

20 NATIONAL
23 VOLUNTEERING
CONFERENCE
THE FUTURE IS NOW

B2: Focus on LGBTQI+

LGBTIQ+ People and Volunteering

Barriers & How to Navigate Them

Sarah Collins (She/Her)



Living Proud

LGBTIQ+ Community Services of WA



Living Proud

- QLife peer support and referral service
- Opening Closets training
- Specialist and advanced training
- Consultancy and policy support
- Community engagement and development



LGBTIQ+

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people and other sexuality, and gender diverse people.

– LGBTIQ+ Health Australia
www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au

“We recognise that people’s genders, bodies, relationships, and sexualities affect their health and wellbeing in every domain of their life.”



Existing Studies

- Predominantly look at LGBTIQ+ people’s volunteering in LGBTIQ+ organisations
- For gay and bisexual men, predominantly looks at volunteering in HIV organisations
- Not many ask about the experiences of LGBTIQ+ volunteers in mainstream organisations



Southby, South & Bagnall (2019)

A Rapid Review of Barriers to Volunteering for Potentially Disadvantaged Groups and Implications for Health Inequalities

- No literature was identified in relation to sexual orientation. This may reflect a dearth of evidence in these areas rather than a lack of barriers to volunteering for these groups
- The literature concerning relationship status and volunteering exclusively focused on heterosexual marriage.
- No research was identified exploring either pregnancy and/or maternity/paternity or sexual orientation and barriers to volunteering



Gates & Hughes (2021)

Civic Engagement and Loneliness in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer+ Australian Volunteers

- Volunteers reported a consistent and high degree of community engagement and a strong sense of attachment to the Australian LGBTIQ+ community
- Volunteering appears to be a dimension of many LGBTIQ+ peoples' everyday lives
- An important finding...was that while LGBTIQ+ participants seemed to be socially connected, they also reported relatively high loneliness levels. This suggests there may be unique differences within the LGBTIQ+ community that need to be accounted for in volunteer management programs.
- Social workers should make special efforts to reach out to transgender/gender diverse volunteers to learn more about whether they feel supported at the organisation



Gates & Lillie (2021)

- Social service leaders must work toward developing anti-harassment and non-discrimination policies that **explicitly identify sexual orientation** and gender identity/expression as a protected category within the SSO.
- Additionally, within the organization the use of LGBTQ-inclusive language in day-to-day practice, hiring LGBTQ staff and promoting a culture of inclusion are all essential.
- Leaders must also advocate for inclusion by acknowledging past and current mistakes regarding LGBTQ issues and by actively working to correct those mistakes.

Hiding sexuality or gender identity

35% While accessing health services



35% 16 to 24 year olds at home



50% 16 to 24 year olds at school/uni



**NO
TO
HOMOPHOBIA**
notohomophobia.com.au

GLBT Victorians have avoided showing affection in public

Source: Private Lives 2, Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria, 2012



 WA Survey

“It is daunting approaching mainstream places to volunteer when you are not sure of their stance on being LGBTQ+ friendly and welcoming...If a organisation feels particularly 'heteronormative' I will actively avoid volunteering there out of concern for my safety”

“I had to apply with my deadname so I had to come out after they already all knew my old name and hope they would use my actual name”

“If working one on one with clients I get worried how they will react to me”



“Working and volunteering in mainstream organisations is vital for my resume. It can be incredibly daunting, draining and sometimes leave me feeling very unsafe...Comparing working within a LGBTQ+ organisation and a mainstream organisation, I crave returning to the (former) to volunteer.”



Is there anything the organisation could have done?

- Proactively communicated they were friendly.
- An indication they are LGBT-welcoming on the volunteering form or website, even just a rainbow flag somewhere would be great.



Common Issues & Everyday Situations

- Emergency Contact Person
- Screening/ID Checks
- Deciding Whether to Come Out
 - Small Talk
 - Icebreakers
 - Correcting Assumptions (or not)



Common Issues & Everyday Situations

- Legal vs Social Name
- Pronouns
- Uniforms
- Gendered Facilities
- Transitioning in the workplace





Barriers to Employment

Barriers to employment encountered



AWEI (2018), Pride in Diversity – ACON, www.pid-awe.com.au



WA Museum Boola Bardip





WA Museum Boola Bardip



Engaging LGBTIQ+ Community

- Select partner organisation(s)
- Address potential concerns up front
- Link in with LGBTIQ+ events
- Educate/Inform staff and volunteers



QLife – Phone & Webchat



- QLife peer support and referral Service
- Staffed by peer volunteers
- 3PM-Midnight, 7 days a week



References

Living Proud : Opening Closets Training

Trevor G. Gates & Mark Hughes (2021): Civic Engagement and Loneliness in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer+ Australian Volunteers, Australian Social Work, DOI: 10.1080/0312407X.2021.1899256

Trevor G. Gates & Samantha Lillie (2021) An Exploration of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Volunteerism in North American Social Service Organizations, Journal of Social Service Research, 47:3, 303-314, DOI: 10.1080/01488376.2020.1768201

Kris Southby, Jane South & Anne-Marie Bagnall (2019) A Rapid Review of Barriers to Volunteering for Potentially Disadvantaged Groups and Implications for Health Inequalities