



Lesbian • Gay • Bisexual • Transgender
(L G B T) WELL - BEING

OUT-Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT) Well-being has served the LGBT community since 1994. It is a growing and professional organisation with a proud history of striving for LGBT equality.



Section 9 (3) of the South African Constitution prohibits unfair discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Yet, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT) people face various forms of discrimination. There remain discriminatory laws and a range of abuses directed against LGBT people. When it comes to mainstream service providers, very few of them are aware of LGBT experiences and they can even refuse the provision of services. The nature of South African society is still conservative and LGBT people are often labelled “sinners”, “abnormal”, “un-African” and so on.

The human rights abuses of LGBT people also tend to be silenced and de-prioritised within national discourses. **OUT** believes in meeting these challenges and has had many successes.

OUT is registered with the Department of Social Development as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) and is supported by the Atlantic Philanthropies, HIVOS, the Department of Health, the Ford Foundation, the Heinrich Boll Foundation, the National Lotteries as well as individuals. There is a staff and volunteer component and external accountability is ensured through an active Board. **OUT** plays a leading role within the Joint Working Group, a working alliance of LGBT organisations within South Africa. **OUT** and the Schorer Foundation (the Netherlands) have a twinning agreement that ensures on-going interaction with international LGBT expertise. Work takes place under four focus areas: direct health and mental health services, research, mainstreaming and advocacy.

VISION

OUT is dedicated to building healthy, empowered lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender communities in Pretoria (Tshwane), Gauteng and South Africa. **OUT** aims to reduce heterosexism and homophobia in society at large.

MISSION

OUT works towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender peoples' physical and mental health and related rights.

DIRECT HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Direct services are appropriate and affirming to LGBT experiences. A **telephonic counselling and information line** deals with issues of sexual orientation. Fully trained counsellors are supervised by psychologists and the service is offered in English, Afrikaans and Tswana. There are **support groups** for lesbian women, gay men, HIV positive individuals and transgender people. **Individual counselling** is offered by a registered psychologist.

A **study group for therapists** meets on a monthly basis and **quarterly discussion forums** raise topical issues with a broader audience.

Community development programmes take place in Mamelodi and Atteridgeville. This includes skills development as well as the provision of social spaces. **Programmes for lesbian women** include the provision of social spaces, discussion groups, specific materials, health workshops, and lesbian specific research.

Sexual health programmes focus on HIV prevention. Testing and treatment programmes are planned. Prevention programmes target lesbian women, as well as young gay men from under-resourced and resourced backgrounds. The planned **OUT Wellness clinic** will offer holistic health services, focused on HIV/STD testing and treatment (for men and women).

RESEARCH

Research builds expertise on LGBT issues and is used for advocacy and for programme planning. **OUT** has conducted quantitative, representative research on levels of empowerment of lesbian and gay people in Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal. This valuable research offers scientifically reliable and valid insights into experiences of discrimination. Other research covers sexual practises of young gay men in Gauteng and research on lesbian women and social power.

MAINSTREAMING PROGRAMMES

The programmes aim to integrate LGBT issues within the service delivery of large service providers. Projects include

- material reviews and development
- policy reviews and development of guidelines and sensitisation training.

Programmes include activities with Lifeline, the Gauteng Department of Education, the Gauteng Department of Social Development, and the Gauteng Council of Churches.

ADVOCACY

OUT advocates for LGBT human rights, and all activities take place within a human rights framework. It is the right of all people not to face discrimination, not to be ignored, to be protected and to receive appropriate services.

OUT is a leading voice in the right of same sex couples to get married. Other advocacy activities include the African Peer Review Mechanism, the South African Qualifications Authority, and the trauma sector.

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