



Los Angeles County  
**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**

**Providing Effective Services to Members of the LGBTQI2-S Community Following Disasters,  
Public Health Emergencies and Mass Fatality Events**

*December 12, 2017*

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**Providing Culturally Competent Disaster Services**

Disaster of all types disproportionately impact people in underserved and marginalized communities. Terrorist incidents such as the Pulse Night Club Shooting in June 2016 highlight the importance that emergency managers and all disaster responders increase their efforts to provide culturally competent disaster assistance to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Queer, Intersex, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQI2-S) community; particularly if the LGBTQI2-S community is targeted or impacted by a particular disaster.

**Barriers the LGBTQI2-S Community May Experience and How You Can Help**

The LGBTQI2-S community may experience barriers to accessing resources, such as shelters and/or other disaster recovery services. Here are ways you can help:

1. Disaster response agencies should partner with and include LGBTQI2-S community service organizations in their disaster planning efforts, drills, exercises, and disaster volunteer programs so that organizations who already serve the LGBTQI2-S community can be activated to assist with the provision of culturally competent disaster services.
2. The LGBTQI2-S community may be reluctant and/or cautious to engage service providers due to prior incidents of discrimination, victimization, and/or trauma. Please remain non-judgmental, compassionate, and caring in all interactions.
3. The LGBTQI2-S community needs to feel safe, especially during a disaster. Please be familiar with LGBTQI2-S terminology and remember that each letter in the L-G-B-T-Q-I-2-S acronym is unique and different from the others.
4. The LGBTQI2-S community may not have disclosed their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and their medical history (such as HIV) to family members. Please don't share any personal information without consent and reassure confidentiality.
5. The LGBTQI2-S community has "safe" support systems that often include a "chosen family", which may not be the family of origin. Please ask and ensure travel arrangements and communications with the "chosen family" are respected and honored.
6. The LGBTQI2-S community may require deployment of Spiritual Care and/or Clergy providers who are supportive of LGBTQI2-S people and their families. Please ask what is helpful and supportive.
7. It would not be appropriate to ask a non-trans person (cisgender) about the appearance or status of their genitalia, and it is not appropriate to ask a trans/non-binary person that question either. If a transgender person is concerned over these issues, let them bring it up.

## **Using the Right Language**

If you don't know what pronouns to use, ask:

- Just like with someone's name, you should never assign or assume a person's pronouns based on appearance or limited information.
- No matter the legal name that may be on their Identity Documents (ID), use the person's chosen name.
- It's best to first state your own name and pronouns, then ask for the other person's.
- Be polite and respectful when you ask a person which pronoun they prefer. Then use that pronoun and encourage others to do so.
- Not everyone is comfortable with English as a first language. Plan ahead to have all key documents and forms translated in the 13 threshold languages for Los Angeles County.

## **Helpful Resources/Links**

<b>SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES</b>	<b>WEB LINK</b>
Advocates for Youth	<a href="http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/">http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/</a>
American Psychological Association	<a href="http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/sexual-orientation.aspx">http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/sexual-orientation.aspx</a>
APAIT	<a href="http://apaitonline.org/">http://apaitonline.org/</a>
Center for Disease Control and Prevention	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm</a>
Center for Health Justice Los Angeles	<a href="http://centerforhealthjustice.org/">http://centerforhealthjustice.org/</a>
Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network	<a href="http://www.glsen.org/">http://www.glsen.org/</a>
Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network	<a href="http://www.gsanetwork.org/">http://www.gsanetwork.org/</a>
Human Rights	<a href="http://www.humanrights.gov/dyn/issues/lgbt.html">http://www.humanrights.gov/dyn/issues/lgbt.html</a>
Human Rights Campaign	<a href="http://www.hrc.org/">http://www.hrc.org/</a>
LA Youth Resources	<a href="http://www.layouth.com/resources-for-lgbtq-teens/">http://www.layouth.com/resources-for-lgbtq-teens/</a>
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Disaster Services	<a href="http://dmh.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dmh/our_services/disaster_services">http://dmh.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dmh/our_services/disaster_services</a>
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Suicide Prevention Program	<a href="http://dmh.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dmh/our_services/services_detail/?current=true&amp;urile=wcm:path:/dmh+content/dmh+site/home/our+services/our+services+detail/partners+in+suicide+prevention">http://dmh.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dmh/our_services/services_detail/?current=true&amp;urile=wcm:path:/dmh+content/dmh+site/home/our+services/our+services+detail/partners+in+suicide+prevention</a>
Los Angeles LGBT Center	<a href="https://lalgbtcenter.org/">https://lalgbtcenter.org/</a>
National Alliance to End Homelessness	<a href="http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/national-recommended-best-practices-for-serving-lgbt-homeless-youth">http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/national-recommended-best-practices-for-serving-lgbt-homeless-youth</a>
National Disaster Interfaith Network – LGBT Needs & Disaster	<a href="http://www.ndin.org/ndin_resources/tipsheets_v1208/25_NDIN_TS_LGBTNeeds.pdf">http://www.ndin.org/ndin_resources/tipsheets_v1208/25_NDIN_TS_LGBTNeeds.pdf</a>
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays	<a href="http://community.pflag.org/">http://community.pflag.org/</a>
San Francisco State University-Family Acceptance Project	<a href="http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/">http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/</a>
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States	<a href="http://www.siecus.org/index.cfm">http://www.siecus.org/index.cfm</a>
Stop Bullying	<a href="http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/lgbt/index.html">http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/lgbt/index.html</a>
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	<a href="http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/PEP14-LGBTKIDS/PEP14-LGBTKIDS.pdf">http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/PEP14-LGBTKIDS/PEP14-LGBTKIDS.pdf</a>
The Wall Las Memorias Project	<a href="http://www.thewallsmemorias.org/">http://www.thewallsmemorias.org/</a>
The Red Circle Project @ APLA	<a href="http://redcircleproject.org/">http://redcircleproject.org/</a>
The Trevor Project	<a href="http://www.thetrevorproject.org/">http://www.thetrevorproject.org/</a>
Transgender Law Center	<a href="https://transgenderlawcenter.org/">https://transgenderlawcenter.org/</a>
University of California, Los Angeles	<a href="http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/">http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/</a>