

Rainbow Tick Community of Practice Notes

August 2020

Thank you for joining our recent Rainbow Tick Community of Practice session.

Rainbow Health Victoria hosts these community of practice sessions to support and connect those working to develop LGBTIQ safe and welcoming services. The group offers an opportunity to ask questions, share challenges and develop good practice.

Rainbow Tick Community of Practice uses the Rainbow Tick standards as a useful framework to guide best practice, and is open to people from any organisation, at any point in a journey towards LGBTIQ inclusion.

In this session we focused on;

- **Standard 4: A Welcoming and Accessible Organisation**

In the current context where many services are providing remote service delivery, how do we signal to LGBTIQ staff, volunteers and service users that we are a safe and welcoming service for them in virtual environments?

- **Standard 6: Culturally Safe and Acceptable Services**

How do we identify, assess and manage what the specific challenges risks are for LGBTIQ staff and service users, in order to ensure cultural safety at this time?

Below we share some ideas that participants shared in this session about how we can translate these standards to the current context of our organisations and modes of delivery during Covid-19.

Thank you as always for to our participants for their active participation, wonderful ideas and hard work.

Welcoming and safe

4.1 The organisation welcomes LGBTI consumers through a range of different strategies that are appropriate to different contexts and environments.

Share resources and guidelines with staff about how to create and welcoming and inclusive environments for LGBTIQ people in online platforms. Some ideas are to wear a rainbow lanyard when on screen, add your pronoun to your name on Zoom, use inclusive imagery in Zoom backgrounds.

There is a lot of information flowing, from government and service providers, share information that is relevant to LGBTIQ staff and service users using simple clear messaging in social media.

Continue to acknowledge and celebrate LGBTIQ days of significance- through online platforms including newsletters, social media and your website. Many organisations recently celebrated Wear It Purple Day. Share links to resources and photos of your organisation's celebrations.

One organisation raised a rainbow flag on site and shared it on social media. These acts of support and solidarity are important at a time when many people can't connect physically with community.

4.2 The organisation's communication and educational materials are LGBTI-inclusive (E.g. inclusive language and images, and LGBTI specific information where relevant).

Ensure your organisations commitment to LGBTIQ inclusion, is outlined in diversity statements that are visible on your website, facebook, & other social/digital media.

Consult with LGBTIQ community members and organisations about good practice when it comes to language and images and take the lead of LGBTIQ community-controlled organisations.

Some services have an LGBTIQ-specific section of their website. Try to ensure this inclusion is embedded across the images and materials you use for all your programs. You can include images of staff and clients that reflect the diverse reality of your staff, clients and volunteers. This includes diversity of age, cultural background, ability and gender, including depictions of non-heteronormative relationships and family structures. Check out this source of free, diverse and contemporary images of LGBTIQ people.

Some organisations have a rainbow version of their organisations branding.

Include rainbow/trans/intersex flags on promotional materials for your service. You can find a list of all the flags [here](#) and [here](#). A rainbow flag on its own may not create safety for someone who is non-binary, or has an intersex variation for example, as they may not relate to the rainbow flag.

Our Aboriginal peers have told us it is not appropriate to display the rainbow flag using an acknowledgement similar to acknowledgment of country. Acknowledging Aboriginal sovereignty and connection to country is a very specific and important message and deserves its own space. Share your message of LGBTIQ inclusion in a different place and format.

Add your pronouns, as well as flags and diversity statements to email footers.

Many staff are under stress at this time. Providing clear guidance about inclusive practice in the form of simple guidelines or scripted questions and responses can be useful to ensure consistent care.

Share links to LGBTIQ community-controlled health and community services.

If you are providing studies and examples, include LGBTIQ people in these.

4.3 The organisation effectively communicates its services to the LGBTI community.

Reassure LGBTIQ people that your service is there for them through regular, targeted posts on social media.

Partner with other agencies, including LGBTIQ specialist services to connect with LGBTIQ community, for young LGBTIQ people this might include headspace, school nurses, local council youth groups.

Understanding current needs/ context

6.1 The organisation understands the needs of LGBTI consumers and addresses these needs in the design and delivery of services and programs.

How do we connect with LGBTIQ community and find out about the specific needs of LGBTIQ people at this time?

Organisations have utilised surveys of both staff and consumers, feedback forms, and social media to reach people.

Establish or utilise existing diversity committees, community representatives and community reference groups, these may need to meet via zoom or over the phone.

Contributing community expertise to organisations takes energy and time that many people are short on at the moment. Take this into account, you may need to adapt how you consult with community. Check in with members of consultation groups about whether they currently have energy and time to continue to provide this expertise. Be clear about why you are seeking this information and what you will do with it.

Connect with LGBTIQ community-controlled organisations to find out what they are hearing from community.

Intake and assessment

6.2 Individual intake, assessment, care planning and case management processes and documentation are LGBTI inclusive.

Intake and assessment processes are currently being readapted across health and community services to meet the requirements of covid-19.

Consistent, safe and inclusive processes are challenging to maintain at the best of times, especially for large organisations with a range of sites and services.

Staff need accessible resources to support them to maintain consistent and inclusive processes at this time. Some organisations have provided staff with 'cheat-sheets' to remind them of appropriate language and processes. Resources can also be provided to clients about the diversity policies, and feedback processes of your organisation, for example information on why you ask questions about sex, sexuality and gender identity and what happens with the information you provide.

Offer staff the opportunity to participate in communities of practice and connect with peer organisations also working to improve LGBTIQ inclusive practice.

Visit www.rainbowhealthvic.org.au to register for the next Rainbow Tick community of practice.

6.3 The organisation's service delivery risk management system includes strategies to identify and manage potential risks to the cultural safety of LGBTI consumers

Make your privacy and confidentiality policies easily accessible on your websites and promotional materials.

6.4 The organisation has processes in place to identify and respond to breaches of the cultural safety of LGBTI consumers, staff and volunteers by other staff, consumers, volunteers or visitors.

Remind all staff, volunteers and service users about existing feedback and complaints mechanisms.

Consider what new and current context specific risks might exist for staff, volunteers and service users and add them to your risk register.

Particularly for staff and volunteers there may be an increased need for debrief, supervision and support. Make sure staff and volunteers know about what supports are available to them.

6.5 The organisation disseminates information about LGBTI cultural safety across its programs and services and to other organisations.

Sharing stories of the lived experience of LGBTIQ people (using video or zoom) has helped some organisations maintain connection and commitment to inclusive practice and cultural safety.