

# Best Practices for Sexual Assault Response Teams Supporting LGBTQIA+ Victims/Survivors

In the absence of traditional safety nets, many victims/survivors in the LGBTQIA+<sup>1</sup> community find support within their family of choice, which typically includes trusted friends or others in their shared community. SARTs can play an important role in supporting LGBTQIA+ community members and victims/survivors by utilizing best practices when increasing awareness of the prevalence of sexual assault in the LGBTQIA+ community and to address inconsistencies in response.

## 1 Assess Current Efforts

A great starting point is to assess the status quo in your community. SARTs can complete the LGBTQIA+ Cultural Humility Readiness Assessment to identify current efforts as well as areas for improvement and implementation of future work.

## 2 Transparency of Services

Transparency builds trust. For those in the LGBTQIA+ community, coming in contact with system professionals that are not accepting of them is a very real risk and concern. The following are a few tips to keep in mind to help ensure inclusivity in your services:

- Ensuring you are using language inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community and most importantly following the victims/survivors' lead on how they would like to be addressed.
- It is important to also be open and upfront about the limitations to services available.

1. LGBTQIA+ is an acronym made up of terms intended to be more comprehensive in the inclusion of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi, and Trans community. The additional inclusion of QIA+ include Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and the plus sign represents additional communities as a catch all. LGBTQIA+ may be used interchangeably with LGBT, LGBTQ, or other variations.

### 3 Acknowledgement of Systemic Trauma

Trauma is common. The following are some of the main kinds of trauma that can affect the LGBTQIA+ community.

- Bullying
- Community violence
- Childhood trauma
- Medical trauma
- Sexual abuse

It is important to also recognize the intersectionality of systemic oppression and work to break down the systemic barriers to accessing services.

### 4 Build Space Around the Table

Develop collaborative relationships with LGBTQIA+ Anti-Violence Organizations and invite them to be members of the SART. Additionally, include LGBTQIA+ voices on the SART especially during protocol development and agency policies updates.

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