OBESITY UK

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS FOR THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

FACILITATOR TRAINING GUIDE

A training resource for facilitators of peer support groups for members of the LGBTQIA+ community

About this guide

This resource has been developed with members of the LGBTQIA+ community, to provide a step-by-step guide to train facilitators of peer support groups for the LGBTQIA+ community.

1. Setting up a good peer support group

There are some important things to consider when setting up a peer support group for members of the LGBTQIA+ community. These include the following:

1.A. A suitable setting

- Choose a safe and suitable setting for your peer support group, whether delivering it in person, online or hybrid (online and in person at the same time). When you are setting up your group, you can ask potential group members whether they would prefer face-to-face, online, hybrid or a mixture of formats.

- If you and the group would prefer a hybrid group, you may be able to use special technology to facilitate this. Obesity UK uses 'Meeting Owl,' technology, which has a 360-degree video camera and microphone, allowing everyone joining online to clearly see and hear everyone attending in person. For more information on how to use the Meeting Owl technology to facilitate a hybrid group see: https://resources.owllabs.com/blog/meeting-owl-pro-setup.

  - Running a hybrid group will require more preparation work, including setting up the Meeting Owl technology (if available), online meetings and the venue. It will, however, make the group much more accessible to a wider range of the community.

- When choosing a venue for face-to-face groups, consider the following:

  - Is the venue familiar, trusted and known to be safe for members of the LGBTQIA+ community? Is it provided by a trusted organisation?
  - Is it easy to get to and find, including by public transport and has parking nearby?
  - Is it private and away from crowds?
  - Is it welcoming and non-judgmental?
  - How busy or noisy is the venue?
  - Who else uses the venue and will this affect the comfort of group members?
  - Are there accessible toilets? Does it have gender neutral toilets?
  - Does it have somewhere comfortable for people to change their clothing if they wish to do so?
  - Is there safe and level access and enough navigation space for people living with disabilities?

- Is there access to a kitchen or refreshments?
- Is it free or affordable?
- Is the room warm, inviting, relaxed and informal?
- Is the room spacious and not cramped?
- Is the room well lit (with natural light where possible)?
- Does the room have comfortable and appropriate seating arrangements? (Consider placing chairs in a circle rather than rows to help facilitate discussion).
- Does the room meet your IT needs? Does it have good acoustics?
- Is there space for group members to take a break from the session if needed?
- Consider asking group members if they are happy with the venue or have any problems with it.

- A suitable setting could include a venue provided by a trusted organisation/charity supporting the LGBTQIA+ community in your local area, which may already be delivering peer support groups. You will need to contact them to find out if they can assist you with holding your group there.

- Consider whether the venue should be published online (for everyone to see) or given out only when people enquire about the group, to help keep the group safe.

1.B. A safe, supportive and inclusive space

- It is important that all group members are from the LGBTQIA+ community to help the group feel comfortable and safe with one another.

- Consider the intention of your group and which people from the community are key to engage or might be in need of the group. Depending on the focus of your group, for example a group about people facing perimenopause or menopause, there is a natural target audience, without the need to actively exclude anyone in wording or advertising about the group.

- To create a safe and inclusive space, it is important to ask new members about what access needs they may have. This may mean having a one-to-one discussion with someone to find out in more detail about how you can accommodate their needs and encourage them to attend. These might include:

  - Allowing people to use the chat box to communicate during online sessions if they would prefer not to verbally contribute.

  - Giving a verbal or written introduction of the selected topics of conversation at the start of the session or before it.

  - Offering closed captioning or transcriptions of discussions (where possible) for online sessions. For more information about how to do this on Zoom, see Zoom Support, 'Using audio transcription for cloud recordings':https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0064927#h_01EHA52NVDQD5YSESWWF1XAQM8

- Offering notes from the sessions.

- Offering to provide a translator or British Sign Language interpreter (if possible) where needed.

- Creating opportunities to explain information in more detail to people who may need more support with their understanding.

- Choosing topics of conversation that are relatable to the group (where relevant) and do not exclude anyone. Allowing people to have choice and control over what is discussed in the group will help with this.

- Create a group agreement (a code of conduct or set of ground rules) with the group in the first session to guide how group members can behave respectfully and considerately towards one another. It can also be used as a guide to ensure people's needs are being met in the group and may help avoid/manage difficult situations. It is important that the group agreement is made together, so that everyone in the group feels like they have choice and control over it.

- For ideas on how to create the group agreement, you could refer to the following example. Some of its points have been suggested by other peer support groups for the LGBTQIA+ community and a resource from Mind, 'Developing Peer Support in the Community: A Toolkit': https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4247/peer-support-toolkit-final.pdf.

The Group Agreement

1**. Confidentiality**
- You should only share what you feel comfortable sharing.
- Don't share personal information about others discussed within the group without permission.
- Make sure that the identities/sexual orientation of group members are kept confidential, and group members are not outed.
- If an online session is recorded, ask everyone's permission before doing this.

2. Communication
- Agree if and how members should share their preferred pronouns with the group. For example, during introductions or write them in the chat box during online sessions.
- Try to understand the experiences and views of others in the group.
- Give everyone an opportunity to have their say.
- Try not to dominate the discussions.
- Listen carefully to what others have to say.
- Everyone should be able to share their experiences without judgement.
- Be careful with the words you use.
- Use LGBTQIA+ inclusive language.
- Agree on what language should and should not be used when talking about certain experiences, such as living with obesity for example. The term

'obesity' may cause discomfort for some group members. Group members may prefer terms like, 'living with a larger body' or 'plus size' or the group may prefer not to talk about weight at all.

- Encourage group members to use the language that is most affirmative for them, whilst being mindful of not using any language during discussions that causes discomfort or upset for other group members.
- Respect other people's views and don't dismiss or be negative about what they say.
- Don't talk in a disrespectful way about someone or make personal attacks.
- Humour – be careful not to offend anybody.
- Share ideas with other people.
- Try not to use abbreviations (a shortened form of a word or organisation) without explaining them.
- During an online group – mute when not speaking to reduce background noise. If you have something you want to share, raise your hand either in person or using the raise hand function on Zoom for example, so you don't interrupt others.
- Respect that people might want to communicate in different ways. For online groups, this might be with the camera on or off, or only using the chat box.
- Respect how everyone communicates and their different learning needs.
- Give everyone space and time to speak.
- Agree on whether group members should give content warnings before bringing up difficult topics.
- Come up with a system whereby group members can show that they are unhappy with a certain topic without having to say it to the group. This could also indicate that they would like further one-to-one support from a co-facilitator, where possible.
    - For face-to-face meetings, group members could be asked to hold up a red card if they are unhappy with the discussion and would like further support, for example. They could then be offered an opportunity to speak with a co-facilitator one-to-one in a private area away from the rest of the group.
    - During online sessions, group members could be asked to send a private message to the co-facilitator if they are unhappy with the discussion. The co-facilitator can then chat directly with them during or following the session. Here is some guidance from Zoom Support on how to do this: 'Chatting in a Zoom Meeting: https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/category?id=kb_category&kb_category=3ea23e128720391089a37408dabb35c9
- Come up with ways that the group can leave feedback about the group anonymously (with no-one else knowing what they have said), e.g. using a suggestion box or online feedback form.

3. Respect
- Respect people's boundaries.

- Do not make assumptions about each other's different identities, pronouns and experiences (including past medical history or gender/sex assigned at birth).
- Respect that some people may not want to use their real names.
- Respect that everyone is individual and that differences are good for the group.
- Respect that group members may find certain topics difficult and not want to take part in certain discussions for their own wellbeing.
- Try to make the group feel relaxed.

4. Conduct
- Timekeeping – try to join on time.
- Agree if group members can arrive late or leave early.
- Agree if group members can dip in and out of the group.
- Turn mobile phones off or to silent.
- Do not take phone calls during sessions.
- Agree if and how group members can contact each other (and facilitators) outside of group sessions.
- Take time out from the session if you need it.
- Allow people to leave the group.
- Give people the choice to have a smaller group chat if there is enough space and facilitators.
- Make sure that everyone knows that any discrimination (the unfair treatment of different categories of people) is not allowed.
- Come up with ways to stop behaviour that disrupts the group.
- Come up with ways to stop any disagreement within the group.
- Agree what will happen when the rules are broken.

- Agree what will happen if someone intentionally discriminates or is homophobic or transphobic towards another community member. Agree on a clear and consistent approach to managing this, such as being asked to leave the group until the issue is resolved.
- Agree if other people who support group members or carers can attend too. They will also need to respect the group agreement.
- Agree who will take responsibility for making decisions in the group.

- Once you have collected all the suggestions for the group agreement from everyone, read the list back to the group.

  - Briefly remind everyone of the rules before each meeting
  - Send the group agreement out to the group or display it at every face-to-face meeting.
  - Go through the group agreement with each new member so that they are familiar with it and can have their say.

1(c). Inviting members of the LGBTQIA+ community to attend

- Make sure you advertise your new support group to the people who you have set the group up for. Think about using the communication channels your target community members are most likely to use.

- Provide clear details about the group time, date and venue or meeting links. Ensure you provide contact details or a generic email address for people to contact you about the group.

- Create colourful and eye-catching posters to promote your group (paper-based or digital) and send them to trusted LGBTQIA+ groups, organisations or venues within the local community.

- Make sure that all advertising for the group is as accessible as possible: use inclusive language that is easy to read and understand.

- Promote the group on trusted LGBTQIA+ networks/groups on social media platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram and Tik Tok.

- Try contacting organisations or groups that support the LGBTQIA+ community in your local area to tell them about the peer support group. They may be able to signpost people to the group.

- Provide clear information about the purpose of the peer support group in all communication, including the following:
  - what it is for: i.e. a safe space for members of the LGBTQIA+ community to talk about their lived experience and give and receive mutual support.
  - the group is led by peers and not professionals. This is to manage group expectations, i.e. so they don't expect medical help or advice in the sessions.
  - the facilitators are there to facilitate the discussions and not to give health information to the group.

- It is important to be aware that it may take some time to establish the group. To encourage people to join, the focus for the group needs to be clear, appealing and suitable for members of the community.
  - Some members of the LGBTQIA+ community may be put off by terms such as 'obesity' or 'weight management' and this may not be an appropriate focus for the support group. Terms like 'living with a larger body' or 'plus size' might be more acceptable, but it is important to check with the group what their preferred language and focus might be.
  - A peer support group for emotional eating for example, has been preferred by members of the LGBTQIA+ community previously.

- Ask the group how they would like to be contacted (this may be several different ways) and if they would like reminders to attend, e.g. a reminder 2 days and 2 hours before each meeting. Consider how reminders will be sent e.g. through text, email,

phone call, and who will take responsibility for undertaking or automating this process.

- A one-to-one call may be helpful to anyone who may be anxious about joining the group. This gives them a chance to ask questions and meet the facilitator beforehand.

- Set up a way to communicate with the group. A social media messaging service like WhatsApp can be used to facilitate this but isn't always suitable for everyone – so ensure any communication is inclusive, this may involve using several different communication channels. Consider who will take responsibility for administrating this.

- Contact people interested in joining the group before the first session to introduce the facilitators and provide information on what to expect from the peer support group to help them prepare for it. This could include the following information:
    o The location or link to join the online meeting.
    o The date and time for the session and how long it will run for.
    o Offer support with setting up the online meeting platform for new members, where possible. A "How to…" guide on how to use online meeting platforms such as Zoom.
        - You could use the following short videos from Zoom Support for example, available at: https://learn-zoom.us/show-me?_ga=2.211269009.527051144.1721046729-141748541.1715163590.
        - Useful videos include: 'Joining a zoom meeting', 'Basic in-meeting navigation' and the 'Zoom phone' section
    o Where possible, meet with new members beforehand to discuss their digital needs. Offer one-to-one sessions to familiarise members with using the technology, where required.
    o Provide different ways for people to join, e.g. video or phone.
    o Offer new members the opportunity to have an existing group member as buddy or mentor to help guide and support them both for technical help and general support too.
    o Reassure new members that the peer support group is a safe, confidential and non-judgmental space for group members from the LGBTQIA+ community to share their lived experience and give and receive mutual support.
    o Explain what will happen at a meeting and include the following information:
        - When they arrive/join they will be greeted by the facilitators.
        - The facilitators will introduce themselves.
        - Group members will be asked to introduce themselves and share their pronouns if agreed, using their chosen method (verbally or written in the chat box).

- Explain that group members can use the chat box during online meetings, if they would prefer.
- The group will create the group agreement (ground rules) and be reminded of these at every session, which can then be shared with all new members and reiterated before each session.
- Group members can share their lived experience, if and when they are ready and comfortable to do so. It is okay to just listen.
- If group members become upset or need some additional one-to-one support from a facilitator, they can choose to meet with a facilitator in a safe and confidential space outside the session during face-to-face meetings. For online meetings, group members can choose to speak with a facilitator one-to-one in a breakout room.
- Discuss how group members can feedback or make suggestions for the group.
- State how facilitators will communicate with the group about the sessions and how group members can get in touch with facilitators, if appropriate.

- It important to be aware that some people may try to join the group who may not be from the LGBTQIA+ community or may intend to disrupt or upset the group (e.g. make discriminatory comments). To help prevent this from happening and keep the group safe, you could contact anyone who has expressed an interest in joining the group (where possible) and ask a few questions about why they have chosen to join, what they hope to get out of it and to confirm that they are a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. You can then give out the details about the group once you have established that they are joining for 'genuine' reasons. This will also give potential new members an opportunity to chat with the facilitators before the session, which may help encourage them to attend.

- The facilitators should plan how they will both prevent and manage any disruption within the group. This should be discussed with the group and added to the group agreement. This might include not giving out virtual links to the sessions online, removing people from online sessions or asking people to leave a face-to-face session if needed.

1.D. Good facilitation of the group

- The peer support group facilitators should be members of the LGBTQIA+ community with lived experience, to ensure that they have knowledge and understanding of the experiences of the group.

- It may be helpful for facilitators to have some knowledge of both national and local mental health services, where possible. Some information about national mental

health services supporting members of the LGBTQIA+ community are attached to this guide to signpost group members to if needed

- As a facilitator, you have your own experiences that you may (or may not) wish to share with the group. Sharing your own lived experiences can help and inspire others, however if this is something you choose to do, it is important to protect yourself by being aware of your own personal triggers and being careful not to over disclose.

- When taking on the role of a facilitator, it is essential you think about and define your own boundaries from the start. Think about what you are willing to share and how you wish to engage group members outside of the group setting. This is important in helping to ensure you achieve a comfortable and professional relationship with your group participants. This will include:
    - learning to share only enough of your experience (story) where relevant.
    - being aware that group members may try to contact you outside of group sessions. You will therefore need to consider:
        - whether you are comfortable with group members contacting you, if not please ensure your contact details are not in the public domain, and you have appropriate privacy settings on your social media accounts (if applicable).
        - how much information you share publicly on social media.
        - agreeing with the group on whether contacting each other (including facilitators) outside of sessions is acceptable or not. This can be added to your group agreement.

- The boundaries for the group can be established using the group agreement. For more information about boundaries, see the 'Maintaining boundaries for yourself and the group' section of the Obesity UK Peer Support Group Facilitator Training Guide, Quick Reference Guide: https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/research/obesity-institute/peer-support-toolkit/01a-quick-reference-guide-for-facilitators.pdf.

2. What a good peer support group for members of the LGBTQIA+ community looks like

2.A. A clear structure

- Consider when, how often and how long your peer support groups will be held. It will be useful to discuss and finalise this with your group members once it is established. As a starting point monthly 1-2-hour sessions, held during the evening are usually preferred.

- Consider how many people each meeting can host. For a new group a maximum of 20 people (including 3 facilitators) is usually recommended for face-to-face groups and a maximum of 10 people (including 2 facilitators) for online groups. All groups should have at least two facilitators. This is a guideline, and each group will

determine the optimal number of participants as they become more established and gain experience over time.

- Agree with the group on whether it should be 'open' to new members joining at any time, or a 'closed' group (not open to new members once the group has started or after a certain period, e.g. after three weeks for example).

- Plan the sessions with your co-facilitators and agree on roles. The role of facilitator requires a significant time commitment:

    - You will need to spend around one hour planning and setting up each session. This includes setting up the room or the online meeting platform, e.g. Zoom access for the group and preparing resources, such as leaflets or handouts/links, or organising speakers.

    - You will need to spend around another hour after each session to debrief with your co-facilitators and plan for the next session.

- Running groups online requires a different skill set, for which additional support can be accessed from Obesity UK. The following resources may also be helpful:
    - Getting Started for New Users available from Zoom Support: https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0061316.
    - "Show Me" Videos from Zoom Learning Centre, e.g. 'Zoom meetings' videos: https://learn-zoom.us/show-me?_ga=2.211269009.527051144.1721046729-141748541.1715163590.
    - A guide to setting up a virtual peer support group meeting: https://www.dementiavoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Zoomettes-Guide-to-ZOOM-Version-Dec-2019.pdf

- Ask the group regularly what structure they would prefer. For example, if they would like to have specific topics for discussion and if they would like guest speakers and activities.

- If the group would like guest speakers, the type of professionals you could consider inviting would preferably be from the LGBTQIA+ community, where possible, such as a local health practitioner or researcher to talk about certain health topics decided by the group.

    - Make sure that guest speakers are comfortable with using your online meeting platform and presenting their slides (if required). If they are not, you can control the slide presentation for them. When they say "next slide please" you can move it on to the next slide.

- Create a timetable (or agenda) of what will happen in each session. This is so that the group knows in advance what to expect from each session and which topics are going to be discussed. This gives group members the choice to attend that session or not.

- If the group would like to discuss certain topics, set up ways for the group to tell you which topics they would prefer, such as using a suggestion box or online form. For topic ideas, here are some examples of heath related topics previously chosen by members of the LGBTQIA+ community:
  - Emotional eating
  - Addressing weight stigma and barriers in society/healthcare,
  - Mental health and coping strategies
  - Building support and community
  - Health and wellbeing
  - Accessing healthcare and dealing with discrimination
  - Body positivity, gender identity and body image
  - Daily challenges and practical solutions – what it is like living with a larger body, how to cope and navigate everyday life.

2.B. Good communication with the group

Encouraging good communication within the group is another important skill to learn. For some tips on how to do this, please see 'Communication within the Group' from the Obesity UK Peer Support Group Facilitator Training Guide, Quick Reference Guide: https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/research/obesity-institute/peer-support-toolkit/10-communication-within-the-group.pdf.

2.C. Connections within the Group

It is important to create connection within the group and a welcoming, non-judgmental and supportive environment. Here are some helpful strategies on how to achieve this, see 'Creating Connection within the Group' from the Obesity UK Peer Support Group Facilitator Training Guide, Quick Reference Guide: https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/research/obesity-institute/peer-support-toolkit/09-creating-connection-within-the-group.pdf.

2.D. Conversations starters

It can be hard to start conversations that allow everyone to feel included in the group, particularly when the group does not know each other. Icebreaker exercises can sometimes help to kick-start conversations and learn about each other. For more information on how and when to use icebreaker exercises and for some tried and tested examples, see 'Starting Conversations with the Group' from the Obesity UK Peer Support Group Facilitator Training Guide, Quick Reference Guide: https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/research/obesity-institute/peer-support-toolkit/07-starting-conversations-with-the-group.pdf.

2.E. Difficult conversations/situations managed

2.E.1. Managing challenges in the group

There are many challenges that can arise when facilitating a peer support group. When managing challenges in the group, part of your role as facilitator is to remind people of what

has been agreed between them. The most helpful tool in managing challenges is the group agreement. Work with your co-facilitator, if you have one, bounce ideas off each other and support each other in sessions and afterwards. For ideas on how to manage challenging conversations and situations you may encounter, see 'Managing Challenges in the Group' from the Obesity UK Peer Support Group Facilitator Training Guide, Quick Reference Guide: https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/research/obesity-institute/peer-support-toolkit/12-managing-challenges-in-the-group.pdf

2.E.2. Safeguarding the group

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and allowing them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. There may be times when you are not sure what action to take when there are challenging situations in the group, and you may need support and guidance about keeping everybody safe. For guidance on safeguarding the group, see the Obesity UK Safeguarding Policy (to be provided later). If you are not delivering your group with the support of an organisation, you will need to create your own guide for the facilitators on how to manage risk in the group.

2.E.3. Groups getting too big

If a group gets too big, this can be challenging to manage. People may find it hard to talk in front of too many people, and it may be hard for everyone to be heard in a large group. An unsuccessful approach might include setting up another group session during the week without consulting the group first. A successful approach might include the following actions:

- Split the group into smaller groups during the same session, with your co-facilitators, where possible.
- Offer peer support at different times in the week/month so that some peers may choose an alternative day. Ask group members which days and times would be best for them.
- Encourage group members to become facilitators: ask group members to think about whether they would like to become facilitators to help run more sessions.

2.F. Accessing support for facilitators

As a peer support group facilitator, it is vital that you feel supported in your role. Considering your own self-care, support and development is essential to creating healthy spaces of wellbeing for fellow peers. It is important to discuss how you would like to be supported in your role and who you can talk to about this. For more information, see 'Accessing Support for Facilitators' from the Obesity UK Peer Support Group Facilitator Training Guide, Quick Reference Guide: https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/research/obesity-institute/peer-support-toolkit/13-accessing-support-for-facilitators.pdf.

You could also try the following strategies:

- Have a process in place for facilitators to debrief after delivery. You can debrief with your co-facilitators after each session and think about what worked well, what did not work so well and what follow up actions are required. See 'Debriefing Protocol

for after the Session': https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/research/obesity-institute/peer-support-toolkit/03-debriefing-protocol-for-after-the-session.pdf.

- As a new facilitator, it is important to buddy up with one or two existing facilitators before you start, if possible. A buddy is an experienced facilitator that can offer you opportunities to shadow group facilitation and ask questions to or share concerns with.

    - Choose a facilitator that you would feel comfortable mentoring you.
    - Observe at least one established peer support group session before you start to facilitate a group yourself.
    - Remember every facilitator will have their own 'style' of facilitating, so learn from others but always facilitate your sessions in a style you are comfortable with.

3. Keeping the group running

- Ask group members whether they would like to help facilitate the group, and if they do, 'buddy them up' with more experienced facilitators to help build their skills and confidence to facilitate. This will help to keep the group running if a facilitator leaves the role.

- Provide ways for group members to give feedback about, or make suggestions for improvements to the group, e.g., provide a suggestion box at each session or use an online feedback form. This might help members to feel that they have input into how the group runs and ensure you continue to meet your group's needs. This might encourage your members to keep attending, and hopefully encourage new members to join.

Further Information and Support Resources to signpost Group Members to

1. INFORMATION RESOURCES

1.A. Mental health

- LGBTQIA+ Mental Health - from Mind: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/lgbtqia-mental-health/

- LGBTQIA+ Support for Mental Health - from Mind: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/lgbtqia-mental-health/finding-support-for-lgbtqia-mental-health/

- Useful Contacts LGBTQIA+ Mental Health - from Mind: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/lgbtqia-mental-health/useful-contacts/

- Mental health support for life situations and events if you are LGBTQIA+ identifying - from the NHS: https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/advice-for-life-situations-and-events/mental-health-support-if-you-are-gay-lesbian-bisexual-lgbtq/

1.B. Intersectionality

- Digging into intersectionality - from Identiversity: https://www.identiversity.org/topics/lgbtq-identities/digging-into-intersectionality/

1.C. Gender identity

- Gender Identity for Beginners - A Guide to being a Great Trans Ally - from Amnesty International: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/LGBTQ-equality/gender-identity-beginners-guide-trans-allies

1.D. LGBTQIA+ inclusive language

- LGBTQUIA+ Inclusive Language - from the Warwick International Higher Education Academy: https://www.identiversity.org/topics/lgbtq-identities/digging-into-intersectionality/

2. NATIONAL SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

2.A. Mental health, health and wellbeing support

- **Consortium:** https://www.consortium.lgbt/ - membership organisation that works to support LGBTQ+ organisations and projects around the country. Use the site's Member's Directory to find local mental health services: https://www.consortium.lgbt/member-directory/

- **LGBT Foundation:** https://lgbt.foundation/ - offers information, advice, and support services, including a Talking Therapies programme: https://lgbt.foundation/help/talking-therapies-programme/.
- **Mind:** https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/lgbtqia-mental-health/#.WVzoNUUrKM8
- **London Friend:** https://londonfriend.org.uk/ - offers support groups and services, such as counselling and drug and alcohol support.
- **LGBT Hero:** https://www.lgbthero.org.uk/ - national health and wellbeing charity.
- **Mind Out:** https://mindout.org.uk/ - LGBTQ+ mental health service.
- **Pink Therapy:** https://pinktherapy.com/about-pink-therapy/ - a directory of therapists who work with people who identify as LGBTQIA+, and people who are gender- and sex-diverse (GSD).
- **Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline**: https://switchboard.lgbt/ - provides a listening service over the phone, via email and online chat. It can provide you with contact details of an LGBT-friendly therapist.
- **The Beaumont Society:** http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk/ - help and support from the trans community.
- **The Clare Project:** https://clareproject.org.uk/ - trans support and social group based in Brighton and Hove but open to anyone wishing to explore issues around gender identity.
- **Gendered Intelligence:** https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/ - trans-led charity that aims to improve the lives of trans and non-binary people in the UK, specialises in supporting young people.
- **Gender Identity Research & Education Society (GIRES):** https://www.gires.org.uk/ - a professionally managed membership charity supported by volunteers that helps, hears, empowers and gives a voice to trans and gender diverse individuals and their families.
- **Midline trans+:** https://www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/our-services/adult-one-to-one-support/mindline-trans/ - emotional and mental health support helpline for anyone identifying as trans, non-binary, gender variant, and their families, friends, colleagues and carers. Their phone line is open Mondays and Fridays, 8pm to midnight. Ring 0300 330 5468.
- **Spectra:** https://spectra-london.org.uk/trans-services/ - peer-led trans services accessible to all trans and gender-diverse people, including 1-2-1 health advocacy support, and counselling, peer mentoring, referral and signposting to relevant partners, talks and workshops and monthly online and in-person social groups.
- **Stonewall:** https://www.stonewall.org.uk/ - UK charity campaigning for LGBT equality. Find LGBT mental health services near you.
- **TERRENCE HIGGINS TRUST** (THT Direct): https://www.tht.org.uk/get-help/support-services/tht-direct-helpline - phone and email service for questions about sexual health or living with HIV.
- **Transbucket:** https://www.transbucket.com/ - health care and surgery resource for the online trans community.

- **WORLD PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR TRANSGENDER HEALTH (WPATH):** https://www.wpath.org/ - non-profit organisation devoted to trans health.
- **Imaan:** https://imaanlondon.wordpress.com/ - a charity that supports LGBTQ+ Muslims, providing an online forum where people can share experiences and ask for help.
- **Hidaya:** https://hidayahlgbt.com/about-hidayah-uk/ - leading charity for Muslim people identifying as queer.

2.B. Eating disorders support

- **Beat Eating Disorders** - Eating disorders in the LGBTQIA+ community: https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/about-eating-disorders/eating-disorders-in-the-lgbtq-community/.
- **LGBT Hero** - Eating disorders: https://www.lgbthero.org.uk/eating-disorders.
- **National Centre for Eating Disorders:** https://eating-disorders.org.uk/information/.
- **Overeaters Anonymous Great Britain:** https://www.oagb.org.uk/.

2.C. Other support

- **Drinkaware** - alcohol support services for the LGBTQIA+ community: https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice-and-support/alcohol-support-services/alcohol-support-services-for-the-lgbtqplus-community.
- **GALOP** - the LGBT anti-abuse charity: https://galop.org.uk/ - support for people identifying as LGBTQIA+ with domestic abuse and violence

For more general information and support resources, see 'Further Information and Resources to signpost group members to' from the Obesity UK Peer Support Group Facilitator Training Guide, Quick Reference Guide: https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/research/obesity-institute/peer-support-toolkit/04-further-information-and-resources-to-signpost-to.pdf.