Exploring Outreach – Group Notes

Example 1

There is the balance to be struck between visible support for LGBT initiatives and the individual involved feeling safe and comfortable in a housing setting where they may not be out to other residents. E.g. respecting their privacy and not outing them unnecessarily.

From Stonewall's Lesbian, gay and Bisexual People in Later Life report:

"From personal experience of visiting older friends in retirement and nursing homes I know as an absolute truth that they have felt more comfortable in hiding their sexuality from other residents and carers." Ray, 59, South East

Responses:

- Data collection: what do your forms bring up – what space do you give to people to self-identify and what impact does this have on evaluations.
- Generational barriers/differences – how do you market your offering. What impact, if any, does your word choice have? If you say 'we're inclusive' does this land/resonate with potential target audience?
- Safe space: give older LGBT people spaces that mean they don't have to come out and instead provide the opportunity for people to engage on their terms.
- What happens when you deal with someone at the point of crisis?
- Dementia: if people are coming out for the first time – how do you support them.
- Heteronormative environment default assumption if there's not specific programming or marketing.
- Scale up to normalise inclusion
- A lot of trans can't hide trans-status
- Being led by the person and eschew assumptions – don't forget just how isolated the person may be.

Example 2

A big issue when it comes to older LGBT people accessing mainstream services is that groups/organisations don't ask about people's sexual orientation or gender identity to begin with, so they have no idea if they have service users who identify in this way, and therefore do nothing.

Responses:

- 'Mainstream' is quite a broad term, access issues might look very different between services like NHS and Tate.
- Visual awareness, subtle choices can be useful communications: like gender neutral toilets
- Code of conduct both to be referred to, but also the power of making this visible – of clearly communicating policies/values.
- *Seek accreditation from people like Stonewall.*
- Questionnaire to openly ask 'How are we doing?' – provide space for feedback.
- Organisation's power to create a safe space inside even if the world outside is not.
- Tate Exchange model of having a *welcome assistant* to proactively make people feel included.
- Potential impact of kitemarks

- Training across all staff on how to not make assumptions about people's gender.
- Gender Intelligence
- Services *proactively* asking for feedback
- LGBT Consortium is able to signpost to the variety of different trainings available.
- Dementia Friends: is there a parallel, outward-facing network where expertise can be shared? Look for local LGBT forums. (Martin can help signpost this)
- Expression Boiler Plate

Example 3

From Stonewall's Lesbian, gay and Bisexual People in Later Life report:

"Social networks, reminiscence groups and day centres for older people are very straight-orientated – heterosexual family orientated – and in this sense I think there are reduced options for socialising in an integrated way, while there are also fewer social networks and no specialist provision for older LGB people."
Diane, 57, South East

Responses:

- Asking all groups to consider the needs of attendees
- Avoiding assumptions: for example instead of asking groups to speak about specific family members, invite them instead to talk about 'most-important' person.
- Programming a mix of identity specific groups and open groups.
- Recognising the importance of what your programme may communicate: a one-off weekend event, compared to extended stretch or a regular feature might suggest different levels of engagement between the venue and LGBT community.
- Training: Either skill up your in-house facilitators or bring in outside expertise
- Visibility: Are we working on the basis of kindness and empathy?
- Managing group conversations: where do you or even do you jump in?
- Good way to build expertise in an organisation is to proactively hire someone LGBT
- Embodying your principles in you programming.
- Check your policies for leverage.
- Training for chairs

Example 4

"My husband and I attended a workshop at a museum focusing on theories of evolution. At one stage, the participants were split into two groups – cisgendered men and women – and taken into two separate rooms. The facilitator then delivered a presentation to our group around theories of attraction and talked to us only in terms of how and why we (men) were attracted to the women in the other room. My husband and I just looked at each other and immediately felt that we didn't belong here. We weren't angry, just disappointed and uncomfortable. We made our excuses and left a few minutes later."

Responses:

- Lack of awareness: What procedures, if any, are in place to manage and promote diversity and equality.
- There is a training opportunity for all staff to raise awareness around diversity
- What training is currently on offer?
- Seek feedback
- Gender Intelligence
- Stonewall has training and open courses

- If your venue has space available, make this known, can be a useful way of building learning and connection.
- Either kitemark or be noisy about your principles
- Mayor of London, cultural seeds funding.
- Mapping diversity to be launched