

Appendix E: Questionnaire for service providers

This survey was filled out by a lesbian who works at a service agency in Saskatchewan. Her answers were edited to ensure her anonymity.

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:

My agency doesn't think so, but I do think specialized services are needed. The sentiment is that the relationship isn't taken seriously or counsellors can't get past lesbianism.

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

awareness, information, tolerance, lesbian or lesbian friendly counsellors

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) **(It's offered, however we have homophobic counsellors.)**

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: **10 (guessing)**

8. Please estimate the average number of self-identified lesbians with same sex abuse issues who access your agency's programs/services per year: **5 (guessing)**

9. Does/would your agency feel comfortable providing services to women who have experienced abuse in lesbian relationships?
 yes no Please explain:

The agency would say that they feel comfortable. Depends on the individual counsellor. I feel more comfortable because I am a lesbian, but I'm not 'out' at work - only to 3 other counsellors.

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

Societal tolerance. This subject is not talked about. But I also know that 'religious right' sentiments prevail even though we have Bill C33 [which, in 1996, added 'sexual orientation' as a prohibited ground of discrimination to the Canadian Human Rights Act].

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:

Most staff don't even want [to deal with] those cases.

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:

Generally a right wing community of homophobia exists. Gay and lesbian relationships are not taken seriously.

13. What is your understanding of the term "homophobia"?

That's why I'm not totally 'out' at work.

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:

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

Only 3 or 4 out of the 10 counsellors are lesbian friendly

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 (I would like to hold a youth group or give workshops on homophobia in the schools but I don't think I am able to feel safe doing this given the agency and the environment.)

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:

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

18. Has your agency ever received complaints or negative feedback related to sexual orientation issues from a lesbian client? yes no (but only privately)

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

I think in the long run nothing would happen. There is too much power here. It wouldn't be hard to make a case that the client was written off as having mental health problems. Who are they going to believe? The counsellor or the client?

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?

Maybe we are supposed to handle these problems internally. I may refer to a private lesbian counsellor in one of the major urban centres, but financial accessibility is often a problem.

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 homophobia

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

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

I personally know that this has been raised by lesbians in our community, as well as in the closest urban centre.

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:

Any other comments?

Homophobia exists!