

Beyond Rainbows: Adapting Player Health Efforts to Attract and Welcome LGBTQI+ Individuals

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The Massachusetts Council on
GAMING AND HEALTH



Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health

Mission and Purpose

- Utilize advocacy, education, information, and public health support to provide a strong safety net for every individual that makes the choice to gamble.
- Offer a continuum of evidence-based services from primary prevention through long-term recovery



The Origin of GameSense

- Based on Canadian model
- Statutory Language in Chapter 23K
- Onsite at 3 casinos; Funded by Public Health Trust Fund through the MGC
- Three-legged stool: Players, Employees, and Community



What We Do: Player Health Programming

- 24/7 Helpline/GamLine; Online Chat
- GameSense Information Centers at 3 casinos
- Employee Trainings, Support
- Community-Based Trainings
- Voluntary Self-Exclusions
- Risk Mitigation Programs
- Third-party support
- Evaluation of services
- Media Outreach
- Research translation
- Policy Consultation
- Advocacy on multiple levels





Focusing on the LGBTQI+ Community

Our Working Definition of LGBTQI+

LGBTQI+ is an acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex. The + represents the many other identities and allies that are part of the community, but not specifically named here.



Why is this a focus?

- Literature supports it
- Environment, Social, Governance
- Massachusetts census
- Staff and BOD representation
- Legislature/Advocacy efforts
- Great Researcher, Dr. Michelle Malkin, Eastern Carolina Univ



Diversity/Inclusion at MACGH (pre-survey)

- Staff and Board matrix
- Personnel Manual
- Human Resource trainings
- Racial Justice and Health Equity Committee
- Community-based trainings
- Advocacy Efforts



Survey/Research Process

- Review of GameSense brochures, website, and documents occurred
- Analysis of each item's inclusivity in general, with a particular focus on LGBTQI+
- Visited and observed all GameSense locations and conducted four-hour long focus groups made up of selected GameSense personnel
- Focus groups included questions concentrated on values, resources, diversity, training, job details, forms, and LGBTQI+ cultural humility



Analysis Outline

Broken into 5 high-level indicators:

- physical environment
- programs & services
- staff interactions with clients
- staff hiring, training, and workplace climate
- leadership & organizational vision



How it Felt/How to Prepare Your Agency

- “Gut Punch” Vulnerability
- Frustrating that we aren’t where we had hoped
- Difficult to find resources/\$ to fix problems
- Requires key strategic partnerships/collaborators

- Future focused progress feels amazing!



Research Recommendations

Physical Environment

- Bigger center with multiple private room options
- LGBTQI+/Ally signage
- Make all bathroom options clear



Programs and Services

- Information on LGBTQI+ specific referrals are readily available to staff & clients, and staff make LGBTQ+ specific referrals (internal & external)
- The organization has designated an LGBTQI+ expert or consultant (internal/external) available for staff consultation and advisement
- Integrate LGBTQI+ language/terms in all quizzes/activities



Staff Interactions with Patrons/One another

- Language when discussing individuals, family, even directions to restrooms
- VSE and Reinstatement Forms
- Referrals to community agencies
- Not “outing” others



Staff Hiring, Training, & Workplace Climate

- LGBTQI+ & Gambling Disorder: Cultural Humility Primer Training
- Language on our hiring ads/website



Leadership and Organizational Vision

- Diversity and values displayed
- Signage that demonstrates allyship





Current Implementation

Physical Environment

- GameSense Values
- We Welcome All Sign
- Progress Pride Flag Lapel Pins (optional)



Programs and Services

- New language in materials/website
- Updated activities/quizzes
- Inclusive community-based resources



Staff Interactions with Clients

- Non-gendered directions/instructions/spouses
- Ask for their answers to questions on forms and not assume a name or gender or relationship
- Offer to take down a preferred name and not just a legal name
- Checking in on your assumptions; ok to ask questions



Staff Hiring, Training, & Workplace Climate

- Incorporate our values into all hiring documentation and advertisements
- Bystander Training
- Deescalation Training
- Consent: affirm use of people's stories and experiences



Leadership and Organizational Vision

- New design for our racial and gender justice work and committees
- BOD training





Thank You and Questions
