

AFFIRM

Building community capacity in affirmative cognitive behavioural therapy for sexual and gender minority youth: Effectiveness of AFFIRM facilitator training

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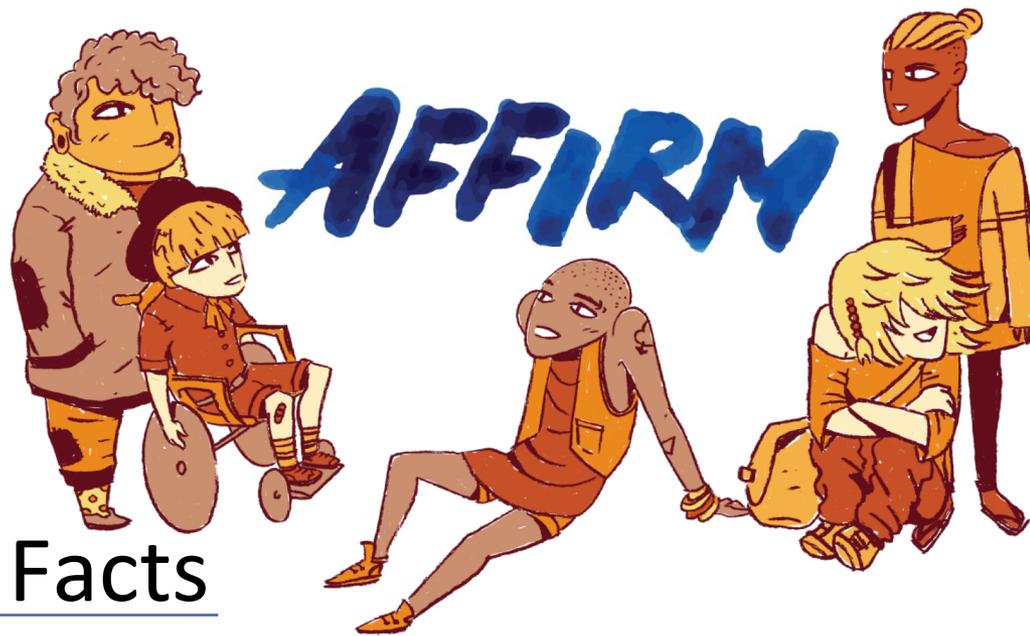


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Fast Facts

- 8-session cognitive behavioral intervention developed to target the unique **sexual and mental health needs** of diverse LGBTQ+ communities
- Promotes positive change and **healthy sexual/mental health coping** through the creation of a safe, affirming, collaborative therapeutic experience
- Rooted in the tenets of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and aims to **improve sexual, emotional and behavioral risks and functioning** by targeting underlying, problematic cognitions
- Developed to counter the harmful and unethical ‘reparative’ or ‘conversion’ therapies which pathologize LGBTQ+ identities and coercively aim to change minority sexual orientations and/or gender identities

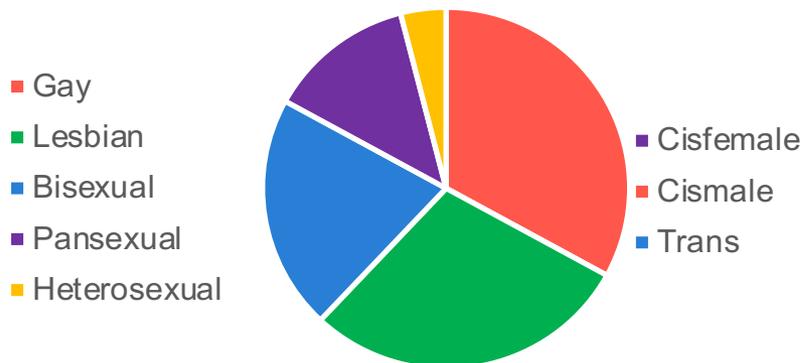


AFFIRM Facilitator Training

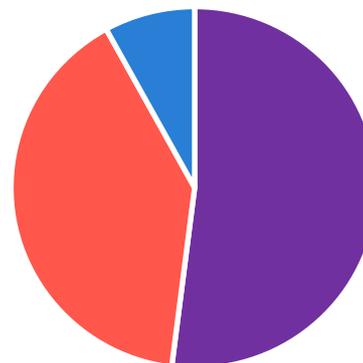
- AFFIRM is trained over 2 days (14 hours) of didactic & simulation-based learning for community members & practitioners
- 8 AFFIRM Facilitator Trainings have been offered to 58 trainees since April 2017
- Trainees complete the Affirmative CBT Facilitator Competence Scale (ACCS; $a = 0.922$), a 7-item measure, at pre- & post-training alongside a qualitative questionnaire

Trainee Demographics:

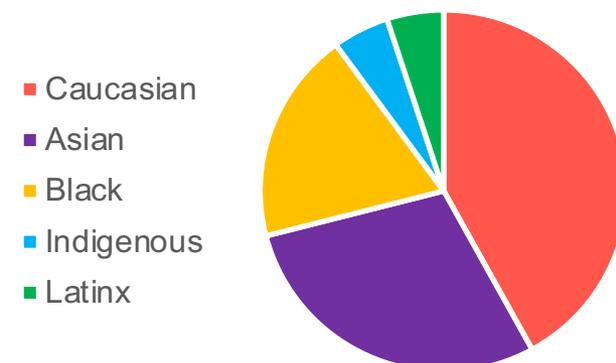
Sexual Orientation



Gender Identity



Ethnicity





Outcomes from AFFIRM Facilitator Training

Results of paired sample t-tests of ACCS pre- & post-training			
Item	Pre-test M (SD)	Post-test M (SD)	t
Incorporate affirmative CBT with clients	1.86 (0.97)	3.69 (0.95)	-18.84*
Help a client understand how discrimination is impacting their mental health/health	3.00 (0.96)	3.81 (1.08)	-8.12*
Help a client talk about how their thoughts, feelings and behaviors are connected	3.13 (1.08)	3.85 (1.03)	-8.35*
Talk with a client about a behavior change that impacts their health/mental health	2.88 (1.11)	3.74 (1.03)	-9.94*
Engage in case conceptualization and formulation that attends to specific needs of LGBTQ+ clients	2.25 (1.22)	3.54 (1.06)	-12.90*
Enhance client ability to cope with anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination	2.36 (1.06)	3.66 (0.94)	-14.37*
Enhance clients to identify thinking patterns that may contribute to poor mental/sexual health	2.66 (1.07)	3.69 (1.00)	-10.70*
Total score	18.14 (5.9)	25.97 (6.34)	-16.21*
*p < .001			

“Reminding me the about the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviors and providing me with specific CBT Strategies & Activities to apply in group facilitation”

“I learned a lot about how to improve my language and questioning to be more affirming to better support LGBTQ+ population”

“The mix of experiential & didactic exercises helped integrate the content”

“Role plays & case examples helped bring the material to life”

“Practicing the different techniques, especially through the simulation was helpful in understanding the content in more than just an intellectual way”

“Being able to connect with other social workers and community advocates and feeling validation for our work”



Discussion

- AFFIRM Facilitator Training increased competence of a diverse group of community members & practitioners to deliver AFFIRM to LGBTQ+ youth
- This study is limited by lack of control, no long-term follow-up, differential experience of trainees, and reliance on self-report assessment
- Facilitators attend monthly clinical supervision meetings and this content, alongside participant outcomes in groups analyzed by facilitator, may provide additional nuance to the training's impact
- Future training research could employ video recordings and direct observation for greater reliability of results
- For more, please visit <http://www.projectyouthaffirm.org> and read our current study protocol at <https://www.researchprotocols.org/2019/6/e13462/>