

The 4 Ps Model: Creating an LGBT-Friendly Mental Health Service

GLEN - Gay and Lesbian Equality Network

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The 4 Ps Model

The 4Ps model is a strategic framework for achieving a service that is inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. This model was developed in Canada in the 1990s and has been adopted by GLEN as a framework to assist mental health services to make their service more LGBT-friendly. It has four interlinked components which are key building blocks for creating LGBT-inclusive services: public profile; policy and procedures; programmes; and professional development.

1. Public Profile

This refers to the message that the mental health service communicates publicly about LGBT people. Consider the following questions:

- What is the profile of the needs of LGBT people within the service and how is this profile communicated publicly?
- What message is communicated to prospective LGBT users of the mental health service?
- How would an LGBT person know the service is LGBT-friendly and that it's safe to disclose their LGBT identity where relevant?

It's vital for services to profile publicly that they are LGBT-friendly. This will let prospective LGBT service users know that they're welcome and will receive the same high quality service as everyone else. This can be achieved by:

- Publicly indicating on the service website that the service is non-discriminatory and values and respects diversity of people using the service (naming sexual orientation and gender identity as examples of diversity)
- Including appropriate reference to LGBT people and/or LGBT mental health on the service's website and in information for service users
- Displaying a poster for the National LGBT Helpline (1890 929 539) or displaying literature in the service e.g. copies of Gay Community News
- Advertising in the gay press (e.g. GCN)
- Developing liaisons with the local LGBT services

2. Policy & Procedures

This refers to the service's policies on equality and diversity and other policies relevant to LGBT people. It also includes procedures to ensure the provision of a service that caters for a diverse range of service users including LGBT people.

Consider the following questions:

- Does the service have an equality and diversity policy and if so does it make explicit reference to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people?
- Does the service have LGBT-inclusive policies, e.g. equal treatment of spouses and civil partners, next-of-kin, involvement of partners in care
- Is there a clear procedure for dealing with homophobic and transphobic behaviour, comments or attitudes at all levels of the service?
- Are these policies and procedures communicated to staff/volunteers and implemented throughout the service?

Under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2008, public and private mental health services must ensure non-discrimination and equal access in the provision of their services. To demonstrate compliance with this legislation it is good practice to have a written equality and diversity policy that outlines the nine grounds of the Acts including sexual orientation and gender identity.

Implementation of such a policy will clearly communicate to staff and service users the service's commitment to respecting diversity and promoting equality. The service's commitment to being LGBT-inclusive can also be articulated in the service ethos statement or service user charter.

3. Programmes

This refers to work being done by the service to address the specific mental health needs of LGBT people and to include LGBT people in the service. Consider the following questions:

- Would your LGBT service users benefit from a targeted initiative to meet their specific needs?
- If LGBT people are underrepresented in your service user profile, what could you do to target your service to the LGBT population?

- Are there opportunities for the organisation to include LGBT people in consultations on the design, delivery and evaluation of its services?

Many services have already developed successful programmes to make their service LGBT-inclusive. Consider the following:

- There are numerous LGBT organisations that are willing and able to support services to develop targeted programmes (see www.lgbt.ie for list)
- Services can advertise or communicate with the LGBT community via Gay Community News (see www.gcn.ie).
- Mental health services can display LGBT information and posters so that LGBT users will know the service is aware of their existence and that the service is LGBT-friendly.
- Specific mental health supports can also be developed, e.g. to cater for the needs of LGBT young people or parents of LGBT people.

4. Professional Development

This refers to specific work being carried out by the service to support staff/volunteers to be LGBT-inclusive in their work. Consider the following questions:

- What has the service done to ensure staff/volunteers are aware of LGBT health issues and needs?
- What has the service done to ensure staff/volunteers provide the service in a manner that is compliant with Equality legislation and LGBT-friendly?
- What resources can be developed to support staff/volunteers to be LGBT-friendly and help them cater to the specific needs of LGBT people?

Increasingly mental health services are developing resources to support staff and volunteers to provide an LGBT-friendly and inclusive service. Examples of such professional development are:

- Good practice guides for the service – the College of Psychiatry of Ireland published a guide for mental health services in 2011 and this can be adopted by the mental health service to promote LGBT-inclusive practice. You can find it here: http://www.glen.ie/attachments/The_issues_for_mental_health_practice.pdf
- LGBT mental health training for staff and volunteers – the Health Service Executive provides LGBT mental health training for services through the

range of LGBT organisations it funds and services can avail of this by contacting GLEN and other groups.

- Including LGBT issues in as part of CME/CPD activities, in-services, in seminars/conferences and in professional publications

Resources

The following resources will help mental health service to implement the 4Ps model:

Sexual Orientation:

- ***Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Patients: The Issues for Mental Health Practice:*** College of Psychiatry of Ireland & GLEN, 2011
www.glen.ie/attachments/CPsychI_LGB_Mental_Health_Guide.PDF
- ***Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual People: Guide to Good Practice for Mental Health Nurses:*** Irish Institute of Mental Health Nursing & GLEN, 2010.
www.glen.ie/attachments/IIMHN_LGB_Mental_Health_Guide.PDF
- ***Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual People: A Guide to Good Practice for Social Workers:*** Irish Association of Social Workers & GLEN, 2011.
www.glen.ie/attachments/IASW_LGB_Mental_Health_Guide.PDF
- ***Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation:*** American Psychological Association, 2009. Available at:
www.glen.ie/attachments/APA_Therapeutic_Responses.PDF

Gender Identity:

- ***Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People:*** WPATH, 2012.
www.glen.ie/attachments/WPATHstandards.PDF
- ***Guidance for GPs, Other Clinicians and Health Professionals on the Care of Gender Variant People: Transgender Wellbeing and Healthcare:*** National Health Service, 2008.
www.gires.org.uk/assets/DOH-Assets/pdf/doh-guidelines-for-clinicians.pdf

LGBT Research & Reports:

- ***LGBT Health: Towards Meeting the Healthcare Needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People:*** Health Service Executive, 2009.
www.glen.ie/attachments/HSE_LGBT_Health_Report.PDF
- ***Supporting LGBT Lives: A Study of the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People:*** Mayock et al, 2009.
www.glen.ie/attachments/Supporting_LGBT_Lives_Report.PDF
- ***Visible Lives: Identifying the Experiences and Needs of Older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in Ireland:*** Higgins et al, 2011
www.glen.ie/attachments/Visible_Lives_Report.PDF

About GLEN

The Gay & Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) is a policy and strategy focussed organisation which aims to deliver ambitious and positive change for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Ireland. Our work programmes address legal recognition and support for same-sex relationships and families; education; mental health; sexual health; community safety, workplace diversity and immigration. GLEN was a winner of a People of the Year award in 2010.

Odhrán Allen is the GLEN Director of Mental Health and our mental health programme is funded by the Health Service Executive and the National Office for Suicide Prevention. For more information about our work on mental health see:

www.glen.ie/page.aspx?contentid=331&name=mental_health_and_well_being

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