

Mainstream and
LGBTQ
Intervention and
Prevention
programs
Fundors
Researchers

*LGBTQ Domestic Violence
Targeted Recommendation:*

Involve, learn
from, and build
the leadership of
LGBTQ youth



National
LGBTQ DV Capacity Building
Learning Center

Recommendation: Involve, learn from and build LGBTQ youth leadership

Rationale

The National Crime Victim Survey has consistently demonstrated over the past 20 years that young people ages 12 to 24 experience violent crime at rates higher than the rest of the population. This is true for all forms of violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault.

Like all young people, LGBTQ youth are vulnerable to intimate partner violence, along with other forms of violence and abuse, including sexual exploitation, bullying, and street violence.ⁱ LGBTQ youth are more likely to experience physical and psychological dating abuse, sexual coercion, and cyber dating abuse than their heterosexual and cisgender peers.ⁱⁱ

Working closely with young people is a critical component to building beloved, just communities, effective prevention, and early intervention. Yet many organizations hesitate or stumble when approaching meaningful violence prevention work with youth.

We believe it is impossible to create meaningful, successful programming for youth without the direct involvement of youth. Youth leadership and advisory boards are a promising practice for meeting this goal. Developing youth as sources of information and expertise and working with youth to identify the issues most relevant to them have multiple advantages:

- A youth advisory board can help define community needs, research questions, outreach materials, and prevention work.
- Involving youth provides a forum for both learning from young people and building youth leadership and expertise. Particularly with marginalized populations, such as young LGBTQ people of color (POC) for example, this is a significant investment anti-violence, DV, and SA organizations can make toward the future of our work.
- Involving youth as paid consultants and experts helps programs keep on track ethically by centering the target population's needs, concerns, and perceptions.
- Keeping youth-oriented materials relevant is an ongoing process that requires regular input from young people. The "shelf life" of language, messages, and imagery for young people is relatively short. Language about sexual orientation and identity, as well as violence and intimacy, changes quickly.

Many organizations avoid substantial work with youth because the legal obligations regarding mandatory reporting, confidentiality, and consent can get confusing and difficult: Organizations get overwhelmed trying to figure out what needs to be reported to law enforcement or child welfare, and what does not. Can a young person consent to services and at what age? Do confidentiality requirements apply to people under 18? When and with what limits?

Organizations need to address these issues directly and create clear policy which centers youth self-determination, connection to community, and well-being. To accomplish this, youth input is critical.

Recommendations for Mainstream and LGBTQ DV/SA Prevention and Intervention

Form effective youth advisory boards:

1. Pay youth for their time and expertise. This makes participation accessible to a wider range of young people and dignifies the skill and insight youth bring.
2. Ensure inclusion of marginalized youth on any advisory committee that goes beyond tokenism. Diverse LGBTQ and homeless youth have much to offer.
3. Have adequate staffing devoted to recruiting for, developing, and supporting youth participation. This may be a substantial portion of an FTE; some organizations fund these sorts of positions with a mix of prevention and intervention funds
4. Ensure youth advisory boards or consultants go beyond rubber stamping decisions which have already been made by staff, but are instead empowered to raise questions and issues, investigate community needs, and propose strategies and solutions.
5. If your organization has an effective youth advisory/youth involvement component, document and evaluate your approach so that others can learn from and replicate your successes.

Take steps to overcome barriers to working with youth in terms of liability, confidentiality, and mandatory reporting.

1. Refer to [our targeted recommendations](#) regarding mandatory reporting.
2. Understand your state's law(s) regarding consent and confidentiality for youth: Review current law(s) and get help to interpret it in the most empowering way possible for youth.
3. Replace rigid rules and policies about notification of adults, guardians, parents, or other institutions with focused, effective, well-supported, survivor-centered advocacy.
4. Problem solve, safety plan, and center the self-determination of each young person. Avoid cookie cutter solutions and policies.

Recommendations for Funders

1. Recognize that meaningful youth involvement in programming requires funding and staff support. Paid advisory boards supported by staff accomplish multiple goals an organization or funder may hold: job training, developing community leadership, empowering youth, ensuring cultural relevance, and broadening the pool of potential staff.
2. Ask organizations to demonstrate that they are involving the communities they hope to impact (e.g. youth, or LGBTQ youth) in ways that allow members of those communities to act from a position of strength and expertise (as advisory committees) and not just from a position of need (as clients).
3. Support program evaluation and documentation of youth advisory boards and other forms of youth involvement and empowerment in programming.

Recommendations for Researchers

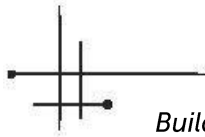
1. When researching questions regarding youth, ensure that youth have significant voice in informing research questions, methods, and tools.
2. Assist community-based programs in documenting and evaluating effective youth advisory boards or other forms of youth involvement in programming.
3. Ensure that information created with the help of youth is disseminated and shared with youth, and that youth are credited for their contributions.

Resources

- For detailed recommendations related to LGBTQ youth inclusion in events, social services, and medical and educational settings, please see [the series of tip sheets](#) created collaboratively by Break the Cycle and the LGBTQ DV CBLC.

ⁱ For example, one study of 140 LGBTQ youth found that approximately half of them had experienced some form of intimate partner violence. (Langenderfer-Magruder, L., Walls, N. E., Whitfield, D. L., Brown, S. M., & Barrett, C. M. (2015). Partner Violence Victimization Among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth: Associations Among Risk Factors. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 33(1), 55–68. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-015-0402-8>)

ⁱⁱ Dank, M., Lachman, P., Zweig, J. M., & Yahner, J. (2014). Dating violence experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43(5), 846–857.



Build LGBTQ Youth Leadership

One in a series of targeted recommendations from the LGBTQ Domestic Violence Capacity Building Learning Center intended to improve policy, research, intervention and prevention efforts regarding LGBTQ DV.

The LGBTQ DV CBLC is a project of the Northwest Network for Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse with foundational partner the National Coalition of Anti Violence Programs

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