

# Best Practice Clinical Standards For LGBTQ-Affirmative Therapy

## An LGBTQ-Affirmative Psychotherapist:

Does not make an assumption about the sexual orientation of a client

Accepts that an identity as a LGBT person is a positive outcome of the helping process

Believes that a client can achieve a positive identity as a LGBT person when internalized homophobia and social homophobia are decreased

Provides psycho-educational feedback to facilitate the client finding a language to define her/his sexual orientation

Advocates for client self-determination in choosing the sex and sexual orientation of the therapist with whom they want to work

Attains knowledge about different theories of the coming out process and identity development for LGBTQ individuals

Beyond taking a stance of complete neutrality, celebrates the validity of LGBTQ persons and the diversity of their relationships and actively works to counter oppression

Acquires knowledge that is grounded in diverse experiences, rather than being gained only through intellectual/academic methods alone

Exercises careful judgment and takes responsible steps to ensure the competence of his/her work in helping to protect clients from harm and be effective in their lives

Has a willingness to make appropriate clinical self-disclosure of his/her sexual orientation if that information is pertinent to maintaining a healthy therapeutic relationship with a client

Has a working knowledge of the variety of LGBTQ sensibilities, values, needs, and “lifestyle contexts”

Considers the context of homophobia and the impact of this dynamic on all aspects of the lives of LGBTQ clients – work setting, personal relationships, life choices, psychological and behavioral concerns, etc.

Invests a genuine commitment to deal with his/her own homophobia, bi-phobia, transphobia, and heterosexual bias.

Embraces an on-going commitment to self-awareness about how cultural and/or familial messages regarding LGBT individuals might impact their work with LGBT clients

