQ Bias

- Never saying “lesbian, bisexual, transgender, etc.”
Saying “those people” or “those... whatever...”
- Thinking that being LGBTQ is just a phase or something that can be cured or converted
- Keeping distance from LGBTQ people for fear of being labeled.
- Avoiding asking an LGBTQ person about their friends and partners
- Laughing at a biased joke.
- Wonder why a woman who you think is pretty “can’t find a man.”
- Wishing or expecting that an LGBTQ person will not be “too out” or “too obvious.”
- Blaming LGBTQ people for “causing social conflicts” or “tearing families apart.”

Examples of Anti-LGBTQ Bias at DV Shelter Agencies

- Making judgments about LGBTQ clients as being weird, scary or strange.
- Not wanting to share rooms with a lesbian or transgender client
- Saying that LGBTQ people are immoral and/or are going to burn in hell
- Saying that an LGBTQ person was abused because of their sinful lifestyle
- Other examples?

Barriers to Responding to Bias

- Our comfort levels in responding to bias incidents often vary by location and by the people involved.
- With 1 meaning “extremely **un**comfortable responding” and 10 meaning “extremely comfortable responding,” what number represents your comfort level in responding to some of the incidents people have mentioned so far?
- What are some of the internal and external factors that affect your comfort level in responding to acts of bias?

Responding to Everyday Bias

- Everyday bias is insidious. Left unchecked, like litter or weeds, they blight the landscape...
- Organizational culture is largely determined by what is and isn't allowed to occur. If people are lax in responding to bias, then bias prevails. Speak up early and often in order to build a more inclusive environment.
- “Core value statements and other policies sitting on dusty shelves don't establish an office culture; casual interactions do.”

Responding to Everyday Bias

- Everyone in an agency has a role to play in setting a respectful and unbiased tone in the office and shelter environments.
- The only person you can change is yourself. Therefore, respond because it's important to you. Whether or not the person changes their behavior is up to them.

Be Mindful of Your Own Behaviors

- Confronting our own biases is one of the ways we grow. This may not be a comfortable process, but the practice of examining our prejudices is the first step toward diminishing or eliminating them.
- Seek feedback and advice. Ask friends and colleagues to help you work through your biases. People who work through these issues in healthy ways often have stronger relationships as a result.
- Commit to learn more. Create opportunities for education, exposure and awareness to move from prejudice to understanding to affirmation.

Own Up to Your Own Biased Behavior

- Don't let anxiety, embarrassment or guilt stop you from making amends, or from changing your behavior.
- Apologize immediately.
- If candor is difficult in the moment or if words don't come together, try writing a note or letter.
- Ask if there is any way you can make amends.
- Be open to feedback. Ask clarifying questions if needed. Be gracious and consider the moment a learning opportunity. Thank the person for their feedback.
- Learn the lesson.

Case Example: You are facilitating a support group. As the group convenes for the first time, a participant with tattoos, short hair and masculine clothing enters and sits down. Several of the other participants look shocked and are staring at her with discomfort. You believe that they are reacting because they perceive her to be a lesbian.

1. How would you address this situation?
2. What could you have done before this situation occurred?
3. What could you do have the situation occurred?

Highlights of the 'Speak Up!' Approach!

- Question and identify bias
- Speak up when you hear or see it
- Be mindful of your own behaviors
- Promote and appeal to higher principles
- Set limits on what is said or done around you
- Seek help and help others
- Remain persistent and follow through

The Six Steps to Responding to Everyday Bias

1. Be ready
2. Identify the behavior
3. Offer support to anyone who may have been harmed
4. Set limits
5. Appeal to Shared Values and Policies
6. Find an ally, be an ally
7. Follow through

1. Be Ready

- You know another moment like this will happen, so prepare yourself for it.
- Think of yourself as the one who will speak up. Promise yourself not to remain silent.
- Learn from the past.
- Determine what support you need.
- Talk with your supervisor.

1. Be Ready

- Have something in mind to say before an incident happens. Open-ended questions are often a good response: *“Why did you say that?”*
“How did you develop that belief?”
- Anticipate and rehearse. Practice possible responses in front of a mirror. Figure out what works for you, what feels most comfortable. Become confident in your responses.

2. Identify the Behavior

Why identify the behavior:

- Sometimes, pointing out the behavior candidly helps someone to hear what they're really saying.
- The person may not realize the effect of their words or behavior
- People need to understand specifically what behavior is of concern and know that you are not judging them or their beliefs.

2. Identify the Behavior

When to identify the behavior:

- Sometimes it's better to seize the moment and sometimes it's better to wait and address the issue at a later time
- Think about when you will be able to best respond
- Think about when will be the most conducive to a productive, respectful conversation.
- Think about the impact of not saying anything in the moment. How will others interpret this?
- There may be a way to say something preliminary in the moment and revisit more thoroughly at later time.

2. Identify the Behavior

How to identify the behavior

- Ask clarifying questions: “*Why do you feel that way?*” Be curious and open to what they are trying to say.
- Articulate your view and your organization’s stance.
- Replace misinformation with accurate, more complete information.
- Make it clear that you are not trying to change the person’s belief systems; you are focused on behavior
- Name the bias: “That was a stereotype” “That is a put-down.” “You may not have meant to hurt anyone, but that was a derogatory gesture.”
Sometimes it’s more appropriate to educate on the spot; other times it’s better to educate in private.

2. Identify the Behavior

How to identify the behavior:

- Avoid labeling, name-calling, or the use of loaded terms. Describe the behavior; don't label the person (e.g., calling someone a homophobe or a bigot will send up a wall and get you no where...)
- Strive for common ground.
- Name and acknowledge areas of disagreement.
- Model respect for all perspectives and opinions, even if you disagree with them.
- Stop and redirect the conversation if anyone becomes disrespectful.

2. Identify the Behavior

How to identify the behavior:

- Focus on the tone you want to set, e.g., openness, warmth, respect, etc.
- Emotionally connect and relate to the person and how they are feeling. Connect with feeling as well as with thought.
- Acknowledge the person. Let them know you see and hear them. Respect them and their opinions and feelings. You can acknowledge and respect them without agreeing.
- Notice how you are feeling. Be honest and authentic.

3. Offer Support to Anyone Who May Have Been Harmed

- Assess who may have been harmed by the behavior.
- Check in with them to determine what impact the incident had and offer support.
- Reiterate the organization's policies and agreements and assure the person that the organization is committed to preventing further bias incidents from occurring

4. Appeal to Shared Values and Policies

- Call upon existing policies and group agreements (or establish new ones) to address bias language and behavior.
- If the person is someone you have a relationship with, appeal to shared values and call on their higher principles (e.g., fairness, inclusion, compassion, respect, tolerance .etc).

5. Set Limits

- You cannot control another person and you cannot change a person's beliefs or attitudes. But you can set limits on their behavior (e.g., "That behavior is not allowed in this support group.")
- Be clear about the consequences and follow through.
- Even if attitudes don't change, by limiting expressions of bias, you are limiting its contagion. Fewer people will hear it or experience it.

6. Find an Ally, Be an Ally

- Seek out like-minded people and ask them to support you.
- Lead by example and inspire others to do the same.

7. Follow Through

- If there were other people present during an incident and you didn't respond in the moment, it may be important to go back to the other people who were present, check in with them, offer any support if needed, and reaffirm policies and agreements.
- Change happens slowly. People make small steps, typically, not large ones. Stay prepared, and keep speaking up.

Responding to Children

- Focus on empathy: When a child says or does something that reflects biases or embraces stereotypes, point it out.
- Guide the conversation toward empathy and respect (e.g., “How do you think she would feel if she heard you call her that?”)
- Expand horizons: Help a child expand their definition of “normal.” (e.g., “She’s not a bad person. Let’s learn about her and her community.”)
- Be a role model.

Case Example: You are facilitating a support group. As the group convenes for the first time, a participant with tattoos, short hair and masculine clothing enters and sits down. Several of the other participants look shocked and are staring at her with discomfort. You believe that they are reacting because they perceive her to be a lesbian.

How can we apply the six steps to this situation?

1. Be ready
2. Identify the behavior
3. Set limits
4. Appeal to Shared Values and Policies
5. Find an ally/be an ally
6. Follow through

Part VI: Next Steps and Closing



Additional Resources and Next Steps

- See attachments provided as teleconference call supplemental materials for additional information.
- We can conduct this training for your staff at your agency at no charge.
- Future TAT teleconference calls will address, intake interviewing and screening, safety planning, effective services for transgender clients, legal advocacy and more.

Discussion

- Share one next step you are considering:
 - Work toward applying the six steps?
 - Share this presentation with your team?
 - Schedule this training for the rest of the staff?



Evaluation

- Please go to:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=zwCZF7RPfftvNBeNxnpB3Q_3d_3d and complete brief survey!