



Amplifying Voices

Reaching out to LGBTQ+ South Asians

AMPLIFYING VOICES: REACHING OUT TO LGBTQ+* SOUTH ASIANS

(Draft)

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**LGBTQ+ = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Two-spirited, Allies and more*

Dear Colleagues:

As part of Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)'s ongoing commitment in the areas of anti-racism, anti-oppression and anti-homophobia, we are currently exploring ways in which we can assist our member agencies to become more inclusive in serving the South Asian LGBTQ+ population. We are delighted to share with you this resource booklet: our initial attempt to help our agencies and their frontline workers in reaching out to South Asian LGBTQ+ communities effectively.

CASSA sincerely thanks all the community members and agencies for your participation in the two focus groups and for completing our surveys. Your input during the process was critical in helping us develop this initial tool. We also plan to use your feedback to guide the continuation of our work in this field throughout the next year.

This resource booklet is just another beginning. It will be an evolving document. As a start, we have printed a small number of copies as the first batch and are seeking your input to improve it before we print more for wider circulation. In addition, we will be sharing the information in this booklet through online/web-based communication.

Thank you for your support, encouragement and guidance. We are looking forward to your continued engagement in CASSA's future initiatives.

In Solidarity,

Neethan Shan
Executive Director
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)

1. Introduction

The South Asian community in Toronto is the city's fastest growing visible minority group. According to Statistics Canada, by 2017 more than one million South Asians will be living in Toronto, making it one of the largest diaspora in the city. It is also important to be mindful that LGBTQ+ South Asians will be a large community in this city given that approximately 10% of any population is LGBTQ+. Therefore it is very important for service providers to start actively working within anti-oppressive, anti-racist, anti-homophobic and anti-heterosexist frameworks to offer services that are accessible, equitable and inclusive.

2. Myths

- **I don't know any lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer clients.**

You may not know any LGBTQ clients who are "out" to you, but you likely do know some. Trans people who pass often don't disclose their previous identity. What would make you think you can tell if a client is LGBTQ+ or not?

- **You can "spot" a lesbian, a gay man or a trans identified person.**

For the most part, you can only "spot" LGBTQ+ people if they want to be identified, or if they fit your stereotype of what LGBTQ+ people look like. Don't let the stereotype fool you. There are feminine, masculine and androgynous men who are straight, bi, trans and gay. There are also feminine, masculine and androgynous women who are straight, bi, trans and lesbian.

- **Being lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans is abnormal and unnatural.**

The Canadian Psychological and Psychiatric Associations consider the human desire for same-sex relationships to be healthy and normal. The American Psychological Association states that, “It is no more abnormal or sick to be homosexual than to be left-handed.” You may also find religious and cultural views that dictate that being LGBTQ+ is unnatural or abnormal – however within the context of your work, LGBTQ+ clients need and deserve 100% of your professional respect, support and assistance.

- **I don’t know how to help LGBTQ+ clients.**

Up until now you have probably helped and worked with many LGBTQ clients+. The only difference after someone discloses to you is NOW you know. Service providers who are knowledgeable about their clients needs and situations can do a much better job in providing services and making appropriate referrals. It is not appropriate to ask a client if they are LGBTQ+ even if you have a strong feeling they might be. The best way to know is to foster an environment where they feel safe and comfortable enough to share with you.

[Source: “Introduction to Understanding LGBTQ Newcomers”, Among Friends Project, Access Alliance –

<http://accessalliance.ca/sites/accessalliance/files/Intro%20To%20Understanding%20LGBTQ%20Newcomers.pdf>]

3. Voices of the Community

Question: Briefly describe a positive or negative experience you had while accessing services (in Settlement / Immigration, Health Care System, Social Services / Counseling, Housing / Shelters / Food Banks, Educational institutions)

“I have a trans boyfriend and when we go to hospital emergency rooms or to doctors together we are treated as though we are freaks. My own family doctor is not sex positive at all and does not understand polyamory or non monogamy.”

“Personally I have experienced negative experiences when dealing with immigration and social services where I was frowned down upon for being Trans and due to my ethnic background.”

“My partner of 18 years had a major surgery. I was in the waiting room and the surgeon knew I was there, anxious for news. The surgeon's heterosexist and racial assumptions did not allow for her to recognize that a South Asian woman (me) was the spouse waiting for news in the waiting room. She walked right by me. I told her that I was waiting for news, and she still didn't realize that it was MY partner on which she had performed surgery. A very alienating experience in an already frightening situation”

“Overall, my experiences have been positive but they have been with services that are largely organized and managed by non-South Asians. There are a few services

specifically directed at South Asians who do not wish to address the LGBTQ+ community. It is an issue that is not discussed.”

“I have a doctor who is a South Asian woman. I really trust her because I know she works within a community health centre that has an anti-oppression philosophy. She asks questions about partners in neutral ways and values my same-sex relationship by asking about it on a regular basis.”

“Other than colour and age discrimination in some educational institutions, I haven’t had any serious problem. I used to be a member of a South Asian Gay men organization called Khush, where I felt very comfortable, and everyone respected me”

“Being told that I hadn't filled out a form properly because the person didn't believe that I was queer...In a queer positive space, might I add”

Question: What additional factors cause difficulty in accessing services? Ex: assumed gender presentation, language barrier, heteronormative assumptions, lack of translation, ability concerns, immigration status, unwelcoming waiting rooms or reception, etc.

“All of the above and lack of information on what services exist that are accessible and not disempowering to seek out. This booklet will be a great resource and hopefully you'll be doing trainings with service providers on how we can better serve LGBTQ++ communities, challenge our own heteronormative assumptions and be better allies.”

“Language barriers, lack of translation and unwelcoming racial or discriminative comments and gestures from select individuals.”

“Heteronormative assumptions and the idea that South Asian families are generally very homophobic. I think these are common misrepresentations that need to be broken down before any service can effectively serve the community.”

“Gender expression, racism (hostile environment), cultural assumptions (South Asians are all wife-burning misogynists and therefore sexism is the "norm" in our communities)”

4. Protection for LGBTQ+ people under the Human Rights Code

The Ontario Human Rights code prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Sexual Orientation and the Human Rights Code

The Ontario Human Rights Code is a law that provides for equal rights and opportunities and recognizes the dignity and worth of every person in Ontario. The Code makes it against the law to discriminate against someone or to harass them because of their sexual orientation or their marital status which includes same-sex relationships. This right to be free from discrimination and harassment applies to employment, facilities, accommodation and

housing, contracts and membership in unions, trade or professional associations. This means that a person cannot be treated unequally or subjected to harassment in these areas because he or she is gay, lesbian, heterosexual or bisexual. It is also illegal to discriminate because someone is in a same-sex relationship.

[Source: Ontario Human Right Commission: Ontario Human Right Commission: http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/issues/sexual_orientation]

Gender Identity and the Human Rights Code

People who are discriminated against or harassed because of gender identity are legally protected under the ground of 'sex'. This includes transsexual, transgender and intersex persons, cross-dressers, and other people whose gender identity or expression is, or is seen to be, different from their birth-identified sex. Gender identity is linked to a person's sense of self, and particularly the sense of being male or female. A person's gender identity is different from their sexual orientation, which is also protected under the Code.

[Source: Ontario Human Right Commission: http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/issues/gender_identity]

Discrimination: is treating someone unfairly based on: Race, Colour, Religion or creed, National or ethnic origin, Citizenship, Age, Sex, Physical or mental disability, Sexual orientation, Marital or family status, and it can be direct or indirect. Discrimination can result from individual behaviour as well as the unintended and often unconscious consequences of a discriminatory system. This is known as systemic discrimination.

What can be done in cases of Discrimination?

One can make a Discrimination Claim with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario by filing an application. You can visit the website for information on Applicant's Guide, Respondent's Guide, Plain Language Guide, and the Rules of Procedure Governing Part IV Applications.

For further assistance please contact the Human Rights Legal Support Centre.

You can also call the Tribunal toll-free at 1-866-598-0322

[Source: Ontario Ministry of Attorney General:

http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/justice-ont/human_rights.asp#]

Discrimination in the Health system

If someone has been discriminated against by a doctor based on their sexual orientation or gender identity they can contact:

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario :

www.cpso.on.ca/contactus Toll Free: 1-800-268-7096 x 603

Discrimination in Housing

A landlord cannot discriminate against someone because they are LGBTQ+. For more information about finding housing or reporting discrimination, visit these websites:

Settlement in Ontario: <http://settlement.org/site/HO>

New Youth in Ontario: www.newyouth.ca/life/housing

Discrimination in Employment

An employer cannot discriminate against someone because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. For assistance in cases of such discrimination contact:

Workers Action Centre: www.workersactioncentre.org

[Source: OCASI, Positive Spaces Initiative Starter Kit

<http://www.positivespaces.ca/sites/positivespaces.ca/files/OCASI%20Positive%20Spaces%20Starter%20Kit%20-%20English.pdf>]

Harassment: is making a hurtful comment or action that is known or ought to be known to be unwelcome. Examples of situations that might be considered harassment include:

- A landlord says to a lesbian tenant she should “go live with people like yourself because you do not belong here”.
- Homophobic jokes or hints being made about a person's sexual orientation or same-sex relationship.
- The display of disrespectful signs, caricatures, cartoons or graffiti.

[Source: Ontario Ministry of Attorney General:

http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/justice-ont/human_rights.asp#]

Hate crimes: refer to criminal offences that are motivated by hate towards an identifiable group. The incident may target race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar factor, such as profession or political beliefs. These types of offences are unique in that they not only affect those who may be specifically targeted by the perpetrator, but they often indirectly impact entire communities.

More than half of all hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation are violent. About one in ten police-reported incidents of hate crime were motivated by sexual orientation, usually homosexuality (98%). Unlike hate crimes motivated by race/ethnicity or religion, those driven by hatred towards a particular sexual orientation were primarily violent (56%), rather than property related (36%), with common assault being the most frequent type

of violation. As a result, incidents motivated by sexual orientation were more likely than other types of hate crime incidents to result in physical injury to victims.

[Source: Statistics Canada:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2008017-eng.pdf>]

5. Anti-Oppression Policy

It is extremely crucial to use an Anti-oppression framework while serving **all** communities in order to provide services that are equitable and inclusive. In order to effectively execute this framework, it would require the active involvement of people belonging to diverse groups within the community (without tokenizing) as well as an organizational attitude of openness.

The Basic Framework for Anti – Oppression and Diversity Policy

- one of the many challenges when serving diverse communities is not just limited to issues of access and inclusion based on individual's race, language, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, ability, age, religion etc.
- It is important to work within contexts of power and privilege, as well as other factors such as ideologies of subordination and domination which usually sustains and supports the oppressive systemic hierarchies.
- Diversity is the wide range of differences among people based on age, ethnicity, race, language, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ability, class, education etc. but is not limited to these.
- The core principles of inclusion:

- recognizes that society is diverse and that diversity is enriching rather than a problem.
- identifies that practices modeled after dominant cultural or societal norms will directly result in inequity and exclusion of certain groups of people.
- from an organizational perspective, inclusion would demand a strategic process to break down barriers and introduce change based on accepting the ideology that people face barriers (for instance while accessing services) due to systemic and societal factors as opposed to just personal reasons.

[Source: Sistering, Framework for Anti-oppression and Diversity Policy <http://www.sistering.org/about/nondiscrimination.php>]

What is Anti- Oppression?

Oppression is when a group of select people maintains or develop their own social or economic status by using their power to suppress, disempower or marginalize another group of people. Usually, oppression results in the exploitation of one group by the other for their own benefits. Oppression is deeply rooted within social institutions and dominant culture but remains invisible and affects people regularly.

Oppression can happen through:

- institutions (ex: Media portraying mostly heterosexual relationships)
- individuals (ex: a career counselor encouraging students from a particular ethnic background to apply to college instead of university)
- culture (ex: magazines depicting beauty as mostly white, skinny, straight hair, and blue eyes)

Anti-oppression is aimed at acknowledging oppression and working towards minimizing its effects of marginalization, exclusion and oppression by leveling the power imbalance that exists among groups. It encompasses strategies, theories and actions that challenge socially and historically built inequalities and injustices that are ingrained in our systems and institutions by policies and practices that allow certain groups to dominate over other groups. Anti-oppression is actively acknowledging the intersections of oppressions that effect people based on race, age, class, gender, ability, etc... it should also encompass a commitment to social justice to resist and end these oppressions actively.

Critical Components of Anti-Oppression:

Anti-ablism: challenging ablism by making spaces accessible for all and resisting the marginalization of people with disabilities.

Anti-racism: strategies, theories and action that aim to challenge and counter the inequalities, misconceptions, prejudices and discrimination produced through a system that has historically developed to favour white people while marginalizing people of colour.

Anti-sexism: challenging and working towards eliminating norms, values, beliefs, structures and systems that marginalize and subordinate women while granting power, privilege and patriarchy

Anti-heterosexism: involves recognizing privilege, questioning power and privilege and challenging the assumptions that disadvantage queer and trans people

Anti-ageism: fighting discrimination based on age

Anti-classism: organizing against discrimination and oppression an individual or group faces based on perceived or actual socio-economic class

[Source: Youth Action Network, Fire it up: a toolkit for youth action

<http://www.youthactionnetwork.org/rac/FireItUp/FireItUp.pdf>]

What does it mean to work from an anti-oppression framework?

- Actively working to acknowledge and shift power towards inclusiveness, accessibility, equity and social justice.
- Ensuring that anti-oppression is embedded in everything that you do by examining attitudes and actions through the lens of access, equity and social justice.
- Being conscious and active in the process of learning and recognizing that the process as well as the product is important.
- Creating a space where people are safe, but can also be challenged.

[Source: City of Toronto, Engagement within an Anti-oppression framework

<http://www.toronto.ca/involveyouth/chapter5.htm>]

Anti-colonial discourse involves decolonizing the experiences of those that have been oppressed due to colonization, looking at the effects of how colonialism has affected many different populations where oppressions have stemmed. This is done by looking at pre-contact, colonial contact and the aftermath and working towards self-determination and resistance. A lot of this involves critically decolonizing and recovering indigenous/local knowledge as a form of resistance because of the

oppression that colonialism has inflicted on local, marginalized and indigenous communities. (This is important to keep in mind while doing Anti-oppression work)

[Source: OISE, George Dei and Arlof Kempf, Anti-Colonialism and Education: The Politics of Resistance

<http://www.sensepublishers.com/catalog/files/90-77874-18-6.pdf>]

6. The Phobias

- **Transphobia:** fear, rejection or hatred of transsexual/transgender people, as well as cross-gender elements that exist within all people.
- **Biphobia:** fear, hatred and rejection of bisexual individuals based on the perceived binary of being heterosexual or homosexual only.
- **Homophobia:** fear, rejection and persecution of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people. Rooted in a desire to maintain the heterosexual social order, which relies on oppressive gender roles.

[Source: "Introduction to Understanding LGBTQ Newcomers", Among Friends Project, Access Alliance –

<http://accessalliance.ca/sites/accessalliance/files/Intro%20To%20Understanding%20LGBTQ%20Newcomers.pdf>]

Homophobic or Transphobic behavior

- gay-bashing or physical violence, including sexual violence
- making derogatory comments, innuendos, insults, slurs, jokes or threats about sexual orientation or sexual practice;
- silencing talk of sexual or gender plurality

- forcing people to “come out” or to stay “in the closet” disclose or hide their sexual orientation or gender identity;
- linking homosexuality with pedophilia (child abuse)
- accusing LGBTQ+ persons of recruiting others to join their sexual orientation
- defacing notices, posters or property using homophobic or transphobic graffiti;
- rejecting friends or family members because of their sexual orientation or gender identity;
- behaving as though sexual orientation is solely about sexual practice or is a lifestyle choice;
- treating the sexual orientations or gender identities of LGBTQ+ persons as less valid than those of heterosexuals;
- behaving as though all LGBTQ+ people have AIDS or are responsible for it spreading
- refusing to use pronouns or names consistent with a person’s gender identity
- harassing someone because they do not fit easily into society’s limited definition of what it means to be, and look like, a man or woman.

[Source: University of Guelph, RECOGNIZING HETEROSEXISM, HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA: creating a queer-positive university <http://www.uoguelph.ca/hre/hr/docs/RecognizingHeterosexism.pdf>]

7. Positive Spaces

It's important to recognize that most spaces have heterosexist environment and in many service provision spaces homophobia is reinforced. Having an inclusive

environment allows those homophobic notions to chip away during the most vulnerable moments of people's lives - when they come to seek help. It is a human right to receive services in a respectful manner that allows people to feel as though their basic human rights aren't denied.

What is a positive space?

A Positive Space is a welcoming environment where LGBTQ+ people are able to access culturally inclusive services with dignity and respect and service providers can work free from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. These spaces can be developed and maintained as long as there is a concerted, collective organizational effort to challenge heterosexism, homophobia, transphobia, stigma and stereotypes and the silence around them.

Tips for service providers to transform their environment into a positive space:

- Create a space that is recognizably welcoming
- Display rainbow flags and stickers in your office environment. If there is no support from your co-workers display them in your own workspace
- Use inclusive language. Ex: use partner instead of husband/wife or girlfriend/boyfriend
- Include 'transgender' or 'trans' in addition to female and male in your intake forms
- Change terms in your own agency's materials to be more inclusive if they are not inclusive yet.
- Report incidences of homophobia and transphobic violence

- Work to learn more about homophobia and transphobia.
- Ask for training for yourself and others in your agency.
- Call LGBTQ+ agencies or programs and ask for information about their services
- Challenge yourself consistently to learn about issues even if it makes you feel uncomfortable.

Positive Attitudes for Service providers:

- Challenge homophobia and transphobia in your agency. This may also at times require that individual staff and volunteers to challenge their own beliefs and values.
- If you are not sure how to act or what to do, find the information you need and take action.
- Strive to meet your organizational mandate to provide accessible services.
- Ask yourself how you personally are working to provide accessible services for everyone
- Avoid making assumptions about whether or not an individual is 'out.'
- Follow confidentiality guidelines. Ensure that you do not discuss personal information about a person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression.

Ways to Support your LGBTQ+ Client

- Be Supportive and open-minded
- Listen attentively
- Ask clients what they think they need from you

- Conduct your own research to cater to their needs
- Give proper referrals
- Respect their confidentiality and safety needs
- Inform clients about their rights
- Be aware of the 'coming out' process. Understand that the coming out process will impact how and what clients disclose about their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.
- Communicate in a non-judgemental manner
- Be mindful that for those who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity, they may have many unanswered questions and not know where to find needed information.
- Approach intake questions in a sensitive way which allows for disclosure of sexual orientation and/or gender identity and gender expression.
- Frame questions in ways that will help build trust in during your interactions

[Source: OCASI, Positive Spaces Initiative Starter Kit

<http://www.positivespaces.ca/sites/positivespaces.ca/files/OCASI%20Positive%20Spaces%20Starter%20Kit%20-%20English.pdf>]

8. Healthy Organizational Practices

Below are some organizational practices and attitudes that can help create a space that is Anti-oppressive:

- Dedicate adequate time and space for organizational discussions on oppression and discrimination
- Promote messages that are anti-racist, anti-homophobic, anti-transphobic, anti-ableist and analyse everything the organization does while keeping these in mind.

- Set anti-oppression goals and continually assess whether your organization is meeting them
- Provide opportunities for people to develop skills to communicate their views on oppression.
- Promote egalitarian group development by prioritizing skill shares and being aware of who tends to do what work, who gets recognized/supported/solicited
- Respect different approach of leadership and style of communication
- Don't tokenize people to do certain work but base the choices on their work, experience, and skills
- Make a Collective commitment to hold everyone accountable for their actions and behavior so that the organization can be a safe place for all.

[Source: Root Activist Network of Trainers

<http://www.rantcollective.net/article.php?id=17>]

9. Heteronormativity and Heterosexism

What is Heterosexism?

It is the assumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual.

What is its impact?

Intentionally or unintentionally, our society advantages heterosexuality and heterosexual persons, while denying, erasing, devaluing, mistreating or discriminating against LGBTQ+ persons or groups, as well as those perceived to be so.

What is Heteronormativity?

It is based on the belief that there are two distinct and complementary categories of human beings, male and female, and that the only natural or normal intimate relationships are those between two people of the opposite sex.

What is its impact?

Heteronormativity creates roles and norms for each sex, while asserting that a person's sex, gender identity and gender roles should align to either all-male or all-female norms. These norms may be overt, covert or implied. People are not permitted to deviate below the standard that is created by normative heterosexuality.

Heteronormativity is reflected in widespread social institutions and social policies that legitimize and advantage heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and natural within society.

What is Heterosexual privilege?

Heterosexual privilege bestows unearned and unchallenged advantages and rewards on heterosexuals solely as a result of their sexual orientation. These benefits are not automatically granted to LGBTQTTI persons. Ex: Not risk being denied employment, housing or other services because of one's sexual orientation or gender identity

What does Anti-Heterosexism work entail?

Being opposed to heterosexism involves recognizing and questioning the power and advantages society confers on heterosexual people because of their sexual orientation. It

involves respecting and fostering the inclusivity and pluralism of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Anti-heterosexism challenges the assumptions that disadvantage LGBTQ+ persons due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

[Source:University of Guelph, RECOGNIZING HETEROSEXISM, HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA: creating a queer-positive university <http://www.uoguelph.ca/hre/hr/docs/RecognizingHeterosexism.pdf>]

Below are some examples given by the participants of our focus groups when describing behavior and non verbal communication that they experienced from service providers that reinforced heterosexist stereotypes. This type of language and behavior can make anyone uncomfortable, especially if the perpetrator is coming from a place of heteronormative privilege:

- Refusing to make eye contact either when coming out, or if ‘visibly’ queer or trans
- Speaking down to someone using paternalistic tone or derogatory comments
- Using language catering to nuclear, heterosexual families/couples (referring to husband/wife).
- Alienating and treating LGBTQ+ people like special cases
- Inferring that LGBTQ+ relationships are purely sexual, asking questions like, “what kind of queer sex are you having”
- Assuming that all racialized people are heterosexual and acting surprised when it becomes apparent that they are not

- Asking questions that are irrelevant to the services that the person is requesting, particularly stereotypical questions that would make a person uncomfortable

10. How to be an Ally

Who is an ally?

It is someone who doesn't identify as LGBTQ+ but is supportive and accepts LGBTQ+ people. They would personally advocate for equal rights and fair treatment of all.

How to be an Ally?

- Know your privileges
- Educate yourself on the history, concerns and issues that exist in LGBTQ+ community (this should be a continuous process)
- Do not make assumptions that everyone you meet is heterosexual
- Create a free and open space that has an atmosphere of respect
- Be ready to share your knowledge with non-allies
- Use non gender specific language
- Refer to people using their preferred gender expression
- Understand that homophobia can take the form of emotional and sometimes physical abuse of LGBTQ+ people. It is also a violation of every person's freedom and human right to be who they want to be

- When you come across people using offensive language, behavior, and jokes interrupt them and inform that it is unacceptable

[Source: University of Illinois at Springfield, Straight but not narrow handout <http://www.uis.edu/studentaffairs/safezone/resources/documents/how%20to%20be%20an%20ally%20to%20lgbtq.pdf>]

11. Suggestions from the focus group

Below are a few important suggestions for service providers to consider. It was given by the participants of the focus groups conducted by CASSA.

- Service providers should be more aware of the issues that LGBTQ+ communities face through self-education, initiating dialogues in the workplace etc. This would also entail understanding intersectionalities and how it factors into their experiences
- Be willing to provide education around LGBTQ+ issues and Anti-homophobia training to all staff, volunteers and board of directors. This starts out by initiating sensitivities around queer and trans issues
- Conduct anti-racism and anti-oppression training for staff, board members and volunteers even if service providers have a LGBTQ+ friendly space. This will help address racism within these spaces towards racialized LGBTQ+ people.
- Don't assume that coming out is the ultimate goal of coming to use services, there are ultimately other issues that racialized communities are dealing with

- Ask:
 - Informed questions and don't just go down a list
 - Open ended questions so that it allows the client to leave out certain details that they shouldn't have to explain.
- Exercising honesty and confidentiality is vital, as well as being patient with how comfortable people are, not pushing them to open up.
- There should be clear indication to all service providers that it is a human rights violation to discriminate based on sexual orientation, so even if people are homophobic, to deny services is against the law.

12. Terms and Definitions to Familiarize with

The importance of knowing these terms and definition:

- To recognize the diversity within LGBTQ+ communities
- To understand that identities as well as these terms and definitions are complex and ever-changing
- To understand that people need to be able to self identify as they feel necessary
- To make proper referrals once there is a better understanding of the realities of the clients
- To realize that LGBTQ+ terms may not be newcomer friendly and that language is not translation

⊙ **Bisexual:** refers to an individual whose sexual orientation is acquainted to both women and men, in equal or unequal intensity.

- ⊙ **Cisgender:** refers to someone who feels their gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth. The prefix 'cis' in Latin means "on the same side."
- ⊙ **Coming Out:** the act of disclosing one's sexual orientation or gender identity. Coming out can refer to acknowledging one's own sexual or gender feelings; Often also called "coming out of the closet".
- ⊙ **Gay:** a slang word used to describe people whose sexual identity is same-sex oriented, regardless of gender. It tends to be used more often in our society to refer to same-sex oriented men.
- ⊙ **Gender identity:** determines the gender you perceive yourself as, regardless of your sex. A person's gender identity doesn't affect or determine sexual orientation and vice versa; by no means shall they be perceived as the same.
- ⊙ **Gender:** refers to a cluster of characteristics of behavioural, cultural, social and/or personal order that determine the perception of individuals as being female/feminine or male/masculine.
- ⊙ **Intersex:** someone who is born with physiological and/or genetic characteristics that cannot be classified as solely male or female. Intersex people are sometimes referred to as "hermaphrodites" yet this term lacks the accuracy in describing intersex conditions and is perceived as offensive.
- ⊙ **Lesbian:** refers to same-sex oriented women.
- ⊙ **MSM:** Acronym meaning "Men who have sex with men".

- ⊙ **Passing:** Conversationally, this term is used when a trans person is perceived in everyday situations as a member of the gender they identify with.
- ⊙ **Queer:** an umbrella term commonly used to define lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirited and other people and institutions on the margins of mainstream culture; however the definition continues to be debated among queer theorists.
- ⊙ **Questioning:** refers to someone who may be unsure of or is still exploring their gender, sexual identity or sexual orientation.
- ⊙ **Sex:** refers to some of the physiological, genetic and genital aspects of our body that are generally perceived to determine the functions of the organism as female or male (generally assigned at birth). The dominant perception (reinforced by medical/legal systems) is that one's sex determines one's gender.
- ⊙ **Sexual orientation:** refers but is not limited to: the emotional attachment, sexual and or physical attraction as well as sexual behaviours in human sexuality and identity.
- ⊙ **Trans man (FtM):** a female-to-male trans person. Trans men should be respectfully referred to as men regardless of what stage they are at in their transition.
- ⊙ **Trans woman (MtF):** a male-to-female trans person. Trans women should be respectfully referred to as women regardless of what stage they are in their transition.
- ⊙ **Trans:** a term often used in North America as an umbrella term for transgenders, transsexuals, intersex and gender non conformist people. Not all "gender variant" people will identify with this label.

☉ **Transgender:** someone who feels their gender identity doesn't necessarily match the normative binaries (sex) of female or male. Transgender people may or may not want to undergo sex reassignment treatment.

☉ **Transition:** the process of adjustments that a transsexual (and in some cases a transgender) person goes through to bring their physiological functions and aspect as well as legal and life affairs in line with their gender and/or gender identity. This includes but is not limited to: Adjusting dress preferences, changing their name, undergo sex reassignment therapy, coming out to family and friends, etc...

☉ **Transsexual:** someone who feels their gender identity doesn't necessarily match the normative binaries (sex) of female or male. The majority of transsexual people will undergo sex reassignment treatment (Hormone replacement therapy, sex reassignment surgery, breast augmentation or removal, amongst other medical procedures), as well as seek for the legal adjustment to their correct identity (name change and sex adjustment).

☉ **Transvestite (cross-dresser):** someone who wears attires of the opposite sex regardless of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. A transvestite may cross dress for reasons of performance, eroticism, non conformance with established gender roles and expressions of gender variance.

☉ **Two-Spirited:** a term which Aboriginal or Native communities use to describe a person who possesses both the male and female spirit. A two-spirited person might not use the terms gay, lesbian, bi, or trans.

© **WSW:** Acronym meaning “women who have sex with women”.

[Source: Access Alliance, Among Friends training module,

<http://accessalliance.ca/sites/accessalliance/files/Intro%20To%20Understanding%20LGBTQ%20Newcomers.pdf>]

13. RESOURCES

USEFUL LINKS

211 Toronto- www.211toronto.com

Bombay Dost: Registered LGBT magazine in India.

<http://www.bombaydost.co.in>

Dosti is a Toronto-based social and support group for South Asian gay, bisexual and transgender men. Dosti has been around since the mid 90s and has come to mean a number of different things over the years. www.dosti.ca

Intersex Society of North America: Organization dedicated to ending stigma about intersexuality. Resources include a list of support groups and a teaching kit www.insa.org

LGBTQ Parenting Network :

www.lgbtqparentingconnection.ca

Ontario Public Health Association - 'A Positive Space is a Health Space' manual.

<http://www.opha.on.ca/resources/docs/SexualHealthPaper-Jun06.pdf>

Pathways to Gender Justice: A toolkit for people working in the immigrant and refugee serving sector in Canada

<http://www.ccrweb.ca/Gender.pdf>

PFLAG Canada supports, educates and provides resources to anyone with questions or concerns. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week www.pflagcanada.ca

Positive Spaces Initiative (OCASI): www.positivespaces.ca

Promising Practice Toolkit (Stepping Up to the Plate project).

Best-practices in arts-based programming for LGBTQ+ newcomer immigrant and refugee women

<http://accessalliance.ca/services/women/arts/lbtqwomen>

Pukaar :Pukaar is the Naz Foundation International's quarterly journal focusing on Asia male-male sexualities and well-being.

<http://www.nfi.net/pukaar.htm>

Snehithan: A social and support group for LGBTQ+ men of Kannada, Malayalam, Sinhala, Tamil and Telugu speaking communities. www.snehithan.ca

Queer West Community Network- LGBTQ+ not-for-profit centre that produces performing arts festivals for the purposes of educating and advancing the public's understanding and appreciation of performing arts. www.queerwest.org

Rainbow Health Educational Toolkit has been designed primarily for healthcare & social service providers in recognition that there is an enormous lack of resources and knowledge LGBTQ+ people's health and wellness.

<http://www.rainbowhealthnetwork.ca/node/24>

Settlement.org: Information and resources to help you provide effective service, information and referral and interventions to newcomer LGBTQ+ communities

<http://atwork.settlement.org/atwork/SSG/lgbt.asp>

The Gay and Lesbian Vaishnava Association, Inc.: an international organization dedicated to the teachings of Lord Caitanya, the importance of all-inclusiveness within His mission, and the Vedic concept of a natural third gender.

<http://www.galva108.org>

The House Community Health Centre for Youth

www.theyouthcentre.ca

Transexual Road Map : www.tsroadmap.com

Trikone: non-profit organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people of South Asian descent
www.trikone.org

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICES

Access Alliance

340 College St., Ste. 500 Toronto, ON M5T 3A9
416-324-8677 www.accessalliance.ca

Associated Youth Services of Peel

120 Matheson Blvd. E. Suite #201, Mississauga, Ontario L4Z 1X1
(905) 890-5222 or 1-800-762-8377 ext. 460 www.aysp.ca

Central Toronto Youth Services:

65 Wellesley Street East, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1G7
416-924-2100 Fax: 416-924-2930 www.ctys.org

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)

2401 Eglinton Ave. E, Suite 212, Toronto, ON, M1K 2N8
(416) 932 1359 www.cassa.on.ca

CultureLink

2340 Dundas Street West, Suite 301 Toronto, ON M6P 4A9 -
416-588-6288 Fax: 416-588-2435 www.culturelink.net

Delisle Youth Service

40 Orchard View Blvd. Suite 255 Toronto, ON M4R 1B9
416-482-0081 www.delisle-youth.org

Family Service of Peel

151 City Centre Drive Suite 501, Mississauga, Ontario L5B 1M7
905-270-2250 Fax: 905-270-2869 www.fspeel.org

Family Service Toronto

355 Church Street, Toronto ON
416-595-9618 www.fsatoronto.com

Family Services York Region

4261 Highway 7, Suite 203, Unionville, Ontario L3R 1L5 905-
415-9719 Fax: 905-415-9706 www.fsyrc.ca

LEGIT (Lesbian and Gay Immigration Taskforce) - Toronto

P.O. Box 111 Station F, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2L4

416-392-6874 www.legit.ca

Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth of Toronto (LGBYT)

519 Church St. Toronto, ON M4Y 2C9

(416) 392-6874 www.lgbyt.org

OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants)

110 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 200 Toronto, ON M4R 1A3

416-322-4950 Fax: 416-322-8084 www.ocasi.org

PFLAG Toronto

200 Wolverleigh Blvd. Toronto, ON M4C 1S2

416-406-1727 www.pflagcanada.ca

Planned Parenthood of Toronto (PPT)

36B Prince Arthur Ave Toronto, ON M5R 1A9

(416) 961-0113 www.ppt.on.ca

Positive Youth Outreach (PYO)

399 Church Street, 4th Floor, Toronto, ON M5B 2J6, Canada

416- 340-2437 www.positiveyouth.com

PRIDE Committee of Toronto

65 Wellesley Street East, Suite 501, Toronto, ON M4Y 1G7

416-927-7433 www.pridetoronto.com

Rainbow Health Network

Box 822, Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1G3

416-405-8253 www.rainbowhealthnetwork.ca

SALAAM TORONTO

C/O 519 Church St. Community Center Toronto ON, M4Y 2C9

416-925-XTRA(9872) Ext. 2209 www.salaamcanada.org

Sistering

962 Bloor St West , Toronto ON M6H 1L6

416-926-9762 Fax: 416-926-1932 www.sistering.org

South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)

1992 Yonge St. Suite #205, Toronto, ON

416-487-6371 www.salc.on.ca

South Asian Women Centre

800 Lansdowne Ave Toronto, Ontario M6H 4K3
(416) 537-2276 Fax (416) 537-9472 www.sawc.org

Supporting Our Youth (SOY)

333 Sherbourne Street, Toronto, Ontario M5A 2S5
416-324-5077 Fax: 416-324-4188 www.soytoronto.org

The 519 Church Street Community Centre

519 Church Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 2C9
416-392-6874 Fax 416-392-0519 www.the519.org

Worker's Action Centre

720 Spadina Avenue, Suite 223 Toronto, ON M5S 2T9
(416) 531-0778 www.workersactioncentre.org

GOVERNMENT

Canadian Human Rights Commission

110 Yonge Street, suite 902, Toronto, ON M5C 1T4
416-973-5527 / Toll Free: 1-800-999-6899/ TTY: 1-888-643-3304
Fax: (416) 973-6184 www.chrc-ccdp.ca

Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario

655 Bay Street, 14th floor, Toronto, ON M7A 2A3
(416) 326-1312 , Toll Free (outside Toronto): 1-866-598-0322
Fax: (416) 326-2199 www.hrto.ca

Human Rights Legal Support Centre

400 University Avenue, 7th Floor, Toronto, ON M7A 1X8 416-314-6266 Toll Free: 1-866-625-5179 TTY: (416) 314-6651 TTY Toll Free: 1-866 612-8627 www.hrlsc.on.ca

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Asian Community Aids Services

17 Isabella Street, 1/F Toronto, ON M4Y 1M7
416-963 4300 www.acas.org

East Mississauga Community Health Centre (EMCHC)

2555 Dixie Road, Unit 7, Mississauga, ON L4Y 4C4

905.602.4082 Fax: 905.602.5432 www.eastmississaugachc.org

Griffin Centre

24 Silverview Drive North York, Ontario M2M 2B3

416.222.1153 Fax: (416) 222-1321 www.griffin-centre.org

Peel HIV/AIDS Program

160 Traders Blvd E, Unit 1, Mississauga, ON L4Z 3K7

905-361-0523 Fax: 905-361-1004 Toll Free: 1-866-896-8700

www.phan.ca

Rainbow Health Ontario , Sherbourne Health Centre

333 Sherbourne Street, Toronto ON M5A 2S5

416.324.4100 Fax 416.324.4262 www.rainbowhealthontario.ca

Rainbow Services, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

60 White Squirrel Way - 1st Floor

(416) 535-8501 ext. 6781 www.camh.net

Sherbourne Health Centre

333 Sherbourne Street, Toronto, Ontario M5A 2S5

416-324-4103 Fax: 416-324-4262 www.sherbourne.on.ca

The Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)

20 Carlton Street, Suite M126 Toronto, ON M5B 2H5

(416) 599-2727 www.asaap.ca

The Ontario HIV Treatment Network

1300 Yonge Street, Suite 600 Toronto, Ontario. M4T 1X3

416-642-6486 ; 1-877-743-6486 www.ohtn.on.ca

SUPPORT LINES

Access Alliance Multiculturalism Health and Community Services - 416-324-8677

Assaulted Women's Helpline - 1-866-863-0511

Canadians for Choice - 24 hour toll free information and referral line about sexual and reproductive health issues.

- 1-888-642-2725

Coalition against same-sex Partner abuse. 416-595-0307 x 272

Distress Metro Toronto -416-408-4357

Gay and lesbian bashing hotline and victim assistance (24 hrs) 416-392-6878 ext 337.

Gay Lesbian Bi Trans Youth Line 1-800-268-9688

www.youthline.ca

Gerstein Centre: (416) 929-5200

HEYY (Help Line East End Youth) 416-423-4399

Kids help phone - 1-800-668-6868

LGBT Youth Line (4pm-9:30pm): 1-800-268-9688, 416-962-9688

Multicultural Women Against Rape Crisis Line: 416-597-8808

Crime Stoppers: 1-800-222-8477

Peel LGBT hate crime hotline - (905) 456-5905

Scarborough Sexual Health Clinic -416.338.7438

Sherbourne Health Centre LGBT services- 416-324-4103

Tgal Queer support and peer counseling phone line operated by volunteers.- 416-964-6600.

Teen Sex Information Line - 416-961-3200

To call the nearest Police station to you: 416-808- (Div #)00

Toronto Area GLBT Phone Line and Crisis Counseling (416) 964- 6600, or 1-877-964-6677

Two Spirited People of the 1st Nations - 416-944-9300

The Teen Sex INFO Line : (416) 961-3200

LGBT Hate Crimes Hotline (Peel Region) : 905-456-5905

Anti-Hate and Bias Reporting Helpline (London, ON) :
519-951-1584

Distress Centre: (416) 408-HELP(4357); (416) 486-2242

Women's Sexual Assault Helpline of York Region: 905-895-7313 or 1-800-263-6734

Community Services Hotline: 416-292-2832

EMERGENCY Dial 911

For Toronto Community Information : Dial 211

www.211Toronto.ca

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)

We are a social justice umbrella organization working with Ontario's diverse South Asian community. Our mission is to facilitate the economic, social, political and cultural empowerment of South Asians by serving as a resource for information, research, mobilization, coordination and leadership on social justice issues affecting our communities.

We aim to create social change by building alliances and working collaboratively with those who share a vision of empowering all communities to participate in defining Canada's future

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)

2401 Eglinton Ave. E, Suite 212, Toronto, ON, M1K 2N8
(416) 932 1359 FAX NO: (416) 932 9305 www.cassa.on.ca

Acknowledgments

Project funding provided by Community Service Partnership (CSP) program, City of Toronto

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Council of Agencies Serving South Asians

