



FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE:

Nondiscrimination and Inclusion of LGBTQ Individuals
in Victim Services Programs

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NATIONAL COALITION OF ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAMS (NCAVP)

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities. NCAVP is a national coalition of local member programs and affiliate organizations who create systemic and social change. We strive to increase power, safety and resources through data analysis, policy advocacy, education, and technical assistance.

NCAVP coordinates the National LGBTQ Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Center. The NCAVP LGBTQ TTA Center provides free ongoing technical assistance and support to current and potential Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) grantees nationwide through a toll-free warmline number, list serve, Deaf-accessible instant messaging AIM, and resource bank of LGBTQ anti-violence materials. The NCAVP LGBTQ TTA Center is available for direct service and advocacy organizations seeking answers, support, and strategies to become inclusive of and accessible to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer survivors, including HIV-affected survivors.

NCAVP's National Training and Technical Assistance Center

Toll-free warmline: 1-855-AVP-LGBT (1-855-287-5428)

Deaf/hard of hearing accessible AIM: AVPIgbt

E-mail: info@ncavp.org

www.ncavp.org

Additional national LGBTQ resources:

FORGE

www.forge-forward.org

The Network/La Red

www.tnlr.org

The Northwest Network of Bi, Trans, Lesbian, and Gay Survivors of Abuse

www.nwnetwork.org

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INTRODUCTION

This Booklet is written for sexual violence (SA) and domestic violence (DV) victim services organizations to provide a basic understanding of policies and practices that promote nondiscrimination and inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals. DV and SA organizations provide vitally important services to individuals who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence, sexual violence, or stalking. Engaging in a process to ensure that your entire organization embraces nondiscrimination and inclusion promotes an environment of safety, acceptance, respect, compassion, empowerment, and individuality of all.

We encourage you to approach using this Booklet and its contents as an opportunity to reflect on and ensure your vital services are known by and welcoming of anyone who needs them. This resource is designed for DV and SA organizations to embark on an action-oriented process that addresses nondiscrimination and inclusion of LGBTQ survivors, staff members, volunteers, and board members.

WHY THE CURRENT FOCUS ON LGBTQ COMMUNITIES?

DV and SA organizations, like other community-based programs, work hard to address the needs of individuals living directly within their respective communities. Although some DV and SA organizations already are connected with and provide services to LGBTQ individuals, many others are less aware of and experienced with some of the unique needs of this community. The opportunity to engage with LGBTQ organizations and individuals is especially opportune: too many individuals in the LGBTQ community are experiencing domestic and sexual violence and need victim services, and the U.S. Congress explicitly recognized this need and included LGBTQ communities within the 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY

Though often hidden from the mainstream, LGBTQ communities experience domestic violence¹ and sexual violence at the same or higher prevalence rates as non-LGBTQ people. DV and SA services are essential gateways to safety and survival. Just as in all mainstream and marginalized populations, lack of effective and appropriate responses can be lethal.² Here’s what we know:

Gay and Bisexual Men:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, gay men reported levels of intimate partner violence and sexual violence equal to or higher than those of heterosexuals.³
- Bisexual men reported levels of intimate partner and sexual violence equal to or higher than those of gay or heterosexual men.⁴
- According to NCAVP’s most recent National Intimate Partner Violence Report, when compared to other survivors, gay men were more likely to experience threats, intimidation, and harassment.⁵

Lesbian and Bisexual Women:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, bisexual women had significantly higher lifetime prevalence of sexual violence and intimate partner violence than other women.⁶
- Lesbian women reported levels of intimate partner violence equal to or higher than those of heterosexual women.⁷

Some Definitions

Sexual orientation: the gender(s) that people are attracted to, including gay, straight, lesbian, bisexual, queer, or heterosexual.

Gender identity: one’s personal view of one’s gender, including identifying as a woman, man, genderqueer, or other gender identities.

Gender expression: aspects of behavior and outward presentation (intentional or unintentional) that may communicate gender to others, including clothing, body language, hairstyles, socialization, relationships, career choices, interests, and presence in gendered spaces (e.g., restrooms, places of worship, etc.).

¹ For the purposes of this booklet, the term “domestic violence” is used, which mirrors the statutory language of the Violence Against Women Act. Other terms commonly used to describe domestic violence within LGBTQ communities include “intimate partner violence” and “partner abuse.”

² National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. (2014). Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ and HIV-Affected Communities in the United States in 2013. http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/2013_ncavp_ipvreportfinalweb.pdf.

³ Walters, M.L., Chen J., & Breiding, M.J. (2013). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/specialreports.html>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Op. cit.

⁶ Op. cit.

⁷ Op. cit.

Transgender Survivors

- According to NCAVP’s most recent National Intimate Partner Violence Report, when compared to other survivors, transgender survivors of intimate partner violence were more likely to face physical violence and discrimination.⁸
- Research from the National Center for Transgender Equality and National LGBTQ Task Force found that transgender and gender non-conforming family violence survivors were four times more likely to be homeless than respondents who were not survivors of family violence.⁹

LGBTQ survivors, like survivors from other marginalized communities, face unique challenges in the way that they experience domestic and sexual violence. To effectively address domestic violence and sexual violence in the LGBTQ community, survivors must be aware of and feel that victim services organizations are welcoming of, available to, and appropriate for them. Unfortunately, some LGBTQ survivors have experienced barriers when trying to access these vital services. In response, Congress took action through the reauthorization of VAWA in 2013.

LGBTQ DISCRIMINATION EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED IN VAWA-FUNDED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

In the Violence Against Women (VAWA) Reauthorization Act of 2013, Congress added language to the nondiscrimination provision of this federal law. This newly expanded provision applies to all recipients of VAWA funds, and specifically uses the terms “gender identity” and “sexual orientation.” Here’s what the new provision states:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, **gender identity, sexual orientation,** [emphasis added] or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available under [VAWA], and any other program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds appropriated for grants, cooperative agreements, and other assistance administered by the Office on Violence Against Women.”¹⁰

The provision does contain an exception that addresses sex segregated and sex specific programming. To understand the potential impact this exception might pose

⁸ Op. cit.

⁹ Grant, Jaime M., Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling. Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011. http://transequality.org/PDFs/NTDS_Report.pdf

¹⁰ Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. 42 USC §§ 13701-14040.

to your organization, its operations, and policy development, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) issued guidance to the field through a Frequently Asked Questions document. That resource may be accessed at the following Internet address: www.ovw.usdoj.gov/docs/faqs-ngc-vawa.pdf. We recommend that all DV and SA organizations read through the U.S. DOJ resource prior to engaging in a process to address your organization's own LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination policy.

Keep in mind that by highlighting concrete steps to review your organization's existing policies and protocols to address nondiscrimination and be LGBTQ inclusive, this Booklet guides you through a process to develop and implement a more inclusive nondiscrimination policy reflective of the changes Congress mandated in 2013.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Policies in and of themselves have little value, especially if they are created only to be filed away, never to be viewed again. Instead, think of policies as living testaments -- a means to explore and reflect the organization's culture, values, and approach to its work. Nondiscrimination policies are excellent vehicles for reflecting the values and practices that an organization strives to employ on an ongoing basis.

WHAT IS A NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY?

A nondiscrimination policy is an explicit statement of a DV/SA victim services organization, for example, that discrimination and harassment (a more "subtle" form of discrimination) are not allowed nor tolerated. Generally, a nondiscrimination policy makes clear that discriminatory actions and/or disparate (unequal) treatment based on a person's identifying characteristics are prohibited. A nondiscrimination policy also typically includes a more affirmative statement that reflects the organization's commitment to treat everyone equally, both in service provision and in employment. Overall, a nondiscrimination policy serves as a broad statement that communicates the organization's active commitment to serve and respect all individuals involved with the organization.

WHAT IS A POLICY STATEMENT?

A policy statement provides the details of what the policy means in practice, where and to whom the policy applies, and how the policy will be enforced if discrimination occurs. Think of nondiscrimination policies and the policy statements in this way:

- The nondiscrimination policy is a map – it shows that your organization intends to travel from Point A (addressing discrimination) to Point B (eradicating discrimination).
- The policy statement is the roadmap that gets you from Point A to Point B – it details the specific route (steps) that your organization will undertake to arrive at its destination (nondiscrimination).

A policy statement also provides DV/SA organizations an opportunity to articulate a lot about what the policy means for the organization. For example:

- What the “scope” of the policy is – whether it covers nondiscrimination in hiring practices, employment, service provision, and any other organizational activities;
- What the organization’s beliefs and values are regarding discrimination and oppression;
- How individuals may report discrimination if they experience or witness it; and,
- What steps will be followed if discrimination is reported.

WHAT DO NONDISCRIMINATION POLICIES REALLY ACCOMPLISH?

A lot! A nondiscrimination policy statement sends a clear message to service recipients, employees, stakeholders, and the broader community that the DV/SA organization is committed to creating an inclusive environment for all individuals, no matter their identity. Survivors who identify as a member of a traditionally marginalized group often look to an organization’s nondiscrimination policy to gauge whether that organization is aware of and will be responsive to them. If a nondiscrimination policy explicitly recognizes their identity (e.g., LGBTQ), then those survivors will feel more confident in accessing services because the organization actively addressed inclusion and, therefore, likely will be more responsive to their particular needs.

An often-overlooked benefit for DV/SA organizations is the clarity these policies can provide when responding to reports of discrimination. A report often adds stress and raises safety concerns within an already crisis-oriented environment. A thorough and clear policy statement provides clarity about the organization’s position on nondiscrimination, while it details the specific process by which reported violations will be addressed.

VARIATIONS IN THE SCOPE OF NONDISCRIMINATION POLICIES

The scope of nondiscrimination policies often varies from one organization to another. For example, some DV and SA organizations choose to have one nondiscrimination policy that applies to everyone involved in the organization. Other organizations might have multiple policies, including an employment nondiscrimination policy (sometimes referred to as an equal opportunity statement), a volunteer nondiscrimination policy, and a client nondiscrimination policy. Each DV and SA organization should determine for itself what scope (i.e., policy coverage) will work best for their policies, based on the structure and services the organization provides.

WHY INCLUDE LGBTQ PEOPLE IN THE NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY?

Nondiscrimination policies seek to address oppression and bias against groups of people. Many groups have been targets of oppression. LGBTQ people continue to experience discrimination, harassment, and violence in the United States. Current discrimination reflects part of a long history of homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bias supported by beliefs, laws, and policies that denied rights to LGBTQ people. Recent research from NCAVP shows that LGBTQ people do not have access to many mainstream anti-violence services across the country.¹¹ Additionally, in a national survey conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National LGBTQ Task Force, 55 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming respondents had experienced anti-transgender harassment within a shelter.¹² With the growing desire and commitment to support LGBTQ survivors of domestic and sexual violence, a nondiscrimination policy is a significant first step toward ensuring access to vital victim services for all LGBTQ survivors.

EXAMPLES OF NONDISCRIMINATION POLICIES

As you think about creating or enhancing, and implementing an LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination policy in your organization, read through the following examples to get ideas about what to consider including in your own policy(ies).

Nondiscrimination Policy for Staff

[Organization] is committed to creating an environment that supports equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination for all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, perceived or actual sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, marital status, national origin, or disability.¹³

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Non-Discrimination Policy for Clients

Recognizing that prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping are prevalent through society and dedicated to the creation of a safe, secure space for those seeking services with us, it shall be the policy of [Organization] to maintain and promote a facility that provides the highest quality of services to survivors of sexual and domestic violence regardless of their actual or perceived sexual orientation,

¹¹ NCAVP and NCVC, op. cit.

¹² Grant, Jaime M., Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling. Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011. http://transequality.org/PDFs/NTDS_Report.pdf

¹³ Developed by The Network/La Red. <http://www.tnlr.org>

gender identity, gender expression, sex, race, color, religion, age, marital status, national origin, or disability. All survivors receiving services at [Organization] shall receive fair and equal treatment, without bias, and shall be treated in a professional manner.

Individuals who feel they have been subject to discrimination or harassment should report this occurrence to [designated contacts].

[Organization] will take all reasonable steps within its control to meet the diverse needs of all survivors seeking services and provide an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their actual or perceived identities.¹⁴

Client Nondiscrimination Policy

The SPAN Shelter Program is dedicated to providing a safe environment for all clients. We welcome all people who are abused, including anyone traditionally silenced because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, race, religion, age, ability or income level. This means that staying at shelter includes interactions and sharing a room with people and children of all genders, sexual orientations and all ethnic and racial backgrounds. This includes people who may identify as lesbian, bisexual, transgender or male, as well as individuals with physical and mental disabilities and elderly people.¹⁵

Comprehensive Nondiscrimination Policy for Staff and Service Users

Umbrella does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, health status (including HIV-positive), physical, mental or emotional ability, sexual orientation/identity, gender identity/expression, socio-economic status, race, national origin, parental responsibility, language, immigration status, or religious or political affiliation in employment or provision of services.¹⁶

These policy examples highlight the variety of ways that DV and SA victim service providers can express their nondiscrimination policies to include LGBTQ people. Now that you have had to learn and think about LGBTQ inclusive nondiscrimination policies and all that they embody, the next section provides a suggested framework and relevant questions to consider for developing and implementing your own organization's LGBTQ inclusive nondiscrimination policy and practices.

¹⁴ Developed by The Network/La Red. <http://www.tnir.org>

¹⁵ Developed by the Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN).

¹⁶ Developed by Umbrella, Inc.

ENGAGING IN A PROCESS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN INCLUSIVE POLICY

Every domestic violence and sexual violence victim service organization follows its own unique process for how to modify or create organizational policies. To address an LGBTQ-inclusive policy into these organization-specific processes, this section explores some important questions to consider, supplemented by examples of specific action steps your organization could take to become LGBTQ inclusive.

There are five key stages for developing and implementing a LGBTQ nondiscrimination policy and inclusive practices:

1. Convene an organization-wide discussion;
2. Partner with a local LGBTQ organization;
3. Draft the policy statement;
4. Map out a pre-implementation action plan; and
5. Move from policy to practice.

STAGE 1: CONVENE AN ORGANIZATION-WIDE DISCUSSION

The first stage involves organizational dialogue. Bring stakeholders together and initiate discussion about discrimination and inclusion. Look to your organization's mission and/or vision statements and highlight the values that are expressed within them. These value statements serve as guiding principles for the organization and will help identify what components of the organization's operations will demand focus to ensure comprehensive inclusion of LGBTQ individuals. It is important to include all organizational decision-makers, as well as staff who work directly with clients. Also consider bringing in additional stakeholders to the table, including program participants (survivors using the services), volunteers, organizational partners, and community members who support the organization. Structure these conversations to identify the policy development and implementation processes that will work best for the organization's configuration, culture, and values.

Consider posing the following questions to initiate these conversations:

What are your organizational values for serving survivors?

Domestic and sexual violence victim service providers often are guided by values and frameworks for service provision that are person-centered, and promote self-determination, empowerment, person-centered practice, trauma-informed practice, and responsive to the community. Many organizations also have incorporated an anti-oppression framework into their service delivery philosophy and operations. These frameworks easily can be adapted to include the prevention of oppression and discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer survivors. Considering the organization's values that guide serving survivors helps to inform how the nondiscrimination policy will fit within the overall values of the organization.

Do these values apply to all survivors (older individuals, undocumented individuals, LGBTQ individuals, etc.)?

Most domestic and sexual violence victim service providers share a commitment to serving all survivors. Statements of inclusion reflect an organization's adaptability and flexibility to meet the unique needs of an ever-changing population (i.e., immigrants, people living with disabilities, people living with HIV, youth, and many others). LGBTQ survivors face many unique challenges in accessing support and services. As addressed with other marginalized populations, domestic and sexual violence organizations need to create proactive plans to prevent and address discrimination against LGBTQ individuals throughout their organizations. For guidance, take a look at the specific strategies your organization employed to address the needs of other marginalized populations. Reflecting on what worked well, and did not work so well for those populations will help inform how best to inclusively serve LGBTQ individuals and address potential discrimination.

How does the organization currently deal with discrimination?

What does the organization define as discrimination? Who does the current nondiscrimination policy cover? Do the current policies and protocols reflect the organization's views and position on discrimination? Are there areas where messages of nondiscrimination can be strengthened? These questions can help your organization explore and narrow its focus for drafting and implementing an LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination policy. When considering these questions, note whether training is provided to staff on discrimination, and add such a training to your pre-implementation action plan (see Stage 4).

How has the organization communicated its commitment to under-served and marginalized communities?

Since most domestic and sexual violence organizations already have a policy that addresses discrimination against certain individuals based on race, religion, language access, disability, and others, reflect back on how you communicated those nondiscrimination commitments to the community. Organizations commonly communicate their commitment to inclusion through outreach strategies, formal and informal discussions with underserved communities, or posting the policy on websites. Consider how your organization could communicate your commitment to service now extends to LGBTQ inclusion.

STAGE 2: PARTNER WITH A LOCAL LGBTQ ORGANIZATION

The second stage of the process is essential. NCAVP strongly recommends working with a local LGBTQ organization because these organizations will have critical insights about how best to serve LGBTQ survivors. LGBTQ organizations can help expand your thoughts and ultimate decisions about the policy statement's content. They also can provide practical guidance about how best to implement the policy and promote inclusive operations, and alert you to potential challenges that might emerge. Invest the time and energy to develop a relationship with your local LGBTQ organization or one of the national technical assistance resource organizations. We encourage you to contact and collaborate with the technical assistance resources contained in [Appendix A](#), and develop a partnership that fully reflects nondiscrimination and inclusion.

STAGE 3: DRAFT THE POLICY STATEMENT

Now you are ready to draft the actual policy and procedures. Remember to include the information reviewed earlier in this Booklet:

Articulate what the policy means for the organization:

- What the “scope” of the policy is – whether it covers nondiscrimination in hiring practices, employment, service provision, and any other organizational activities;
- What the organization’s beliefs and values are regarding discrimination and oppression;
- How individuals may report discrimination if they experience or witness it; and,
- What steps will be followed if discrimination is reported.

Consult with an LGBTQ organization about your draft. Does it genuinely reflect the organization’s values and practices? Follow your organization’s unique process for developing and implementing organizational policies (i.e., management and/or Board approval).

STAGE 4: MAP OUT A PRE-IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

Implementing a policy involves more than circulating the actual policy statement around the office. It involves steps to infuse the letter and spirit of the policy throughout the organization and its practices. To ensure the policy is embraced and incorporated into all facets of the organization’s operations, we recommend creating a work plan for comprehensive implementation of the nondiscrimination policy. Read through Stage 5 first, and then make a list of the specific action steps required for each service provision component to fully implement the new policy. Use that list to map out a plan with timelines that include all identified action steps. Keep in mind that when you launch the new policy and actively engage in implementation, ongoing training, staff engagement, and evaluation of its effectiveness to prevent discrimination and promote inclusion will need attention. Build those “check points” in to your pre-implementation action plan.

STAGE 5: MOVE FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

Implementing an inclusive nondiscrimination policy affects all parts of a domestic violence or sexual violence organization. Think about how the nondiscrimination policy will affect attitudes and practice within each of the organization’s core victim services. Take the necessary time to think through how to be inclusive. Remember, it’s not just

what is written in the policy, but the actual words and actions that reflect meaningful inclusion. Deliberating on strategies for inclusion results in actions that will build staff comfort and confidence, while it ensures that your organization has the capacity to successfully and effectively serve LGBTQ survivors.

Since domestic violence and sexual violence victim service providers interact with survivors in a number of ways, think about specific strategies that promote LGBTQ inclusion for each component of domestic violence and sexual violence service provision. Here are some of the core services to consider:

Hotline and Crisis Line Calls

People calling in crisis and danger and the advocates responding to understand and address the callers' immediate needs around physical, emotional, and financial safety of survivors are often the first points of contact between survivors and victim services organizations. Advocates answering hotlines or crisis lines focus on opening up communication, not shutting it down. Training staff to employ gender-inclusive practices for responding to callers keeps the line open and does not alienate a survivor in danger. Gender-inclusive practices instruct advocates how not to make assumptions about a caller's gender identity or sexual orientation, as well as the gender identity and sexual orientation of the offending or abusing party. Ask open-ended questions about how the caller identifies with regard to their gender identity and sexual orientation. These questions help create a more inclusive process for determining their safety and immediate needs. Try using gender-neutral terms, such as "partner," "significant other," or "spouse" to create a non-gendered environment for the caller.

For some calls, gender-identifying information may be less relevant or more difficult to collect. Calls to the hotline or crisis line about coming into emergency shelter or securing an advocate to accompany a survivor to a sexual assault exam, often requires a more in-depth interview and screening process. If your organization's protocol requires an extensive screening and you find it necessary to identify an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity, respectfully ask survivors how they identify and how they would like to be called. Take a look at these sample questions:

"Would you mind if I ask you some questions about yourself in order to best support you? You do not have to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. How do you identify your gender? What would you like me to call you, or do you have a preferred name? How do you identify your sexual orientation? What pronouns would you like me to use?"

Some victim services organizations inadvertently use gender as the basis to determine whom the survivor is and who is the abusive partner is within a relationship. For LGBTQ individuals, this practice can be off-putting and even cause a survivor to forego accessing the physical safety your organization can provide. Collaborate with the local LGBTQ organization to provide training on how to be inclusive while answering hotline calls to help create a safe environment for those important first points of contact.

Intake and/or Screening for Shelter and Support Group Services

The considerations addressed for hotline and crisis line calls can easily be integrated into a more detailed intake process. For example, domestic violence and sexual violence victim service providers should revise their intake forms to create inclusive gender categories, such as:

Check all that apply:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Man	<input type="checkbox"/> Woman	<input type="checkbox"/> Transgender	
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-transgender	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-identified _____		

Including these categories provides individuals the ability to self-identify. It is preferable to provide the opportunity for the survivor to state their identity; just as it is done for race and ethnicity.

If personally identifying documentation is required as part of the intake process (driver’s license, visitation agreement involving children, Social Security Number to access transitional housing), consider how to be inclusive of survivors whose identifying documentation may not match their expressed or stated gender identity or preferred name. If, for whatever reason, the organization must be made aware of someone’s legal identity or relevant documentation (i.e., responding to a subpoena, for example), explain to the survivor that you are required to know the person’s legal name and gender, why you are required to know, and assure the person that you will use the names and pronouns the individual wishes when providing services. Be aware that these situations can be an incredibly uncomfortable part of the intake or screening process for someone whose gender identity or expression does not match the sex assignment on their documentation.

A significant portion of any intake process, especially for shelter services or support group facilitation, involves lots of forms, procedures, rules and policies. Review each of these documents to make all necessary gender-inclusive modifications, and train all staff on these changes. When reviewing the various rules, policies, and procedures involved with service provision, explain the organization’s new nondiscrimination

policy. Make sure every participant, including LGBTQ survivors, understands how the policy operates in practice. Inform survivors how to report discrimination that they have experienced or witnessed. When discussing the nondiscrimination policy, emphasize the safety it represents for everyone in the organization. Follow up with a couple of questions to learn what staff might do to make them feel supported and comfortable, and answer any remaining questions they may have about the policy. The intake process represents another component of service provision where training on working with transgender and gender nonconforming survivors would be vitally important.

Emergency Shelter Services

Incorporating LGBTQ survivors into communal living situations through shelters sometimes can feel challenging. Many organizations have shelters that were designed to provide safe haven for survivors and their children, who mostly were women. Accessing shelter services has been challenging for a number of LGBTQ survivors. However, there are multiple ways that domestic and sexual violence providers can support LGBTQ people seeking shelter. Many programs across the country have integrated successfully and effectively LGBTQ people, including transgender survivors and male survivors, into shelters. Since each and every shelter is unique, each organization has gone about integrating LGBTQ survivors into shelter differently. Consider these three strategies:

Integrating LGBTQ People in Shelters:

One common theme contributing to inclusion and integration in shelter services is the decision to begin sheltering all survivors. This universally inclusive practice required that policies be revised and appropriate action steps be taken to make inclusion a reality. They held conversations with all staff, provided necessary training, changed policies, informed survivors of the new shelter policies, and thought about and planned how and where to place survivors within shelters. The shelters also planned how to accommodate male and transgender survivors within bedrooms and bathrooms. Some shelters moved toward single rooms for all families, others created gendered rooms, while still others made it a practice to assign roommates of all genders together. Survivors should be allowed to use the restrooms that correspond with their gender identity. Some shelter programs created gender-neutral restrooms, allowing for as much privacy as possible, including locking stalls and individual showers.

Each organization will need to make these determinations for itself, yet organizations that decide to integrate their shelter should train all staff on serving LGBTQ survivors and addressing homophobia, biphobia, or transphobia, which

often occur within communal settings. One program that integrated their shelter is the SPAN program in Boulder, Colorado (see <http://www.safehousealliance.org> for contact information).

Providing Comparable Services:

Some victim services organizations that offer shelter services promote inclusion through the provision of comparable services (i.e., extended hotel placement) for survivors who do not reside within the shelter. Some programs provide a 30-day hotel stay for all survivors who do not identify as women. Transgender and gender nonconforming survivors should be housed with the gender with which they identify and feel most comfortable. Keep in mind that even if survivors are provided shelter in a different location (hotel) from other survivors (main shelter facility), develop processes to ensure that all survivors housed off-site have access to all of the services that survivors on-site receive (i.e., support groups, shelter meetings).

Creating Alternatives to the Shelter Model:

Some victim service organizations are moving beyond traditional shelters, and are creating alternatives sheltering services. These alternatives vary; some involve apartment placement for survivors seeking shelter, while others provide funds to supplement survivors' own housing.

Transitional Housing

Transitional housing programs often offer more privacy for survivors, and many of the challenges that arise from communal living are avoided. To be inclusive within transitional housing, consider what additional planning beyond communal living may need to take place for survivors in transitional housing. What specific issues and challenges may arise with on-site transitional housing as compared to scattered site housing?

If your organization owns and operates a facility for transitional housing, implement staff training across disciplines, from receptionists to safety staff, to maintenance staff, on supporting LGBTQ survivors. If there are any shared spaces within the housing unit, make appropriate plans for ensuring that all residents understand and agree that the space is LGBTQ-inclusive.

For scattered site areas, how can you inform and help landlords, apartment owners, and supers to be inclusive of LGBTQ individuals? Consider holding conversations with landlords, apartment owners, and supers and offer LGBTQ sensitivity training to them.

Support Groups and Counseling

Support groups and counseling play an important healing role for many survivors of domestic and sexual violence. For LGBTQ survivors, as with all survivors, a safe place to discuss their experiences is crucial to the healing process. To be inclusive within support groups, incorporate LGBTQ-inclusive agreements into the shared rules to make the space safer for everyone. Without singling out any one individual or group, hold open discussions within the support groups to talk about discrimination in general. If your organization will dedicate the resources, provide a mixed gender support group in addition to women only or men only support groups. Each survivor would be free to choose the group that best meets their needs. Also consider announcing, through fliers, web site posts, and newspaper advertisements, that your support groups are LGBTQ-inclusive, and include that information to LGBTQ organizations within your community. For individuals who request individual counseling, identify local mental health providers with LGBTQ expertise, and provide survivors with the list of confident referrals.

Legal Advocacy Services

Legal advocates provide vital support to survivors trying to navigate complex systems, such as law enforcement, courts, health care, and other social service systems. Partner with your local LGBTQ organization to train legal advocates and allied legal professionals about LGBTQ discrimination and its practical effects on accessing justice and services. Prepare legal advocates on navigating the sometimes-tricky waters of addressing LGBTQ discrimination while securing respectful, culturally inclusive treatment of survivors from law enforcement, court personnel, health care workers, or other social service providers. Work with your local legal services organizations to learn how discrimination plays out in practice throughout the community to best prepare advocates for securing the services LGBTQ services so desperately need.

Personnel/Management/Human Resources

Within the day-to-day internal operations of your organizations, think about how the LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination policy will impact employees and personnel-related practices. Consider the following questions to determine what pre-implementation action steps are needed to fully embrace the new policy.

Do current policies apply equally to staff, volunteers, Board members, and service recipients?

Nondiscrimination policies are not just for program participants who access services. Many domestic and sexual violence victim service providers have

nondiscrimination policies related to employment. Staff members, volunteers, and Board members also should be covered by the policy and involved in all efforts to prevent discrimination. For organizations that are comprised of LGBTQ-identifying staff members, volunteers, and Board members, having a policy that prohibits LGBTQ discrimination provides a safer and more productive work place.

What does an LGBTQ-inclusive policy mean for your hiring practices? Does the organization actively recruit individuals from diverse backgrounds, including LGBTQ individuals, for employment and volunteer opportunities?

It is also beneficial to include hiring practices within the scope of the nondiscrimination policy's coverage. Creating a statement that welcomes qualified individuals from diverse backgrounds as employees strengthens the organization overall. Consider reaching out to LGBTQ communities when posting for positions, and clearly stating that the organization does not discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression on job postings.

Systems Advocacy

Systems advocacy involves engaging with a wide variety of people, organizations, and systems to advocate for systemic change. Many domestic and sexual violence victim service providers engage in a variety of systems change efforts (i.e., coordinated community response teams-- CCR, domestic abuse response teams -- DART, and sexual assault response teams -- SART) to improve the way their communities respond to violence. Consider first what systems advocacy efforts the organization is engaged in. Are these teams aware and inclusive of LGBTQ survivors? What changes can be made to reduce and prevent discrimination against LGBTQ people within these systems? Recommend LGBTQ-specific policy changes within coordinated response teams. Work with CCRs, DARTs, and SARTs to hold trainings and discussions on concrete strategies that promote inclusion. For example, SARTs can bolster a coordinated community response to sexual assault by discussing and agreeing to protocols that ensure that all LGBTQ survivors are served with dignity, respect and nondiscriminatory practices. Scheduling ongoing conversations among these system teams to address discrimination of all kinds helps the individual players within those systems better respond to domestic and sexual violence.

CONCLUSION

Inclusion for all communities is an ongoing process. This Booklet sought to provide a basic framework and approach for domestic violence and sexual violence victim service organizations to think about, adopt, and implement an LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination policy. As victim services organizations, each of you shares a long track record of commitment to serving survivors and creating positive social change throughout communities nationwide. That fact underlies all that we do and aspire to in the movement to end violence. Committing to creating an organizational culture free from discrimination against LGBTQ people exists in that same spirit of serving all survivors and creating the change necessary to end the violence. Thank you for your commitment to inclusion and nondiscrimination!

APPENDIX A



National Office

New York City Anti-Violence Project
240 West 35th Street, Suite 200
New York, NY 10001
Phone: 212-714-1184
Fax: 212-714-2627

The following NCAVP member and affiliate list is current as of February 2014. The member organizations and affiliates are listed alphabetically by state or province for ease of reference. If you have corrections, want to learn more about our work, or know of an organization that may be interested in joining NCAVP, please contact the NCAVP Coordinator, at extension 50, or info@ncavp.org.

Program information below is listed as follows:

STATE

City

Organization Name

Focus Areas:

- HV (Hate Violence)
- IPV (Intimate Partner Violence)
- PM (Police Misconduct)
- SV (Sexual Violence)

Phone Numbers

Web

ARIZONA

Tucson

Wingspan Anti-Violence Programs
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Client: (800) 553-9387
Office: (800) 624-0348
Web: www.wingspan.org

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

LA Gay & Lesbian Center (LAGLC) Anti-Violence Project
HV, PM, SV
Client (English): (800) 373-2227
Client (Spanish): (877) 963-4666
Web: www.lalgbtcenter.org

Los Angeles

LAGLC Domestic Violence Legal Advocacy Project
IPV, SV
Office: (323) 993-7649
Toll-free: (888) 928-7233
Web: www.lalgbtcenter.org

Los Angeles

LAGLC STOP Domestic Violence Program
IPV, SV
Office: (323) 860-5806
Web: www.lalgbtcenter.org

San Francisco

Community United Against Violence
HV, IPV, PM, SV
24 Hour Hotline: (415) 333-HELP
Web: www.cuav.org

COLORADO

Denver

Colorado Anti-Violence Program
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Client: (888) 557-4441
Office: (303) 839-5204
Web: www.coavp.org

FLORIDA

Broward County

Broward LGBT Domestic Violence Coalition (NCAVP Affiliate)
IPV, SV
Office: (954)7645150 x.111

Miami

The Lodge/Victim Response, Inc.
IPV, SV
Crisis Line: (305) 693-0232
Web: www.thelodgemiami.org

Tallahassee

Inclusive LGBTQA Task Force
HV, IPV
E-mail: yfairell@hotmail.com

Wilton Manors

Sunserve Sunshine Social Services
IPV
Office: (954) 764-5150
Web: www.sunserve.org

GEORGIA

Atlanta

SpeakOut Georgia
HV, IPV, SV
Hotline: (678) 861-7867
Web: www.speakoutgeorgia.org

Atlanta

United4Safety
IPV, SV
Helpline: (404) 200-5957
Web: www.united4safety.org

East Point

Racial Justice Action Center
HV, PM
Office: (404) 458-6904
Web: www.rjactioncenter.org

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Center on Halsted Anti-Violence Project
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Office: (773) 871-2273
Web: www.centeronhalsted.org

Chicago

Illinois Accountability Initiative
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Office: (630) 661-4442

KENTUCKY

Louisville

Center for Women and Families
IPV, SV
24 hr Crisis Line: (877) 803-7577
Web: www.thecenteronline.org

LOUISIANA

New Orleans

BreakOUT!
HV, PM
Office: (504) 522-5435
Web: www.youthbreakout.org

New Orleans

HIV/AIDS Program, Louisiana Office of
Public Health (NCAVP Affiliate)
HV, IPV, SV
Office: (504) 568-7474

New Orleans

LGBT Community Center of New Orleans
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Office: (504) 945-1103

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Fenway Community Health Violence
Recovery Program
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Intake: (800) 834-3242
Office: (617) 927-6250
Web: www.fenwayhealth.org

Boston

The Network/La Red
IPV, SV
English/Spanish Hotline: (617) 742-4911
Web: www.tnlr.org

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Equality Michigan
HV, IPV, PM
Client: (866) 926-1147
Web: www.equalitymi.org

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis

OutFront Minnesota
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Hotline: (612) 824-8434
Web: www.outfront.org

MISSOURI

Kansas City

Kansas City Anti-Violence Project
 HV, IPV, PM, SV
 Client: (816) 561-0550
 Web: www.kcavp.org

St. Louis

Anti-Violence Advocacy Project of ALIVE
 HV, IPV, SV
 24 hr Crisis Line: (314) 993-2777
 Web: www.alivestl.org

St. Louis

St. Louis Violence Response Initiative
 HV, IPV, SV, PM
 Office: (314) 329-7660
 Hotline: (314) 329-7668
 Web: www.ejustmo.org

NEVADA

Las Vegas

Gender Justice Nevada
 HV, IPV, SV
 Hotline: (702) 425-7288

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico GLGBTQ Centers
 Office: (575) 635-4902
 Web: www.newmexicoglbqtcenters.org

NEW YORK

Albany

In Our Own Voices
 HV, IPV, SV
 Hotline: (518) 432-4341
 Office: (518) 432-4341
 Web: www.inourownvoices.org

Bayshore

Long Island GLBT Services Network
 HV, IPV, SV
 Office: (631) 665-2300
 Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth, Inc.
 Web: www.ligaly.org
 Long Island GLBT Community Center
 Web: www.ligbtcenter.org

Buffalo

Western New York Anti-Violence Project
 HV, IPV, SV, PM
 Office: (716) 948-5744

New York

New York City Anti-Violence Project
 HV, IPV, PM, SV
 24 hr English/Spanish hotline: (212) 714-1141
 Office: (212) 714-1184
 Web: www.avp.org

Rochester

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley
 HV, IPV, PM, SV
 Office: (585) 244-8640
 Web: www.gayalliance.org

NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh

Rainbow Community Cares, Inc.
 HV, IPV, PM, SV
 Office: (919)342-0897
 Web: www.rccares.org

OHIO

Statewide, Columbus Office

BRAVO (Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization)
 HV, IPV, PM, SV
 Client: (866) 86 BRAVO
www.bravo-ohio.org

ONTARIO

Toronto

The 519 Anti-Violence Programme
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Client: (416) 392-6877
Web: www.the519.org

OREGON

Eugene

Oregon Anti-Violence Project, The Gender
Center, Inc.
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Office: (541) 870-5202

RHODE ISLAND

Providence

Sojourner House
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Client: (401) 658-4334
Web: www.sojournerri.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

Greenville

Sean's Last Wish
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Office: (864) 884-5003
Web: www.seanslastwish.org

TENNESSEE

Memphis

Tabernacle of Love Ministries – Memphis
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Office: (901) 730-6082
Web: www.tabernacleofloveministries.org

TEXAS

Dallas

Resource Center Dallas
IPV
Office: (214) 540-4455
Web: www.rcdallas.org

Dallas

Trans Pride Initiative
HV, PM, IPV, SV
Office: (214) 449-1439
Web: www.tpride.org

Houston

Montrose Counseling Center
HV, IPV, SV
Office: (713) 529-0037
www.montrosecounselingcenter.org

VERMONT

Winooski

SafeSpace at the R U 1 2? Community
Center
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Client: (866) 869-7341
Web: www.ru12.org

VIRGINIA

Richmond

Virginia Anti-Violence Project
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Office: (804) 925-8287
Web: www.virginiaavp.org

QUEBEC

Montreal

Centre de Solidarité Lesbienne
IPV, SV
Client: (514) 526-2452
Web: www.soldaritelesbienne.qc.ca

WASHINGTON, D.C.

DC Trans Coalition
HV, IPV, PM, SV
Office: (202) 681-DCTC
Web: www.dctranscoalition.org

GLOV (Gays and Lesbians Opposing
Violence)
HV, PM
Office: (202) 682-2245
Web: www.glovdc.org

Rainbow Response Coalition
IPV, SV
Office: (202) 299-1181
Web: www.rainbowresponse.org

WISCONSIN

Appleton

Fox Valley/Oshkosh LGBTQ Anti-Violence
Project
HV, IPV, PM, SV
E-mail: foxoavp@gmail.com

Milwaukee

Milwaukee LGBT Center Anti-Violence
Project
HV, IPV, SV
Office: (414) 271-2656
Web: www.mkelgbt.org

NATIONAL

Milwaukee, WI
FORGE Sexual Violence Project
SV
Office: (414) 559-2123
Web: www.forge-forward.org

Blacklick, OH
National Leather Association (NCAVP
Affiliate)
IPV
Web: www.nlaidvproject.us/web