



MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT

REPORT NO. 048-13

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Bryna Warshawsky, Acting Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2013 April 18

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY: 'ADD YOUR COLOUR' LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER QUEER VIDEOS

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 048-13 re "Youth Engagement Strategy: 'Add Your Colour' Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Videos" be received for information.

Key Points

- There are limited services and resources available to Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (LGBTQ) youth in Middlesex-London.
- Bullying is a pervasive problem for all youth, with additional challenges for youth who are struggling with identity as an LGBTQ individual.
- Youth engagement is an effective strategy for assessing and targeting the health needs of youth.
- LGBTQ youth and allies in the community have collaborated with Health Unit staff to develop videos raising awareness with respect to the problem of bullying in the LGBTQ community.

Background Information

Sexual Health Services at the Health Unit is made up of The Clinic and Sexual Health Promotion (SHP) Team. One of the Public Health Nurses on the SHP Team, Ms. Leanne Powell, works with the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (LGBTQ) population. Over the past few years, she has focused many of her efforts on delivering health information and promoting The Clinic services to this underserved group.

Through interactions with the LGBTQ community, it became apparent that there are many gaps in services and very few resources available specifically for LGBTQ youth. In September of 2011, as a part of Sexual Health Promotion program planning, it was decided that a youth engagement strategy would be initiated. In the past, with projects such as the [Adventures in Sex City Game](#) (two on-line sexual health games for youth), youth engagement has proven to be a successful strategy for assessing and targeting the interests and health information needs of the youth in this community.

The purpose of the LGBTQ engagement strategy was to gain a greater understanding of the health-related barriers and possible health needs of these youth in Middlesex-London. The strategy began with efforts to recruit high school aged students; recruitment strategies were carried out first by sending letters to the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) groups in high schools in Middlesex-London, as well as at the GSA conference at the Thames Valley District School Board. Public Health Nurses from Family Health Services also helped to spread the word in the high schools. Although recruitment was initially a

challenge, in February 2012, a group of students from various high schools met for the first time to set goals and talk about what they thought public health providers could do to help break down barriers and increase access to health care for them and their LGBTQ peers.

The first collaborative effort took place at the Pride London weekend in the summer of 2012; students helped to disseminate health information and encouraged their peers to attend the event. The students also accompanied Health Unit staff in the Pride March that weekend. This first initiative motivated and inspired the students to continue their collaboration with the SHP Team.

With a core group of five to eight students, the engagement group continues to meet bi-weekly and has taken on the title of 'Youth Encouraging Acceptance' (YEA). During the meetings, the students talk about their experiences and challenges they have faced. They agree with the assessment that there are limited resources and services available to them, and particularly to those who are bullied by their peers. The students expressed an interest in developing videos which would raise awareness about bullying and the resulting isolation that happens in the LGBTQ youth community. The students wanted the videos to target a wide audience, to encourage everyone to stand up against bullying and to show support and acceptance of LGBTQ individuals.

The LGBTQ Videos: 'Add Your Colour'

The first draft of the storyboards and scripts for the videos were quite elaborate, but over time, it became apparent that the message the students wanted to communicate could be demonstrated quite simply. Two short videos were created for distribution by the London-based communications company, Keyframe, with the assistance of Mr. Dan Flaherty, Manager, Communications. By calling attention to abusive name-calling and demonstrating how each statement can shatter a person piece by piece, the videos are very impactful. The videos highlight that showing support and caring, as indicated by the hand on a shoulder, can help individuals dealing with discrimination.

Conclusion/Next Steps

The 'Add Your Colour' videos will be launched by the Youth Encouraging Acceptance (YEA) group on the evening of May 17, which is International Day Against Homophobia. In addition to showcasing the two video clips, the evening will feature musical performances, a guest speaker, and a health fair including LGBTQ friendly organizations.

The Health Unit will use social media to promote the launch, as well as to disseminate the videos. Posters and invitations will be used to advertise the event and promote the videos within the community. Efforts are currently underway to promote the videos in high schools across Middlesex-London. In addition, it is hoped that local media will help to promote the launch night, as well as the videos themselves.

The YEA group continues to meet bi-weekly to complete the video campaign and to recruit new members. The YEA group has also expressed interest in providing feedback for the newly redesigned Health Unit website and in helping the Sexual Health Promotion Team develop and expand their online resources for LGBTQ individuals and their allies.

This report was prepared by Ms. Stacy Manzerolle, Acting Manager, Sexual Health Services.



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<p>This report addresses the following Ontario Public Health Standard: Sexual Health, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Blood-borne Infections (including HIV)</p>
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