How to be an Ally: Evaluating an LGBTQ+ Healthcare Competency Intervention

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Opportunity

Research shows that health professionals in the U.S. feel unprepared to treat LGBTQ+ patients and their specific health concerns. An intervention designed to increase the LGBTQ+ healthcare competency of pre-health professional students at Northeastern University will alleviate the health disparities faced by this community.1

Goals

- Increase the number of allies in the healthcare community.
- Introduce pre-health professional students to LGBTQ+ healthcare competency.
- Create welcoming clinical environment for members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Approach

- **Part 1:** Method: Lecture-based
  - Understanding the health disparities facing LGBTQ+ individuals and ally-ship as a clinical provider

- **Part 2:** Method: Case study & group discussions
  - Gaining comfort with non-binary pronouns and gender-neutral language in clinical settings.

- **Part 3:** Method: Discussion and examples
  - Understanding how to create an LGBTQ+ friendly clinical environment through real-life examples

Results (n = 80 Northeastern pre-health professional students)

- **Knowledge Assessment (Pre vs. Post):**
  - Total Avg. Score

- **Skills based Questions (Pre vs. Post):**
  - Average Score per Question

100% of students responded “strongly agree” when asked if the information received through this workshop would be helpful for their personal and professional lives.

Impact

**Summary**

- This is the only intervention offered to Northeastern students on LGBTQ+ healthcare competency with a healthcare specific curriculum.
- Northeastern students are in a unique position to fight health disparities in the LGBTQ+ community through their clinical interactions, especially in cooperative education placements.
- The workshop was able to demonstrate an improvement in knowledge of LGBTQ+ healthcare competency by virtue of pre- and post-test scores.
- Students increased their comfort across skills ranging from pronoun use, understanding of health disparities, and overall knowledge of allyship in a healthcare setting.

**Recommendation**

- Given the positive feedback to this intervention and the demonstrated improvement in cognitive scores and skills, LGBTQ+ healthcare competency information should be disseminated more widely throughout pre-health professional majors and classes at Northeastern.

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