



National LGBTQ Institute on Intimate Partner Violence

A PROJECT OF THE LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER

In partnership with the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs and In Our Own Voices, Inc.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION + GENDER IDENTITY

DATA COLLECTION GUIDE

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Since its inception, the National LGBTQ Institute on Intimate Partner Violence has prioritized supporting agencies and providers to collect sexual orientation and gender identity (SO/GI) data accurately and responsively on the clients they serve.

As will be emphasized throughout, there is no one right method of collecting sexual orientation and gender identity information. The “right” way depends on a variety of contextual factors. As such, 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.

In addition to creating this guide, the Institute continues to lead national webinars and trainings on this topic, as well as conducting technical assistance with providers. If you are interested in participating in one of these training or technical assistance opportunities, you can find more details about them in the Resources section at the end of the guide.



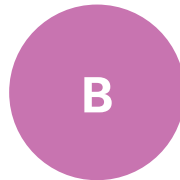
**SEXUAL ORIENTATION + GENDER
IDENTITY DATA COLLECTION GUIDE**



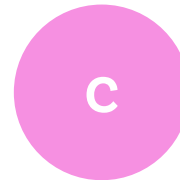
This guide includes the following sections –



**KEY ETHICAL
PRINCIPLES**



**SUGGESTED GENDER
INCLUSIVE INTAKE
FORM OPTIONS**



**PREPARING FOR
DATA COLLECTION**



**WAYS TO COLLECT
SO/GI DATA**



RESOURCES

A.

KEY ETHICAL PRINCIPLES



Considering the sensitivity of SO/GI information and the potential vulnerability associated with 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. These guidelines are developed from best practices used by the National LGBTQ Institute on Intimate Partner Violence and are informed by the best practice guidelines developed by the Williams Institute.



BE TRANSPARENT

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

- Why the data is being collected
- How it will be used
- Who will see it (i.e., Who will have access?
How will it be reported and shared with others?)
- How it will be stored
- How it will be protected





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 would violate federal regulations. Agencies should ask demographic questions (including SO/GI questions) of all clients; however, all clients have the right to decline to answer without any consequence to the services they receive. In addition, many jurisdictions are enacting laws and policies that may put LGBTQ+ survivors at further risk. Clients and agencies alike must weigh the implications of disclosing this data.

NORMALIZE SO/GI DATA COLLECTION

SO/GI demographic data should be voluntarily requested of all clients, not just those perceived to be a part of the LGBTQ+ community. There is no way to predict a client's SO/GI, and it is important that all clients have the opportunity to share information that may inform their needs. Further, this ensures that no client is targeted or feels singled out, helping to normalize the idea that everyone has a SO/GI.





DE-IDENTIFY ALL REPORTED DATA

Maintaining confidentiality means ensuring that no survivor can be identified in reports or publications of the data, whether internal or external. 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 people of color and LGBTQ+ people. 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 that trust is to use the data collected to the maximum benefit of survivors. Agencies should use this data for more than just reporting to funders. For example, it can be used to assess whether LGBTQ+ survivors are accessing services, which services LGBTQ+ survivors are accessing, inform staff development, and foster greater understanding of client needs.

B.

SUGGESTED GENDER INCLUSIVE INTAKE FORM OPTIONS





What is your Gender Identity (Select all that apply)

- Woman
- Man
- Genderqueer
- Gender fluid
- Nonbinary
- Not Listed: _____
- Prefer not to say

Are you transgender?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

What are your pronouns? (Select all that apply)

- She/Her/Hers
- He/Him/His
- They/Them/Theirs
- Ze/hir/hirs
- Not Listed: _____
- Prefer not to say

What is your Sexual Orientation? (Select all that apply)

- Heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Queer
- Questioning
- Asexual
- Pansexual
- Not Listed: _____
- Prefer not to say



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. The following are four key steps that agencies can take to prepare.



1. Assess organizational and provider skills, knowledge, capacities, and infrastructure.

- A. What training do staff need to be comfortable with and proficient in collecting this data?
- B. What systems, technologies, and practices are in place to ensure privacy and confidentiality?
- C. For example, these could include installing password-protected computers and firewalls, limiting access to client files, and adopting confidentiality and containment policies.

2. Understand why you want to collect this information.

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

3. Identify necessary partnerships.

- A. Who are local experts on LGBTQ+ communities in your area?
- B. How can you equitably partner with local experts to ensure you are asking about SO/GI data in relevant and appropriate ways?

4. Determine the best way and time to ask.

- A. Is the best way to ask via interview, paper-and-pencil survey, online survey, or something else?
 - I. This will depend in part on how your organization collect other information from clients, the technological capacity of your organization, and what format allows your organization to guarantee confidentiality.
- B. When is the best time to ask?
 - I. During intake, a subsequent conversation, or through program evaluation?
- C. How often will you ask?
 - I. SO/GI identities are not static. Have you considered screening clients at regular intervals? For example, if you re-complete intake documents annually, do you re-ask demographic questions?

D.

WAYS TO COLLECT SO/GI DATA



There is not a single correct 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 following questions can help guide agencies in finding the best way to structure, frame, and word the question(s) regarding clients' sexual orientation and gender identity.



1. What do you want to know?

- Do you want to know a 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?

2. 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 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; the size and diversity of the LGBTQ+ community in your region; and staff's ability to provide education to clients.

3. How will you analyze it?

- How much qualitative, non-numerical data (open-ended, fill-i-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?



RESOURCES





Utilizing ongoing input from providers, experts, and survivors, the National LGBTQ Institute on Intimate Partner Violence offers state-of-the-art training and technical assistance that significantly expand the capacity of public and private agencies to provide culturally relevant, survivor-centered LGBTQ+ IPV intervention and prevention services, including to LGBTQ+ persons from racially and ethnically diverse communities. Refer to this section of our website Research & Practice | National LGBTQ Institute on IPV (lgbtqipvinstitute.org) for more information about our research library, best practice recommendations and other resource guides. The National LGBTQ Institute on Intimate Partner Violence works to enhance the visibility of LGBTQ+-specific IPV needs, interventions, and strategies, while conducting research to identify and disseminate evidence-informed interventions and overseeing policy initiatives that have a meaningful impact on the quality, scope, and accessibility of LGBTQ+ IPV services nationwide.

The National LGBTQ Institute on Intimate Partner Violence is a project of the Los Angeles LGBT Center – the nation’s oldest and largest community-based LGBTQ+ service and support organization – in close collaboration with the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), and In Our Own Voices, Inc (IOOV). IOOV is a leading national organization giving voice to the needs and challenges of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming communities, as well as LGBTQ+ Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. IOOV seeks to: develop the leadership of LGBTQ+ BIPOC communities, strengthen the voices of LGBTQ+ BIPOC communities, and increase the community’s capacity for combating oppression and marginalization. NCAVP, based in New York City, is comprised of 46 local member programs, affiliate organizations, and individual organizations involved in fighting, addressing, and creating systemic and social change regarding LGBTQ+ intimate partner violence. NCAVP is in turn overseen by the New York City Anti-Violence Project and is itself the largest LGBTQ+-specific anti-violence program in the nation.



Check out our website to learn how to get involved with the National LGBTQ Institute on Intimate Partner Violence and request training or technical assistance –

Home | National LGBTQ Institute on IPV (lgbtqipvoinstitute.org)

Check out our Ongoing Learning Center for free, self-paced, courses you can take on demand –

On-Going Learning Center | National LGBTQ Institute on IPV (lgbtqipvoinstitute.org)

Park, Andrew. “Reachable: Data collection methods for sexual orientation and gender identity.” The Williams Institute. March 2016.

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