

Presenter Disclosure

Presenter: Ranjith Kulatilake & Tanya Neumeyer

Relationships to commercial interests: None

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FILLING IN THE GAPS: EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IN LGBTQ+ NEWCOMER MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

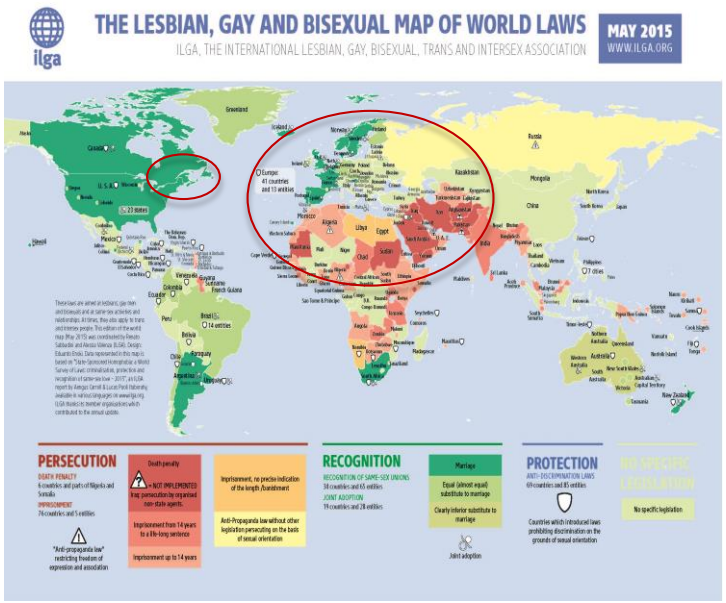
Ranjith Kulatilake & Tanya Neumeyer

Overview

- Introductions
- Context & Needs
- Values Statement
- Effective Practice
- Aspirations
- Discussion



Context for LGBTQ+ Refugee Mental Health



Homosexuality is punishable…

- by death in **8** countries: Iran, Iraq, Mauritania, Nigeria, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen
- by imprisonment in **89** countries worldwide (ILGA, May, 2015)
- in **39**/53 commonwealth countries

(76crimes.com: Jan 4,2016)

- Over 90% of AA's Newcomer LGBTQ+ clients are from countries marked in red shades
- Predominantly from Africa and the Caribbean and some from Eastern Europe, Russia, South Asia and the Middle East

Needs

- Housing
- Immigration support
- Financial coaching
- Job search
- Language skill building
- Friends & community building
- LGBTQ+ positive identity role models
- Newcomer specific safer space

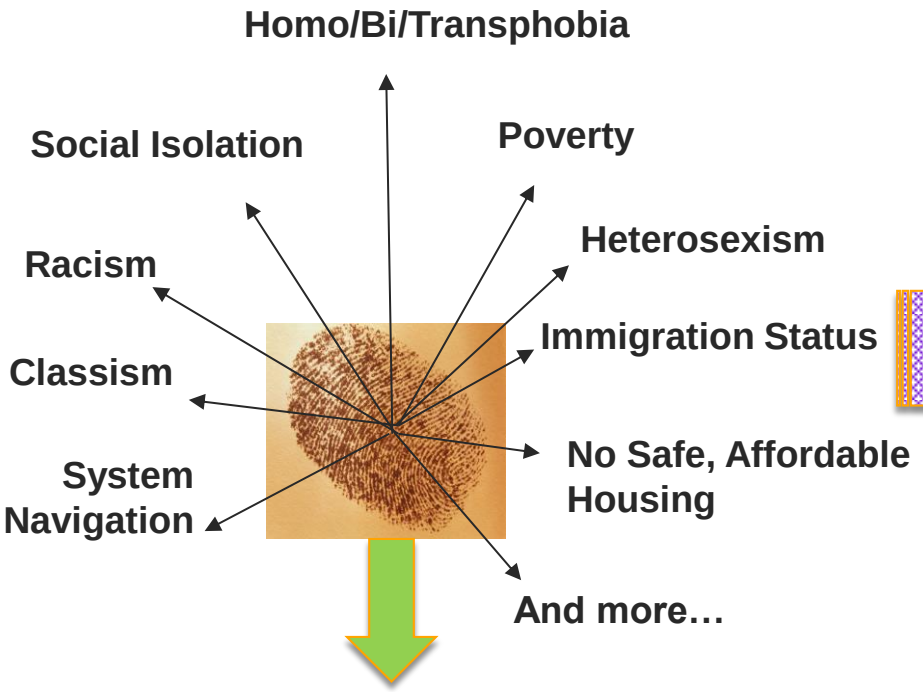

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YES IT'S CLEAR WE ARE QUEER WE ARE HERE GET USED TO IT!
LGBTQ+ NEWCOMERS
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Common Mental Health Conditions Faced by LGBTQ+ Newcomers & Refugees

- Severe trauma
- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Adapted from Global Envisioning LGBT Human Rights Project: www.envisioninglgbt.com

Barriers In Canada



Impact on Health Outcomes

On Arrival: Visitor/ Non-status → No Health Coverage

Refugee Claimant → IFHP

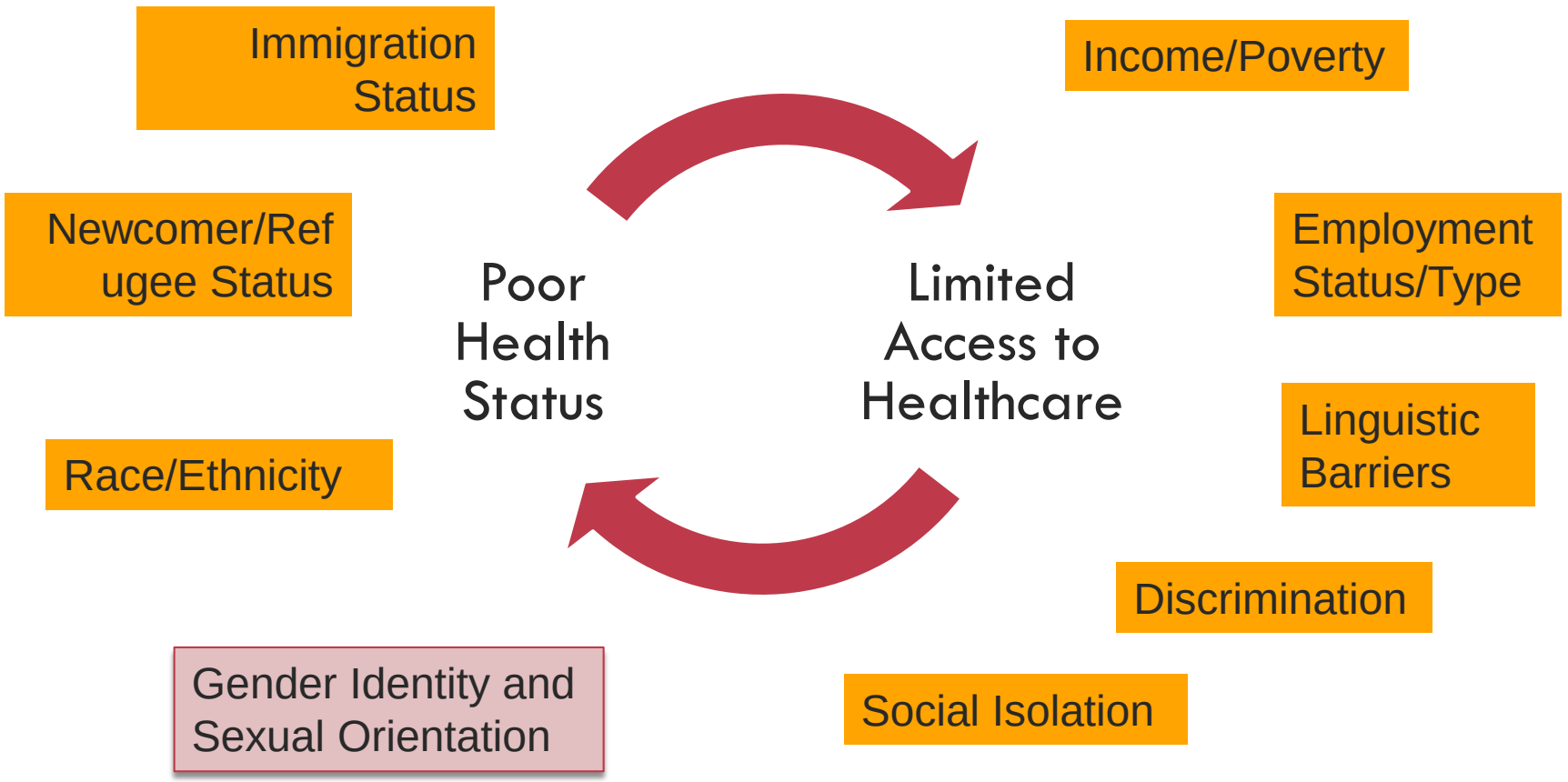
Failed refugee claimant - up to end of the appeal process → IFHP – if extended

If Non-status → No Health Coverage

Convention Refugee/ Permanent Resident/ Canadian Citizen → OHIP

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Vicious Cycle of Health Deterioration & Barriers to Healthcare Access



Adapted from Research for Change, Access Alliance

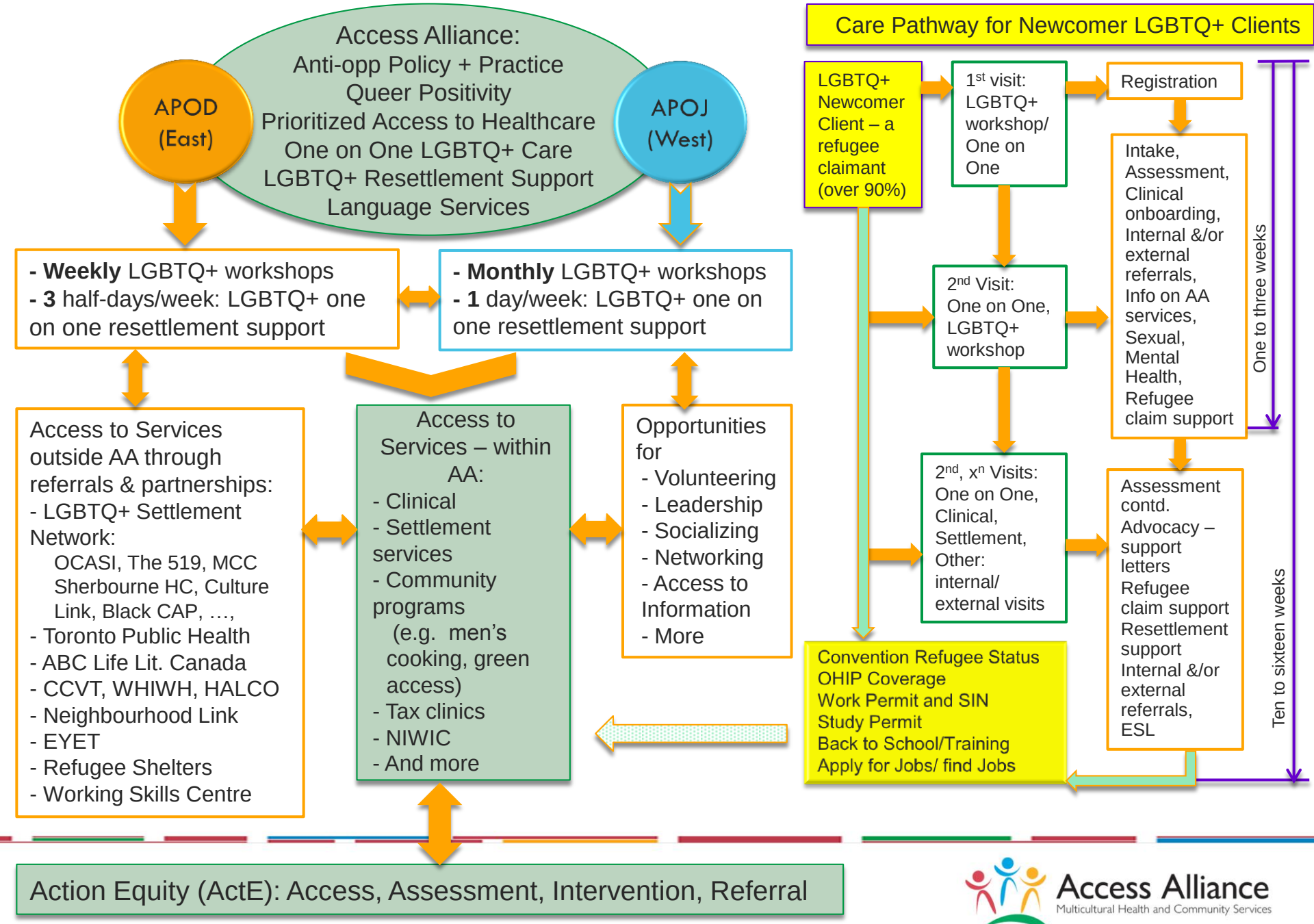
LGBTQ+ Programs at Access Alliance

- Weekly LGBTQ+ Resettlement workshop at our Access Point on Danforth
- Monthly LGBTQ+ resettlement workshop at our Access Point on Jane
- Last year we had 1436 client visits to 62 workshops
- Supported by dedicated volunteers



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Extending Access for LGBTQ+ Newcomer Care



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Value Statement: Our Premise

- Everyone in this space has wisdom
- We need everyone's wisdom for a wiser outcome
- No question or response is 'silly'
- We support each other
- The whole is greater than the sum of its parts
- Everyone will be heard and will hear others



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Values of Conduct

- Be respectful of others
- Strive to be punctual
- Make ‘I’ statements; be accountable
- Share time equitably
- Accommodate different views
- Celebrate diversity
- Learn from each other by helping and sharing

Values of Conduct

- No transphobic, homophobic, bi-phobic, lesbo-phobic, racist, sexist, classist, ablest, ageist remarks
- Challenge the view, not the person
- Ensure confidentiality – as it is also a safety issue for LGBTQ+ Newcomers
- Do make friends - not demanding/expecting friendships
- Respectfully and supportively listen
- Do take breaks – All gender and gendered washrooms available
- ☺ Have fun!!! ☺

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Success Stories

- Size, scope, depth of service provision
- Annual Pride events
- LGBTQ+ Gardening group, summer 2015
- Art, poetry & storytelling sessions, 2015 & 2016



Starting Points for Effective Practice

- Annual client survey results show that 17% of clients at Access Alliance report having mental health concerns
- JUST US, arts based program for LGBTQ women
- Successes include expression, peer support, connection & referrals
- Similar program currently running until July, for women and men, trans inclusive

Peer Leadership Model

- Innovation to existing model
- Peer-based, peer-led
- Arts informed
- Psycho-educational content
- Improving systems navigation & self-care strategies



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Funding & Partnerships

- Currently seeking funding & partnerships
- Lessons learned:
  - Keep applying, adjust scope
  - Work with placement students
  - Build on existing partnerships

Thank you

Questions & comments

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