

P9.13 Service user participation and social inclusion

1. What You Need To Know

Twenty10 incorporating GLCS NSW (Twenty10) is committed to empowering and supporting service users to fully participate in the community and within the organisation.

The organisation will:

- create safer physical and digital spaces for service users to participate in that are accessible, welcoming, and affirming
- ensure our spaces, practices, approaches and interactions are physically accessible and safe (physically and emotionally)
- Ensure all services and programs reflect current best practice and the organisation's professional and ethical standards
- Support service users' autonomy and empower to engage with services and programs
- Respect service users' religious beliefs, culture, employment, education and social wellbeing
- encourage and support service users to be involved in decisions that affect them and the services they receive: in service development, evaluation, planning and organisational management.
- Empower and support service users to build positive and strong social support networks and foster community participation where appropriate.

2. Procedures

Twenty10 recognises that affirming and positive environments are created verbally, emotionally, and physically; they are only possible through displays of respect, awareness and kindness in accessible and inclusive physical spaces.

2.1 Approaches to social inclusion and user participation

Twenty10 seeks to foster experiences of social inclusion and user participation, by:

- *Information strategies* - Our staff and programs share information that fosters and supports experiences of social participation and inclusion on site and in the wider community;
- *Access to assistance and support* - Our staff and programs empower service users to identify and connect with various types of assistance and support offered by specialists, programs, organisations and other services - including but not limited to those offered by Twenty10; and
- *Increased self determination and social connectivity* - Our staff and programs empower service users to identify and connect with social networks and community in positive ways.

Twenty10 seeks to support the effectiveness of these approaches on site, by considering various factors, including:

- Consistent use of preferred names
- Use of personal pronouns
- Use of inclusive and respectful language (the language the service user uses about their own gender, sexuality, relationships, body, etc).
- Questions asked (and those not asked) by staff and volunteers
- Level of perceived and actual confidentiality and privacy of information
- The behaviour of other people in Twenty10 spaces
- The inclusivity of written materials and information presented.

Twenty10 also considers service users' experience of physical inclusion and accessibility, using various factors such as:

- Potential barriers for those with limited mobility, hearing or sight
- Options for accessible and gender neutral toilets and change rooms
- Dress codes
- Flyers and posters on walls in spaces accessed by service users including the foyer (what is there and what is not there)
- Forms used by service users.

2.3. General public

Twenty10 promotes opportunities to participate in services, groups, projects and events, including those run by the organisation, via:

- the website
- E-newsletters
- Printed posters, postcards and flyers
- social media including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Discord and Tiktok.

2.2. QLife

2.2.1. Information strategies

QLife counsellors provide information and referrals to service users through telephone calls and web chat sessions. The National LGBTI Health Alliance also provides a public referral database on the qlife.org.au website.

QLife brochures and information are mailed out along with other Twenty10 brochures and resources to schools, services and members of the public.

2.2.2. Assistance and support

QLife counsellors support participation by:

- Providing a variety of ways for service users to access the service, including telephone and web chat
- Assisting service users to find sources of support, which may include friends, family members, or organisations that they are connected to.

2.2.3. Self-determination and social inclusion

QLife counsellors promote self-determination and social inclusion by:

- Using each call or web chat as a one-off intervention
- Welcoming calls and web chats from family, friends, service providers, and other members of the community
- Encouraging service users to engage with their local community
- Exploring with service users what kinds of opportunities they might be interested in
- Referring service users to community organisations and other resources using the QLife database.

2.3. Adult groups

2.3.1. Information strategies

Information is provided to service users through:

- Discussion topics for the group (if applicable)
- Announcements at the beginning of the group
- Posters in the group space
- Handouts and flyers for opportunities to participate.

2.3.2. Assistance and support

Group facilitators support participation by assisting service users to find sources of support, which may include friends, family members, or organisations to which they are connected.

The groups provide an opportunity for socially isolated members of the LGBTIQ+ communities to create social connections away from more traditional meeting places that are centred around alcohol, sporting interests or activities requiring money.

These connections can last beyond a service user's time in the group itself.

2.3.3. Self-determination and social inclusion

Group facilitators promote self-determination and social inclusion by:

- Encouraging service users to engage with their local community
- Using the Safer Space Guidelines to help group participants feel safe and included (refer to [P09.6 Service user rights and responsibilities])
- Exploring, through discussion topics, opportunities available to service users
- Referring service users to community organisations (for more information, refer to [P09.4 Intake and referral])
- Encouraging feedback and participation in service delivery.

2.4. Young people's groups

2.4.1. Information strategies

Information is provided to service users through:

- Individual conversations
- Promotion on our social media pages
- Through phone, text and email
- Topics or themes for the group
- Announcements at the beginning of groups and events
- Posters in the space
- Posters in other relevant organisations
- Handouts and flyers for opportunities to participate.

2.4.2. Assistance and support

Group workers support participation by:

- Assisting service users to find sources of support and connection. These may include, but are not limited to, friends, family members, organisations, therapeutic interventions, and personal strategies.
- Using the Safer Space Guidelines to help participants feel safe and included (refer to [P09.6 Service user rights and responsibilities])
- Referral to other Twenty10 services, where appropriate
- Referral to other services where appropriate.

2.4.3. Self-determination and social inclusion

Group workers promote self-determination and social inclusion by:

- Using the Safer Space Guidelines to help participants determine their own interactions and safety (refer to [P09.6 Service user rights and responsibilities])
- Encouraging service users to engage with their local community
- Providing opportunities for clients to take part in social, creative educational activities
- Exploring, through discussion topics, opportunities available to service users
- Referring service users to community organisations
- Encouraging feedback and participation in service delivery

2.5. Drop-in

2.5.1. Information strategies

Information is provided to service users through:

- Posters in the drop-in space
- Promotion of services, events and activities on social media, phone, text or email
- Handouts and flyers for opportunities to participate
- Informal referrals during conversations.

2.5.2. Assistance and support

Drop-in workers support participation by:

- Assisting service users to find sources of support and connection. These may include, but are not limited to, friends, family members, organisations, therapeutic interventions, and personal strategies
- Using the Safer Space Guidelines to help group participants feel safe and included (refer to [P09.6 Service user rights and responsibilities])
- Referral to other Twenty10 services, and other services where appropriate.

2.5.3. Self-determination and social inclusion

Drop-in workers promote self-determination and social inclusion by:

- Using the Safer Space Guidelines to help participants determine their own interactions and safety (refer to [P09.6 Service user rights and responsibilities])
- Encouraging service users to engage with their local community
- Identifying areas of social interest of service users and encouraging and assisting them to develop their social networks (e.g. joining a local club or attending a local community college course)
- Encouraging service users with special interests to link up with a group in the local community
- Providing clients with information and support to enrol in courses which would enhance their independence, such as, training in basic living skills courses, e.g. managing finances, cooking, etc.
- Providing opportunities for clients to take part in social, creative and educational activities
- Exploring, through conversations, opportunities available to service users
- Referring service users to community organisations
- Encouraging feedback and participation in service delivery.

2.6. Case management and housing

3.6.1. Information strategies

Information is provided to service users through formal and informal referrals.

2.6.2. Assistance and support

Client Services Officers support participation by:

- Assisting service users to find sources of support, which may include friends, family members, or organisations that they are connected to
- Assisting service users with connecting to other organisations, educational opportunities, occupational opportunities, or government departments
- Assisting service users to connect with mental health supports, including counselling and groups.

2.6.3. Self-determination and social inclusion

Client Services Officers promote self-determination and social inclusion by:

- Encouraging service users to engage with their local community
- Identifying areas of social interest of service users and encouraging and assisting them to develop their social networks (e.g. joining a local club or attending a local community college course)
- Encouraging service users with special interests to link up with a group in the local community
- Providing clients with information and support to enrol in courses which would enhance their independence, such as training in basic living skills such as managing finances, cooking, etc.
- Providing opportunities for clients to take part in social, creative and educational activities
- Exploring, through conversations, opportunities available to service users
- Referring service users to community organisations
- Encouraging feedback and participation in service delivery.

2.7. Education, training, and consulting

The aim of the education, training, and consulting program is to build capacity in other organisations to provide opportunities for social inclusion of people with diverse genders, sexualities, and intersex variations. For more information, refer to [P09.26 Community education and training].

2.4.1. Information strategies

Information is provided to service users through:

- Announcements at the beginning of the training
- Promotion on Twenty10's social media
- Participant Workbook (PRISM training) or handouts for other education sessions
- Resources library on the website
- Handouts and flyers for opportunities
- Providing opportunities to join social media and e-newsletters.

2.4.2. Assistance and support

Trainers support participation by:

- Assisting service users to develop referral pathways, create networks and find sources of support in their local area, statewide or nationally
- Referral to support and services at Twenty10, QLife or other services where appropriate.

2.4.3. Self-determination and social inclusion

Trainers promote self-determination and social inclusion by:

- Building confidence in participant's capacity in working with LGBTIQ+ communities
- Providing non-confronting learning activities that are interactive and experiential
- Providing opportunities for participants to reflect and build on their own and their organisation's inclusive practice
- Modelling inclusive practices including the Safer Space Guidelines
- Encouraging training participants to engage with their local community and connect with other service providers
- Exploring, through training activities or brainstorming, opportunities available to participants
- Referring service users to community organisations
- Providing pre- and post-training evaluations for each training participant to measure their own development

- Encouraging feedback and participation in service delivery

2.8. Service development and organisational management

All service users are encouraged and supported to become involved in service development and organisational management, if they choose to do so.

Opportunities to do this include:

- Taking part in service user surveys and feedback forums, including the design of surveys and forms (refer to [P09.8 Service user and stakeholder feedback]).
- Providing input when new services or activities are being developed
- Representing service users in committees or groups
- Standing for the board.

3. Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How often do we officially solicit feedback from service users?

A: Refer to [P09.8 Service user and stakeholder feedback].

4. Where to Go For Help

For more information on this policy as it pertains to young people's services, speak with the Client Services Coordinator.

For more information on this policy as it pertains to adult services and QLife, speak with the Community Capacity Building Manager.

5. Definitions

Accessibility: The quality of being able to be accessed by a wide range of people.

Barriers to access: Issues that might make it hard for certain people to access our services. This could be a physical barrier, a social barrier, a cultural/linguistic barrier, or a psychological barrier.

Culturally sensitive practice: to recognise and respect service users' ethnic, cultural and race-based values, characteristics, traditions and behaviour, and to integrate these characteristics successfully into practice. This includes workers' awareness of their own cultural values and perceptions and how these impact on service users and their work with them.¹

Disability: A physical or mental difference that causes difficulty in a person's life. This can be temporary (for example, a broken leg) or permanent.

Disability Justice: ensuring that people with disability are treated equally before the law and have equal access to justice and their rights upheld.

Harm Minimisation Approach (or Harm Reduction): policies and practices which aim to prevent or reduce drug related harms for people who use drugs rather than preventing drug use itself.

Inclusive and Respectful Language: language a person uses about their own gender, sexuality, relationships, body etc.

Information strategies: The means by which we distribute information to service users.

¹ Soydan, H 2010, 'Anti-racist practice', in M Gray & S Webb (eds) *Ethics and value perspectives in social work*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke (UK), p. 144.

Participation: Making decisions about involvement in the community, including having input into services run by the organisation.

Self-determination: An ethical principle in social work that recognizes the rights and needs of clients to be free to make their own choices and decisions.

Social inclusion: Having the resources, opportunities, and capabilities to learn, work, engage, and have a voice.

Safer Space: a supportive, non-threatening environment that encourages open-mindedness, respect, a willingness to learn from others, as well as physical and mental safety. It is a space that is critical of the power structures that affect our everyday lives, and where power dynamics, backgrounds, and the effects of our behavior on others are prioritised...('safer' is used instead of 'safe' because) not everyone experiences spaces in the same way as others, so any one set of guidelines established to create safety may not meet the requirements of everyone and there may be complications or lapses in fulfilling those guidelines in practice.²

Safer Space Guidelines: as set of guidelines to support service users, stakeholders, staff and volunteers in creating a respectful, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

6. Publication and distribution of information

The Office and Administration Manager will be responsible for the publication of this document on Google Drive. The Co-Executive Director/s will be responsible for distribution of service information by uploading and keeping information up to date on Google Drive and advising staff of any major changes to the policy.

All Client Services staff are responsible for verbally communicating relevant information to service users.

DOCUMENTATION

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	[P09.2 Service information] [P09.6 Service user rights and responsibilities] [P09.8 Service user and stakeholder feedback] [P09.26 Community education and training]
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	

Roles referred to this policy
Client Services Officers Client Services Coordinator Community Capacity Building Manager Communications and Project Support Officer

² Coalition for Safer Spaces, <https://saferspacesnyc.wordpress.com/> Cited 16/05/2019.

Policy context: This policy relates to	
Standards or other external requirements	NSW Specialist Homelessness Services: Standards 1, 2, 3 and 6
Legislation or other requirements	Anti-discrimination (Cth) Anti-discrimination (NSW) Disability Act (Cth) Workplace health and Safety
Contractual obligations	National Child Safety Framework

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
Annually	Executive Director	Board Co-chairs

Policy review and version tracking			
Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1.0	12/06/2020	Mon Schafter	July 2021
2			
3			