



Creating a Diverse and Welcoming Atmosphere

Michael Fordham
Prevention Programs Administrator
UAB 1917 Clinic

Faculty Disclosure

- I have no relevant financial disclosures

Objectives

Upon completion of this talk, participants will be able to:

1. Identify why LGBTQ welcoming clinic environments are important
2. Define trauma-informed principles and think of ways to implement them into your practice
3. Discuss the difference between physical and cultural aspects of a welcoming environment

About the 1917 Clinic

- Opened January 28, 1988
- Ryan White Part C funding
 - Servicing ~4,000 patients
 - Comprehensive medical care
- 66% Black/African-American, 31% White, 3% Other
- 75% Male, 24% Female, 1% Trans persons
- 53% below 100% of the Federal Poverty Line



Why Does This Matter?

- Intersectionality - - *the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups* (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality>)
 - Examples:
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Gender identity
 - Socioeconomic status
 - Others?

Why Does This Matter?

- Stigma and discrimination have direct, negative consequences on health outcomes
 - Reduced hope
 - Lower self-esteem
 - Increased psychiatric symptoms
 - Difficulties with social relationships
 - Reduced likelihood of staying with treatments
 - Personal and professional difficulties

Courtesy of the American Psychiatric Association

Why Does This Matter?

- LGBTQ+ “hot topics”
 - Transgender healthcare laws
 - “bathroom bills”
- Increased fear and reluctance to seek medical care
 - Poorer health outcomes

Why Does This Matter?

- LGBTQ persons are vital members of our communities
- Approximately 3.5% of Americans identify as LGB³
- 0.3% of Americans identify as transgender³

3. Hafeez H, et al. Health Care Disparities Among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth: A Literature Review. *Cureus*. 2017.

Trauma Informed Approaches

- What is the goal of trauma informed care at the 1917 Clinic?
 - To empower patients, staff, and the greater community by integrating a trauma informed approach into the 1917 Clinic's culture, policies, environment, and delivery of HIV prevention and care



Trauma Informed Approaches

- What happened to you vs what is wrong with you?



Trauma Informed Approaches – The Six Principles

- Physical & emotional Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice, and choice
- Cultural, historical, and gender issues

www.nastad.org/trauma-informed-approaches

Trauma Informed Approaches – The Six Principles

- Safety
 - Throughout the organization, staff and the people they serve feel physically and psychologically safe
- Trustworthiness and Transparency
 - Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency and the goal of building and maintaining trust among staff, clients, and family members of those receiving care

<https://traumainformedoregon.org/resources/new-to-trauma-informed-care/trauma-informed-care-principles/>

Trauma Informed Approaches – The Six Principles

- Peer support and mutual self-help
 - These are integral to the organizational and service delivery approach and are understood as a key vehicle for building trust, establishing safety, and empowerment
- Collaboration and mutuality
 - There is recognition that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making. The organization recognizes that everyone plays a role in TIA

<https://traumainformedoregon.org/resources/new-to-trauma-informed-care/trauma-informed-care-principles/>

Trauma Informed Approaches – The Six Principles

- Empowerment, voice, and choice
 - Organization aims to strengthen the staff, client, and family members' experience of choice and recognizes that every person's experience is unique and requires an individualized approach
 - What do clients, staff, and communities offer?
- Cultural, historical, and gender issues
 - The organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases, offers culturally responsive services, and leverages the healing value of cultural connections
 - Recognizes and addresses historical trauma

<https://traumainformedoregon.org/resources/new-to-trauma-informed-care/trauma-informed-care-principles/>

Physical Space

- What does your physical space look like?



Old 1917 Clinic Building



New 1917 Building

Physical Space

- Welcoming
- Safe
- Inclusive
- Diverse



Physical Space

- LGBTQ+ affirming badge pins, stickers, or buttons
- Pronoun buttons or pins
- The literature and/or posters in the clinic/office feature LGBTQ people
- Literature in the clinic/office features information relevant to LGBTQ communities
- Gender neutral/inclusive bathrooms and signage



The Intangibles....

An inclusive and welcoming environment isn't just about wall color, furniture, and overhead music....

IT STARTS WITH US!



Inclusive and Affirming Language

- Staff consistently address new patients and their families or care person using inclusive language
 - i.e. correct pronouns, patient's preferred name
- Clinic forms are gender neutral
 - Spouse/significant other vs husband/wife
- Patient pronoun card on tracking form

Mistakes Happen – Own Them!

- We are human, and we often make mistakes
- If you mis-gender someone or use an incorrect name, simply apologize and acknowledge your mistake
- Pledge to do better next time

Building Connections With Patients

- Trusting connections and relationships take time – be patient!
- Start with basics
 - Verify the patients name, DOB, other personal identifiers – explain why you need this information first
 - How would you like me to address you?
 - Pronouns, name, other identifiers
 - If on the phone, ask if the patient is in a safe area to talk
- Be sincere and reliable
 - Keep your commitments. Don't make promises you can't keep
 - If you don't know the answer, that's OK! Tell the patient you will find out

Building Connections With Patients

- Be authentic
 - Fulfill your obligations
 - Treat people with kindness and respect – Golden Rule
 - Be in the moment, and listen actively
 - Open-minded and fair
 - Our patients have diverse histories, identities, backgrounds, and lived experiences
 - We may not understand all of them, but it is important to be open to them

Building Connections With Patients

- Be personable. Care. Be culturally humble
 - Ensure interpreting services available if needed
 - Remember details about the patient's life outside of the clinic (pets, family, jobs, hobbies, etc)
- Don't forget the little things!
 - Be curious about your patients lives

Your Team Environment Impacts Your Patients

- Building relationships among your teams and staff
 - Get to know your coworkers, listen, and learn from your team (even the introverts...)
 - Support one another (information, encouragement, and follow through)
 - Vulnerability
 - Receiving and giving feedback – respectively
 - Think of Brene Brown’s Engaged Feedback Checklist
 - (<https://daretolead.brenebrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/DaringFeedback-EngagedFeedbackChecklist11.pdf>)

Thank You!

- Questions? Comments?
- mfordham@uabmc.edu