

Appendix F: Questionnaire for service providers

This survey was filled out by a lesbian who worked at a shelter in Saskatchewan. This survey was received after the data analysis had already been completed, so data from it is not included in any data base or analysis.

1. What services does your agency provide to abused women generally? (check all that apply)

shelter crisis line one-to-one counselling support groups referrals

other (please specify) _____

2. What does your agency know about abuse in lesbian relationships?

nothing very little some quite a bit

3. Does your agency consider sexual orientation to be a contributing factor to the challenges faced by women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships?

yes no

4. Does your agency consider issues in lesbian relationships to be something that requires specialized services? yes no If no, please explain:

They don't recognize lesbian relationships as relationships.

If yes, what specialized services/supports do lesbians in abusive relationships need/want?

5. What general services has your agency knowingly provided to women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships? (check all that apply)

shelter crisis line one-to-one counselling support groups referrals

other (please specify) _____

6. What services has your agency provided specifically for women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships? (check all that apply)

shelter crisis line one-to-one counselling support groups referrals

other (please specify) _____

7. Please estimate the average number of self-identified lesbians who access your agency's programs/services per year: 3-5

8. Please estimate the average number of self-identified lesbians with same sex abuse issues who access your agency's programs/services per year: 1-2

9. Does/would your agency feel comfortable providing services to women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships?

yes no Please explain:

I would feel comfortable because I am a self-identified lesbian. Other support staff, including management, would not because of religious, moral & personal beliefs.

If no, what would help your agency feel more comfortable?

**Awareness and training in specified area. Knowledge of agencies for referrals
TOLERANCE, SENSITIVITY, UNDERSTANDING!**

10. Does your agency have a specific response or protocol for dealing with a client who is or was in a abusive lesbian relationship? yes no Please explain:

When I started at the shelter 4 years ago, there was no information or referral lists for Lesbians. I added the contact number for GLHS, but few staff were aware or willing to be informed on such issues.

11. Does your agency have counsellors who deal specifically with women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships?

yes no

12. Are you aware of barriers that might prevent lesbians from accessing the services of your agency? yes no Please explain:

Even though they said it was a “friendly” environment, it wasn’t. Such comments by staff members like “Being gay is wrong” or “There is something morally wrong with gay people”. Staff couldn’t even say the word lesbian let alone understand it.

13. What is your understanding of the term “homophobia”?

Does your agency have employees who could be described as homophobic? yes no

14. If your agency provides shelter services, does it have concerns about other residents being homophobic? yes no Please explain:

I doubt if the shelter would knowingly admit a lesbian, because of religious and personal beliefs.

If your agency provides shelter services, does it have concerns about an abusive female partner getting into the shelter? yes no Please explain:

15. Have staff at your agency received training in providing 'lesbian friendly' services?

yes no

If yes, who provided this training: _____

16. Do you consider your agency's services lesbian-friendly? yes no

If yes, what makes your agency's services lesbian friendly?

If yes, what efforts does your agency make to inform the 'lesbian community' that your services are lesbian friendly?

no efforts

openly displays sexual minority material in its waiting room and offices (i.e. material depicting other than heterosexual relationships). If not, please explain:

openly advertises its services in sexual minority publications. If yes, where? If not, please explain:

other efforts (please specify)

If no (and even if yes), would your agency be interested in receiving training in providing lesbian friendly services? yes no If no, please explain:

I feel they would not be interested in receiving training because the willingness to be open-minded and receptive to different ideas is not there.

17. Does your agency have an internal policy to protect lesbians from harassment or discrimination? yes no

18. Has your agency every received complaints or negative feedback related to sexual orientation issues from a lesbian client? yes no

19. How would your agency deal with a client who discloses discrimination or harassment within your agency because of her sexual orientation?

Speaking from experience, because I had to leave my position because of discrimination in the workplace, I feel a client's complaint would be ignored and "swept under the carpet". The client would not have a voice because staff are very tightly knit and would not allow board members or others to hear such a complaint.

20. Does your agency refer women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships to other agencies? yes ___no

If yes, to whom do you refer? **Staff referred to Mental Health, I referred to GLHS**

21. Do you see gaps in the services your agency can provide to women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships? yes ___no Please explain:

Because of the lack of information / referrals, services and because staff do not take lesbian relationships seriously, staff are not properly trained or educated about the seriousness of the relationship or how to handle abuse of this type.

23. What does your agency know about the services offered in Saskatchewan by abuse help agencies to women abused in lesbian relationships?

nothing very little ___some ___quite a bit (**management knows nothing, 1 or 2 staff members know only about GLHS**)

24. Do you see gaps in the services provided in Saskatchewan to women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships? yes ___no Please explain:

The gaps lie in the uneducated people who are working in our shelters as well as other Government agencies.

25. Have clients expressed to your agency that there are gaps in the services provided to women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships in Saskatchewan? ___yes no
Please explain:

Clients fear rejection and ridicule from support staff, so to them it's best to "stay in the closet". The bottom line is abuse is abuse no matter your sex, color, religion etc..

Any other comments?

Working in rural women's shelter, I found staff insensitive to the needs of a lesbian. They don't recognize same sex relationships and they express their negative opinions freely to clients. So in actuality, it is not a lesbian-friendly environment for the self declared or for the non-declared. More needs to be done in regards to education. I know you could ask any staff if they are gay positive and they would say yes to your face. But experiencing the side of the cold shoulders and disgusted stares, I know they disagree behind your back.

The way I see it, it's 'women abusing women', that is, 'staff abusing clients'.