



LGBT TOOL KIT FOR SOCIAL SUPPORT

This is the resource pack that evolved out of the research called 'Gays into the Future', an intergenerational project for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people (LGBT). The intent of the research was to define the social support needs of the community and what could be done to ameliorate the difficulties and hardship they encounter. Working with a community group of youth and older members of the LGBT community, various activities were coordinated to bring both generations together including a focus group of service users and service providers, a workshop organised around four different scenarios that gays might experience and another workshop shaped by the youth along the lines of a speed dating game. Data was collected at each event and a literature review was done. The data collected from the service users is in red; data collected from service providers is in blue. All extracts from the literature appear in italics.

In developing this resource pack, it was decided to stay with the metaphor of a tool kit, and to see how that could apply to the social support issues that arise for people who are LGBT. The variety of tools that can be found in a tool kit provide excellent metaphors as to the best means of addressing some of those issues, in addition to how they represent the social aspects of life that make being LGBT people more difficult. Tools are often used to describe certain actions that are taken: e.g. we can hammer out the details, it hits the nail on the head, don't throw a spanner into the works, consider the nuts and bolts of the organisation, are just some examples. When thinking about the social support needs of LGBT people, some of the tools illuminate the problems and others elucidate possible ways of framing the solutions.



SCREW – HOMOPHOBIA

Although there are 6 tools that exemplify the problems faced by LGBT people, there are 13, or twice as many, tools to construct some solutions. One of the greatest barriers to the well-being and equality for non-heterosexuals is the predominant attitude of homophobia, represented by the **SCREW**. Because of the way that homophobia insinuates itself into the lives of non-heterosexuals by twisting the meanings and experiences of LGBT people, you could say that the LGBT community feels screwed. Participants in our research made reference to homophobia at the school level: “*school sex ed ignored me – teachers routinely used homophobic language – esp in sport lessons*”. This pervasive mind-set results in outrageous acts (hate crimes: “*they wont [sic] stop change – under 16 – committing hate crime*”) and outlooks that seem to be validated by the larger society against this vulnerable community (Herek, 1990). This was articulated by a participant: “*Homophobic school and did nothing to stop it*”; “*Teachers ignore homophobia!!*” “*People see/hear it every day and they do nothing and they don’t care.*” Homophobia, or the irrational fear of homosexuals, is expressed in negative attitudes and feelings such as contempt, hostility, and prejudice towards people who are non-heterosexual in their sexual orientation, e.g. “*previous boss made my work hard because of sexuality*”. Homophobia manifests most often as discrimination and violence, “*young gay men are subjected to violence*”, and depending on the age of the person who is being attacked, it can take the form of bullying to criminal assault. There were many comments from our participants about bullying: “*Teachers ignore homophobic bullying*”; “*school bullies – no one gives any help*”; “*Chavs in school – teachers useless*”; “*homophobic bullying about being gay*”. Unlike the nail that penetrates straight into the object, the screw twists its way in and often can cause damage requiring that a wall plug be used. Just like the wall plug that holds the screw in place, the screw driver is the ideology of heterosexism or heteronormativity that anchors homophobia in heterosexuals that are threatened by homosexuality or any sexuality that is not heterosexual. One participant’s confidentiality was violated outrageously while in hospital by a health professional when he “*was asked by a doctor [about my sexuality] in front of other patients when I was in hospital and received homophobic abuse from the patient in the bed next to me.*”

“Gay people are stigmatized not only for their erotic behaviors, but also for their perceived violation of gender....a dual pattern of denial and condemnation is associated with gender” (Herek, 1990, p.322) and this tells the story of transgender people. The trans man who participated in our research felt trans people needed to “*fight their gender.*” The uncoupling of gender and sexuality is one of the processes that trans people have to integrate and what makes them different from the others in the LGBT acronym. Older LGBT people experience a second form of discrimination in ageism, and this dual victimization is just beginning to be addressed in the community (Cahill and South, 2002; Harrison, 2002; Brotman et al, 2003; Sargeant, 2009). The conflict lies in the expectation that older people are no longer sexual, denying a context for homosexuality. “*In a society that desexualizes older people in general, the compounding influence of homophobia can create an environment that is truly hostile*

for these elders” (Cahill and South, 2002, p. 52). Attention to the needs of older LGBT people began in the 1990s (Quam and Whitford, 1992; Grossman et al, 2000; Heaphy et al, 2004), and with the advent of social network theory, Grossman and colleagues created the *“first research to examine the importance of network members’ sexual orientation and their knowledge of others’ sexual orientation”* (Grossman, et al, 2000, p. P177). Because older LGBT people, especially gay men, were required to keep their sexuality hidden (until 1967 when homosexuality was legalized), the literature describes the invisibility and silence of LGBT elders. Ironically, although *“it wasn’t illegal for two women to be together”* *“women are also likely to rely more on informal, local and ‘hidden’ support networks, and...have more reservations about ‘going public’ about their identities”* (Heaphy, et al, 2004, p. 883). Despite the fact it was *“easier for women as ‘companions’”* in the current research the women who attended were from the youth, and there was little representation from older women (Harrison, 2002). Attempts to engage the lesbian community network drew no response. The many dramatic social changes in the last forty years of initiatives for the LGBT community and in the structures of living in general have resulted in the ‘detraditionalisation’ of lifestyles (Heaphy, et al, 2004). One study reported in 2008 compared two research projects using older LGBT people and found *“they are often silenced by policy and practice which actively excludes and marginalises their needs and perspectives”* (Ward, et al, 2008, p. 159).

SCREW DRIVER – HETEROSEXISM/HETERONORMATIVITY



The **SCREW DRIVER** represents the drivers of homophobia, the beliefs that people hold based on the profound assumption of heterosexism, where you are guilty of being heterosexual until proven otherwise, and heteronormativity, which is the social expectation that being heterosexual is the normal sexual orientation, and anything that is not heterosexual is abnormal and unnatural: “it didn’t feel normal to have these feelings”. *“Heterosexism is...an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any nonheterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community”* (Herek, 1990, p. 316). This is the background upon which young people ‘come out’, “worrying about acceptance by family and friends.” One older LGBT person found it was “very difficult to come out as a sportsman” seen to be a macho career. These attitudes are driven by the intolerance of people who lack understanding and appreciation of the victims’ experience of life, whether it be the discrimination that is widespread or the narrowing of possibilities due to sexual orientation: this participant “moved away from a very religious home and country so that I can do what I want without any negative impact on my family.” The screw driver of heterosexism/heteronormativity is what twists the screw, homophobia, into the fabric of LGBT lifestyles, violating the integrity of their private lives: “I was attacked on a train and sexually assaulted at knife point 20 years ago; I was treated very badly by the police who accused me of being racist.” *“Heteronormativity legitimizes homophobia”* (DePalma and Jennett, 2010, p. 18). However, by unscrewing the screw, it could be possible to remove this toxic influence over the experiences of LGBT people. A contemptible example of LGBT discrimination is this: “I had a manager at work who was a born again Christian who called me into her office and told me I would burn in hell. I complained to the Managing Director who didn’t want to rock the boat – so I had to go.” What will it take to turn the screw in the opposite direction, so that it is removed from the reality of LGBT lives?

SAW – GENERATION GAP BETWEEN YOUTH AND ELDERS



The **SAW** is a tool that divides things, cutting to the core, and separating different parts from each other. The saw represents the generation gap between older and younger LGBT people, where older people's views are influenced by having to remain invisible, and who had to live through HIV stigmatization: "It wasn't acceptable to be gay years ago; it was really hard to come out in the 80s with HIV", and young people see older LGBT wisdom as irrelevant (Russell and Bohan, 2005). *"The lesbian and gay 'scene' has long served as a key site of intergenerational conflict in the UK"* (Ward, et al, 2008, p. 149). The homosexual scene is extremely youth and appearance oriented, which causes older men to feel undesirable once they reach a certain age (Sargeant, 2009; Heaphy, et al, 2004; Brotman, et al, 2003; Hajek and Giles, 2002); there is also the general prejudice that still pervades the culture against older gay men being seen as predators of young men (Hajek and Giles, 2002). "It's better for young people, but ['m] still a person" is a comment from an older person reflecting the difficulty in being seen and heard. *"Older lesbians and gay men feel they cannot relate to the younger members of these communities"* (Brotman, et al, 2003, p. 198). The generational divide is likely to mean that interactions within the LGBT community are age-segregated, such that *"age-related stereotypes appear to be heightened by a lack of interaction"* (Russell and Bohan, 2005, p.2). New patterns of communication are the key to cross-generational interaction because *"the radical divergence in perspectives renders conversation and understanding across generations difficult"* (Ibid., p. 3). This intergenerational project on LGBT experience is a crucial step to removing the divisions between older and younger LGBT people, and bridging the gap establishes the value of exchanging information and experience between the generations as learning opportunities for all.



SPANNER – BARRIERS TO INCLUSION AND EQUALITY

The **SPANNER**, as it is used when someone ‘throws a spanner into the works’, represents the barriers to inclusion and the challenges of achieving equality as articulated by participants: “**treat gay and straight people equally**” and “**everyone be equal**”. One of the older participants described the difference between his generation and the youth of today in terms of what was missed in life: “**equality within the community due to poor government decisions too late in life. However today’s equality I feel is better for the young people**”. In its traditional use, a spanner tightens the grip of a nut on a bolt, which in our tool kit is signifying the essential requirements of meeting the social support needs of LGBT people. If this nut and bolt are infected by the insidious attitudes of homophobia tightening the grip on the everyday reality of the LGBT community, then the spanner is the weapon that maintains those barriers to inclusion. For example: “**in every area I have [been] treated differently as a trans man – even in the LGBT community. Being asked to use the female lockers and changing room!**” It could be said that in this tool kit, the screw and the spanner work together to exclude non-heterosexuals from the privileges and rights that heterosexuals have. For instance, one participant shared that: “**at the Council, mum can’t say she’s gay, [although] some people aren’t bothered.**” However, just like the screw can be unscrewed to remove the toxic influence of homophobia, the spanner can be transformed into an adjustable wrench, allowing for the expression of flexibility and elasticity in ways that endorse the efforts of those who are working to make sustainable change through policies and protocols that protect the rights of LGBT people. The Equality Act 2010 holds the promise of removing the barriers to inclusion; the persistent talk about cut backs since this law came into effect can interfere with forward movement in this endeavour. There is as yet “**no focus on workplace integration**”



RETRACTABLE KNIFE – ANTI-GAY RHETORIC AND VIOLENCE

The **RETRACTABLE KNIFE** (the weapon of choice for the 9/11 terrorists for hijacking airplanes) can exemplify the anti-gay rhetoric that cuts away the dignity and self-respect of LGBT people (Herek, 1990). Used as a weapon the retractable knife can kill, but used for its intended purpose, to open boxes, the knife in its closed position can create opportunities to open up a new dialogue with the LGBT community. Anti-gay rhetoric is the rubric that sustains the discrimination and prejudice that homophobic people use to keep members of the LGBT community in their place. LGBT people believe that the “**stereotypical images of LGBT people in the media**” contribute to this. An unfortunate aspect of this ongoing inequity is the vociferous and vitriolic style of the tirades that bigots express defensively such that when non-heterosexuals encounter the health sector they find there is “**room for improvement for bigoted patients and staff.**” Although this vitriol is not limited to the health sector, it is one domain where it plays out on a regular basis. Older gays have to “*negotiate a heteronormative ageist health or social service provision system*” (Harrison, 2002, p.2). One person recounted covert discrimination when “**mental health put down lesbian**”; this only adds to the stresses that non-heterosexuals experience. The impression left is that the mere existence of homosexuality presents a noxious threat to heterosexuals determined to defeat them at all costs. The outcome is hate crime which will be discussed in depth in the last section on themes. The youth were aware that: “**Homophobia is rife among young people when they are not educated.**” Equal protection is reframed as special rights for gays rather than equal rights, while restraining rules on adoption frame the argument insisting that children need a mother and a father, e.g “**young boys need positive role models**”, ignoring the numbers of households with single parents; or “**if adopting, [you’re] likely only to be offered an older child or disabled child.**” On the workplace front, one of our participants said: “**The only discrimination I have faced was at work.**” The story that was told above about the born-again Christian manager is an example of this workplace discrimination. Whereas this rhetoric is met with disdain by most of the British public, based on anti-discrimination laws now in place, in other English speaking countries anti-gay organisations display vehemence in their rhetoric that imagines the LGBT community has an agenda that will undermine all traditional values. These anti-gay organisations are often led by religious groups and other right-wing institutions using rhetoric so hideous that it becomes the final problem tool of this kit – the vice grip.



VICE GRIP – ANTI-GAY OPPOSITION

The **VICE GRIP** is the anti-gay opposition that wants to hold the LGBT community down, bound by vicious insinuations and malicious intent and LGBT people feel that there is: “no one to protect you/prevent it from happening.” Populated by religious right organisations and associated right-wing groups, this opposition believes LGBT people have no right to exist, are an abomination, and the protests that declare these falsehoods are designed to malign and smear non-heterosexuals. What these attitudes disregard is “that being LGBT is more than about a person’s sex life” (Concannon, 2009, p. 413, emphasis added). Despite the Equality Act 2010 which makes anti-gay rhetoric illegal, this kind of persecution continues, because within the human rights discourse sexual rights are still ‘the new kid on the block’ (Parker, 2007). The punishment for stirring up hate towards LGBT people can be years in jail. The anti-gay opposition complain that their rights to free speech are being attenuated while gay rights advocates are forced to persevere against this stigmatization. The stereotypes that are fostered through this rhetoric de-humanize LGBT people, who are depicted as caricatures of real people, i.e. “in some places they just stare.” The strength of intolerance exhibited by members of the religious right, whether Christian or Muslim, is shocking and degrading and for this person “religion can influence how you may feel coming out”. The born again Christian mentioned above is the quintessential example of this discrimination. The way that non-heterosexuals get hemmed in by this vituperative public speaking can feel like a vice grip. This participant was “treated differently at school, people kept away” which has a negative social impact. The malicious invective is calculated to shame and demean members of the LGBT community and deprive them of their rights to be treated with equity and justice. “Sexual rights include ‘the right of all persons, free of coercion, discrimination and violence,’ to attain the highest possible ‘standard of sexual health, including access to sexual and reproductive health services’” (Parker, 2007, p. 973, emphasis added). This person who had just come out had this to say: “only just come out (17) so [have] not experience[d] any injustice”; one wonders for how long that will be true. The recent spate of suicides in 2010 connected to homosexuality has made headlines around the world. It remains to be seen how the new legislation that protects against discrimination based on sexual orientation will contain or redress this vice grip of anti-gay opposition.

The consequences of all the problematic tools just itemized are often psychiatric morbidity and diminished quality of life (Frabel, et al, 1997; King et al, 2003). The need to protect oneself from hate crime, discrimination and other forms of abuse is distressing and challenging and can damage self-esteem and any sense of wellbeing. The social stigma creates personal conflicts and shame. Hate crime has a powerfully negative effect on the lives of those who are non-heterosexuals. Sometimes referred to as ‘internalized homophobia’, sexual identity distress is part of the experience of gay-related stress common to members of the LGBT community (Ryan and Rivers, 2003; Wright and

Perry, 2006). Social support networks are key to providing some insulation from the forces of discrimination and strife (Wright and Perry, 2006; Frabel, et al, 1997). In one study that focused on the coming-out process in young people, they found *“a dynamic relationship and interplay between a young person’s feelings of sexual identity distress and the size and nature of his/her social support network”* (Wright and Perry, 2006, p. 87, emphasis in original). These psychological difficulties often lead to problematic health issues and risky behaviour, including substance abuse and self-harm (King, et al, 2003). Another large study on mental health surveyed respondents in the UK (as most research was coming from North America), which was an accomplishment in terms of the power of the results: *“No European study in mental health has recruited over a thousand gay and lesbian participants”* (King et al, 2003, p. 556). Empowerment strategies that lead to positive self-perception are one means of reducing the deleterious effects of stigma and pain. Unfortunately there are few counsellors or psychotherapists available in the UK, which is why there are interminable waiting lists for people with mental health problems. For this particular population, *“there is little in the way of professional infrastructure specifically for counsellors and psychotherapists working with lesbian and gay clients in the UK”* (Clarke and Peel, 2007, p.15).

There have been dozens of initiatives over the years that have improved the conditions of sexual minorities. For some, the improvements that have happened over time have increased the level of apathy among sexual minorities about doing anything. This applies to both older people who had to remain invisible, and the new generation who have had privileges unknown to elders. It is surprising *“how much apathy there is, even within the gay community of which I am a member* (Adams et al, 2010, p.81). The above tools communicate the variety of problems faced by the LGBT community, but the good news is the long list of tools that provide solutions to the problems that exist. With these tools we can begin to dismantle the negative rhetoric from religious groups and other dominant institutions that prevent non-heterosexuals from experiencing their rights in a diverse and challenging society.



DRILL & DRILL BITS – DISMANTLING BARRIERS & CONSTRUCTING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The tool from the list of solution tools that would be most helpful in disassembling the barriers to wellbeing and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals would be the **DRILL**. The drill has the capacity to drive holes into walls, into the ground (sometimes called a jackhammer), and teeth, depending on the size of the drill. The holes that are created by the drill are openings to new possibilities: building a bookcase, accessing the gas works underground or removing the decay in a tooth to restore its wholeness. The drill that bores holes is also the tool that prepares the ground for new developments, laying the ground work for rethinking the attitudes and actions which have been so oppressive to LGBT people. Even before the current political climate of cut backs in spending, “more support was needed [but] not enough money” was the rejoinder to improving the circumstances of the LGBT community. Homosexuality seems to be the last frontier in building a tolerant society and there are “some cultures where it’s more acceptable if you were a lesbian rather than a gay man”; yet the malicious rhetoric that derides the lifestyles of LGBT people and demeans the very existence of upwards of 5% (1.5% gay and bisexual , plus .5% ‘other’, and another 3% unsure/undecided) of the population, as the Office for National Statistics has reported in 2010, these barriers need to be blown up by dynamite. Short of keeping explosives that could find their way into the wrong hands, the drill has the power to push through barriers and drive deeply into the walls of resistance that exist. The normalization of heterosexuality, or heteronormativity, is a major barrier of resistance and the source of oppression that needs continuous interrogation to undo ((Yep, 2002). Rather than having to dismantle the wall one brick at a time, the drill makes it possible to break down large sections of the obstruction that prevents non-heterosexuals from living a reasonable way of life. The themes section on education describes different programmes that have been tested at each level of school – primary, secondary and higher education. Although they appear in the hammer section, soon to be defined, they also present activities that dismantle the barriers as well as building new opportunities “to develop deeper awareness of the daily acts of violence committed against LGBT individuals” (Yep, 2002, p. 171).

Another use of the drill is the preparation or rehearsal of something, such as a fire drill, which prepares people to know what to do in the event of a real fire. The variety of military drills that soldiers must undergo on a consistent basis is preparation and rehearsal for the real events of war on the battlefield. As we explore these aspects of the power of a drill, for the purposes of this tool kit its application would lie in the content of this resource pack. Applying the strategies suggested in this tool kit are the drills that make it possible to improve the lives of those who’ve been subject to oppression starting with “no separation in rules for one and not another”. The pieces that make

drilling possible are the **DRILL BITS**, some of which are designed to bore holes and others made to install or mount new objects. The drill bits provide an opportunity to mount new objectives in the fight for freedom of expression and freedom from subjugation based on sexual orientation. To raise the awareness of the issues, the starting point would be “giving more knowledge”. The recognition by society that “*the modern welfare state, in the UK, was developed around the heterosexual white British family*” (Concannon, 2009, p. 404) is a way to understand how current inequalities and discrimination towards LGBT service users began. With the development of initiatives to improve the circumstances of sexual minorities, health and social care have had to design new strategies for care. An early study on social support for gay men recommended “*more attention should be directed towards identifying effective ways to extend support to these high-risk populations*” (Turner, et al, 1993, p.49). Because family can be a source of support or a powerful negative influence, it was suggested that “*their inclusion in intervention programs deserves paramount consideration*” (Ibid., p. 48). Drill bits come in a range of sizes for drilling, from tiny to thick, creating holes of all sizes to allow the building of something to happen. The drill can then be used as an electric screw driver to screw in the pieces that are being constructed. One bit is slotted and another bit is cross point, depending on which screw is required for building. When set to reverse the direction, the drill can unscrew a screw in a few seconds, and the drill in this context removes the stain of homophobia that corrodes the experience of the LGBT community. The drill and its bits becomes a multi-tasking tool that dismantles barriers as well as constructs new opportunities for LGBT people.



HAMMER –EMPOWERMENT & COALITION BUILDING

In conjunction with the drill and the drill bits, the **HAMMER** is the next positive tool for building new approaches towards acceptance of these sexual minorities. It is possible to ‘hammer out the details’ of what needs to be done to diminish the incidence of discrimination and violence towards non-heterosexuals, using the hammer as the motivating force and power behind the construction of new attitudes and behaviours that *“harmonise the situation.”* There is a folk song from the mid-20th century with the lyric ‘I’d hammer out love between my brothers and my sisters all over this land’ which would be a fine starting point to bring LGBT people into the fold of human kindness that other members of society enjoy through a *“positive image and open mindedness”*. Alongside this ‘hammer of justice’ we can use ‘Maxwell’s silver hammer’ to disarm the offensive anti-gay rhetoric that imprisons sexual minorities, subjected to *“rejection and segregation”*. Tearing down the barriers and building new coalitions between community support groups and organisations, like The Lesbian and Gay Foundation (LGF) determined to end homophobia in campaigns like ‘Enough is Enough!’ and ‘Operation Fundraiser’, is strategic. The latter is an initiative that enables community groups to access grants to support the development of schemes that benefit a range of diverse local community projects (Out Northwest, issue 101). These coalitions aim to empower members of the groups, and this empowerment must be extended to the provision of services which contain *“inclusive mechanisms that avoid alienating LGBT service users”* (Concannon, 2009, p. 405). Policy making demands consultation with the service users as the starting point of inclusion. For older people, Age Concern was the first organisation that embraced how *“placing users at the centre of consultation processes is a key policy objective for them in order to successfully promote the needs of LGBT elders”* (Ibid., p. 408). The hammer that brings ‘love between my brothers and my sisters’, or between heterosexuals and homosexuals, hits the nail on the head in terms of providing social support to members of the LGBT community. Another kind of coalition building would be gay/straight alliances as demonstrated in the US, which challenge both the notion that homosexuals and heterosexuals are incompatible and the tendency to dichotomize one against the other (Bohan, et al, 2003). One of the drawbacks is the dearth of public spaces for LGBT people, even in a place like Brighton, the ‘gay capital of the UK’ (Browne and Lim, 2010). *“Yet there is no public or community non-commercial space that is designated LGBT on a permanent basis”* (Ibid, p.629). One challenge to this current research was the limitation in the time available because the Base only met once a week and all activities were done on that one day in a space that was shared by other community groups. The political climate that created the shutting down of various community groups means hammering out ways to build coalitions despite this reduction in services. Otherwise this can be another form of discrimination embedded within policy changes of the coalition government.



NAIL – CONNECTIONS THAT RAISE AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY

The **NAIL** attaches two things to each other when hammered into place. It is an essential part of building anything because it joins things together, whether two pieces of wood or two points of view. The combination of the hammer and the nail is a powerful means to build harmony between diverse groups – heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals, young LGBT people with older LGBT people, religious extremists and non-sectarian advocates of gay rights. The nail can be seen as the building block of new structures for groups and individuals that align their thinking in the development of policies and practices that bring relief to people struggling with the effects of discrimination and prejudice. The research behind this report brought the youth of the Base, a community group that provides support and a safe place for LGBT youth to congregate, and older members of the LGBT community together to engage with each other through a variety of activities. The significance of the experience was a gradual awakening to the value of the knowledge that each generation had. One participant expressed appreciation of this exchange as a means to foster connections: “**more intergen work across the board – hetero & gay**”. One workshop that brought old and young together to discuss the common issues that non-heterosexuals face really nailed it for the youth, whose motivation grew robustly after the event. Nails are crucial in establishing harmony between groups, holding them together in a way that allows the experience of common ground to emerge. Social networks are an instrumental means for making connections with others that include heterosexuals as well as homosexuals (Fabel, et al, 1997; Wright and Perry, 2006). With the reduction in services, social networking might be the main way for connections to be made. This would heighten the awareness of diversity within the LGBT community (at least four mentioned in the acronym) and the heterosexual world (Harrison, 2002). Nails are the sustaining aspects of connection – without nails the structural foundation of any building falls apart. Nails connect wood beams together, wood frames together, objects to the wall and a variety of other uses that foster connections. Through connections, awareness is raised about how the counterpart has managed certain aspects of LGBT life and contributes to a widening base of knowledge and wisdom. One suggestion by one of the participants was to “**try to raise awareness, treating people with respect and equal**”. Perhaps weather resistant nails are what is needed to manage the storm of outside forces such as anti-gay rhetoric and right wing conservatives that would deny LGBT people their human rights.



PLIERS – JOINED UP INTERAGENCY SERVICE PROVISION

Another tool that joins things together is the **PLIERS**, though there are different uses depending on what they are being used for, including flat nose pliers or cutting pliers. In addition to cutting things, pliers are used for bending things and for compression. Unlike the nail, pliers hold things firmly together for a temporary period, before something more permanent is used to forge the connection. A common notion about pliers is their function in ‘handling’ materials of all kinds, and for this tool kit they are useful in handling different elements for developing protocols and policies that restore wellbeing for members of the LGBT community. These pliers could be joining agencies together that deliver a joined-up and seamless provision of service. The establishment of a united health and social care provision within the Department of Health has been a challenge instituted by the Labour government which has met some resistance. Partnership work has become the norm in service provision, which must bridge different kinds of cultures within partnering organisations (Monro, 2006). The agencies that contributed to this research were in various stages of addressing the needs of the LGBT community according to the Equality Act 2010. In this work it is essential that the leadership of statutory organisations, who support these measures, make clear their intentions to the rank and file of their organisation, where the attitudes and behaviours of individuals might be in opposition to gay rights (Harrison, 2002; Monro, 2006; Concannon, 2009). One participant made the suggestion to *“re-educate management to embrace diversity”*. Heterosexism is embedded in some organisational cultures in *“ways in which equalities is discursively framed (or erased), the location of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equalities at the bottom of the hierarchy of equalities initiatives, resistance to the imposition of LGBT equalities by staff, and the organisational cultures in which they operate”* (Monro, et al, 2010, conference abstract). The recognition that agencies employ workers of all kinds, including LGBT workers, and they may not believe in what the organisation is trying to accomplish is necessary to implement effective change (Ibid; Monro, 2006). Mainstreaming is central to LGBT work, and its implementation depends on overcoming the tension created when *“sexuality-specific initiatives are not seen as necessary by everyone”* (Monro, 2006, p. 33).



NUTS AND BOLTS – COMING OUT & OVERCOMING RESISTANCE WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

What are the **NUTS AND BOLTS** of this change? When we speak about nuts and bolts in this capacity we are talking about the essential requirements or practical details of something, sometimes referred to as the 'nitty gritty'. Like the hammer and nails and the pliers, nuts and bolts also secure things together, and they work in tandem. The bolt needs the nut to work and vice versa. Together they are a powerful combination that holds things together when assembling something, and it is the nuts and bolts of new policy that need to be assembled to implement the new legislation that demands equality for all members of society (Monro, 2006; Clarke and Peel, 2007; Concannon, 2009). The nuts and bolts of LGBT experience must be understood by the greater society in order to do justice in the creation of new policy. 'Coming out' for members of the LGBT community is a fundamental process of the personal individual reality of non-heterosexuals. In this research there was a range of experiences for this emotionally charged occurrence. Here's what our participants had to say about coming out: "I didn't experience any problems when I came out at 12 years old"; "mixed reactions from people"; "feelings of fear mixed with excitement" and "relief and anticipation". A surprising finding from this research were those whose coming out was easier than expected: "didn't have any problems"; "not as frightening coming out as I thought it would be". Some others would resort to finding "support from other family members to come out to parents." Could it be that the changes that have occurred over the past generations have been influential in making this transition easier? Those who became gay when homosexuality was illegal had a much different experience: "an older person would not have been able to tell anyone." However it cannot be assumed that everyone's life has been made easier, as this participant said: "No – it was and still is difficult to get used to my feelings". When asked what they felt they had missed out on in life as a result of being an LGBT person, the replies included: "having kids"; "fitting in with straight mates"; "having a GF [girlfriend] at 13"; "enjoying lessons in school"; "being a granddad"; "being a teenager"; and "friends at school".

The nuts and bolts are the working components of protocols that define new regulations for the equality of sexual minorities in society; it could also be said that the people employed in statutory and voluntary agencies are the nuts and bolts of the organisations who implement (or don't) the new regulations as described above in the pliers section. The top down expectation that discrimination will disappear because there is a new protocol in place is unrealistic. A bottom up approach based on compulsory training in diversity and equality is the nuts and bolts of increasing awareness among workers to understand that negative attitudes and beliefs have a damaging effect on those whose lives are restricted by their sexual orientation. The education of service providers is

essential for success. With the new Equality Act 2010, there is a compelling reason to enforce this requirement because *“without legal compulsion, the providers who most require education will be those who do not participate”* (Harrison, 2002, p. 6). This is discussed later in the research themes section under the workplace. We know much less about the transgender person or the bisexual, as both were add-ons within *“the empty inclusionary of the LGBT umbrella”* (Adams, et al, 2010, p.84) but they do not receive the same level of support. It is known that *“bi and trans people are often ignored when subsumed within the category LGBT”* (Browne and Lim, 2010, p.629). In the spanner section there was one comment on barriers to inclusion by a participant; other comments were *“focus on bi & trans people more”* because their experience is different. These are matters that must be part of the diversity and equality training that people receive, because there is diversity within the label LGBT.



LEVEL – LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD TOWARDS EQUALITY

There are other tools in this tool kit that have a less specific purpose yet make a contribution to the changes that are needed for the inclusion of sexual minorities in society. The **LEVEL**, for instance, is an important tool for ensuring balance when constructing something or attaching something to a wall that needs to be even. Balancing the needs of LGBT people within the larger culture means providing the safety and support against discrimination that they are subject to, and is not offering them extra rights, which is the anti-gay rhetoric against gay rights. The level is the metaphor for equality that as yet is not the everyday reality of sexual minorities. As a tool that marks the horizontal plane for constructing something evenly, in the case of the LGBT community this means levelling the playing field and providing the necessary programmes and strategies that bring non-heterosexuals up to the standards of the rest of society. One way of doing this is to balance the narratives of suffering with an alternative narrative of positivity (Bohan, et al, 2003). A plethora of literature focuses on the pathology of homosexuality which feeds into internalised homophobia (Adams, et al, 2010). So much emphasis has been placed on the stigma of being LGBT that one truly invisible part of this experience is a positive perspective. More research needs to be done on the positive aspects of being an LGBT person (Clarke and Peel, 2007). Attention to the benefits as well as the risks will balance out the experience of non-heterosexuals and provide a more whole understanding of the LGBT community. In a study that examined chronic illness in LGBT people, one woman “desired a community where she could be her ‘whole self’” (Jowett and Peel, 2009). There have been many comments on the need for equality spread throughout this document and in the following themes section. LGBT people are the underdogs of society and with this rebalancing of perspectives, the levelling of the playing field will make equality more than just a word of intention.



TAPE MEASURE – MEASURING RESILIENCE AS WELL AS RISKS

Another measuring device that is important is the **TAPE MEASURE**, a flexible form of ruler used to measure the distance or size of something. Whether it is a flexible plastic tape or a metal self-retracting measure, the tape measure provides an accurate measure that can include the distance around corners or curves. The statistics that frame the understanding of the LGBT community are like the numbers on the measuring tape indicating the precise measure of a space or form. The majority of statistics however are focused on the risks of life within the LGBT community, particularly gay men and the incidence of HIV and AIDS (Bohan, et al, 2003; Wright and Perry, 2006). Similar to the level above, the need for more work on the resilience of non-heterosexuals is vital for a more complete awareness of the experience of LGBT people. The ability to navigate the turbulent waters of homophobia develops into valuable coping mechanisms, resourcefulness and resilience in LGBT youth. Bohan and her colleagues (2003) were able to demonstrate that some youth are thriving, not suffering. They found that some of them “**use humour to draw attention to the inequality**”, as mentioned by one of the participants.

The flexibility that the tape measure affords can broaden the scope of statistics beyond just the risks to include some of the positive elements of life as an LGBT member of the community (Ryan and Rivers, 2003). Rather than framing the risks, we can measure the rapid changes that have occurred over time in improving the situation of homosexuals and other sexual minorities. Together with the level, a tape measure can raise awareness of the holistic experience of sexual minorities. A significant step in measuring the experience of non-heterosexuals will be to “*stop pathologising our experiences*” (Adams et al, 2010, p. 83).



CHISEL, HINGE, TORCH, PENCIL – ENDING NEGATIVE ATTITUDES, FUTURE PROGRESS, ENLIGHTENMENT & STORYTELLING

Other items that would be found in a tool kit are the chisel, a hinge, a torch and a pencil, and each has something to contribute to the social support needs of LGBT people. The **CHISEL** is a tool that has a cutting edge or blade at the end that can chip away at a hard object that is being reformed. The chisel offers a means to whittle away the conventional attitudes that have discriminated against people who are LGBT so that reform is possible in policy making and more inclusive viewpoints. For older people this would include changing ageist stereotyping as well (Harrison, 2002). Of course the chisel is often paired with the hammer as the driving force to chisel away negative beliefs about non-heterosexuals. It means eliminating homophobia in health care provision (Jowett and Peel, 2009). The **HINGE** is another item that holds two objects together in a way that allows a limited range of motion between the objects. The most common hinge is found on doors that are hinged to the door frame, allowing the door to open and close. The future progress of LGBT wellbeing and equality hinges on opening the debate between opposing groups in a way that presents a real turning point in acceptance and recognition. Local governments need to *“address the factors that affect the success of sexualities initiatives, and for success indices to be supplemented by a series of performance indicators concerning the strategies by which success can be achieved, including planning and policy making, input, community leadership, anti-discrimination, and governance”* (Monro, 2006, p. 36). The **TORCH** shines a light on the issues that are paramount in the advancement of gay rights and reveals the hidden spaces where resistance makes that difficult. This tool kit is one example of shining a light on the issues and suggests ways of improving the situation. The **PENCIL** is the tool that tells the story in the development of resources that will redefine the best strategies and policies for the improvement of circumstances for LGBT people in a holistic way. Some research has shown that stories about positive experiences were not valued by other researchers (Bohan et al, 2003). Writing the story of LGBT equality has been the purpose of this toolkit.



BOX – RESOURCE PACK

All of these tools would be impossible to carry around without the TOOL **BOX** to put them in. The box is the container that organizes and protects the tools that are used. There are many important tools in our toolbox which offer explanations of both the problems and the solutions of the need for social support for LGBT individuals and groups. The handle on the toolbox that permits carrying it around suggests a perspective that integrates all the values imbued within our tools. The resources that are needed by service providers and service users are contained within the toolbox or tool kit of this valuable source of information.

THEMES OF CURRENT RESEARCH

This section highlights the themes that were requested by the funders for further development through this research. Of the five themes, the most salient two are education and hate crime. Participants in the study had the most to say on these subjects which overlap in the early years, when hate crime takes the form of bullying in schools. Included in this section are suggestions made by the service users, along with pertinent actions taken by service providers, and other relevant research that developed valuable options to improve the social support needs for LGBT people.

Education

Starting with the **DRILL** that tears down barriers, education is the fundamental location for change. Without any representation from the education sector at any of our research activities, there was no input from service providers on this key factor for breaking down barriers. When it comes to making change within education, the participants' views were: "**make teachers challenge the words that were used**"; a programme that insists on teachers' addressing "**homophobic bullying at school, teachers not taking it seriously**" and "**[at] school, nothing mentioned, atmosphere of bullying**" is crucial. All of the activities of the research – the focus group and workshops – indicate there was a dominant concern about the bullying that begins in school and the indifference from authorities in dealing with it. The dismantling of bullying using the **DRILL BITS** is the start to effective change and the transformation of indifference to zero tolerance is even greater so that comments like this no longer apply: "**bullied at school, and not taken seriously**". Because of the equality legislation, a concerted effort by police to enforce anti-bullying rules is required yet "**police could have been better trained, education[sic] and non-judgemental.**" Suggestions made were "**more police in schools – going in giving regular talks**" or "**police supportive about homophobia**".

Using the **HAMMER**, it would be strategic to employ a programme similar to the 'No Outsiders' research project that addressed LGBT equality in primary schools over several years across the UK.

"'No Outsiders' was a collaborative action research project that brought academics and practitioners together as co-researchers, enabling teachers to implement and evaluate strategies to address sexualities equality in their schools" (de Palma and Jennett, 2010, p. 21). As a site where homophobia can take root, as one participant said: *"more LGBT awareness in schools"* could be a step in making connections that the **NAIL** fosters. Education programmes that *"develop positive and inclusive attitudes about gender diversity and sexuality before they start to take up stereotypical and normative attitudes"* (Ibid, p. 22) hold real promise if they were to become a compulsory part of the national curriculum. The outputs of the 'No Outsiders' research include lesson plans, worksheets, and storybooks that confront the prejudices that lead to homophobia; the benefits could be a society in which homophobia and heteronormativity become *"aberrations rather than part of the accepted norm"* (Ibid, p.24). The **PLIERS** could be used to synthesise various educational initiatives that cover the range from primary to higher education. The 'No Outsiders' research created a successful curriculum for primary education; for secondary education there are teaching programmes like 'Mates', which was developed in New South Wales, Australia; and in higher education, the 'Beyond the Charmed Circle' exercises develop a *"deeper awareness of the daily acts of violence"* that LGBT people experience (Yep, 2002, p. 171). In New South Wales discrimination of all kinds including sexual orientation has been illegal since 1977, and the state government has been proactive in producing *"resource materials that assist teachers and school psychologists in challenging heterosexism and homophobia"* (Ryan and Rivers, 2003, p. 110). The teaching materials include a video, discussion sheets, and guided role play, and includes a focus on conflict resolution. One of the workshops of this LGBT research adapted the 'Beyond the Charmed Circle' exercises from an American audience to a British one. The discussions that were stimulated by this exercise excited the youth in their first intergenerational exchanges with older LGBT people, exemplifying ways to hammer out love between my brothers and my sisters. The **NUTS AND BOLTS** would be how at each school level these programmes would engage students in activities that raise awareness and explain the diversity within the label LGBT, instead of just lumped together in an acronym. This would certainly **LEVEL** the playing field early in life and be reinforced throughout education. Once these programmes have been employed in the national curriculum, the **TAPE MEASURE** can provide the statistics that would demonstrate its effectiveness and the personal efficacy experienced by LGBT people. With a model that presents *"a more complete understanding of the oppressiveness of our current sexual hierarchy, everyone can celebrate their own form of human sexual expression"* (Yep, 2002, p. 174).

Workplace

When it comes to equality in the workplace, some suggestions from participants are: *"more staff training, more open minded equality"* and *"employ more LGBT people to empathise"*; at the fundamental level, however, it is essential to *"stop discriminating"*. The **DRILL** that breaks down barriers starts with these suggestions and the **DRILL BITS** that help dismantle the apparatus of bullying can also unscrew homophobia to prevent *"bullying because of sexuality (verbal)"*. Mandatory staff training would be required for all staff at all levels (Monro, 2006). What would need to happen is for managers to abide by policies put in place by the leadership of the organisation, and when they do not adhere to those policies a means of accountability that does not punish the victim (as was seen with the born again Christian) would be in place. Equality in the workplace is more conceptual than real as one of the participants said: *"Stop being so discriminative."* Despite

initiatives *"LGBT individuals face unequal treatment on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity in employment practices"* (King and Cortina, 2010, p.69). Non-discrimination policies are in effect throughout the UK, but this does not filter down to the rank and file members of the organisation. **HAMMER**ing out the details means organisations need to *"look beyond employment decisions and ensure equal treatment of heterosexual and nonheterosexual employees across organizational life"* (Ibid, p.75), in order to create an LGBT-supportive organisational climate.

One service provider described an *"LGBT subgroup of diversity & equality strategy group in Adult Social Care as part of a network of groups across the local authority"* which brings groups together with representation from the LGBT community to foster equality and diversity. These 'structures of responsibility' institute *"formal policies, procedures, and practices that address heterosexism throughout an organization"* (King and Cortina, 2010, p. 75) making it more LGBT friendly. In the current research there was an excellent response by the local Council on matters of LGBT employment and workplace opportunities. They include: *"Robust HR policies – Harassment – zero tolerance approach"*; *"Sexuality and Trans demog collection on user experience surveys – just launched"*; *"LGBT employee group"*; and *"Stonewall Index (& hopefully Trans Index) applicants (as a Council)"* shows how serious the Council take matters of sexual orientation diversity. The **NAIL** helps promote these connections and raise awareness both between and within organisations of a network. The **PLIERS** work to overcome staff resistance so that interagency partnerships can generate seamless approaches to equality and diversity. Addressing ageism, that compounds the experience of older LGBT people as double-barrelled discrimination, is critical in bringing together policies which are pertinent for older gays. This would require the education of service providers about LGBT issues within aged care services (Harrison, 2002). Employing pliers that connect agencies in forging new policies to improve the workplace circumstances of LGBT people utilizes the potential of the pliers to handle hot issues. The **NUTS AND BOLTS** would involve employees feeling more able to disclose their sexuality at the workplace without any repercussions, the outcome of which would be more job satisfaction, better group functioning and organisational commitment (King and Cortina, 2010). While the Equality Act 2010 would seem to **LEVEL** the playing field theoretically, implementation would require consequences when staff members engage in *"blocking progress by watering initiatives down, sitting on them and making people write reports repeatedly"* (Monro, 2006, p. 30). Creating systems of evaluation, such as performance indicators that determine the success of implementation, would be the role of the **TAPE MEASURE**.

Health and Healthcare

In the domain of healthcare, the experience of LGBT people demonstrates a range of discrimination encountered in the provision of health services. *"Homophobia in healthcare provision is still a reality"* (Jowett and Peel, 2009, p. 468). Horror stories can be found in the literature about care providers openly displaying their prejudice; a couple of examples are: *"The staff in a nursing home refused to bathe a resident because they did not want to touch 'the lesbian,' and a homecare assistant threatened to 'out' a gay client if he reported her negligent care"* (Cahill and South, 2002, p. 52). For LGBT people, some suggestions are: *"training about diversity with nurses in nursing homes"*; *"same sex care homes"*; *"LGBT care homes"* and *"choice/variety of home"* when it comes to receiving care; some other ideas that would make these spaces gay-friendly are: *"posters that have gay images"*; *"posters that are gay friendly"*; and *"not thinking[all] people are straight"*. Because *"hospital staff could be prejudiced"*, participants suggested the need for *"more support,*

doctors that are knowledgeable on LGBT issues” and “publicity & LGBT friendly space / posters”.

The **DRILL** and the **DRILL BITS** would help to break down the barriers to inclusion, and also build new empowering opportunities. There were suggestions from our participants: “Sexual Health – open to sexuality & offer protection for any sexuality”; “next of kin questions – should be accepted no matter what the sexuality”; “NHS nurses supportive of same sex partner visiting”; and “a need for gay volunteers as hospital home visitors.”

Health and healthcare cover a variety of contexts including primary care, hospitals, care homes, clinics and other spaces where health professionals come into contact with patients. Often in the case of LGBT patients, they do not disclose their sexuality to health professionals for fear of a homophobic response (Jowett and Peel, 2009). One of our participants expressed concerns: “I worry about when I, my partner need social/home/residential care”. **HAMMERING** out these details will be essential in a society that is ageing and will soon require additional kinds of facilities and practices that are LGBT friendly. As ‘baby boomers’ reach retirement age, there is power in numbers in designing services that are gay-friendly, especially since many of that generation have been ‘out’ for most of their lives. Service users suggested the need for “carers that are gay friendly and don’t assume all old people are straight” which hits the **NAIL** on the head as the way to foster connections between users and providers of health care. Because statutory and voluntary sector day centres are seen as heterosexist, new LGBT facilities would provide for the social needs of older LGBT people (Concannon, 2009). Participants felt that to “treat everyone the same” is the starting point of better communication between health professionals and patients. The NHS “service redesign considers impact for LGBT community” would benefit from the use of **PLIERS** to bring together the different sections of the NHS in creating an inclusive service redesign. “It is essential for the success of new service developments that consultation forums and networks are developed, with organizations working in partnership to pool expertise and experiences, and share information” (Concannon, 2009, p. 415). The **NUTS AND BOLTS** will help people feel able to disclose their sexuality to health professionals knowing that there would be no negative reaction. An NHS free from discrimination and prejudice would **LEVEL** the playing field in healthcare, and the **TAPE MEASURE** can reveal that more gays are using health services newly shaped by a positive welcoming philosophy.



Hate crime

Hate crime is an unfortunate actuality in the lives of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people. The experiences of the LGBT service users were varied from those who’ve never personally experienced hate crime to those who have been horribly assaulted, but the overall impression is that the public and those in authority have become inured to the incidence of this violent discrimination. This is a sad commentary for those who are victimized. One suggestion was “more police in schools – going in giving regular talks”. Some will identify with “personally I don’t [feel] treated differently to a straight person” but most will indicate the need for “more support for lgbt people” and “more education in schools re: gay bullying”. One of the youth’s views was: “the GMP treat homophobic crime but it’s not taken seriously.” The major complication in reporting hate crime to the police is whether the person has come out to family, i.e. “when I reported my attack I didn’t report it as a homophobic attack as I didn’t want my family to know.”

Hate crime presents a specific challenge that the Equality Act 2010 intends to abolish, yet how will this law be enforced? The participants had a lot to say on its significant impact on their everyday reality, including: with “the police, what they say is not what they do”; however, on the best practice end of the continuum is: “the police in Manchester would take it very seriously – I know lesbian and gay men in the force who cover the Gay Village”. What about other areas in Greater Manchester and beyond? Using the **DRILL** to eliminate hate crime, a serious barrier to inclusion, would effect a reduction in the incidence of hate crime based on sexuality. Hate crime generated a lot of comments described above in the education section, and using the **DRILL BITS** to construct a multidimensional approach can begin to eradicate these offences in the lives of LGBT people. For those unaware of how this affects non-heterosexuals, any line of attack must first “raise awareness” and then go further to eliminate violence with “more rainbow flags, more awareness and activities to inform services”. What often changes the opinions of those who commit these crimes is meeting people who are gay and focusing on their common humanity. Activities that bring gay and straight people together to learn more and understand the indignity of what LGBT people face is a critical beginning in reducing hate crime. *“Interpersonal contact between gay people and heterosexuals under favorable conditions is one of the most effective ways of reducing psychological heterosexism”* (Herek, 1990,p.325).

Hate crime is the antithesis of what the **HAMMER** signifies. The service providers who attended the focus group depicted their response to hate crime in the following ways: the police “provide a tailored approach to victims, if possible an officer of that orientation so victim can relate and feel more comfortable/reassured”; the Council cites “local authority has links into Hate Crime reporting networks” and “employee policys[sic] and zero tolerance policy to and by staff”; the NHS has “links through emergency department with police”; and a Housing association rep said “M & D offices act as reporting centres”. Other than the police, other statutory responses sound good, but are ineffective and reactive. True integration will require a proactive plan hammered out by organisations to prevent hate crime. As was described above for the hammer, the force behind the **NAIL**, service providers are beginning to pay attention to the incidence of hate crime, but more needs to be done. Connections can only be fostered by the abolition of hate crime aimed at those whose sexuality is different. The **PLIERS** are useful for engaging interagency work to eliminate this crime with a concerted effort to expand upon some joined up activities already in place. The **NUTS AND BOLTS** of hate crime recognise that with increased LGBT visibility is the risk of being exposed to hate crime, an unexpected reaction to the fight for group empowerment in gay rights (Frale, etal, 1997). There is little the **LEVEL** can do about hate crime, but the **TAPE MEASURE** would be able to measure any changes in the right direction as a result of other measures that have been taken using other tools.

Housing and homelessness

The subject of housing and homelessness was limited and generated the need to tackle “social isolation – no specific housing [with an] LGBT focus.” There was a comment from one of the participants that reveals the true challenge: “residential homes haven’t even got [their] heads around older hetty couples, let alone gay couples”. Special housing for the LGBT community, as just described, must jump over several hurdles in order to be available. Because the staff can be prejudiced against LGBT people, the **DRILL** would come in handy to remove the hurdles in attaining

housing for non-heterosexuals. The issue engendered useful suggestions from participants: “housing should be based on how able you are to look after yourself, not age” with regard to older people; a younger person had this experience: “needed re-housing after breakup because of age, [but] could only get sheltered accommodation which was unsuitable”. The need for “safe housing, i.e. specific area for LGBT people” and there “needs to be a shelter that is LGBT friendly” demands attention from service providers to avoid these situations. The **DRILL BITS** could be part of the constructing of new buildings that house members of the LGBT community. Service providers and service users coming together to create such a shelter is an important process for encouraging the connections that **NAILS** join together. A **HAMMER** would be a strategic means for constructing new edifices for this community, while agencies could imagine housing organisations and local authorities working together using the **PLIERS** to provide suitable housing where “equality and diversity training is compulsory for all staff.” None of the participants indicated that they were homeless and no one talked about knowing anyone who was. Housing becomes more of an issue with older LGBT people like the person who was concerned about going into a home for care in the healthcare section above. The **NUTS AND BOLTS** can add to staff training that reduces prejudice and discrimination. Hiring staff that are themselves LGBT people is one way for **LEVELLING** the playing field when it comes to housing. Assuming there would be funding for more housing, the **TAPE MEASURE** can provide useful statistics to determine how successful these measures are.

Alcohol and drugs

Alcohol and drug use issues are one area where the participants had the most positive statements about their social support needs: “My alcohol worker @ eclipse is supportive of my sexuality and asks questions so she knows best way to support me around my sexuality”, and another suggestion: “HIV drug use counselling?? Meaning workers are LGBT friendly and understand that partners might be male or female and its [sic] not an issue”. This domain is ahead of the rest in providing sensitive support to members of the LGBT community. Alcohol and drug use by LGBT people is an issue that could respond positively to a “sensitive assessment/ monitoring process”, in reducing its prevalence. It is believed that the elimination of discrimination and other violence would lessen the need for intoxicants to escape the reality of abuse and rejection. The **DRILL** can help with the elimination of discrimination, and the **DRILL BITS** can unscrew the homophobia behind the acts that drive LGBT people to substance abuse.

Alcohol and drug use by LGBT people is believed to be a result of the psychosocial issues that LGBT people experience. Issues of shame, rejection, and self-esteem often lead to hazardous behaviours related to alcohol and drug abuse, causing health problems related to the use of such substances, with alcohol being more problematic (Grossman et al, 2000). As an indicator of mental health vulnerability, perceived discrimination has a deleterious effect on lesbian, gay and bisexual people’s quality of life (Mays and Cochran, 2001). Because “social factors, such as discrimination against gay individuals, function as important risk factors for psychiatric morbidity, interventions to either prevent or treat stress-sensitive disorders may need to be differentially tailored to this population” (Mays and Cochran, 2001, p.1874). The **HAMMER** is a vital tool in generating interventions that are specific to LGBT people that promote resilience in the face of unabated discrimination and other social factors. Use of alcohol and drugs as an escape mechanism would be a deterrent to the experience of joining together in the creation of new interventions that develop connections as the **NAIL** does. However, it is recommended that any “intervention efforts will need to incorporate

clinical strategies to deal with issues of gay identity before community support strategies can be effective” (Turner et al, 1993, p.48). To assist in dealing with these issues, the police: “provide advice, crime prevention tools, help lines etc. in gay/gay friendly bars, clubs and magazines” as a starting point in relieving the psychosocial stresses of discrimination and stigma. The **PLIERS** can be used with measures in place for managing alcohol and drug abuse that include “patients given advice/guidance re alcohol and drugs contact numbers for further help (Healthy Living Project)” an initiative that involves partnership networks of organisations dedicated to the improvement of health and quality of life. The **NUTS AND BOLTS** in substance abuse would depend on the decline of homophobia, both external and internal. Gay-related stress is high, especially for youth, who are the main group targeted as users of alcohol and drugs (Wright and Perry, 2006). The **LEVEL** could suggest a tactic of moderation in substance use, while the **TAPE MEASURE** might design programmes that focus on the positive aspects of life as a member of the LGBT community.

This resource pack has defined the variety of tools of this tool kit as symbols of both problems and solutions regarding the social support needs of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people. The use of each tool conveys meaning about the issues that are current within society. The tool kit can provide greater understanding and compassion to the desire to improve the experience of non-heterosexuals through social support strategies. With the extensive tool kit illustrated throughout this resource pack, it is now time to start the work.

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