

Strategies in Serving Transgender Clients

While specific concrete steps towards trans inclusion vary based on the nature of the service and resources available here are some general guidelines to better serving transgender and gender variant clients.

1. Acquire Supportive, Knowledgeable Staff and Volunteers

An organization that wants to serve the needs of gender variant clients is well advised to have people on staff who are well versed in issues faced by transgender/gender-variant community members. A knowledgeable staff person who is also transgender/gender-variant themselves can be especially valuable.

2. Implement Trans-Inclusive Policies

Staff and volunteers come and go, but a policy affirming the rights of transgender clients and how an organization will address their needs is an invaluable legacy. Respectful policies allow clients' self-identified gender to be affirmed and respected.

3. Create Welcoming Space and Intake Strategies

The needs of transgender people are so under-served, usually they will assume an organization is not well-versed in their needs, or potentially hostile. Creating a space that speaks to the needs of transgender clients (including visible signs, symbols, and personalities that speak to trans-awareness), and incorporating trans issues in the intake process can go a long ways to making services more accessible.

4. Trainings

In-service staff trainings on issues effecting transgender people can be incredibly valuable. These can take the form of panels with trans advocates, trans-specific trainings, or making sure that trainers on other topics include issues of gender variance in their curriculum. Contacting your local trans advocacy agency is a good way to find out who does good trainings in your region.

5. Community Advocacy Work

Given that an organization and its clients exist within a community that most likely does not address the needs of transgender community members, working with external advocacy efforts can be very helpful in serving the needs of clients. In addition, situations inevitably arise where key figures in an organization should be prepared to educate school officials, political figures, potential funders, family members, and other social service agencies about the needs of transgender people.