

Determining Staff Experience, Attitudes and Awareness of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Gender Identity Presentations in Irish Child & Adolescent Mental Health Settings

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Background

Individuals with both varied sexuality and gender identity presentations are at higher risk of co-morbid mental illness, including suicide and self-harm.

Currently individuals with gender identity concerns are often referred to psychiatry for assessment if they wish to pursue intervention with gender identity services.

This has created a profile of a service user who may require access to mental health services for a reason other than treatment of a mental illness. Awareness of use of pronouns, having gender inclusive assessment forms and records, are areas where staff may not have been upskilled.

Culturally the sexuality spectrum has broadened, with greater rates of disclosure of language and identities to describe sexuality, such as pansexual and asexual.

There is limited evidence of staff attitude and awareness regarding sexuality and gender identity in Irish settings, and even less research conducted in child and adolescent teams.

Objectives

To determine staff experience, attitudes, and awareness of LGB (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual) and gender identity presentations in an Irish healthcare setting.

To explore levels of satisfaction with training regarding these presentations and to ascertain interest in future training for working with this client group.

To identify if there are differences when analysed by age, gender, occupation, years of clinical practice, and prior training.



Methods

A survey was designed based on prior studies, namely the Sexual Orientations Belief Scale (SOBS) and the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (GAP), and included the following measures: Lesbian, gay, bisexual and gender identity health care experience, attitudes and awareness.

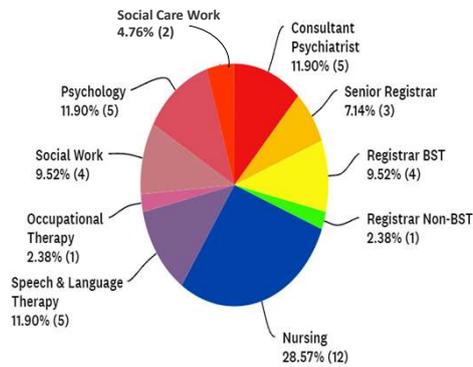
The survey was distributed via email to all HSE CAMHS teams in the Cork/Kerry (CHO4) area. Results were analysed by demographic, experience, training and attitudes.

Ethical approval for this study was granted by Cork Research & Ethics Committee on 14th August 2020.

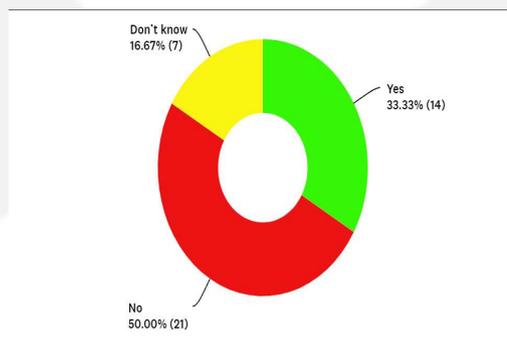
No financial sponsorship was attained for this study.



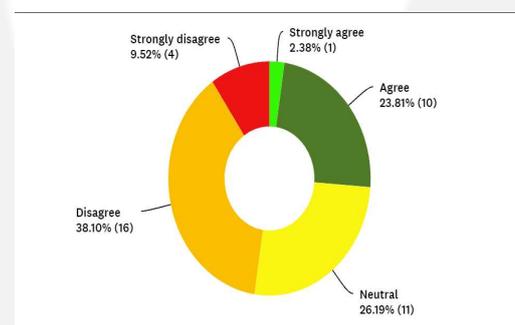
What is your occupation?



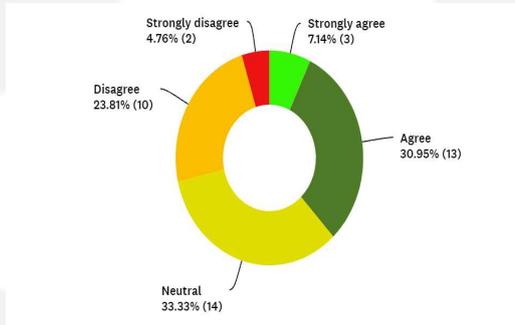
Are you aware of LGBT policies in your facility or nationwide?



I feel adequately trained to treat individuals that identify as transgender



I feel adequately trained to treat individuals that identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual



Results

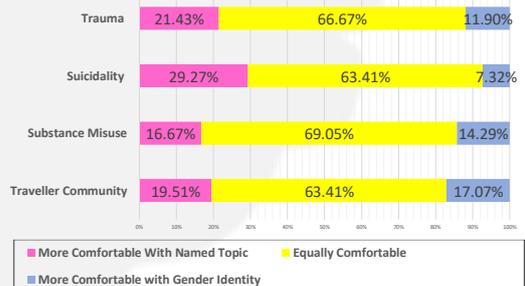
Sixty people were invited and 42 respondents consented to the study and completed the survey in full, representing 70% uptake.

52% (n=22) were dissatisfied with their training on Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual presentations, and 69% (n=29) were dissatisfied with training on gender identity.

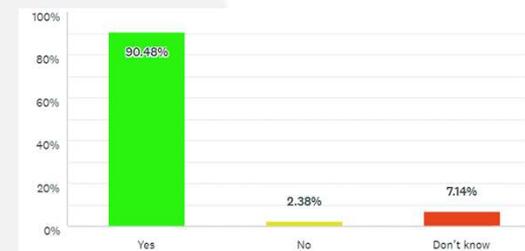
29% (n=12) disagreed they were adequately trained regarding Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual presentations, and 48% (n=20) disagreed they were adequately trained regarding gender identity presentations.

Overall, 90.5% (n=38) indicated they would attend additional training. Nursing staff and non-trainee junior doctors were more likely to have had no additional training at either pre or post graduate level.

Compared to other presentations, are you more, equally or less comfortable with gender identity?



Would you be interested in future training in sexuality and gender identity if it were available?



Conclusion

Results indicated that staff are dissatisfied with their current level of training in both sexual orientation and gender identity. Responses suggest strong interest in further training in both these areas.

Respondents were advised to seek HSE online training or Gender Identity Skills Training if interested in immediate resources. The HSE Rainbow badge initiative also encourages staff to educate themselves and advocate for LGBT service users.

References

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