

Reducing LGBTQ Healthcare Disparities: An Affirmation Training QI Project

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*On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this paper.
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Abstract

Background: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals are a diverse community with a common need for culturally competent healthcare. In 2016 the National Institutes of Health declared the LGBTQ community a health disparity population. Without guidance healthcare teams are unlikely to educate themselves on LGBTQ specific concerns, and the healthcare disparity gap for the LGBTQ population will likely widen. Poor healthcare team knowledge of LGBTQ health concerns causes a lack of affirming healthcare spaces, decreased health seeking, and increased health disparities. **Purpose:** This evidence-based quality improvement (QI) project aims to develop, implement, and evaluate the impact LGBTQ affirmation training has on healthcare team knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KAB). Feasibility was assessed based on newly implemented LGBTQ specific practice changes and healthcare team feedback. **Methods:** The pre-post design QI project used validated tools to measure changes in KAB before and after affirmation training delivery. The training was delivered to a small non-profit medical clinic providing free healthcare to working uninsured adults in a suburban area in the southern United States. The project sample included staff interacting with or making decisions on behalf of patients (n=11). The training (three modules, two animated videos, and a handout) can be completed in under 90 minutes and is based on American Nurses Association and American Academy of Family Physician principles. The modules are provided by the Fenway Institute. **Results:** There was a measured increase in healthcare team KAB. Participants reported a positive experience that allowed them to explore sensitive subjects and increased personal confidence in providing LGBTQ affirming care. **Conclusions:** The affirmation training curriculum employed in this QI project introduces the required steps for decreasing LGBTQ health disparities in an easy to digest fully online reproducible format. **Implications:** Anyone working in the healthcare arena can reduce health disparities by employing these recommendations.

Key Words: LGBTQ patients, practice recommendations, affirmation training, quality improvement intervention, LGBTQ health disparities