

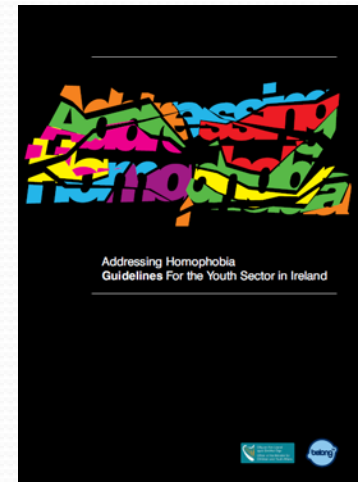
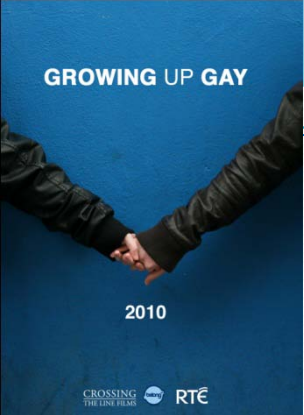
Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People

Gillian Brien

Drugs Outreach/Youth Worker

BeLonG To Youth Services





LOVEACTION



Our Mission and Vision

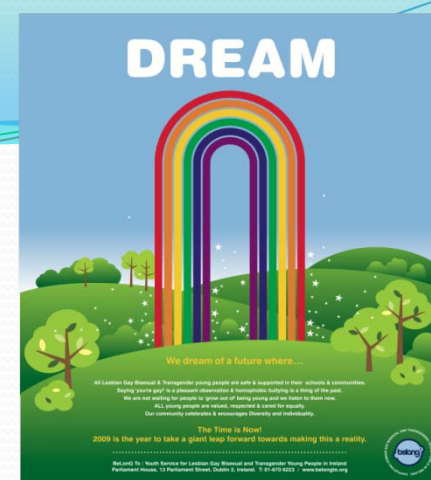
OUR MISSION:

To provide safe and fun services to LGBT young people in Ireland which:








- Facilitate them through exploration, development and growth
- Enable them to access all their rights as equal citizens
- Empower them to participate as agents in positive social change
- And to provide advocacy and campaigning voice so that society respects LGBT young people as full and valued members.

OUR VISION:

BeLonG To's vision is for an Ireland where Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) young people are empowered to embrace their development and growth confidently and to participate as agents of positive social change.



Overview

-  BeLonG To Drugs Service
-  LGBT Drugs Research
-  How to Include LGBT Reps within Structures
-  Challenges including LGBT People
-  Benefits including LGBT People
-  Inclusion of LGBT Reps so far
-  Impact of Inclusion of LGBT Reps



BeLonG To Drugs Service

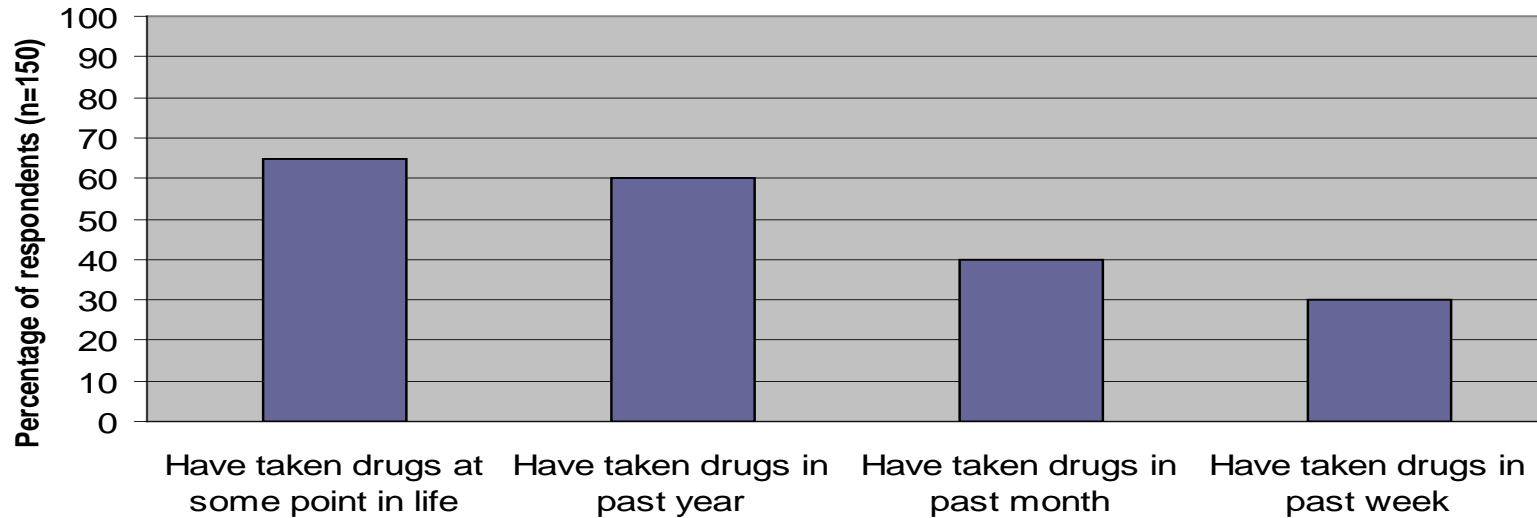
BeLonG To's Drugs Service was set up in late 2006 to support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) young people (14-23yrs old) in relation to drug and alcohol use. It is a one-worker service and is the only designated LGBT drugs education and prevention service in Ireland.

Our experience through delivering this work, which is mirrored in major Irish Research, shows that LGBT young people can experience marginalisation, fear, isolation, bullying, harassment, family and peer rejection, which can lead to them being more vulnerable to drug & alcohol use.

The service was set up in conjunction with a national study of drug use amongst LGBT young people



LGBT Research Findings



- **65% had taken drugs before.**
- **21 per cent have systematically used drugs (i.e. have done so on more than 60 occasions).**
- **60 per cent had taken drugs over the 12 months preceding the survey.**
- **40 per cent had used drugs in the preceding month and 29 per cent in the seven days leading up to the survey.**

The researchers conclude that LGBT young adults are between 2 and 5 times more likely to consume drugs than their heterosexual counterparts.

**Sarma, Kiran 2007 'Drug Use Amongst LGBT Young People in Ireland'
BeLonG To Youth Services: Dublin**

Supporting LGBT Lives

- Most common age people knew they were LGBT = 12
- Most common age they first told anyone = 17
- 58% reported homophobic bullying in their school
- 25% were physically threatened by their school peers
- 27% of LGBT people had self-harmed at least once
- 50% of LGBT people under 25 years had seriously thought about ending their lives
- 20% of LGBT people under 25 years had attempted suicide at least once



How should Reps from the LGBT community be included

Presently LGBT people are not specifically represented within the National Drugs or Alcohol Structures, LGBT people need to be included within Local, Regional and National structures because of the complex issues of marginalisation they face.

‘Such marginalisation can have a cumulative effect, resulting in severe exclusion through direct and indirect discrimination’ (A Framework to support Social Inclusion for LGBT people’ Pobal (LDSIP), 2008) (I wouldn’t include that)



How to Include LGBT Reps within Structures

LGBT people have recently been included within the National Drugs Strategy, they are named as target group (Action 44-66), now is time to prioritised LGBT people inclusion within:

Local – LGBT Rep have seat sub group Treatment & Rehabilitation committee, named representative Taskforce and a seat on Preventive & Education Committee

Regional –LGBT Rep Regional Taskforce, regional Treatment & Rehabilitation and regional Preventative & Education Committee.

National – LGBT Rep on DAG or Sub Group of DAG



Challenges of including LGBT Reps

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people are of course not a homogeneous group, with one set of issues faced by all. As with any other group in society, LGBT people have multiple identities.

They can be young, old, female or male, fathers and mothers, be culturally diverse (New Communities & Unaccompanied Minors), Travellers or have different abilities/disabilities.

We believe that the DAG should firstly prioritise the sustained provision of our service, which it states it will do within Action P65. At present we are funded at a rate which is considerably less than what the service costs the organisation. Further cuts will result in reduced service at best.



Benefits including LGBT Reps

LGBT people are included within the National Drugs Strategy and recently submission was put forward for inclusion within Alcohol strategy.

LGBT People 10% Irish population, they are part of every community.

Benefits of including LGBT Reps within structures it creates a socially inclusive society and extend the range of opportunities and options to drugs and alcohol services to all actions of the National Drugs Strategy and Alcohol Strategy LGBT Reps need to be included.



Inclusion & Impact of LGBT Reps so far, some examples

National Youth Work Advisory Committee (NYWAC)

- **2008: The National Youth Work Advisory Committee –**

Results in Equality Subgroup, OMCYA prioritising tackling homophobic bullying and the co-production of *Addressing Homophobia Guidelines for the Youth Sector* –

North Inner City Drugs Taskforce Project Promoters Committee

- **2006: Drugs Research and Services** – BeLong To joined forces with the National Drugs Strategy Team and the North Inner City Drugs Task Force to carry out national research on drug use amongst LGBT young people and to develop the first and only LGBT specific drugs education and prevention service.

- **2009: The National Drugs Strategy** – following community consultation coordinated by BeLong To – LGBT people are included in the National Drugs Strategy as a group that need greater supports.

- **2010: The National Alcohol Strategy** – following community consultation coordinated by BeLong To and Gay Men's Health Service – LGBT people are included within The National Alcohol Strategy

Inclusion & Impact of LGBT Reps so far.....

SPHE LGBT Resource Working Group

- **2005: SPHE Teacher Training**
- **2006: The *Stop Homophobic Bullying in School Campaign***, was launched by Minister for State in Education Sile De Valera in October 2006.
- Production of a dedicated Resourcing for teaching LGBT is **2010: sues in SPHE class in second level schools.**
- **2009: Oireachtas Committees and Working Groups** – In 2009 BeLonG To supported the work of a number of Oireachtas groups, this included supporting the Joint Working Group on Early School Leaving.

IGYLO – International Gay & Lesbian Youth Organisation (BeLonG To Board member)

- **European Parliament puts homophobic bullying on its agenda** - (Ilga-Europe/IGLYO Report on Social Exclusion in Brussels, MEP took an important commitment)
- **IDAHO International Day Against Homophobia** – MEP De. Rossi supports BeLonG To publication and advent 2009-2010
- **Worlds AIDS Day** – BeLonG To networks with 69 members states of IGYLO

Impact of Inclusion of LGBT Reps

- **Inclusion of LGBT People in Reachout – the Governments 10 year Suicide Prevention Strategy, results in:**
 - **The HSE's National Office for Suicide Prevention** resource BeLong To's National Development Project to establish LGBT youth supports to young people around the country (now 12)
 - **BeLong To's 'Start-Up Pack'** – BeLong To produces a manual and quality criteria on how to set up and run an LGBT youth group.
 - The HSE's National Office for Suicide Prevention resource BeLong To and GLEN to commission ***Supporting LGBT Lives*** – a national study into LGBT mental health and wellbeing, with a special emphasis on young people.
- **2006: The Gay Health Network (South & North Ireland)**
 - **2010: Collaborative pieces of work** - with LGBT Community has generated over 15 targeted publications, in 4 different languages, addressing issues of Substance Misuse, Sexual Health and Mental Health, dissemination across North/South Ireland.



Ph: 01 670 6223

E: info@belongto.org

W: www.belongto.org

W: www.belongto.org/pro/

Thank You!

