



SMART Recovery Australia: **LGBTQIA+ Practice Guide**

5 Top Tips for Supporting the LGBTQIA+ Community in Recovery Meetings



PRONOUNS

Facilitators using pronouns (she/her/they/them) helps to create an environment where others feel safe to do the same. Consider putting your pronouns on your email signature, your Zoom name and using them in your introduction when you facilitate your SMART Recovery Meetings. It is important to use inclusive language that reflects the diversity of the LGBTQIA+ community.

MEETING GUIDELINES

Specify inclusivity in your SMART Recovery Meeting guidelines. Inclusivity is a must in any SMART Recovery Meeting but in LGBTQIA+ specific meetings, it is particularly important to have this front and centre.

Establish clear guidelines regarding respectful communication and zero tolerance for discriminatory behaviour.

SMART TOOLS

Our extensive suite of SMART Recovery tools and worksheets ensures there is something for everyone but tools that have been identified as very relevant for the LGBTQIA+ community are:

- **Unconditional self acceptance**
- **The ABCs of CBT - challenging false assumptions and self-limiting beliefs**
- **The Cost Benefit Analysis**

CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Our research shows that when we create a SMART Recovery Meeting environment that enables people to feel: "Safe to be myself and accepted" and "Comfortable to discuss my gender and/or sexuality"

This creates trust in the Facilitator ensuring a safe space to explore personal and sensitive topics, alcohol use, drug use or other addictive behaviours. Share resources, articles, or guest speakers that focus on addiction and recovery within the LGBTQIA+ context can help create a safe space. This can include addressing

the impact of discrimination, coming out, or building a supportive community. Some of the outcomes of this are that people report they:

- **Have the information they need to make more informed decisions about their alcohol /drug use / other addictive behaviours**
- **Feel more connected to a community**
- **Have a better support system**

SEEK FEEDBACK

Actively seek feedback from LGBTQIA+ participants to understand their unique needs and continuously improve the relevance of SMART Recovery for these communities.

By implementing these tips, you can create an environment where individuals within the LGBTQIA+ community feel seen, heard, and supported in their recovery journey.

Reflective Practice Questions for Facilitators

Questions to ask yourself to help build an inclusive and safe practice:

- What are your safety signs for participants?
- Consider all of your interactions with people: from advertising, referral, intake process to your meeting
- Do you share stories and testimonials from individuals within the LGBTQIA+ community who have found success in their recovery journey through SMART Recovery Australia? Representation matters.
- What are your unconscious biases around relationships, gender and sexuality challenges and how might they cause AOD challenges (or other behaviours) for participants?
- How are you ensuring your SMART Recovery Meetings are facilitated by LGBTQIA+ peers or partnering with LGBTQIA+ organisations in this area?