



Best Practice Standards LGBTQ-Affirmative Mental Health Practitioners in Utah

The LGBTQ-Affirmative Psychotherapist Guild of Utah advocates for the availability of competent mental-health resources and services for any consumer who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and/or questioning (LGBTQ). To support this goal, we maintain a Resource Directory of licensed mental-health clinicians at our website (www.lgbtqtherapists.com).

The Guild promotes multicultural competence as a framework within which LGBTQ-affirmative psychotherapy must be conducted. Multicultural competence is composed of three dimensions: (a) knowledge (i.e., an understanding of the cultural history of one's client, relevant identity development models, sociopolitical contexts, and experiences with discrimination), (b) skills (i.e., development of culturally sensitive interventions), and (c) awareness (i.e., ability to self-reflect on and manage one's biases, assumptions, and limitations) [¹]

To maintain best practice standards of multicultural competence, the Guild expects that all practitioners who are included in this Resource Directory adhere to a specific set of Guidelines. Practitioners must sign a pledge indicating that they have read, understand, and agree to these Guidelines as a prerequisite to be included in the Guild's Resource Directory. The Leadership Collective (the administrative governing body) of the Guild will review any reported violations of these Guidelines. The Leadership Collective will determine the appropriate action in response to any violations.

In addition to adhering to the clinician's mental-health organization's Code of Conduct, the licensed professional must also adhere to a set of Practice Guidelines established by the APA [²] These Guidelines recommend that the mental health practitioner:

Guideline 1. ...strives to understand the effects of stigma (i.e., prejudice, discrimination, and violence) and its various contextual manifestations in the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Guideline 2. ...understands that being transgender or having a lesbian, gay, or bisexual orientations are not mental illnesses.

Guideline 3. ...understands that same-sex attractions, feelings, and behavior are normal variants of human sexuality and that efforts to change sexual orientation have not been shown to be effective or safe.

Guideline 4. ...is encouraged to recognize how their attitudes and knowledge about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues may be relevant to assessment and treatment and seek consultation or make appropriate referrals when indicated.

Guideline 5. ...strives to recognize the unique experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals.

Guideline 6. ...strives to distinguish issues of sexual orientation from those of gender identity when working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender clients.

Guideline 7. ...strives to be knowledgeable about and respect the importance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender relationships.

Guideline 8. ...strives to understand the experiences and challenges faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and

transgender parents.

Guideline 9. ...recognizes that the families of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people may include members who are not legally or biologically related.

Guideline 10. ...strives to understand the ways in which a person's lesbian, gay, or bisexual orientation may have an impact on his or her family of origin and the relationship with that family of origin.

Guideline 11. ...strives to recognize the challenges related to multiple and often conflicting norms, values, and beliefs faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender members of racial and ethnic minority groups.

Guideline 12. ...is encouraged to consider the influences of religion and spirituality in the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons.

Guideline 13. ...strives to recognize cohort and age differences among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals.

Guideline 14. ...strives to understand the unique problems and risks that exist for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth.

Guideline 15. ...is encouraged to recognize the particular challenges experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals with physical, sensory, and cognitive-emotional disabilities.

Guideline 16. ...strives to understand the impact of HIV/AIDS on the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and communities.

Guideline 17. ...is encouraged to consider the impact of socioeconomic status on the psychological well being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender clients.

Guideline 18. ...strives to understand the unique workplace issues that exist for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals.

Guideline 19. ...strives to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in professional education and training.

Guideline 20. ...is encouraged to increase their knowledge and understanding of issues relevant to homosexuality, bisexuality, intersex, and transgender through continuing education, training, supervision, and consultation.

These Best Practice Standards for LGBT-Affirmative Psychotherapy have been developed by the Leadership Collective of the LGBTQ-Affirmative Psychotherapist Guild of Utah - October 2012.

Citations for material included in these Best Practice Standards:

- (1) Lyons, H. Z., Bieschke, K. J., Dendy, A. K., Worthington, R. L., & Georgemiller, R. (2010). Psychologists' competence to treat lesbian, gay and bisexual clients: State of the field and strategies for improvement. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 41(5), 424-434.
- (2) American Psychological Association. (2012a). Guidelines for psychological practice with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients. *American Psychologist*, 67, 10-42. Found at <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/guidelines.aspx>
American Psychological Association. (2012b). *Transgender identity issues in psychology*. Found at <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/transgender/index.aspx>

