



Improving Emotional and Behavioral Outcomes for LGBT Children/Youth: An Action Planning Tool

This tool is intended to support your efforts to identify action steps you can take in your organizational (e.g., child welfare agency, school) and community roles to improve services and supports for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) children/youth and their families. Although “LGBT” is used as an overarching acronym here, also think about other related populations such as those who may be gender variant (but not transgender), are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity, or identify as two-spirit (an identity used by some Native American tribes).

The tool includes a table that is adapted from and organized around 10 standards of care described in *Improving Emotional and Behavioral Outcomes for LGBT Youth: A Guide for Professionals* (2012). These standards provide a framework for your goal-setting, action steps, and anticipated outcomes. They also can support efforts to implement the Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, enhanced National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards in Health and Health Care, which include sexual orientation and gender identity as part of its working definition of “culture.”

For more information about this tool, as well as LGBT training/technical assistance available from the Technical Assistance (TA) Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health and the American Institutes for Research (AIR), please contact Jeff Poirier at jpoirier@air.org or 202.403.5368. You can access information about the TA Partnership’s LGBT, Questioning, Intersex, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQI2-S) Learning Community and numerous resources (e.g., guides, other websites) online at <http://tapartnership.org/COP/CLC/lgbtqi2s.php>. AIR’s LGBT practice area is also described online at <http://www.air.org/focus-area/human-social-development/?id=138>.

Using This Tool

You can use this tool as an individual or as a community team. While the latter is recommended, in particular including organizational/local leadership as part of the team, individual professionals and other community members can also use this tool to facilitate their planning and subsequently guide their cultural and linguistic competence. First, what is your system of care or organizational mission? Write that in Box 1 as an overall framing for your thinking about the standards of care and related strategies.

Box 1: Mission Statement (if applicable)

Second, think about your vision relative to LGBT children/youth and their families within your organization/community. This vision should describe a future set of conditions that is not only important to LGBT children/youth and their families, but is also achievable. What is the vision that you would like to work toward achieving, either individually or as a team? Describe your vision in Box 2.

Box 2: Your Vision Statement

Third, reflect on strengths that can support accomplishing your vision and challenges that could hinder it. List these in Box 3.

Box 3: Strengths and Challenges	
Strengths	Challenges

In the next few pages is a table organized around 10 standards of care for improving outcomes for LGBT youth. Select the standard(s) that you think will be most useful to accomplishing your vision. For each, indicate whether it is a low, medium, or high priority and specify who will lead each goal (this may be you). Next, identify a goal(s) related to that standard. The goal(s) should be **SMART**: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. **As you think about and identify goals, refer back to the preceding mission and vision statements. In addition, try to respond to the challenges and strengths you listed.** Then, think about specific strategies or action steps you can take to achieve these goals. Include estimated timelines for completing the action steps. Continue to plan your efforts including listing the individuals or team members responsible for each item and how you will measure whether the goal(s) was successfully achieved.

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Standards ¹	Priority & Leader	Goals	Strategies/Action Steps & Timeline	Team	Measures of Success
<p>EXAMPLE</p> <p><i>Standard 1: Assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement</i></p>	<p>High</p> <p>Leader: Marco Smith</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand agency's strengths, needs, and areas of improvement for providing supportive services for LGBT youth and their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop or find an evaluation tool (by 7-1-13) Implement survey/tool with staff and children/youth accessing agency services (by 9-30-13) 	<p>Planning: Executive Director, Program Director</p> <p>Survey: All staff and children/youth receiving agency services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on organizational capacity and needs are available leading to implementation of new practices.
<p>Standard 1: Assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess organizational policies, staff capacities, and procedures Evaluate organizational progress toward identified goals Obtain and respond to consumer feedback to improve quality of care 					

¹ Extracted and adapted from Helfgott, K.P., & Gonsoulin, S.G. (2012). Standards of care for LGBT youth. In S.K. Fisher, J.M. Poirier, & G.M. Blau, & J.M. Poirier (Eds.), *Improving Emotional and Behavioral Outcomes for LGBT Youth: A Guide for Professionals* (pp. 141–157). Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Company.

Standards ¹	Priority & Leader	Goals	Strategies/Action Steps & Timeline	Team	Measures of Success
<p>Standard 2: Nondiscrimination Policies</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in nondiscrimination policies • Have clear procedures for confidential reporting of concerns 					
<p>Standard 3: Staff Knowledge and Development</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build staff capacity through a mix of informal and formal learning/training opportunities • Address areas of identified need (using assessment-related findings) 					

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<p>Standard 4: Documentation, Data Collection, and Information Sharing</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use forms and data systems that allow for documentation of preferred names and gender pronouns • Establish policies and follow procedures for protecting confidentiality of private information 					
<p>Standard 5: Safe, Supportive Environments</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address bias/stigma • Display symbols that represent the LGBT community • Encourage LGBT youth to participate in decision-making bodies that can inform improvement efforts 					

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<p>Standard 6: Practices That Affirm Identity</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to youth using their preferred gender pronouns • Use gender-neutral language when asking youth if they are dating (such as “partner” or “significant other”) 					
<p>Standard 7: Healthy and Supportive Peer Connections</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for LGBT youth to socialize with other LGBT youth • Foster positive relationships between openly LGBT youth and youth who are not LGBT 					

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<p>Standard 8: Family Connections</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support family acceptance and understanding of LGBT identity • Advise families about potential effects of negative reactions • Identify and connect families with community supports 					
<p>Standard 9: Access to Affirming Services and Supports</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create collaborative partnerships with LGBT-serving organizations in the community • Collaborate with youth-serving agencies to enhance access to appropriate housing, job placement, and mental health supports 					

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<p>Standard 10: Community Outreach and Engagement</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute lists of local and online LGBT resources • Involve LGBT youth in efforts to build community awareness of issues such as LGBT acceptance, bullying, and identity formation—in particular in outreach to other youth 					