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SOSAFE
DAGKbNYCZW0
Implementation

SoSAFE DAGKbNYCZW0 Implementation Guide User Guide

Contents

SOSAFE

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Specifications

- **Product Name:** SoSAFE Implementation Guide
- **Version**: 1 (2024)
- **Target Audience:** Workers supporting people with disability, including LGBTQIA+ individuals

Product Information
The SoSAFE Implementation Guide provides inclusive strategies for workers supporting individuals with a disability, particularly focusing on LGBTQIA+ inclusivity. It emphasizes the importance of understanding and affirming diversity in sexuality and gender for all individuals.

Key Features:

- Attitudes, skills, and knowledge for workers
- A shared approach to implementing SoSAFE inclusively
- Easy-to-read resources for LGBTQIA+ inclusion
- Based on human rights principles

Product Usage Instructions

- **Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge:**

  Workers should familiarize themselves with the attitudes, skills, and knowledge required to implement SoSAFE effectively.
- **Shared Approach:**

  Implement SoSAFE with a shared approach to support inclusivity for all individuals, including those who are LGBTQIA+.
- **Shared Tools:**

  Utilize the resources provided in the guide to promote LGBTQIA+ inclusion and social/sexual safety.
- **Shared Rules:**

  Follow the shared rules outlined in the guide to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all individuals.

- **Shared Language:**

  Use inclusive language when discussing sexuality and gender to create a welcoming and respectful atmosphere.

Inclusive strategies for workers who support people with disability, including those who are LGBTQIA+

Introduction

This resource provides information for workers when implementing SoSAFE to promote inclusion, as well as social and sexual safety for all. In this booklet, there is a focus on supporting people who are LGBTQIA+ and ensuring that diversity is represented when we implement SoSAFE in any setting.

This resource will tell you about:

- the attitudes, skills, and knowledge you need as a worker
- a shared approach to implementing SoSAFE to support people inclusively
- easy read and engaging resources to support LGBTQIA+ inclusion

The information in this resource is important for all workers to know. It aims to help you feel more confident to talk to people with disability about LGBTQIA+ identities and to help them get the support they want and need.

SOSAFE is based on the principles of human rights. This approach acknowledges human rights are universal and lifelong. Sexual rights apply to all people in the areas of human relationships, sexuality, sexual well-being and reproductive health.

The specific rights embedded in the SOSAFE Framework include the right to:

- **sexual expression.** All people have the right to learn about, identify and respect their personal needs, desires and goals. (Regardless of the beliefs or preferences of carers/support staff and alternative decision-makers.) This includes learning by taking risks. There is an inherent dignity for every person in their ability to take risks.
- **sexual decision-making.** All people have the right to be supported to have control and decide on matters related to their sexuality, gender, and their body. This includes the choice of sexual behaviors, practices, partners and relationships.
- This is a poster from **rainbowinclusion.org.au**. It is a useful website full of resources that focus on the rights of LGBTQIA + people with disability. More resources are listed on page 13.

Attitudes, Skills and Knowledge

SoSAFE builds worker capability in all workplaces by improving workers' attitudes, skills and knowledge to create cultures of safety for all people with disability. This is important for everyone, including those who may be part of a minority group, as well as those who are not. There are a range of ways we can increase the social and sexual safety of the people who are LGBTQIA+ who we support by strengthening our:

Attitudes:

- embracing human diversity in all its forms
- reflecting on the human rights that are the basis of your work accepting the full identity of people you support
- being respectful of all people's gender and sexuality
- being flexible and supporting people when they change and grow remembering that:
  - there are most likely people 'in the room' who are LGBTQIA+
  - you cannot know a person's biology, gender, or sexual identity just by looking at them
  - if you do know details about a person, you may not know how central those details are to their identity
  - everyone's experiences are unique to them.

Skills:

- teaching about and modelling respectful relationships
- supporting people to share their identity where they wish
- respecting people's wish to keep some aspects of their identity private if they wish encouraging the gender and sexual expression of the people you support
- using people's pronouns
- acknowledging mistakes, take on the learning opportunity if necessary and move on being an advocate for the people you support, for example, introducing people using their pronouns to avoid misgendering (mistaking someone's gender)
- providing access to information about being LGBTQIA+ and rights and support people to understand it
- supporting people to access LGBTQIA+ events and venues if they wish
- helping people to feel proud of their LGBTQIA+ identity
- helping people to connect to other LGBTQIA+ people if they wish
- ensuring the people you support can participate in or lead LGBTQIA+ events if they wish.

Knowledge:

- when discussing sexual health, providing a range of examples and ensure that the same information is provided to everyone regardless of their gender e.g. information about puberty, menstruation or pregnancy
- challenging your own and other's gender stereotypes
- using inclusive language rather than assuming a person's identity
- attending LGBTQIA+ inclusive training regularly
- promoting positive stories that are inclusive
- educating yourself around LGBTQIA+ issues
- having conversations with the people we support, in the appropriate context, about their safety and inclusion as LGBTQIA+ individuals.

In summary, our role as a worker is to understand and affirm diversity in sexuality and gender for all people. It is simply recognising that people may express their sexuality or gender in many different ways, and that this is OK.

This is opposite to the idea of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity means that people believe:

- there is one preferred or 'normal' sexual orientation
- there is a gender binary (there are only two distinct, opposite genders)
- gender roles are rigid (for example there are jobs only men or only women can do) sexual and marital activities are only appropriate between people of opposite sex.

These beliefs can lead to homophobia, a form of discrimination. The principles and values of SoSAFE do not support heteronormative beliefs. When a worker affirms diversity in sexuality and gender, it makes everyone safer. This inclusive approach allows people with and without disability, those who are LGBTQIA+ and those who are not, to be authentically themselves and to express their needs and wants freely.

A shared approach

SoSAFE works best when it is implemented consistently. This means workers adopt a shared approach across their workplace to their:

- practices (the ways we work)
- tools (the visual supports we use)
- rules (the protective elements of SoSAFE we model and use)
- language (the words and definitions we use).

SoSAFE has a range of protective elements. Protective elements are the rules of a workplace that help to keep people safe from harm. This includes rules such as naming touch when giving a side hug, asking for consent prior to personal care, and teaching people how to be OK helpers and receive disclosures in safe and supportive ways.

The diagram below reflects how each of the four elements of the shared approach are interconnected across the whole of an organisation. This approach ensures that there is a consistency in:

- core concepts such as public, private, seeking help, appropriate touch, OK and not OK and consent
- relationship types such as community workers I know and worker roles such as OK and private helpers
- boundaries and activities that are OK in different relationship categories.
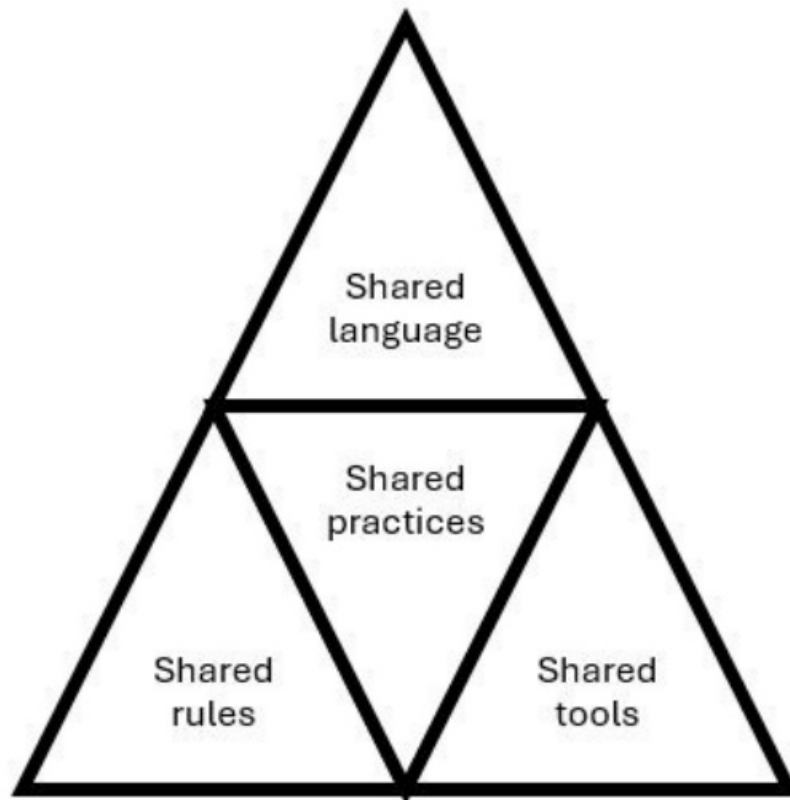
Shared practices

Here are a range of strategies to support shared LGBTQIA+ inclusive practices when implementing SoSAFE:

When communicating about relationship types:

- describing families broadly, by using inclusive terms that encompass all the different family structures that exist
- representing diversity when describing activities between friends or close friends, by providing a variety of examples. For example, when describing touch activities male close friends may hold hands and engage in private talk, consent may be withheld by
- males or long term partners may choose to live separately
- promoting diversity in intimate relationships, by using gender neutral terms such as partner, rather than boyfriend/girlfriend.

When talking about private body parts:

- focusing attention on the many aspects of puberty/body changes/sex and gender that are experienced universally. For example, growing pubic hair, developing body odor, showing signs of sexual arousal – not just a gendered or sex based understanding
- teaching all people about all different body parts not only the parts you may assume they have
- labelling the body part rather than labeling the body part as a gender e.g. a vulva rather than a woman's vulva.

When talking about private behaviours:

- providing flexibility if people want to wear clothes that may be seen as gendered. Teach when and where this

may be seen by others as a public or private behaviour

- being explicit about different kinds of sexual touch and include examples from different types of relationships
- accepting that private behaviors such as masturbation are not gendered and ensuring that masturbation is seen as an appropriate sexual behavior if done in a private place at a suitable time.

Shared tools

Some of the key ways workers can use SoSAFE tools LGBTQIA+ inclusively include:

- when talking about relationship types, ensure you use gender neutral terms such as partner rather than boyfriend or girlfriend
- when offering suggestions about activities between different relationship categories be sure to use a variety of examples and to avoid stereotypes. For example, people may have close friends of the opposite or same gender, any friends may enjoy dancing,
- shopping or rock climbing together
- use gender neutral pronouns (they/them) when describing a relationship category (such as partner or close friend) where the person does not yet have anyone in that category so you avoid making assumptions
- when describing sexual activities using the term sexual touch ensures that you are not assuming the type of sexual activities a person may want or enjoy, now or in the future.
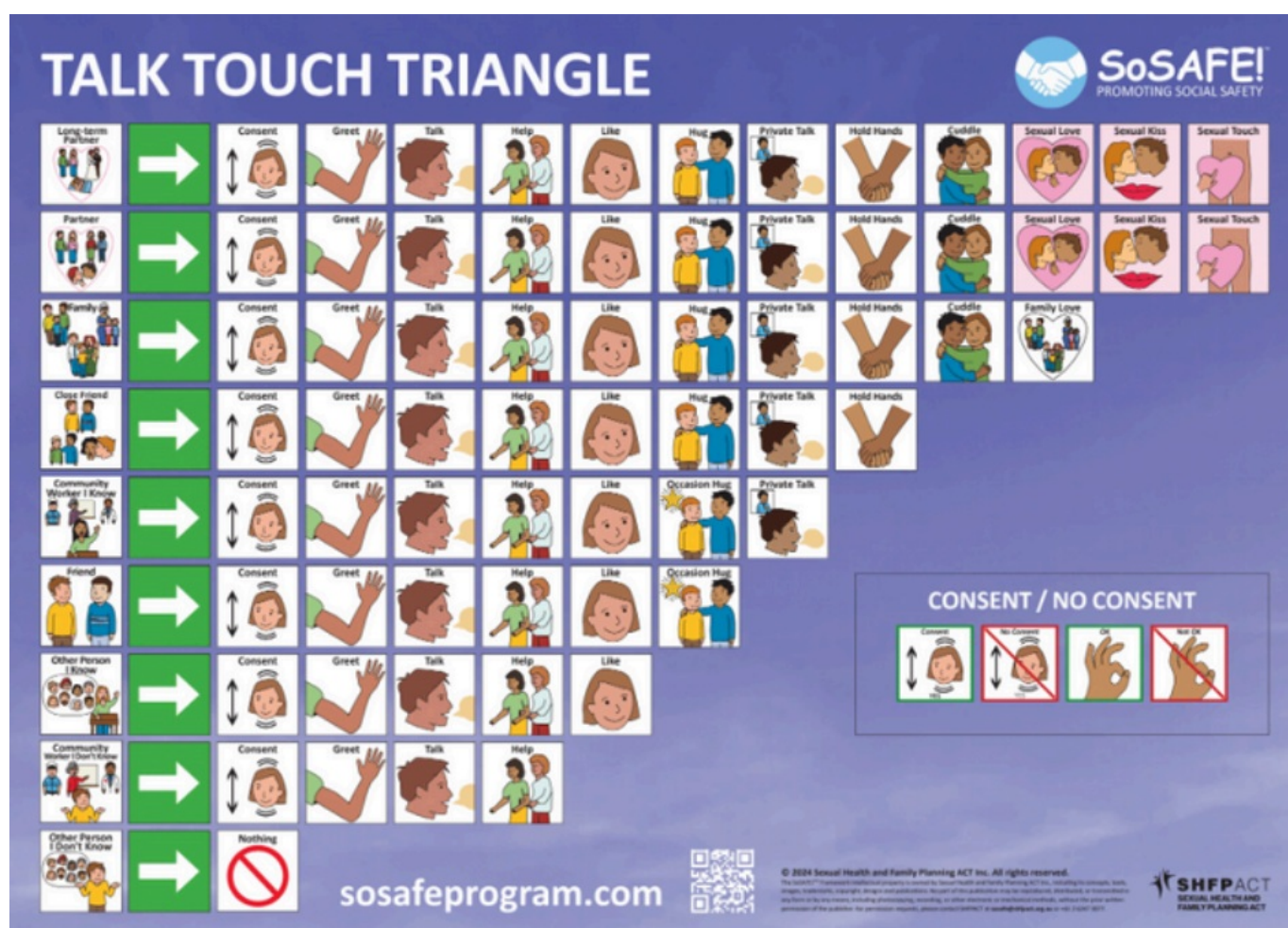
The Talk Touch Triangle uses gender neutral terms such as partner to promote an inclusive approach.

Shared rules

The relevant rules of the SoSAFE Framework when ensuring you are including people who are LGBTQIA+ include:

Rule:
All physical touch requires consent from both people and must be OK according to the Talk Touch Triangle.

Strategies:

- ensuring the examples of consent you use are inclusive of all types of relationships, even if you are talking about general consent, not just sexual consent
- promoting inclusivity by avoiding stereotypes around consent examples, for example, that either person may be the one withholding consent (not assuming it is always one gender), or only giving heterosexual examples.
- using the resources Introduction to Consent and Introduction to Sexual Consent for examples using inclusive language and non-stereotypes.
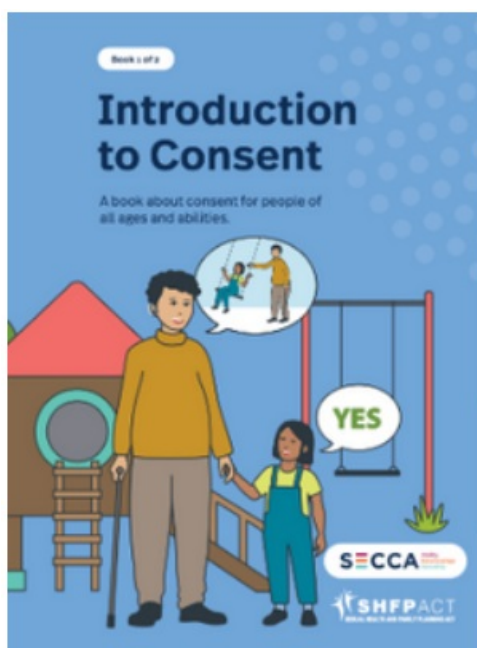
Rule:
When talking about behaviours, we use the terms OK and not OK.

Strategies:

- using language such as OK and not OK to talk about people's behaviours is important in SoSAFE as they avoid the moral or judgemental tones of other terms such as good and bad which may lead to some people feeling excluded
- allowing people to describe behaviour as OK or not OK can keep the focus on safety. Safety and reducing violence are equally important in the LGBTQIA+ community.

Shared language

Inclusive language has been highlighted throughout this resource as a key strategy to promote safety and inclusion when supporting people who are LGBTQIA+. There are a list of key terms for workers to know on page 11.
Language is LGBTQIA+ inclusive when we use words in ways that acknowledge and demonstrate respect for how

people describe their own bodies, genders and relationships. It creates an open and respectful environment that helps break down prejudice and stereotypes.

Embracing LGBTQIA+ inclusive language ensures that all LGBTQIA+ people we support are included in our conversations or our work. This includes instances when we are communicating directly with a person and when describing someone who is not present.

Shared language in SoSAFE is also important as it:

- maximises opportunities for people to learn and use words about sexuality and gender that may be new or initially uncomfortable as these words are used by everyone
- minimizes confusion or unintentional hurt for example using the appropriate terms that people prefer to describe themselves and their relationships

Language in this area can change. It can also depend on context. Some cultural groups and communities use other LGBTQIA+ terms such as Brotherboy and Sistergirl, creating the acronym LGBTQIA+SB. Here is an excellent resource to support you to use these terms when working in these communities.

Key glossary terms

Gender
Gender can be how a person thinks of and identifies themselves. There are many different genders. Some genders include:

- woman or female
- man or male
- transgender
- non-binary
- genderfluid.

Intersex
Intersex is when a person is born with different reproductive organs or private body parts than a typical male or female.

LGBTQIA+
This stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and + means any other way people may feel about their gender or sexuality. Here is an easy-read definition of each of these words.

Sex
Sex is what people are assigned at birth based on their reproductive organs and private body parts. A person's sex can be:

- Male
- Female
- Intersex.

Sometimes sex can be used to refer to sexual activity.

Sexual Orientation

- Sexual orientation is how someone feels about themselves and who they are romantically or sexually attracted to. Attraction may be to:
- the same or different gender to the person
- one gender or more than one.
- Some people do not feel romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others.

Transgender
Transgender is a type of gender identity. It is when a person's gender is different to what was assigned at birth.

Support services

QLife
If you or the people you support need LGBTQIA+ Peer Support, available 3pm to midnight. Call QLife on

- 1800 184 527 or
- go to **qlife.org.au**

**What services does QLife provide?**

- QLife is for LGBTQIA+ people and their support network wanting to talk about a range of issues including sexuality, gender, bodies, feelings, or relationships. While QLife does not provide specific advice or treatment for medical conditions, people who contact QLife may do so as a tool to support their mental health including but not limited to depression, anxiety, stress, trauma, gender dysphoria, and loneliness.

Who is the service intended for?
Anyone who is LGBTQIA+ or diverse in their sexuality or gender is welcome to contact QLife. As are those who support LGBTQIA+ people including professionals, family members and friends.

What kind of assistance does the service offer?
QLife is a free and anonymous service run by LGBTQIA+ people for LGBTQIA+ people. It provides Australia-wide peer support and referral service via telephone, 1800 184 527, or webchat, **www.qlife.org.au.** QLife does not provide crisis mental health services.
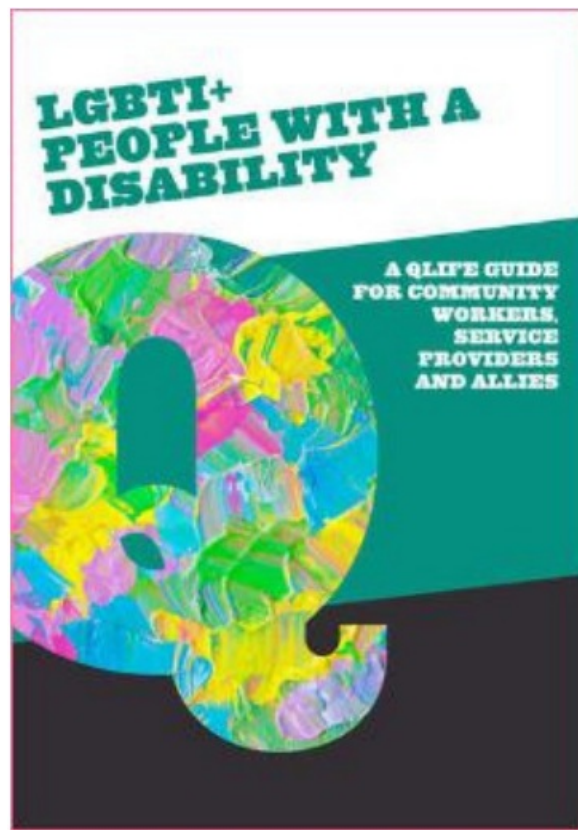
Please contact mental health services in your local area for crisis mental health support or phone 000 in an emergency.

Other services
R U OK? also has an LGBTQIA+ resource to help you have conversations to keep people safe. It is available here, and has lots of step by step strategies.

Additional resources

Plain English factsheets:

- **Lesbian**
- **Gay**
- **Bisexual**
- **Transgender**
- **Intersex**
- **Easy read definitions of LGBTQIA+ (PDF)**
- **Easy read definitions of LGBTQIA+(online)**

Inclusive books for different age groups:

- **early years**
- **primary school**
- **secondary school**
- **college**

What do the letters in LGBTIQA+ mean?

- Lesbian

Lesbian means women who have sexual feelings for other women.

- Gay

Gay means men who have sexual feelings for other men.

- Bisexual

Bisexual means people who have sexual feelings for both men and women.

- Transgender

Transgender means people who feel different from the gender they were born in.

Easy read information for people with disability

- [an easy read guide from England about](#)
- [LGBTQIA+ sex and relationships](#)
- [Yenn Purkis' website](#)
- [Our Rainbow Lives report](#)
- [NDIS LGBTQIA+ Strategy](#)

Resources for workers

- **How to be an active ally (Victorian government)**
- **a plain English guide from America about**
- **supporting LGBTQIA+ people with disability**
- **For allies and others (Rainbow Inclusion)**
- **How to be an awesome ally (Say it out loud)**

SHFPACT

- Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT
- P (02) 6247 3077
- E **training@shfpact.org.au**
- **www.SaferMeSaferYou.com.au**

FAQ

What is the SoSAFE Framework based on?
The SoSAFE Framework is based on the principles of human rights, acknowledging universal and lifelong rights related to human relationships, sexuality, sexual well-being, and reproductive health.

Where can I find additional resources related to LGBTQIA+ inclusion?
You can visit **rainbowinclusion.org.au** for more resources focusing on the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals with disability. Additional resources are also listed on page 13 of the guide.

Documents / Resources
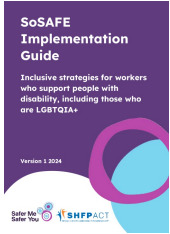
SoSAFE DAGKbNYCZW0 Implementation Guide [pdf] User Guide
DAGKbNYCZW0, BAFZMjvL4EU, DAGKbNYCZW0 Implementation Guide, DAGKbNYCZW0, Implementation Guide, Guide

References

- **Rainbow Inclusion - Rainbow Inclusion**
- **User Manual**