

Transfer of Information against the Discrimination of Gays and Lesbians in Europe (TRIANGLE)

Main findings of the needs assessment

Gathering of data

The project partners spread out a pre-structured, written questionnaire in the target group, i.e. psychosocial counsellors and teachers/educators both working with young people. Among others, the questionnaire addressed their experiences with educating on homosexuality or counselling of gays and lesbians, the confidence in one's own skills, and their needs in terms of areas they would need support on.

Altogether, 377 questionnaires were filled in (Italy, 146; Germany, 75; France, 0; Austria, 116; Netherlands, 40). Mean age of the respondents was 42 years (range, 16-75 years). Two-third of the respondents were female. Almost none of the respondents originated from ethnic minority groups. Sexual orientation was heterosexual in 83%, homosexual in 15%, and bisexual in 2% of the respondents. Two-third of the respondents worked in the educational sector (as a teacher or a psychosocial counsellor), and one-third worked in the health sector (as a psychosocial counsellor).

Findings in respondents working in the educational sector

- The main problems encountered when educating on homosexuality are:
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that have encountered this problem)
 1. the youngsters are not willing to talk about it open-hearted (65%)
 2. the parents of the target group are averse to educating on homosexuality (59%)
 3. the youngsters have a hostile or indifferent attitude during the education (53%)
 4. the youngsters behave offensive or aggressive towards homosexual youngsters in the group (48%)
 5. I was not confident about how to take good care of homosexual youngsters in the group (47%)
 6. I lacked a teaching packet on homosexuality (42%)

- The skills in which the respondents have the least self-confidence are:
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that are not self-confident on this aspect)
 1. adequately handling differences between youngsters from different cultural-ethnic backgrounds (52%)
 2. connecting to youngsters' experiences (40%)
 3. creating such an ambience, that youngsters dare to talk open-hearted about sexuality and relationships (39%)
 4. adequately handling (religious) anti-gay attitudes or convictions (39%)
 5. speaking freely about differences and similarities in sexuality of heterosexuals and homosexuals (36%)
 6. adequately handling a coming-out of a youngster during the lesson (34%)

- The themes about which the respondents need the most information are:
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider this theme as most relevant for the manual)
 1. the coming-out process (52%)
 2. aspects of health and (psychological) problems associated with homosexuality (37%)
 3. sexuality of gays and lesbians (36%)
 4. homosexuality in relation to religion and culture (32%)
 5. ways in which gays and lesbians are discriminated against (31%)
 6. social map of relevant organisations in their country (26%)

- The methods about which the respondents need the most information are:
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider this method as most relevant for this manual)
 1. how to teach on homosexuality in a classroom or other group of youngsters (65%)
 2. how to deal with homo-negative attitudes in a classroom (53%)
 3. how to empower gay and lesbian pupils or clients (46%)
 4. general guidelines for anti-discrimination interventions (theory, standards) (34%)

- The contexts about which the respondents need the most information are:
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider this context as most relevant for the manual)
 1. working with groups of mixed gender and sexual preference (72%)
 2. working with groups of mixed ethnic background (46%)
 3. working with individual male or female homosexuals (44%)

Findings in respondents working in the health sector

- The main problems encountered when counselling gays and lesbians are:
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that have encountered this problem)
 1. I was not confident about my knowledge on homosexuality in cultural-ethnic minority groups (91%)
 2. I was not confident about how to take good care of the homosexual youngster (63%)
 3. I was not confident about my knowledge on homosexuality (56%)
 4. I lacked a handbook or manual for counselling gays and lesbians (53%)
 5. I was not confident about how to take homospecific aspects into account during the counselling (51%)
- The skills in which the respondents have the least self-confidence are:
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that are not self-confident on this aspect)
 1. adequately recognize problems related to homosexual preference (44%)
 2. adequately judge whether his or her homosexual preference should be a theme in the counselling (35%)
 3. adequately judge whether his or her cultural-ethnic background should be a theme in the counselling (35%)
- The themes about which the respondents need the most information are:
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider this theme as most relevant for the manual)
 1. the coming-out process (61%)
 2. aspects of health and (psychological) problems associated with homosexuality (49%)
 3. homosexuality in relation to religion and culture (31%)
 4. sexuality of gays and lesbians (31%)
 5. homo-specific counselling in general (30%)
- The methods about which the respondents need the most information are:
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider this method as most relevant for this manual)
 1. how to adequately address homosexuality in a counselling situation (46%)
 2. how to empower gay and lesbian pupils or clients (41%)
 3. how to teach on homosexuality in a classroom or other group of youngsters (39%)
 4. homo-specific counselling methodology (38%)
- The contexts about which the respondents need the most information are:
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider this context as most relevant for the manual)
 1. working with groups of mixed gender and sexual preference (60%)
 2. working with individual gay/lesbians (46%)
 3. working with groups of mixed ethnic background (44%)
 4. working with ethnic minority groups (43%)

Differences according to country

As the demographic characteristics of the respondents differ according to country, differences in findings of the need assessment according to country should be interpreted cautiously.

Some relevant observations are:

1. A relatively high proportion of the Italian and Dutch respondents say that sex education in general should be a theme in the manual.
2. The Italian respondents also consider homosexual parenting as very relevant for the manual.
3. The Austrian respondents also consider homosexuality and the law as very relevant for the manual.