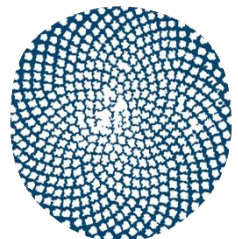
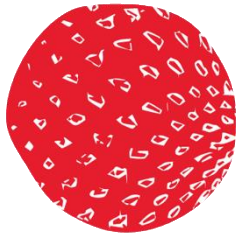




**NATIONAL
LGBTQ
INSTITUTE
ON IPV**



Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity (SO/GI) Data Collection

Guidance for FVPSA Grantees

October 2018

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In 2018, the office of the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) announced a modification to its Performance Progress Report (PPR). The PPR is a report completed by all state and tribal domestic and sexual violence programs that receive FVPSA funds. The report asks agencies to specify how they used the funds they received, including reporting the demographics of the clients the agency served. For years, the PPR has included questions regarding the race, ethnicity, age, and gender of agency clients. In 2018, FVPSA modified the PPR to now include a question on clients' sexual orientation and gender identity (SO/GI), listed in the box below.

New Performance Progress Report Item

self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ)

[This is a count of clients who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer]

To support agencies to collect and now report this new client information, the FVPSA office enlisted the help of the National LGBTQ Institute on IPV (LGBTQ Institute). The LGBTQ Institute is a FVPSA-funded, national training and technical assistance provider on issues at the intersection of IPV and LGBTQ communities. Supporting agencies and providers to accurately and responsively collect SO/GI data on the clients they serve has been a priority area of the LGBTQ Institute since its inception. In addition to providing this guide for FVPSA grantees, the LGBTQ Institute will continue to lead national webinars and trainings on this topic as well as conduct technical assistance with interested providers. If you are interested in participating in one these training or technical assistance opportunities, you can find more details about them in the Resources section at the end of the guide.

As will be emphasized throughout, there is no one right method to collect sexual orientation and gender identity information. The “right” way depends on a variety of contextual factors. As a result, this guide offers important considerations and principles to support you and your agency in determining the best way to collect this data given your strengths, needs, and community context.

This guide includes the following sections:

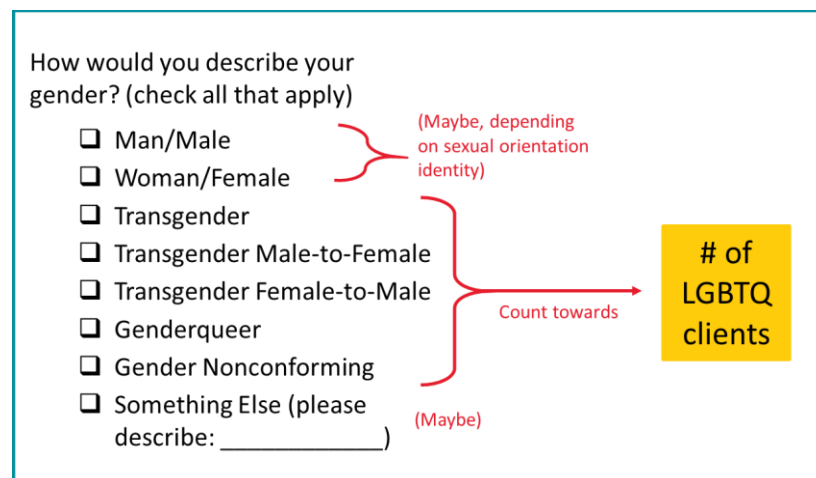
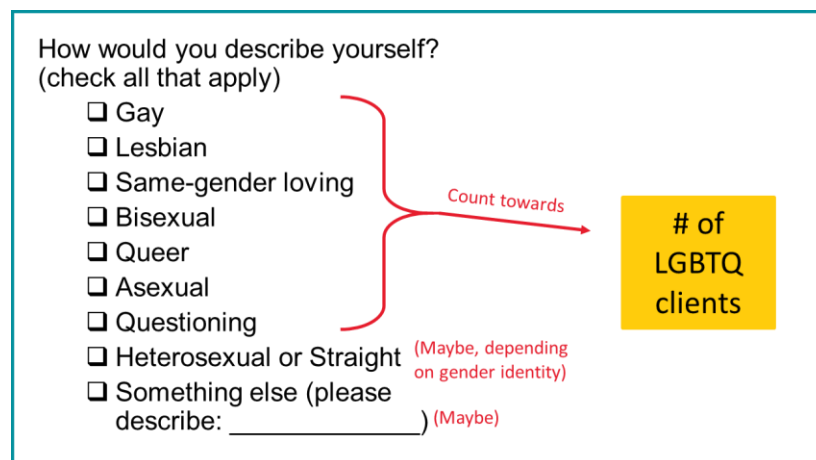
- A. The new PPR item
- B. Preparing for Data Collection
- C. Ways to Collect SO/GI Data
- D. Key Ethical Principles
- E. Resources



The New PPR Item

The new SO/GI question on the PPR asks agencies to report the number of clients they served who self-identify as LGBTQ. The use of “self-identify” here means that the client is the one to determine what their sexual orientation and gender identity is. It is not based on what providers or others assume about the client’s sexual orientation or gender identity. Like all other demographic data reported on the PPR, the SO/GI question is **voluntary** for clients, meaning that they can decline to provide this information and still receive services. Voluntary in this case does not mean that the information must be volunteered (e.g., spontaneously come up) without being asked. The expectation is that agencies ask all clients about their sexual orientation and gender identity, and clients can decide if they want to answer the question(s).

To report the number of LGBTQ clients served, agencies can ask about sexual orientation and gender identity in a variety of ways. Agencies do not have to ask, “Do you identify as LGBTQ?” The figures below show how you can report the number of LGBTQ clients using different kinds of sexual orientation and gender identity questions.



Preparing for Data Collection

Before collecting SO/GI data, agencies will need to ensure that they can accurately, responsively, and confidentially collect, store, and utilize the data. Below are four key steps that agencies can take to prepare.

1

Assess organization and provider skills, capacities, and infrastructure.

- What training do staff need to be comfortable and competent to collect this data?
- What systems, technologies, and practices are in place to ensure privacy and confidentiality?
 - For example, password-protected computers, firewalls, and organizational confidentiality & containment policies.

2

Understand **why** you want to collect this information.

- How can it be useful for your programs?
 - Will it help you identify a need for new programming or services?
 - Will it help you assess if LGBTQ survivors engage with or are impacted by your services differently?

3

Identify necessary partnerships.

- Who are local experts on LGBTQ communities in your area?
- How can you equitably partner with local experts to ensure you're asking about SO/GI in relevant & appropriate ways?

4

Determine the best way and time to ask.

- Is the best way to ask via interview, paper-and-pencil survey, online survey, or something else?
 - This will depend in part on how your organization collects other information from clients, the technological capacity of your organization, and what format your organization can guarantee confidentiality.
- When works best to ask?
 - During intake, a subsequent conversation, or through program evaluation?

Ways to Collect SO/GI Data

There is not a single right method for collecting information on clients' sexual orientation and gender identity status that will work for all agencies. Agencies must determine for themselves the best way to ask for this information given their unique context. The questions below can help guide agencies in finding the best way to structure, frame, and word the question(s) regarding clients' sexual orientation and gender identity.

When deciding how to ask about sexual orientation & gender identity, consider:

What do you want to know?

Do you want to know client's specific SO/GI identity? Or simply that they identify as a member of the LGBTQ community? Which will be more helpful for your agency to continue strengthening its programming for LGBTQ survivors?

Who will you be asking?

What language and terminology will best reflect that used by the LGBTQ community in your region and the LGBTQ clients you serve? What language and terminology will allow *all* clients to confidently and accurately answer the SO/GI question(s)? This will depend on things like: the age, race/ethnicity, and literacy levels, of your clients; the range of languages spoken by your clients; and the size and diversity of the LGBTQ community in your region.

How will you analyze it?

How much qualitative, non-numerical data (e.g., from open-ended, fill-in-the-blank type questions) do you have the resources to work with? How will you be able to identify trends? What will you do with identities that are rarely endorsed? How do you intend to use the data?

Key Ethical Principles

Considering the sensitivity of SO/GI information and the potential vulnerability of sharing this information, it is important that providers and agencies adhere closely to ethical standards for the collection, use, and reporting of this data. Below are key ethical principles that can guide how providers and agencies collect, use, and report SO/GI and other private information from clients.

Be transparent

Ensure that clients are fully informed before they consent to provide their information. Before collecting clients' information, providers should explain:

- Why they're collecting it
- Who will see it (e.g., who will have access? How will it be reported and shared with others?)
- How they will protect it

Keep it voluntary

Given the vulnerability of many survivors, it is especially important that they do not feel like they must provide SO/GI or any demographic information as a prerequisite to accessing services. This would be coercive, and it would violate federal regulations. Agencies should ask demographic questions (including SO/GI questions) of all clients; however, all clients have the right to decline answering without any consequence to the services they receive.

De-identify all reported data

Maintaining confidentiality means ensuring that no survivor can be identified in reports or publications of the data. Funders like FVPSA make this easier by requesting that agencies report client data in aggregate form. That is, in summary form rather than as individual-level records. When reporting any data, it is important not to include clearly identifiable information (e.g., names, contact information, social security numbers). However, even information like race/ethnicity or gender identity can be potentially identifiable, especially in small communities with few minorities. When there is a risk that a client could be identified in a report, even to a funder, agencies should find confidential ways to share the information. For example, if reporting someone's race or gender identity could make it possible to identify a client, agencies should use fields such as "Other" or "Unknown" to report this demographic information.

Use what you collect

To answer private questions about things like SO/GI, survivors must spend their time, risk vulnerability, and put their trust in providers and agencies. A primary way to honor this is to use the data we collect to provide the maximum benefit to survivors. Agencies should use this data for more than just reporting to funders.

Resources

LGBTQ Institute Training & Technical Assistance Opportunities

Access Series Webinars

The LGBTQ Institute's ongoing webinar series on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 12p PT. Check out the webinar schedule at <https://www.nwnetwork.org/events/>.

Office Hours

You can make an appointment to talk with Dr. Lippy directly about any questions you have on this content. Office hours will be on December 6th & 13th 2018. To make an appointment, email Marci Taitt-Lamar at marci@nwnetwork.org.

Q&A Summit

Attend the LGBTQ Institute's annual training summit on working with LGBTQ survivors of domestic and sexual violence on February 27th & 28th 2019 in Seattle, WA. [Click here](#) for more information and to register for the event.



More information on collecting SO/GI data

National LGBTQ Institute on IPV (2016) [Accurately and responsively collect sexual orientation and gender identity data](#). Targeted Recommendation of the [National LGBTQ Institute on IPV](#).

[Demonstrate LGBTQ Access](#) is a free resource website with ideas and tools for community-based service organizations to identify barriers and make changes in policy and practice to increase access for LGBTQ communities.

Park, A. (2016). [Reachable: Data collection methods of sexual orientation and gender identity](#). A report of [The Williams Institute](#).

The GenIUSS Group (2014). [Gender-Related Measures Overview](#). A report of [The Williams Institute](#).

Greytak, E., Gutierrez, E., Greene, K. (2012). [Don't Ask, Can't Report: A practical guide to collecting data on LGBT people in a culturally responsive way](#). Presentation during 2012 American Evaluation Association conference.



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