

## **Suggested LGBT-relevant Public Health System-level and Provider-level Data Elements for Uniform Monitoring and Evaluation of System-level and Service-level Responses to Need and to Support Client-Centered Service-Planning and Care**

We recommend to providers that on demographic reporting (SAMHSA, 2001)<sup>1</sup> and intake forms they survey all clients for a) sexual identity, b) attraction to others based on gender, c) gender assignment at birth, and d) current gender identity.

We recommend that providers employ four multiple choice questions on forms. Questions ‘a’ and ‘b’ help identify clients/patients/consumers as LGB or heterosexual in terms of their sexual identity and their sexual orientation. The other two questions help identify clients/patients/consumers as transgender (T) or as having a gender-related condition such as intersex.

- a) Do you identify as bisexual \_\_, heterosexual or straight<sup>2</sup> \_\_, gay \_\_, lesbian \_\_, or other<sup>3</sup> \_\_?**
- b) Are you attracted to men only \_\_, mostly men \_\_, women only \_\_, mostly women \_\_, or both equally<sup>4</sup> \_\_?**
- c) What gender were you assigned at birth, female \_\_, male \_\_, or other<sup>5</sup> \_\_?**
- d) Do you identify as a female \_\_, male \_\_, or other<sup>6</sup> \_\_?**

The literature<sup>7</sup> is clear about the existence of significant substance use and abuse as well as mental health disparities in LGBT people due to a number of factors, including but not limited to stigma and minority stress. Similar to other groups, based on gender, age, or race ethnicity, effective public health planning, resource allocation, quality assurance and outcome evaluation for the LGBT population are dependent on data collection. On a service delivery level, this information is essential to comprehensive assessment and treatment planning. Is collecting this type of information is too sensitive? The Williams Institute at UCLA and others have conducted research that responds to that concern.

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<sup>1</sup> *A Provider’s Introduction to Substance Abuse Treatment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Individuals*, US Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, printed 2001

<sup>2</sup> Heterosexual is a clinical or medical term that may not be in common use among some clients

<sup>3</sup> Some clients/patients may use culturally based terms such as Same-Gender Loving [African American], Two-Spirit [Native American], queer, or gender queer [Youth]

<sup>4</sup> In assessing for sexual orientation this wording is considered less sensitive to ask at intake and some people may not be sexually active, e.g. youth.

<sup>5</sup> Some clients may report, none, intersex or another gender-related condition or disorder.

<sup>6</sup> Some clients/patients/consumers may use transgender, transitioning, neither, or some other term

<sup>7</sup> A Bibliography developed by Gil Gerald & Associates, Inc. is available at [www.gilgerald.com](http://www.gilgerald.com).