

Guidelines for Advocates Supporting LGBTIQA+SB People with Disability



Creating a supportive environment

- Include welcoming images such as Pride and First Nations flags, statement of support
- Include images of LGBTIQA+SB people on website and resources
- Refrain from asking questions based on your own assumptions
e.g. assuming genders or heterosexual family structures
- Use people's chosen language and pronouns
- For respectful conversations, familiarise yourself with inclusive language guides.

Respecting the privacy and autonomy of disabled people

- Ensuring the advocacy aligns with the individuals personal needs, identity, self-expression and desires, always ask what they feel comfortable with and prefer.
- Supporting expression of identity in ways that account for their unique needs and desires such as using chosen pronouns and providing gender neutral bathrooms.
- Creating accommodating and safe environments for self-regulating and learning, as disability can create a unique experience of identity.
- Giving people the vocabulary and space to discuss sensitive topics in ways that support them with care, respect and understanding of their unique situations.

Early conversations

We suggest having an open discussion as early as possible to help build trust and understanding, so they feel comfortable to express their needs to their advocate. This conversation could include:

- Personal boundaries and communication preferences.
- Chosen name and pronouns, noting this may be different from legal name and may change between contexts.
- Family structure, including rainbow families where relevant.
- Accessibility needs and barriers.
- Gender expression and barriers.
- Specific accommodations for comfort and well-being.



Accessibility considerations

Accessibility needs vary widely, and it is important to identify these early. Advocates can be mindful of:

- Lighting and glare sensitivity.
- Aversion to specific sounds e.g. whistles, loud bangs, thunderstorms.
- Discomfort with certain physical sensations e.g. room temperature
- Information processing preferences e.g. allowing for periods of silence.
- Physical assistance requirements e.g. wheelchairs, sighted guidance for people with vision-impairment.

Respecting personal disclosure

Disclosure of disability, gender identity, or sexuality is deeply personal. Advocates can:

- Allow individuals to share information at their own pace.
- Foster an environment where no identity is treated as taboo or too complex.
- Respect personal privacy and confidentiality.
- Recognise that disclosure can often be intertwined with other parts of a person's life.



Attentiveness and responding to disclosures

Providing advocacy means being fully present. Best practices include:

- Minimising disruptions to the appointment, such as taking unrelated phone calls.
- Respecting and adapting to different communication needs and processing speeds.
- Regular check-ins to ensure interactions are led by the needs of the person.
- Respond to disclosures in a culturally safe and affirming way.
- Be courteous and listen without judgment or assumption.

Intake and client information

Without judgement or assumptions:

- Identify a person's access needs and any disabilities they wish to disclose.
- Offer clients the opportunity to specify topics they prefer not to discuss.
- Provide safe avenues for listing sensory and other accessibility needs.
- Clearly outline available quiet spaces and sensory-friendly areas.
- Ask if individuals are comfortable sharing information about their living situation and support network.
- Inquire about preferences regarding the disclosure of gender identity, sexuality, and variations in sex characteristics.
- Inquire about chosen name and pronouns, including in different settings.
- Offer to complete intake over multiple, shorter sessions, if helpful.

Understanding LGBTIQ+SB and disability intersectionality

Advocates can:

- Ensure accessibility within their premises and services.
- Be open to learning and seek out literature and appropriate training on the LGBTIQ+SB community (e.g. QC training).
- Establish clear policies on collecting and handling confidential client information related to disability, gender identity, and sexuality.
- Focus on clients' lived experience rather than trying to categorise their experiences and identities.
- Engage in open and honest discussions with peers (e.g. starting a working group or community of practice)
- Celebrate intersectionality by participating in significant LGBTIQ+SB dates such as Pride and IDAHOBIT



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