

# HEALING TOGETHER

When our relationships are safe and healthy, so are our communities.



Photo by Uriel Mont from Pexels

## Creating Inclusive Nonviolence Programs for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Gender Non-Binary, and Queer Community Members

**Why use this tool?** Research and the lived experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender non-binary and queer people show that relationship violence can be just as, or even more pervasive, as violence in cis-gendered and heterosexual relationships. And yet, many violence intervention programs are designed to treat cis-men who have caused harm in heterosexual relationships.

For decades now, this inequity has meant that many people who don't fit that paradigm have effectively been shut out from healing and healthy relationship supports.

**This brief list of practices is meant to help nonviolence program facilitators think about how to create a more inclusive and responsive space for LGBTQ+ participants.**

Along with other Healing Together tools, this guide aims to support organizations in shifting away from relying on criminal-legal system interventions and towards healing-centered, restorative, non-punitive approaches to building safety and accountability, and working with men to end cycles of violence.

### Inclusive Practices for Nonviolence Program Facilitators

- Develop policies and protocols that ensure staff and program facilitators will keep gender identity and sexuality confidential (for both participants and their partners) and account for different ability needs.
- Implement policies and practices that aim to foster a safe environment for participants in mixed groups and pay attention to how many LGBTQ+ individuals are served.
- Recruit and train more program facilitators that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender non-conforming or queer to improve access to facilitators with a shared lived expertise.
- Engage in regular LGBTQ+ and anti-oppression trainings that center sexual diversity, gender plurality, and examine intersections with race and wealth.
- Create expectations of valuing and respecting all genders and sexualities and have policies in place for addressing homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, harassment and discrimination; and clearly communicate expectations and policies to participants and staff.
- Revise instructional materials, promotional content, and curricula to include non-heterosexist, non-gender binary language, images, examples of same-sex power dynamics, etc.
- Consider creating a program or dedicated space specifically for those who identify as LGBTQ+.
- Ensure the curricula in use addresses systems of privilege and domination including homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia.
- Engage in outreach to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender non-conforming and queer communities to offer supports around partner violence and healthy relationships.
- Collaborate with local LGBTQ+ organizations to strengthen access to expertise and support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, gender non-conforming and queer people.

## ADDRESSING MISPERCEPTIONS

- Relationship violence experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender non-conforming, and queer individuals can be just as severe, or worse, than that experienced by hetero and cis-gendered individuals.
- Sexism, patriarchy, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and heterosexism can be factors in the root causes of relationship violence no matter the gender identity and sexual orientation of people involved, as can racism, classism, and ableism.
- Any person, regardless of physical appearance or gender expression, can be violent or abusive in a relationship.