



## Standard of Practice

Effective Date: August 5, 2015

Approved by: Pat Valentine

### Making LGBTQ Appropriate Referrals

*"All communities and populations have unique cultural characteristics. Services will be delivered in a manner that is inclusive, competent and respectful of these characteristics" (DHS Values and Principles for Integrated Practice).*

Providing appropriate, sensitive, and affirming services to all individuals is core to the mission of DHS. In the event that an individual needs to be referred for additional services or programming, DHS and contracted provider staff will ensure that the individuals and agencies to which referrals are being made demonstrate cultural responsiveness and are welcoming of the LGBTQ community.

If an individual discloses their identity as LGBTQ and requests services, or demonstrates distress around their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, they should be offered a referral for LGBTQ-specialized health, mental health, or other services, as appropriate.

While some individuals may experience challenges related to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression, it is important to note that just because someone identifies as LGBTQ, that does not necessarily mean they are in need of counseling or other services related to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression.

If DHS or provider staff become aware that an individual has been referred to an organization that is NOT culturally responsive or welcoming of the LGBTQ community, staff will inform the individual and provide alternate options. Additionally, staff will file a complaint through the Director's Action Line to report the provider in question.

DHS and provider staff are **not permitted to** employ, contract with, or make referrals to mental health and other service providers who engage in practices to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. These services are commonly referred to as conversion or reparative therapies. If an individual or family requests conversion or reparative therapy in order to change their own or a family member's sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, the worker, at the very least, will

provide them with the appropriate literature from the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Association of Social Workers which describe why these practices are not recommended and explain why DHS will not support these inadvisable measures<sup>1</sup>.

If a staff member becomes aware of a colleague refusing to provide information and referrals for appropriate and affirming services for individuals who identify as LGBTQ, staff must report the incident to their direct supervisor **OR** to their Human Resources department **OR** to the Director's Action Line. Contracted provider staff should follow the appropriate reporting procedures as determined by their specific organization.

## Related Resources & Documents

### Policy Statements

#### **Allegheny County Department of Human Services**

DHS Anti-Discrimination Policy

<http://info.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=5675>

#### **American Psychological Association**

APA Resolution on So-Called Reparative Therapy

[http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/faculty\\_sites/rainbow/html/resolution97.html](http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/faculty_sites/rainbow/html/resolution97.html)

#### **National Association of Social Workers**

"Reparative" and "Conversion" Therapies for Lesbians and Gay Men: Position Statement

<http://www.socialworkers.org/diversity/lgb/reparative.asp>

#### **Lambda Legal**

Health and Medical Organization Statements on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity/Expression and "Reparative Therapy"

<http://www.lambdalegal.org/publications/health-and-med-orgs-stmts-on-sex-orientation-and-gender-identity>

### Local Resource Guides

#### **Allegheny County Department of Human Services**

Allegheny County LGBTQ Resource Guide

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/LGBTQ-resource-guide.aspx>

#### **Garden of Peace Project**

Trans\* Guide

<http://www.gardenofpeaceproject.org/transguide.html>

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the Conversion Therapy Tip Sheet for additional guidance.

## Questions to Assess Potential Agencies

### What to Ask Medical and Mental Health Care Providers to Find an Affirming Provider

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=40976>

### 10 Things to Discuss with Your Health Care Provider:

- For gay/bisexual men -  
<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=40970>
- For lesbian/bisexual women -  
<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=40977>
- For transgender individuals -  
<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=40971>

## Resources

### Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Director's Action Line

1-800-862-6783

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/dal.aspx>