

Best Practices in Health Services for LGBT Youth

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The Problem:

Substantial health risk is often left unaddressed during clinical encounters between providers and LGBT youth. Research has shown that healthcare providers, and particularly physicians, report being ill-equipped to best serve LGBT youth.

Medical schools corroborate this by reporting training on LGBT health is often inadequate. Though best practices are being studied and have been discussed in a variety of reports, e.g., Lambda Legal's "National Recommendations for Serving LGBT Homeless Youth", the actual implementation of best practices in healthcare services, and how these practices are effecting health outcomes, is not well understood.

Research Questions:

- What is health care professionals' current knowledge of how to provide optimal care for LGBT youth?
- What standards, guidelines, or best practices (if any) are being used in their places of work to provide such care?
- Are health care professionals aware of the unique health needs of LGBT youth?



Approach:

- Literature review and environmental scan of six healthcare organizations and their guidelines for working with LGBT youth.
- Interviews with four healthcare professionals who work with LGBT youth around the US.
- Audience analysis to shape training components
- Online survey distributed to 100 healthcare professionals.
- Incorporation of health communication theory and development of best practices training material for the Center for Social Innovation.

Results:

- Data suggests a need for further training about LGBT youth health in general and best practices.
- 8% of participants reported receiving formal best practices training for working with youth who identified as LGBT.
- Eighty percent of respondents agreed that there is a lack of medical education concerning health care issues for youth who identify as LGBT, and all respondents believed that health care professionals should be specifically trained on how to provide high quality health care for youth who identify as LGBT.
- The greatest need for best practices were in the areas of addressing LGBT identity during the intake process, implementing nondiscrimination policies, developing connections to community LGBT organizations and providing LGBT competency training to all employees and volunteers.

Final Product: Best Practices for Health Care Professionals Who Work with LGBT Youth



References:

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