Inclusion & Equity for Everyone

Addressing the Needs of the LGBTQ Community

Aetna Medicaid
Health Equity Strategy Team

2020

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Training Objectives

Personal and organizational values impact healthcare delivery

Communication and empathy create connections

Knowledge and skill integration improve outcomes

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Culture affects every relationship you have, whether you are aware of it or not

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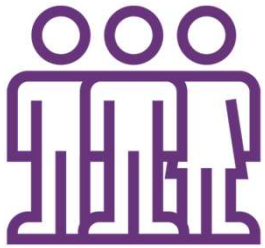
Aspects of culture

Personal

- Self Reflection
- Values
- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Practice Integration



Organizational

- Federal Guidelines (National CLAS)
- State Proposals/Contracts
- Policies and Procedures
- Workforce
- Environment

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Key Values

Cultural competence

- Embraces principles of equal access and nondiscriminatory practices
- Identifies and understands the needs and help-seeking behaviors of individuals and families
- Works with natural, informal support and helping networks within culturally diverse communities

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Cultural Awareness

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LGBTQ Defined

Term	Definition
Lesbian	A woman who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women.
Gay	A person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.
Bi Sexual	A person emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender, or gender identity, though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way, or to the same degree.
Transgender	A person whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation; therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.
Queer/Questioning	The "Q" can represent the word "queer" to express fluid identities and orientations and also represent the term, "Questioning" to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

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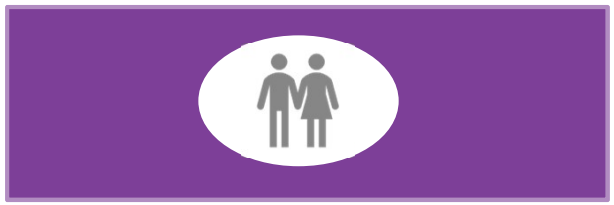
Health disparities in the LGBTQ population

- LGBTQ populations have the highest rates of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use.
- Lesbians are less likely to receive preventive services for cancer.
- Gay men are at higher risk of HIV and other STDs, especially among communities of color.
- Lesbians and bisexual females are more likely to be overweight or obese.
- Transgender individuals have a high prevalence of HIV/STDs, victimization, mental health issues and suicide and are less likely to have health insurance than heterosexual or LGB other individuals.
- Elderly LGBTQ individuals face additional barriers to health because of isolation and a lack of social services and culturally competent providers.

Societal discrimination and common barriers experienced by people who identify as LGBTQ

Lack of Legal Protection

- Increase in mental health problems in states without LGBTQ protections
- Shorter lifespans of LGBTQ people who live in places without LGBTQ legal protections
- Lack of laws protecting against bullying in schools



Violence

- Victims of hate crimes are more likely to suffer poor health
- Violence and victimization are frequent for LGBT individuals, and have long-lasting effects on the individual and the community

Healthcare Access

- Lower rates of health insurance coverage
- Lack of provider knowledge about LGBTQ health
- Previous discrimination in healthcare
- Lack of identifying information in intake forms

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Families and Equality

- 3 million US lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) Americans have had a child, and as many as 6 million American children and adults have an LGBTQ parent.
- Among LGBTQ adults under 50 living alone or with a spouse or partner, 48% of women and 20% of men are raising a child under 18.
- 19% of transgender adults have had a child.
- Same-sex couples raising children are 7 times more likely than their different-sex counterparts to be raising an adopted child.
- More than 24,000 same-sex couples are raising adopted children in the U.S.
- Approximately 3,300 same-sex couples are raising foster children in the U.S.

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Statistics on the LGBTQ youth population

- A 2019 study found 30.4 percent of youth in foster care identify as LGBTQ and 5 percent as transgender, compared to 11.2 percent and 1.17 percent of youth not in foster care.
- Nationally, 40% of homeless youth are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered.
- Nationally, 50% of gay teens experience a negative reaction from their parents when they come out and because parents have difficulty accepting their child's sexual orientation, 26% are kicked out of their home
- LGBTQ young adults who experience high levels of rejection are more than three times as likely to use illegal drugs, almost six times as likely to have high levels of depression, and more than eight times as likely to have attempted suicide

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System Barriers for LGBTQ Foster Youth

- Over-represented in foster care, juvenile justice systems and homeless settings and are more likely to suffer from constant harassment and abuse
- Face the prospect of neglect, discrimination and abuse by the child welfare systems charged to protect them
- Inappropriate placements and a lack of understanding of the needs of LGBTQ youth also endanger their health and safety
- At risk for physical violence, substance abuse, unsafe sex and even suicide
- 13 States have no protections against discrimination for LGBTQ youth receiving foster care and adoption services; an additional 11 States do not protect transgender youth receiving these services

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The LGBTQ Community would like you to know.....

- The LGBTQ community is as diverse as the general public.
- It includes all races, ethnicities, income levels, and educational backgrounds, as well as rural, suburban, and urban dwellers.
- Among different ethnic groups, religious traditions, and cultures, the topics of sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression are viewed and addressed differently.
- The terms, expressions, and ways of defining oneself are often tied to cultural understandings of sexuality and gender and are often influenced by popular culture, generational experience, religious upbringing, and/or region of the country.
- The language and terminology used within and about the LGBTQ community has evolved over time. For example, many younger LGBTQ Americans have reclaimed the term “queer” and may choose that term to self-identify. Other terms might include “same-gender loving,” having a “fluid” sexuality, or identifying as “two-spirit” for American Indian and Alaska Native individuals.

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Skill Integration

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Quick tips

Use gender preferred pronouns

Employ appropriate and respectful communication

Focus on providing services that emphasize dignity and respect

Honor and protect confidentiality

Avoid assumptions about what services are needed

Identify with the member resources and supports that enhance quality of life

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Community Strategies

- Safe schools, neighborhoods, and housing
- Access to recreational facilities and activities
- Availability of safe meeting places
- Access to health services

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Organizational Strategies

Physical Environment

- Consider the LGBT community's "first" potential view of the providers/programs -the website, educational materials and signage
- Post a nondiscrimination policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity
- Ensure that public areas include wall art with LGBTQ images and contain LGBTQ publications
- Place rainbow stickers or pins on staff and posters
- Include LGBTQ images and language in all printed materials/brochures
- Designate gender-neutral bathrooms

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Provider Strategies

Documentation

- Collect and analyze data on LGBTQ health.
- Create spaces on forms for “preferred pronoun” and “preferred name”.
- Change intake forms to ask for “relationship status” rather than marital status and include options such as “partnered”.
- Differentiate between “gender” and “sex assigned at birth” on patient intake forms,
- Add a “transgender” option to the gender section, allowing people to fill in more than one box and add another word that may feel more accurate.

Engagement Strategies

Communicate with people who identify as LGBTQ

- Ask about gender identity and sexual orientation
- Record information with respect and confidentiality
- Respond to an error in language or pronoun
- Develop an LGBTQ-friendly referral list

Partner with LGBTQ community members and organizations

- Work with LGBTQ staff and employee groups
- Partner with LGBTQ organizations for outreach
- Invite LGBTQ community members onto advisory boards

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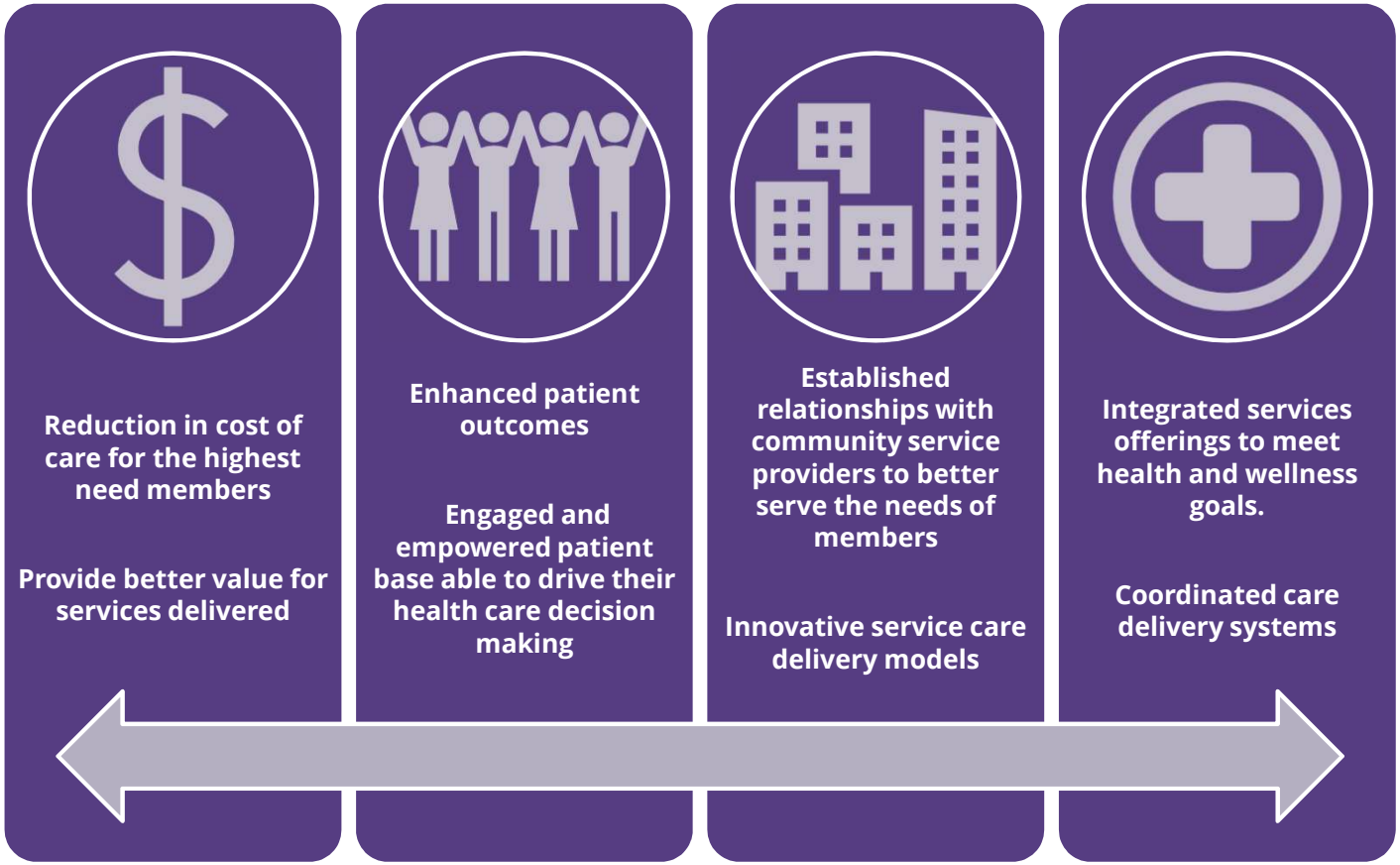
Return on investment



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PRIDE+

Aetna's Network for LGBTQ and Ally Employees

Our Mission

Empower LGBTQ and ally members to advocate inclusiveness and equality across Aetna and within the communities in which we live and work.

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