getting it right
LGBT RESEARCH GUIDELINES

INCLUSION project
Working for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health
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INTRODUCTION

These guidelines aim to raise a few of the issues you might want to consider when engaging in research with or about lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people, and sign-post you to sources of information that can help in the design, implementation, analysis and dissemination of your research.

The guidelines were developed through consultation with a wide variety of researchers experienced in investigating LGBT issues, including researchers from across Scotland, and two researchers from London who contributed their experience of working with both Black LGBT people and people seeking asylum on the grounds of their sexual orientation. The guidelines also draw on the findings of the Scottish Executive’s review of sexual orientation research.¹

It could be argued that there already exists a wealth of generic resources for social researchers that advise on integrity of purpose, ethics, targeting and engagement in research, as well as numerous transferable resources on race and ethnicity developed to highlight the specific issues that can arise when carrying out research with or on people who face systemic oppression and discrimination. Indeed it could even be argued that if keen regard is paid to all that defines good research then this should ensure the needs and issues of any group of people would be addressed. However true this may be, it is also true that heterosexism in our society, institutions, assumptions and practices is so entrenched that it is necessary to highlight the specific issues that arise when carrying out research with, on or including lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people.

The limited range of ‘valid’ research into the health and well-being of LGBT people in Scotland contrasts sharply with the wealth of ‘soft’ research in the LGBT sector. This ‘soft’ research informs much of the sector’s development but can be easily dismissed as invalid by funders and policy-makers due to limitations in methodological rigour. It is hoped these guidelines will help you to develop research methods and practices that allow for the knowledge and learning of the LGBT community to be accepted as valid research that can inform complex policy and funding decisions.

Validity requires that rigorous processes are in place to ensure the research reflects the real needs of LGBT people; otherwise it is all too easy for the lack of methodological rigour to be used to excuse a lack of response to the research findings. Self-completion questionnaires, for example, or face to face interviews at venues, clubs and events, are criticised as having the same old biases: only capturing the perspectives of middle-class, on-scene, mainly white, gay men in their twenties and thirties. If the purpose of the research is to investigate the needs of all sections of the LGBT community then research which makes use of these methodological approaches can be ignored or side-lined because of sampling limitations.

¹ McManus, S. Sexual Orientation Research (Phase 1 and 2). Scottish Executive Social Research 2003
One of the main challenges when embarking on LGBT research is that the LGBT community is far from a homogeneous group; sectors of it have been over-researched whilst others remain invisible or fear participation. As with other people that face systemic discrimination, they may need to be convinced that the research is in their interest, that it has a clear purpose, and that their participation does not put them at risk. It is important to explain that whilst the participants may know that their sexual orientation has a negative impact on their pension, inheritance and other partnership rights, and that for some it adversely affects their mental and physical health, there is little or no data to prove it. Official statistical silence on sexual orientation perpetuates the idea that sexual diversity (and prejudice and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity), is a private matter with no public issue or consequence. If the LGBT community do not appear in the data the 'mainstream' don't have to respond to their claims or needs, and the information needed to evidence rights infringement remains elusive.

Some members of the LGBT community may be cautious of participating in research because of the ways in which the findings may be interpreted, and the potential of some research to perpetuate stereotypes (e.g. gay men and AIDS research or psychiatry-led transgender research). It is therefore crucial that the research's purpose, process and ethical considerations be transparent and open to scrutiny.

**WHEN DESIGNING THE RESEARCH IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER:**

- Classification and definition.
- Sampling.
- Achieving diversity and inclusiveness.
- Ethical issues.
- Methodology (combining, interview and analysis techniques).
- Reporting.

We hope these few pages will help you do that.
DEFINING PURPOSE

If the primary mission of research is to progress, transmit and sustain knowledge or understanding, then the purpose of your research project needs to be clear from the start. What is it that you are trying to find out? Is it clear why the project is being undertaken, and whom it is meant to benefit? A brief Purpose Statement might include a short summary of the project. The next point to clarify is the focus of the work. Is it directed at one topic or more sweeping in structure? Is the project aimed at all members of the LGBT community, or one part of it?

Importantly: with limited funds available, how do we seek to focus our work beneficially, efficiently, and creatively? Integrity requires honesty about the purpose of the research and an explicit understanding of how the results will be used. This should be more than an 'intellectual' honesty; it implies an ability to engage with the subject, and with the people to be researched. It might have to be made clear that you may have no control over what way the results are interpreted. Integrity then is more than honesty; it seeks to strengthen and include participants throughout the whole process.

KEEP FOCUSED

☑ Be clear in your approaches.
☑ Ensure validity and integrity.
☑ Certify concrete outcomes.
☑ Involve.
☑ Communicate.

HINTS: PURPOSE

☑ Who benefits from this research?
☑ What will it be used for?
☑ Why is this research happening?
☑ Is the scope of the research defined by funding pressure?
☑ Has it been done before? Avoid duplication.
☑ What is it looking at?

PITFALLS: PURPOSE

☑ Participants may be wary of your motives as their lives could be taken and distorted.
☑ It may be fashionable but will you learn anything?
☑ Be sensitive to groups or topics that are over researched. e.g. gay men, HIV and sexual health to avoid research fatigue.
☑ Do not assume that if something is true for one part of the LGBT community it is necessarily true for the rest of it.
☑ You may be responding to someone else's agenda, and not driving it (e.g. Funders).
☑ Participant's involvement and feedback in framing and shaping the research is essential at all stages.
☑ Beware over-researching people, researching the most accessible because there is funding or it is fashionable rather than it being of real use.
WORKING WITH INTEGRITY

HINTS: INTEGRITY

- Engage with research participants recognising that they have extensive and diverse lives of which their sexual orientation and gender identity are just two aspects; don’t feed a victim culture.
- Who decides the questions? Organise a workshop to define the agenda and themes of the research.
- Think about adding open questions so people can say what THEY want.
- Engaging people early helps them to set the agenda.
- Re-engage time and again. The tools you are using can change en route; just keep focussed.
- Develop a community development approach to research. Expand the capacity of the LGBT communities to participate in research.
- Get informed consent from research participants for the interview, the recording and the storage and use of their information.
- Inform respondents up front who has funded the research, its purpose and who will access the data, what negative outcomes could result from participation.

PITFALLS: INTEGRITY

- Avoid practice that reduces people to labels rather than responding to humans.
- Avoid interviewing the ‘usual suspects’ from within groups.
- Avoid lumping too many questions/issues together.
- Open questions are useful but may give research participants too much leeway in responding and veer away from the topic. On the other hand sometimes people just want to be heard and open questions give them more room to express themselves.
- If doing research on the gay scene, in social groups or in community settings, remember that some people are there just to socialise.
- When planning research consider why people would want to participate. Some potential participants may fear other’s psychological interpretations of their situation. Some people won’t want to talk about and re-live their pain. Do not assume people want to share.
- Bear in mind when designing the research that some LGBT people think that a lot of LGBT research gets conducted, but there is little impact. Consider your potential participant group: Are there signs of research fatigue? Are people fed up with no feedback, no results, no change?
- People can feel used as subjects rather than involved as participants.
HINTS: REPORTING

- People’s involvement in framing research and feedback at all stages is essential.
- Feed back the results and recommendations to the research respondents/participants.
- Be realistic about the ability of your research to impact upon policy/practice.
- Spell out what this research means to the person and the community as well as to funders etc.

Intellectual honesty embraces standards of excellence, trustworthiness and lawfulness, compliance with guidelines & policies.

CLASSIFICATION & DEFINITION

Classification and Definition is a particularly challenging area in research about sexual orientation, gender identity and/or LGBT people, since people’s sexual orientation does not always fit easily into polarised heterosexual-homosexual categories, nor into the 4 headings assigned to ‘the LGBT community’.

PITFALLS: CATEGORISATION

- Who categorises? e.g. Academics may use MSM (men who have sex with men).
- Use of LGBT hides those not defined by those letters.
- Use of LGBT identity excludes people that may not identify as LGBT.
- Older people may not like LGBT labels and language.
- The definition of LGBT communities may be flawed.
- Identity definitions can exclude.

HINTS: CATEGORISATION

- Look at the characteristics, needs and circumstances of LGBT communities.
- Who/what is the LGBT community; does it exist?
- People are more than LGB or T. Explore identity, gender, sexual orientation and behaviour. Spell out the definition.
- Who is the research for; LGBT people in general, or a specific target group (e.g. Lesbians)? Ask why LGBT people would engage with researchers.
PURPOSE AND INTEGRITY

Using the terminology in the Scotland Act 1998 (i.e. 'sexual orientation', 'lesbian', 'gay', 'bisexual', 'transgender' and 'gender identity') will facilitate comparability across research projects and findings. However, you may decide to allow respondents to report their self-perceived sexual identity, or offer a much wider choice of categories so that people feel more included and satisfied and are therefore more likely to respond to the research honestly and fully (e.g. male/female, homosexual, gay, lesbian, queer, dyke, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex). If you decide to let people self-define or choose from a wider range of categories you can still collapse them down into fewer categories for statistical analysis, allowing for increased comparability and consistency.

Definitions also have to be appropriate to the topic of research. In a study of violence the criteria may be VISIBILITY out gay, out lesbian, queer, on-scene, non-scene, straight looking, dyke looking, camp, into cruising, in relationship, political, non political, discreet, visible etc... which can then be collapsed into lesbian, bisexual women/men, gay men, transgender male to female, transgender female to male and transvestite so that groups are big enough to define statistically. Although this involves some element of recoding on assumption it does offer consistency.

Words are open to interpretation.
Provide clear descriptions of any category used and how it was derived.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- What constitutes sexual orientation? Is it attraction, identity, sexual fantasy, sexual behaviour, lifestyle, partnership, or community? Housing partnership studies use same-sex cohabitation as an indicator of sexual orientation, but this may exclude the sexual identities of bisexual people in same-sex relationships.
- What are you defining? Is it sexual practice or personal identity e.g. on-scene gay men, heterosexuals who have sex with the same sex but do not consider themselves homosexual.
- What activities count as sex? What makes someone eligible in a study of sexual behaviour? The frequency or longevity of their sexual behaviour, or their sexual behaviour within a specified time (e.g. over the past year).
- An individual’s sexual orientation may change, consider: emergent sexuality, affirmed sexuality and open sexuality, and what about those that are as yet undecided about their 'sexual orientation'?
- When trying to classify gender, don’t use “Male / Female / Other” ‘Other’ down-grades non-listed categories and is often back coded into another existing category anyway. Consider how you capture information on sex/gender/gender identity which truly represents your respondents (including transgender and intersex people).
PURPOSE AND INTEGRITY

- Be aware of language use in regards to transgender people. 'Transgender' is currently a generally accepted term to include transgender people who are considering, not considering or have undergone surgical gender realignment, and transvestites and intersex people, regardless of their sexual orientation. Some people may use the term transsexual, although this is often considered to have psychiatric or medical connotations.
- Be aware that concepts and labels can change with age and other social and demographic factors such as ethnicity, immigration, socio-demographic status.
- What constitutes family? 'Family of choice': intimate relationships, lovers, present and former spouses, children, close friend. Or blood relatives?

Derived from McManus 2003

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

In November 2003 Healthy Gay Scotland (HGS) started a research process that aimed to ascertain what kind of resource should be designed to present the experiences and relationships of younger gay and bisexual men in a visual, real-life context. The purpose of this work was to use stories and experiences of different characters to highlight the choices and decisions young gay and bisexual men may face in their sexual health and relationships.

In this case the purpose of the project was clear, as was the focus: younger gay and bisexual men in Scotland aged 16-25. HGS aimed to be inclusive. The resource should reflect the diversity of this group in terms of race, educational attainment, culture, socio-economic background, disability, interests, influences, appearance.

A timetable was put out in advance, that included consultation with all the agencies that work in the field. Key groups/individuals to be involved were identified and consulted all the way through the process. Importantly they were consulted way before the time when final decisions needed to be taken. The research changed the format that the resource was to take. It also guided the entire project, the end result being a ground-breaking comic book.
THE METHOD

The method should be determined by the research question; different methods answer different questions.

**Quantifiable research requires results that are repetitive, reliable and valid.**

Quantitative research explores questions of how many and how often. As a result there is a need to maximise the diversity and size of the sample to ensure the statistical reliability of conclusions. Consider whether a LGBT sample should mimic the demographics of the overall population of the area being researched, or whether it is more important to ensure relevant diversity across other key variables such as age, gender, race/ethnicity and sexual orientation. Which ever you decide be transparent about the criteria employed.

**TIPS FOR INCREASING VALIDITY THROUGH SAMPLING METHODS**

- Pay attention to particular sections of Scottish LGBT community often excluded from research (e.g. transgender people, lesbians and bisexual women, black and minority ethnic people, older people).
- Describe in detail the demographic characteristics of the sample. Consider whether race/ethnicity, immigrant status, age, socio-economic and geographic difference should be taken into account.
- Use purposeful sampling - a range of factors, influences and experiences. You may consider sampling from the extremes of the spectrum rather than across it. e.g. Rather than sampling across Scotland you may sample from an isolated island and rural area, a poor inner city area and a wealthy suburb.
- Use a wide variety of sources.
- A larger sample from as many sources as possible is no less biased, but does allow for some sub group analysis.
- Beware of sampling biases. Recruiting health service users, for example, is likely to bias results towards those currently suffering physically, psychologically or socially. Most studies of transgender people are accessed through clinical records, which consequently biases research towards those going through trauma or operations. Selection from LGBT sector lists can bias towards 'on-scene' and "out" people, snowball and friendship pyramid sampling techniques (where each respondent refers on) can result in biases towards 'like knows like' and can yield lower responses than anticipated. Try non-scene venues such as youth clubs, community centres etc.
- Use of the internet to access more people may work but be aware you may miss older people, poorer people, and immigrant people with no English.
- Use of personal connections often results in age/class biases. This may be appropriate if you want to research particular minority experiences or to map sexual networks but would NOT be appropriate if you wanted to explore prevalence or diversity/difference.
- Consider the relevance of including a heterosexual control group to demonstrate disadvantages and highlight similarities.

Derived from McManus 2003
Qualitative research must go into the issue in depth, represent diversity and map the associations.

Qualitative research is exploratory and interactive and is therefore more useful when the purpose of the research is to generate ideas and policy recommendations. If the research can only reach a small (and therefore unrepresentative) sample, consider using qualitative methods. Do not assume that qualitative research does not have to be representative of the population as a whole, or that it does not have to be systematic and deliberate. It does.

**TIPS ON QUALITATIVE METHODS**

- Participant observations deliver great data but you’ll need to consider the issues of informed consent.
- Much qualitative research relies on in-depth interviews that require high levels of rapport between the researcher and the participant.
- Different qualitative methods are appropriate for different topics. For example, if the research requires personal disclosure of behaviour one-to-one interviews would be more appropriate than focus groups. Visual or hands on processes such as mapping, ranking, modelling can help individuals and groups deepen their reflection about an issue.
- Commit to the effective recording of all data generated not only what is said but individual body language, group dynamics, disagreements etc. Make sure all recorded data includes the names of researchers and participants and the date and place of the interview.
- Get permission from participants to use any audio or audio-visual recording of group processes or individual interviews.
- Interviewing in pairs or triads can enable some people to participate better.
- Using a semi-structured interview (broad topic guide) to facilitate a focus group or an oral testimony provides some structure while also allowing for flexibility and responsiveness to the interviewee.

Explore a range of methods to deepen the quality of the research process such as:

- Key event techniques such as life paths and time lines to trigger reflection.
- Focus groups with 6 to 10 people sharing particular characteristics to reduce nervousness, deepen reflection and increase analysis.
- Participatory appraisal using visualised tools to deepen reflection and provide tools for expression whilst channelling responses into analytical formats e.g. sorting, ranking, mapping, venn diagrams, visualisation etc.

- Asking research respondents to keep diaries, photo journals or scrap books provides a wealth of data but requires high level of commitment.
- Triangulation use three methods to explore the same question. Or using the same method with 3 different categories of people.

Derived from McManus 2003
WHICH METHOD?

SURVEYS

As with other methods there are pros and cons to surveys. The two main challenges for LGBT research are that sample sizes are often quite small and that the process of categorising identity/behaviour is complex.

TIPS FOR SURVEYS

- Much depends on whether the survey is self administered or administered. The wording and ordering of the questions impacts on the responses; always carefully pre test questions. Pilot your survey to ensure it is understood and the results are meaningful for analysis.
- When designing questions consider what the implications might be for LGB or T people? Does the language used assume heterosexuality?
- Use precise and formal language rather than medicalised or casual language, unless it is pre-elicited. If the survey is being administered you could elicit vernacular terminology (street language) before questioning in detail sexual behaviour (ask participants their preferred name for a sexual term, which can then be used in your questions).
- With sexual behaviour and other very personal or potentially embarrassing issues: be sensitive, start off on safe or familiar ground, build up a rapport, consider leaving sensitive issues for self administered questionnaires towards the end of the interview (ensure that the only link between a face to face interview and a self administered questionnaire is a serial number). This will minimise both discomfort and under reporting.
- When designing questions about stigmatised or sensitive behaviours consider using questions based on an assumption of a past event “When did you last...?”
- Look at questions that have been used in other successful surveys.
- Including some open questions will often result in some useful verbatim quotes, but may put some people off replying. Responses are time consuming during analysis because they are difficult to code. e.g. “Tell us your story” - how will this be analysed?
- Measures such as Ranking can allow for comparison across surveys.
- Should it be administered or self administered? Should it be administered by phone or face to face? Face to face allows for the use of visual stimuli e.g. campaign material, shuffle cards etc. Should it be self administered by post, internet or computer; Younger people may prefer computer based methods. If participants are completing a self administered questionnaire on site at the end of another research process (e.g. interview, focus group, participatory appraisal) make sure the researchers look busy so that participants do not feel that they should rush it.
- Self completion by post often yields very low returns and people jumping questions (like sexual orientation) making the whole thing useless. Self completion by e-mail also often yields very low return rate and some only fill a few questions and then submit the incomplete questionnaire.

Derived from McManus 2003
Which Method?

Combining methods and triangulation provides richer and more rounded research that reveals flaws in one approach and reinforces findings. This is particularly useful in validating qualitative research and research with small sample sizes.

But

Be careful if comparing across surveys at different times and with different methods.

Should the interviewer be openly LGB or T?

There is no clear answer to this. Some suggest that it is better for the interviewer/researcher to offer neutrality and not disclose their sexual orientation. If the interviewer discloses as LGB or T the respondent may assume interviewer already knows things and so say nothing. Some suggested that if the interviewer discloses that they are heterosexual the respondent may feel nervous. Either way it is important to consider the issue of researcher disclosure before starting the research. Also consider possible responses to a participants request for the researcher to disclose sexual orientation and or gender identity.
Engaging individuals/communities in the planning and conduct of research is crucial to the legitimacy and responsiveness of the research, the quality of the research outcomes, and to the effectiveness of any actions coming from the research.

There is increasing emphasis on the benefits of involving community members in research, along with increasing expectations from target groups that they be involved. This has resulted in a shift from the 'doing research on' model to a more inclusive approach which acknowledges the importance of connections with people, emphasises collaboration across stakeholders, and repositions researchers as partners with the communities they work with. As well as benefits for the researchers and the research process, involving community members will also help participants to better understand the processes of research and to build capacity to participate in consultative processes through the development of confidence, knowledge and skills.

Community engagement in research is about the connections between the researchers and those who the research is focusing on and can be applied to a wide range of interactions, from research identification and planning, to undertaking the research itself, through to feedback and dissemination. Engagement can be formal or informal, direct or indirect, and can be on a number of levels from information giving or gathering, to consultation, to active participation. The key to ensuring engagement is genuine and meaningful is to be clear about the level of engagement you are looking for, and to ensure participants are properly informed about the level of engagement expected or required of them, and that this meets and addresses their expectations for engagement and inclusion.

When working with the LGBT community there are specific issues regarding engagement that should be considered, such as the difficulties researchers can face reaching people in the LGBT community, the potential biases of 'on scene' research, and the invisibility of certain groups. Traditionally, much research on LGBT communities has involved a narrow range of people, and those who are harder to reach or are not comfortable with current methods of consultation, are too often not involved. If the research aim is to evidence and inform on issues of the LGBT community it is important to ensure that it takes account of the diversity within that community and pays attention to the less visible sectors of that community. Even if the research has a narrow focus, say lesbian mothers, it is still important to consider how to engage with as diverse a sample of lesbian mothers as possible.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY ISSUES

Define community; it is not simply a matter of semantics. The word 'communities' highlights differences, whereas the word 'community' suggests similarities given the oppressive situation that ALL in that community face for the same reason. Decide if you are going to use communities or community.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Be clear about your level and method of engagement with the community. Engagement can be meaningful and genuine at many levels, but the key is to choose the right one for your work, and to provide clarity to participants in relation to their role in the engagement process, and any constraints or limitations imposed on them.

SPECTRUM OF INTERACTIONS:

- INFORMATION SHARING
  A one way action in which you produce and deliver information for use by your target community.

- CONSULTATION
  A two-way process in which communities/participants can provide feedback to you. In this case you would have already decided upon your research direction, target group etc, and would like the opinions of the group on your ideas.

- ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING
  This level of participation would give participants/communities active roles in deciding the direction of the research and, indeed, if the research should be undertaken at all. At this level you would be prepared to use this advice to decide the direction of your work.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

People engaged at any of the above levels often have clear expectations about the return they expect on the investment of their time and energy. Many members of the LGBT community may express concern at poor past experiences of being engaged: of not feeling respected, listened to, or given appropriate feedback, or indeed that their input was totally disregarded in the final output. Many may also be dissatisfied with traditional engagement methods, such as surveys or public meetings, or may be unclear about how they want to have their say.

On the other hand, many members of the community may become actively involved when they are particularly concerned or passionate about an issue. In this case, they will expect tangible outcomes, and to be informed of the results of their engagement, and may want to receive timely and appropriate feedback about how their input was considered in the final decision.
ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION

BE PREPARED TO MAKE AVAILABLE:

- Accurate and complete information on the issues research participants are being asked to consider, so they can make informed choices.
- Sufficient time and flexibility in the engagement process to allow for the emergence of information and ideas.
- A coordinated approach to avoid duplication with current or previous work.
- Safe and supportive environments for people including clarity around confidentiality, post engagement support, information and resources for people to follow up on.

RISK IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Thinking ahead for any problems that might occur when engaging with community members will help ensure things run smoothly.

RISKS TO CONSIDER MIGHT INCLUDE:

- Identifying and managing any distrust/disinterest.
- Identifying and managing any vested interests remember that often people who are passionate about an issue will have an agenda they may want to push.
- If working with identifiable individuals/groups, ensure confidentiality and anonymity issues have been considered and addressed.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY PRINCIPLES

- Inclusiveness.
- Connecting with those that are hardest to reach. This may involve creating new and innovative ways to connect with communities who are not easily visible, or who may not be comfortable or are disillusioned with current engagement methods.
- Mutual respect.
- Be prepared to listen to, understand and act on experiences that may be different from your own or what you may expect to find.
- Integrity.
- Follow ethical principles of conduct, ensure your process is open and accountable.
INCLUSION

Two key types of exclusion in sexual orientation research need to be addressed in the design of your research: people who are rendered invisible because they have not participated, and people who are invisible because they are unidentifiable in the data.

Part of the challenge in addressing this is in managing assumptions and stereotypes about different people or groups. Just because people are LGB or T and live with oppression themselves, do not assume that gender discrimination, sexism, racism, disableism and religious intolerance are not present in the LGBT community. It is enormously important to recognise the diversity of the LGBT community/communities and their families.

For example: If you are studying homophobia you might decide to design your research to include victims of homophobic harassment regardless of their sexual orientation, rather than just targeting on-scene or out LGB or T people. A heterosexual transvestite, effeminate male, masculine female or quiet, shy, young man are also likely to be affected by homophobic bullying. In including heterosexual people in the research do not assume that they consider themselves heterosexual, they may just consider themselves ‘normal’ and not even know what heterosexual implies (heterosexism being so deeply entrenched.). Men who have sex with men do not always self-define as homosexual, bisexual or gay. Different ethnic groups will also have different definitions of sexual orientation that may or may not align with the labels that are most commonly used (ie LGBT, gay, lesbian, homosexual). Recognise that for lesbian/bisexual women and black and minority ethnic LGBT respondents it may be difficult to assess if the attack was motivated by homophobia, sexism or racism.
TIPS ON INCLUSION

- Simple questions such as 'What is your gender?' rather than 'Sex: male/female' changes the level of inclusion for intersex or transgender people.
- Think about who the research intends to impact on and who might be excluded because of your method, sampling or range e.g. people who are not on-scene, living in rural areas, not using the internet, illiterate, without a land line, older, ethnic minorities, disabled, visually impaired, transgender, lesbian or bisexual women etc..
- Reflect on whether you are doing LGBT research or LGB research; transgender people's issues are often perceived to be so different, and their needs are so unique, that it is assumed they would need separate research. They are often excluded from LGBT research.
- Bisexual people are also often overlooked in LGBT research.
- Sexual orientation, gender and ethnicity are complex composite concepts, so consider how you will manage and analyse multiple identity issues such as gender, race, age, disability, religion and status (asylum seekers, refugees, students).
- As with transgender, the difficulty in identifying black and minority ethnic LGBT people is often a challenge and can lead to a tendency to group people together despite a huge range of difference between their cultures (e.g. Pakistani Muslim and Pakistani Sikh, a West Indian catholic or/and a non religious Kurd). An over-simplistic comparison of "black" with "white" does not help, given the diversity in both groups.
- Are you designing methods that will enable people with sensory disabilities and cognitive difficulties to participate (e.g. using large print, face to face, clear instructions, signers, interpreters, show cards, pictures, text talkers, sitting in the light, short sessions, regular breaks and using visual or tactile tools)?
The ways in which research is planned and conducted, and results are reported, recorded and disseminated should follow the principles of good research practice - following set ethical and practical standards. Not only is this good practice for researchers; there are legal requirements e.g. Data Protection Act 1998, that have to be considered. Good research practice is particularly important for research with LGBT communities to ensure that research reflects their needs, is inclusive, accountable, safe and of high quality.

**Steps to Follow & Questions to Consider**

**Conducting the Research**
- What is the purpose of the research?
- What methodology is appropriate?
- How will participants and researchers be safeguarded?

**Recording the Data**
- How will data be gathered and stored?
- How will anonymity and confidentiality be maintained?

**Reporting the Results**
- How will results be disseminated?
- What participant feedback will there be?

**Questions to Consider**
- What is the aim of the research? Does it duplicate previous work? Who is the research for?
- Will quantitative or qualitative methods be required? What sample will you use? How will they be contacted?
- What risks are there to participants and researchers? Does the study provide information for participants? How can risks be minimised?
- How will consent be obtained? Who will collect the data? Where will the data be kept? Will the data be secure?
- Will personal data be collected? How will the data be anonymised? Who will have access to the data? What confidentiality agreements will there be?
- How will the results be published? Will the results be presented to LGBT agencies? What consultation will be undertaken?
- What participant feedback will be done? Will the results cause harm or distress to participants/LGBT communities?
TIPS ON GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE

Provide information for participants and obtain informed consent

Answer the who, what, where and why questions (e.g. who is conducting the study, what is involved in taking part and what will happen with the data, why is the study important etc).

Obtain consent to:

- Carry out the interview in a specified way
- To record the interview in specified way
- To store the interview records in a specified format, for a specified time at a specified place
- To use the data generated for a specific purpose, and/or organisation

Develop procedures to safeguard participants and researchers

- Minimise risks to participants think about how the research will affect them (e.g. provide cards with a contact number for further information and details of where to get advice on the issues raised in the research). This is particularly important to LGBT people: some may or may not have 'come out' in the different zones of their lives, many are at risk of discrimination, homophobia, homophobic violence and threats of 'outing' at home, in their family situation, at work and in the public domain. Some may find the research process triggers distressing memories or emotional shifts and, consequently a need for support or counselling.
- Conduct health & safety assessments for researchers (e.g. think through the worst case scenario and plan your way out).

Ensure appropriate anonymity and confidentiality

- Explain what this means to participants (with information and consent).
- Minimise collection of personal data or remove names/addresses etc as soon as possible (e.g. use tear off pages for personal data so these can be stored separately, or use pseudonyms for interviewees).

Meet with all relevant legal requirements

- Where necessary, obtain formal ethical approval from local or national research ethic committees or appropriate academic institution.
- Check what implications the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 have for your research.
BAD ETHICS = BAD RESEARCH

Ethics are fundamental to the whole of the research process and one of the main questions researchers should ask themselves is ‘What will be the outcome of the research for participants?’ For example, questions on sexual orientation and identity may have extreme implications for people seeking asylum on the basis of sexual orientation. The interviewee could be deported back to a country where same sex relationships are illegal. But at any level, the implications of the research process for all those involved need to be addressed.

GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS CHECKLIST

☑ Adhere to ethical and practical standards
   (with formal approval as necessary).
☑ Safeguard participants - provide research information,
   obtain consent and avoid causing harm or distress.
☑ Be accountable - disseminate results and feedback to participants.
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