



**Hamilton** Family Health Team  
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# Creating a Positive Space at the Hamilton Family Health Team

June 1, 2018

NUTRITION

**MENTAL HEALTH**

NURSING

PHARMACY

# Presenter Disclosure

Presenters:

Tim Elliot, MSW, RSW

Jackie Bootsma, MSW, RSW

The presenters have not received any commercial support and have no conflicts to declare.



# Learning Objectives

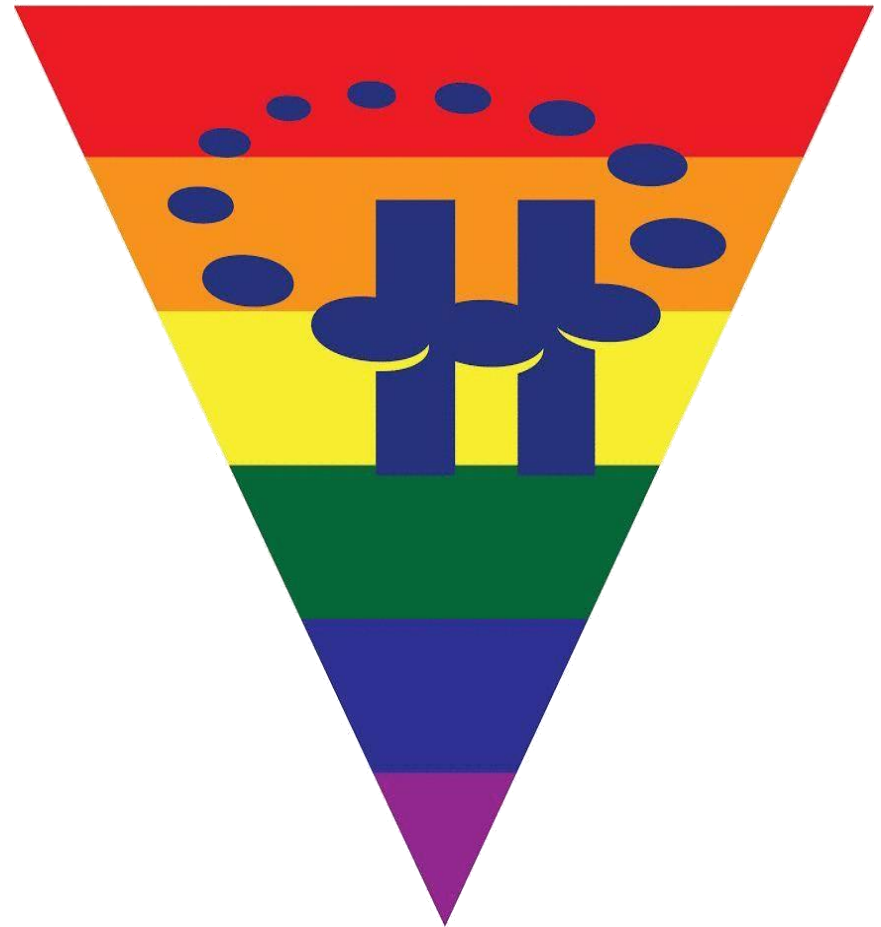
- 1) Evaluate the degree of positive space for patients and staff in a primary care organization
- 2) Demonstrate how increasing positive space improves LGBTQ+ patient access to mental health services
- 3) Build the competencies of health providers to address the mental health needs of this population of patients



# Agenda

## HFHT Positive

1. About the Hamilton FHT
2. Exercise
3. Why is this important?
4. Our Journey
5. Having a Presence
6. Impact on Clinical Care
7. What About Your Space
8. Discussion



# About the Hamilton Family Health Team (HFHT)



- Largest Family Health Team in Ontario
- 165 Family Physicians and 72 Mental Health Counsellors
- 90+ locations in Hamilton with large and small teams



# To Think About


List three words to describe your  
gender





Why is this important?

Why are we doing this now?



The Rainbow Health Organization reports,  
“due in part to negative past experiences,  
many LGBTQ people may delay or avoid  
seeking health care altogether”



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A report released by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, found that only 57% of LGBTQ-identified respondents were out to their family physician. The isolation experienced by LGBT people can lead to a higher risk of alcohol and drug use, smoking, mental health issues and suicide.


(Peterkin and Risdon, 2003)



The LGBTQ population is marginalized and receives marginalized care. They often don't access care for fear of phobia – including homo, bi and trans phobias – demonstrated by primary care providers”

*Dr. Robert Kerr, a Family Physician specializing in LGBTQ health in Hamilton, Ontario.*





I'm often asked "What words should I be using?" said Dr. Kerr who explains that the most common questions he receives from Family Physician colleagues are about language.

"Most of the education [for primary care providers on LGBTQ care] starts with appropriate language use – it is our choice of words that sets the tone of the patient-physician relationship."

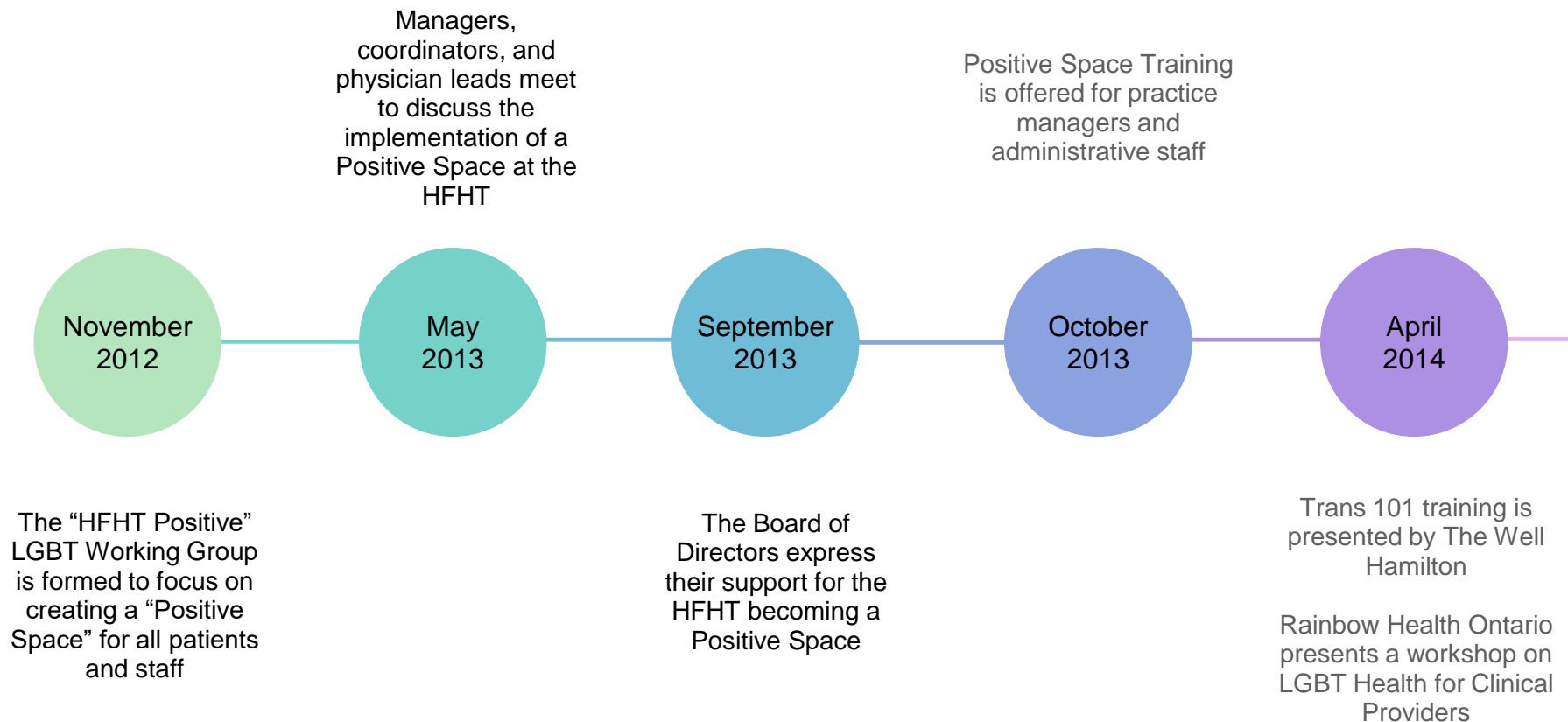
(What's Up in Family Medicine - June 2015)  
*Ontario College of Family Physicians*

# Creating a Positive Space at the Hamilton Family Health Team

A “Positive Space” is

open and welcoming, and equitable and accessible, to people with minority sexual orientations and diverse genders

## Timeline

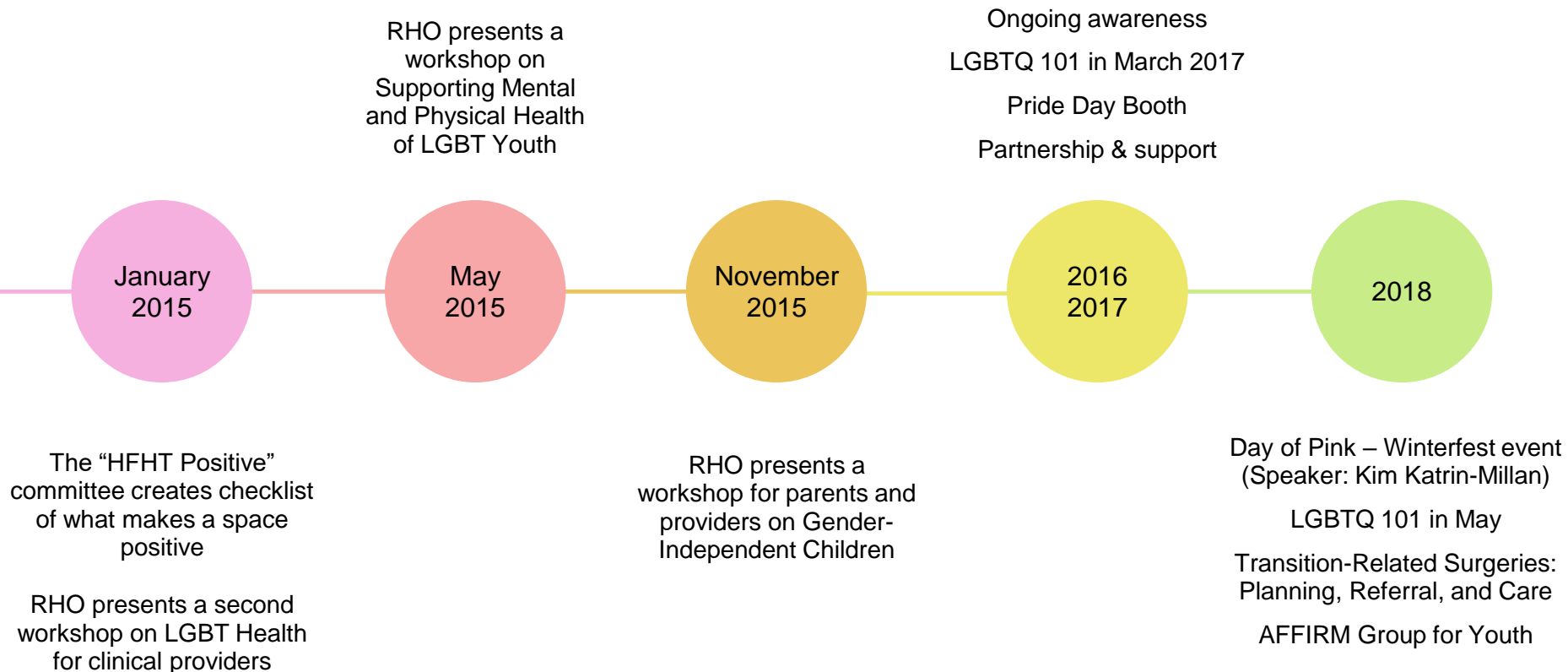


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## Timeline



# Feedback



“One-third of respondents indicated that they learned new terminology and definitions. Another common theme was that they learned about harmful assumptions the media/society makes, and the importance of not assuming but instead asking the client what they prefer to be called/how they identify. In addition, the availability of resources, where to refer LGBT folks for fertility issues (One Fertility), and the rates of addiction and mental health issues in the LGBT community.”



“After all of us at our clinic received the HFHT training “Introduction to LGBT Health for Clinical Providers”, we felt we could put up some positive space signage in the office. Just a few weeks later, one of my patients came out to me that she is a lesbian. I had known this young woman since childhood but she said it was the signs in our practice that made her feel comfortable with telling me. She told me she was very isolated and did not know any other women from the lesbian community and had not told anyone else at all in her life. I was able to link her with The Well in Hamilton.”

*~Family Physician*



# Having a presence is important!

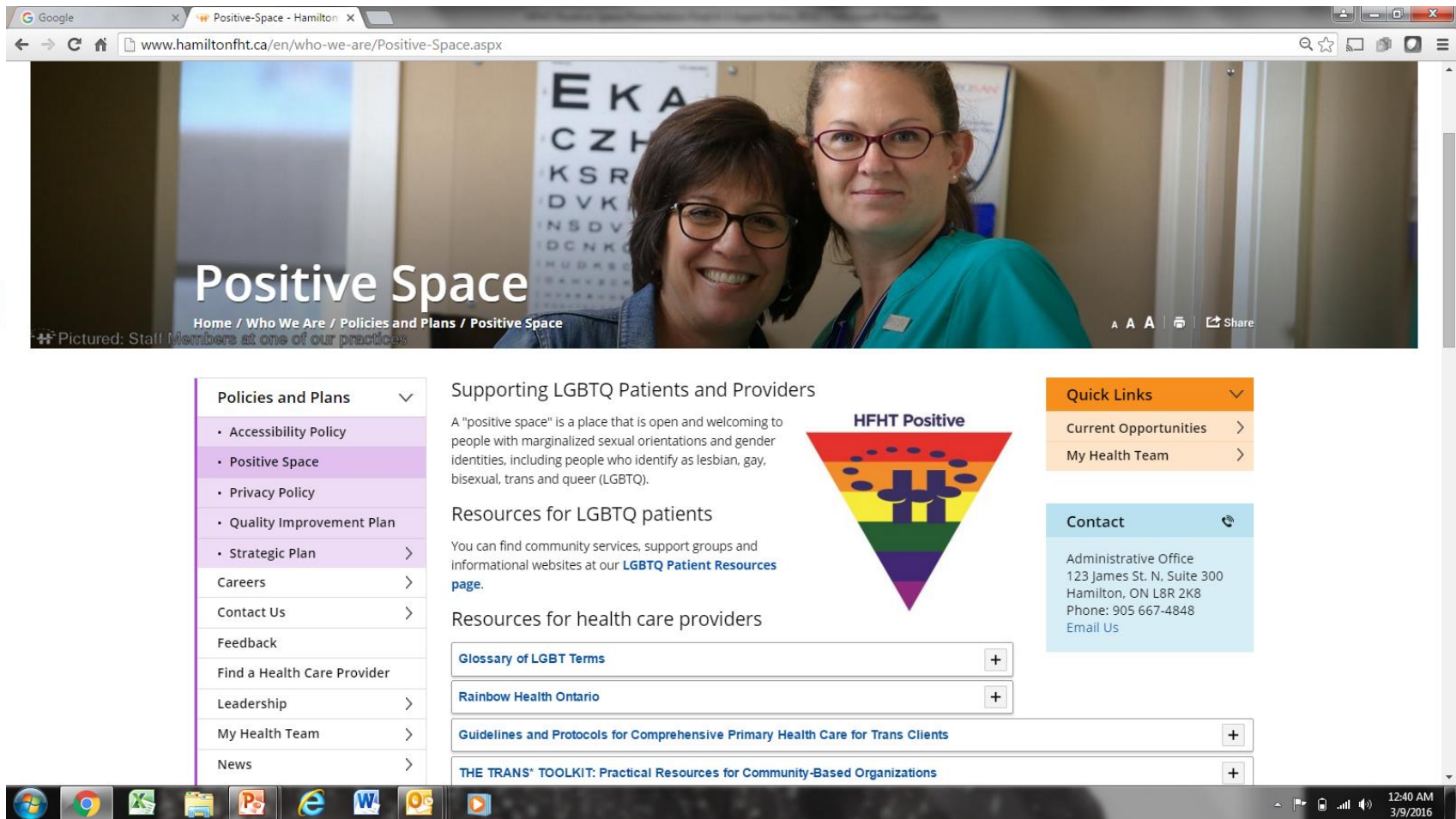


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# HFHT Positive



# Website



The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the 'Positive Space' page of the Hamilton Family Health Team website. The browser's address bar shows the URL [www.hamiltonfht.ca/en/who-we-are/Positive-Space.aspx](http://www.hamiltonfht.ca/en/who-we-are/Positive-Space.aspx). The page features a large header image of two healthcare providers smiling, with the text 'Positive Space' overlaid. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail reads 'Home / Who We Are / Policies and Plans / Positive Space'. A small caption states 'Pictured: Staff Members at one of our practices'. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column contains a 'Policies and Plans' menu with items like 'Accessibility Policy', 'Positive Space', 'Privacy Policy', 'Quality Improvement Plan', 'Strategic Plan', 'Careers', 'Contact Us', 'Feedback', 'Find a Health Care Provider', 'Leadership', 'My Health Team', and 'News'. The middle column is titled 'Supporting LGBTQ Patients and Providers' and includes a definition of a 'positive space', a section for 'Resources for LGBTQ patients' with a link to 'LGBTQ Patient Resources', and a section for 'Resources for health care providers' with links to 'Glossary of LGBT Terms', 'Rainbow Health Ontario', 'Guidelines and Protocols for Comprehensive Primary Health Care for Trans Clients', and 'THE TRANS\* TOOLKIT: Practical Resources for Community-Based Organizations'. The right column contains 'Quick Links' for 'Current Opportunities' and 'My Health Team', and a 'Contact' section with the address '123 James St. N, Suite 300, Hamilton, ON L8R 2K8', phone number '905 667-4848', and an email link. A teal sidebar on the left of the browser window contains a circular logo with a stylized figure and leaves. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 12:40 AM on 3/9/2016.

**Positive Space**

Home / Who We Are / Policies and Plans / Positive Space

Pictured: Staff Members at one of our practices

**Policies and Plans**

- Accessibility Policy
- **Positive Space**
- Privacy Policy
- Quality Improvement Plan
- Strategic Plan
- Careers
- Contact Us
- Feedback
- Find a Health Care Provider
- Leadership
- My Health Team
- News

**Supporting LGBTQ Patients and Providers**

A "positive space" is a place that is open and welcoming to people with marginalized sexual orientations and gender identities, including people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ).

**Resources for LGBTQ patients**

You can find community services, support groups and informational websites at our [LGBTQ Patient Resources page](#).

**Resources for health care providers**

- [Glossary of LGBT Terms](#)
- [Rainbow Health Ontario](#)
- [Guidelines and Protocols for Comprehensive Primary Health Care for Trans Clients](#)
- [THE TRANS\\* TOOLKIT: Practical Resources for Community-Based Organizations](#)

**HFHT Positive**

**Quick Links**

- Current Opportunities
- My Health Team

**Contact**

Administrative Office  
123 James St. N, Suite 300  
Hamilton, ON L8R 2K8  
Phone: 905 667-4848  
[Email Us](#)

# Support Material Branding!

- HFHT Positive Stickers
- Bracelets
- Buttons
- Posters
- Event Banners



# Further Engagement

- Team Recognition
  - FHT Forward Awards
- Team Challenges
  - International Day of Pink
- Pride
- Ongoing Training



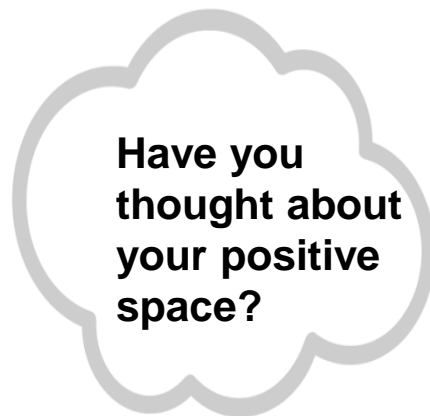


# Impact on Clinical Care

Mental Health Counsellors in  
Primary Care

- Practice Team Changes
- The Patient Experience
- Team Conversation, Signage and Patient Impact
- Positive Space Checklist





# What Can You Do?

- What are the barriers at your place of work?
- What changes can you make to create a positive space
- What are three things your agency/ practice can change to create positive space.





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# Positive Space Checklist



## Is Your Space Positive?

*Adapted for primary care practice teams from the Ontario Public Health Association's manual  
"A Positive Space Is A Healthy Place", for making your organization inclusive to  
people of all sexual orientations and gender identities*

Answer Yes, No, or In Progress

The practice has clearly written non-discrimination and harassment policies that explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity.	Y	N	IP
The waiting room, examination rooms and IHP offices display an equal rights statement (e.g. a "positive space" sticker), the rainbow flag, or a visible non-discrimination statement.	Y	N	IP
There is a list of resources available for people who are LGBTTIQQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, intersex, queer, or questioning) in the waiting room.	Y	N	IP
There is a gender-inclusive washroom that is clearly labelled for both staff and patients.	Y	N	IP
All members of the practice team are comfortable working with colleagues and patients of all sexual orientations and gender identities.	Y	N	IP
All members of the practice team work to safeguard the rights of sexual orientation and gender diverse minorities.	Y	N	IP
All members of the practice team endeavour to use inclusive language such as "partner" instead of "girlfriend/boyfriend" or "wife/husband".	Y	N	IP
There is evidence that actively "out" individuals are employed, supported and welcomed within the HFHT.	Y	N	IP
All members of the practice team are offered LGBTTIQQ competency training to work effectively with LGBTTIQQ staff, patients, and community partners.	Y	N	IP
All members of the practice team have the knowledge and skills to use LGBTTIQQ culturally appropriate language.	Y	N	IP
Family Physicians have the knowledge and skills to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic			



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All members of the practice team are offered LGBTTIQQ competency training to work effectively with LGBTTIQQ staff, patients, and community partners.	Y	N	IP
All members of the practice team have the knowledge and skills to use LGBTTIQQ culturally appropriate language.	Y	N	IP
Family Physicians have the knowledge and skills to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments verbalized by their team members and patients.	Y	N	IP
All members of the practice team assess for prevalent risk factors in the LGBTTIQQ community such as social isolation, harassment, depression, suicide ideation, and substance use.	Y	N	IP
Clinical providers are aware of the unique challenges faced by LGBTTIQQ individuals, such as misconceptions about bisexuality, the meaning of "two-spirit", how trans patients can obtain sex reassignment surgery, hormones, etc.	Y	N	IP
Practice staff are comfortable asking LGBTTIQQ patients about an aspect of their lives they may not fully understand, in order to provide best care.	Y	N	IP
The workplace creates a safe and supportive environment for LGBTTIQQ staff to use their expertise to enhance the workplace's cultural competency on LGBTTIQQ issues, without being stereotyped as a one-issue person.	Y	N	IP

January 2015

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# Discussion

- Q&A



# Thank you!

*Questions or need  
further information?*

[www.hamiltonfht.ca](http://www.hamiltonfht.ca)

