



Making The Bubble Bigger For Queer Youth

Sam Stott & Pól McCann

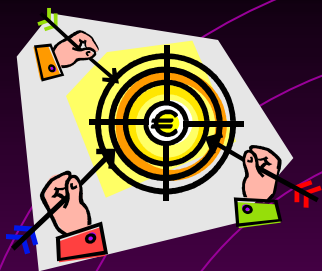
Youthblock Health
& Resource Service

SYDNEY SOUTH WEST
AREA HEALTH SERVICE

Overview

- Aims of presentation
- Background
- Queer young people's health
- Needs assessment process
- Findings & lessons learned
- Recommendations





Aims of Presentation

- To raise awareness of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender & queer (GLBTQ) youth health & wellbeing needs
- To review a needs assessment process conducted by a youth health service
- To share strategies for services to build capacity to promote the health & wellbeing of same-sex attracted & gender diverse young people

GLBTQ Young People

- Identity vs attraction vs behaviour
- Discrimination, isolation & homophobia
- Impact of family & peer rejection
- Increased risks of depression, suicidal behaviour & substance misuse
- Higher rates of STIs
- Resiliency, agency and mastery





Background

- SPACE program - promoting GLBTQ youth health at Youthblock since 1998
- Support group, newsletter and community cultural development
- Changing location of GLBTQ community & shift from health education model to health promotion framework prompted needs assessment

Needs Assessment Components

- Literature review
- Focus groups with young people
- SWOT analysis with staff
- Youth & health service provider survey
- Review of incoming referrals
- Identification of young people's presenting issues





Key Themes

1. Young people's strengths & needs
2. Critical reflection on practice
3. Referral pathways to GLBTQ services
4. Create supportive environments
5. Challenge homophobia & transphobia
6. Community & connection
7. Learning & development

(1) Young People's Strengths & Needs

- Emerging needs: mental health, the impacts of homophobia and safety
- Emerging trend: locus of GLBTQ community moving towards the inner west = higher visibility & less isolation
- Resilience - GLBTQ young people thrive when they have support & community!



(2) Critical Reflection on Practice

- *Observe* what's currently happening for GLBTQ young people in your service
- *Reflect* on how this impacts on young people's health & access to services
- *Plan* ways of implementing strategies to address young people's identified & expressed needs & improve access
- *Act* in partnership with GLBTQ young people to create change!



(3) Referral Pathways To GLBTQ Services

- Assess whether referral to specific services is required or whether your service is best-placed to support the young person (holistic approach)
- Find out what GLBTQ-specific services are available in your area & how young people can access them
- Keep building trust & rapport!



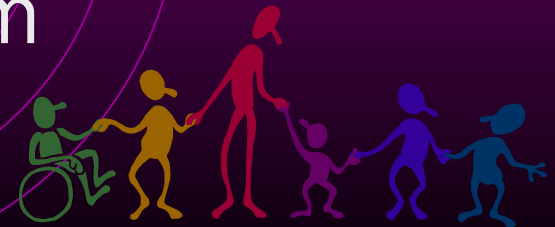
(4) Supportive Environments

- Create a supportive environment in your service for GLBTQ young people & those who are questioning their sexuality and/or gender identity
- Use language inclusively e.g. 'partner'
- Role model diversity & respect
- Ensure there are GLBTQ friendly posters & brochures in your reception



(5) Challenge Homophobia And Transphobia

- GLBTQ youth health is core business
- Clarify attitudes & values about GLBTQ young people & workers
- Affirm diversity & promote respect among young people accessing your service
- Example - Lesbian & Gay Anti-Violence Project's *Safe Place* program



(6) Community & Connection

- Build sexuality & gender diverse young people's sense of connectedness, thereby fostering individual resilience & community mastery
- Example - ACON/Twenty10 *Queer Peer* leadership project for GLBTQ young people



(7) Learning & Development

- Identify opportunities for professional learning & development around working with same-sex attracted & gender diverse young people
- Example - Twenty10's *Ready or Not* training program for rural youth service providers



Recommendations



- Develop & maintain a culture of respect & affirming diversity
- Work in partnership with GLBTQ community + youth & health services
- Multi-strategic & ongoing = sustainable
- Address homophobia & transphobia to reduce isolation & discrimination = improved health outcomes

Questions? Ideas?

- Youthblock Health & Resource Service
142 Carillon Ave
Camperdown NSW 2050
- Ph: +61 2 9516 2233
- Fax: +61 2 9516 3591
- Email: sam.stott@email.cs.nsw.gov.au

