

## Background

- In 2018 the Des Moines VA Health Care System scored 50/100 on the Health Equality Index (HEI), which was the second lowest score out of 47 states (VA, 2020).
- In 2020 progress was made and the VA scored 100/100 on the HEI (VA, 2020).
- Staff and patients reported lack of awareness and knowledge in LGBT care, which can lead to unfair treatment.
- The measurements of HEI did not explore clinical experience.
- Discrimination has occurred within health care settings, isolating a vulnerable patient population and furthering health care disparities (Fadus, 2019).
- Theory of minority stress: those belonging to a minority group (e.g. LGBT community) experience conflict and stress because the values of the dominant culture (e.g. gender-conforming) may not reflect those of the minority group (Fadus, 2019).

## Purpose

- To address the organizational and personal barriers that health care professionals working in outpatient mental health clinic may have in providing culturally competent LGBT veteran-centered care.
- Objective 1: Determine barriers and facilitators that influence LGBT veteran-centered care.
- Objective 2: Assess the recognition of resources within the VA system to support caring for those in the LGBT community.

## Methods

- Project was deemed not human research subjects.
- Setting: Outpatient Mental Health Clinic at the Des Moines, IA VA.
- Population: Psychiatrists (n=5), nurse practitioners (n=3), nurses (n=9), and pharmacists (n=3).
- Design: mixed-methods
- Survey Monkey (9-Qs) was used pre and post intervention.
- Semi-structured interviews (N=5) pre-intervention.
- Intervention: 20-minute pre-recorded education.
  - Content: Resources, language, terminology, and health disparities.

### Qualitative Data Analysis:

- Coded data
- Consensus coding
- Combined data based on color-coding on one sheet
- Summary statements
- Integrate quantitative data with qualitative data

## Results

### Interview Results

#### Services and Resources

- Participants were unaware
- Aware of single colleague resource.

#### Education

Content areas requested:

- Health disparities
- Verbiage
- Culturally competent LGBT health care
- Services and resources.

#### Perceptions of LGBT Community

"It is my perception that individuals who identify as LGBT feel alone and are higher risk of self-harm"

#### Colleagues

"I think my colleagues provide good care, I mean everyone is nice and caring"

#### Professional Experiences

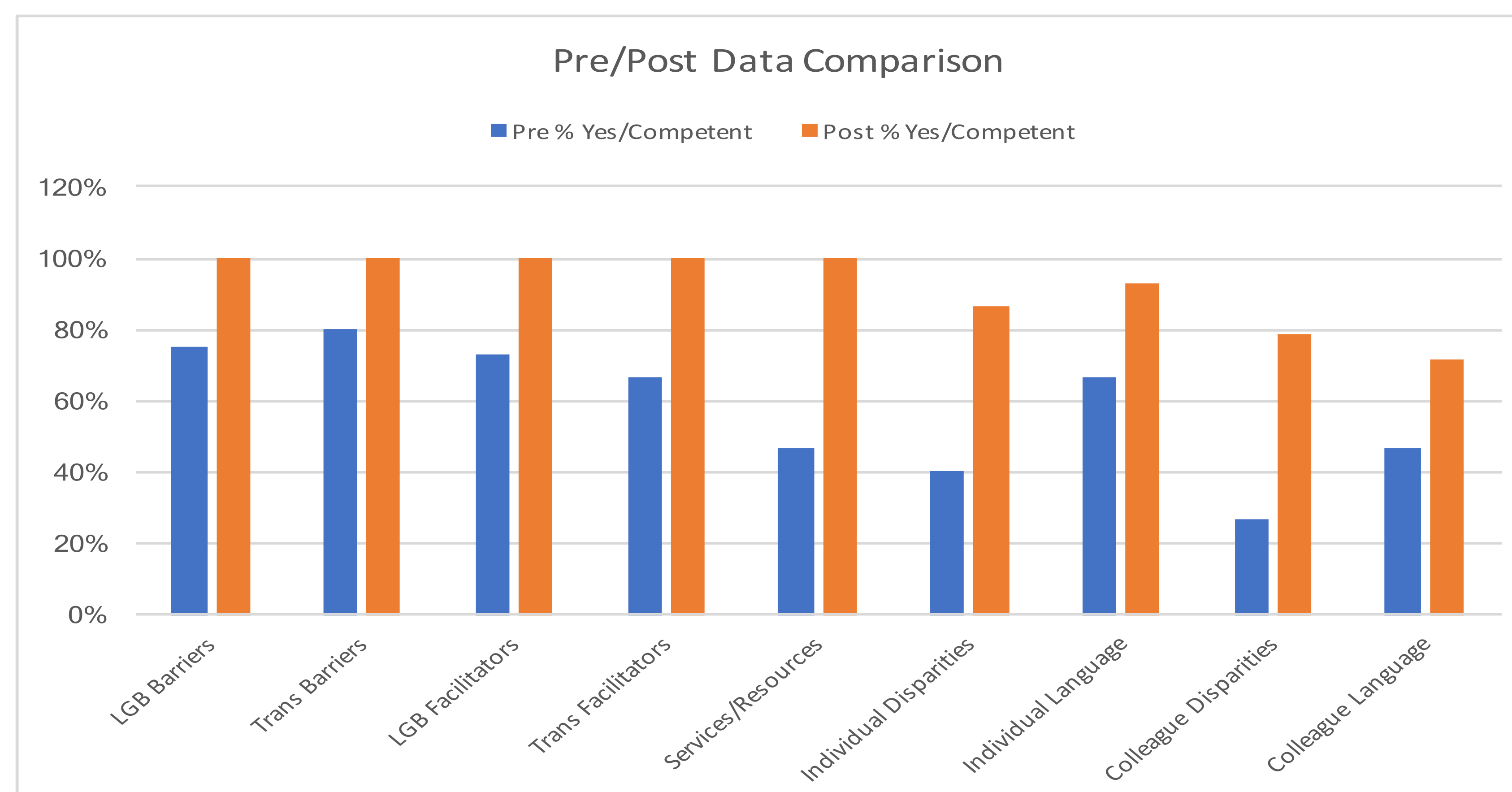
- Transgender patients were mentioned more than LGB patients
- Feel trans patients have more mental health concerns
- Personal experiences provided empathy for professional experiences
- Difficulty with pronouns
- Expressed awareness of own automatic assumptions
- Felt they incorporated their own values in care.

#### Recommendations

- Improve communication
- Include more education
- Include education in orientations
- Outreach and education for veterans
- Content availability
- Some felt no special services were needed

### Survey Results

| Objective  | Pre-Survey | Post-Survey |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Participants were able to identify barriers and facilitators for those who identify as LGB         | 80%        | 100%        |
| Participants were able to identify barriers and facilitators for those who identify as transgender | 67%        | 100%        |
| Participants were able to identify resources and services  | 47%        | 100%        |



#### Outcome 1

Staff feel more competent in providing veteran-centered LGBT care because they understand health disparities, language, terminology, and resources available.

#### Outcome 2

Staff can identify barriers in providing LGBT veteran-centered care, which include lack of awareness, content availability, and poor communication.

#### Outcome 3

Staff can identify what resources and services are available within the VA system to support caring for those who identify as LGBT.

## Conclusion

- Barriers were found: lack of awareness, lack of education, lack of knowledge in health disparities, language, terminology, and awareness of resources and services available.
- This project will change nursing practice because education helped improve language used, understanding of services, terminology, and health disparities in the LGBT community.
- Dissemination: Presentations to mental health leadership, nurse practitioners system wide, mental health service line, and shared presentation with National LGBT VCC group.
- Sustainability: quarterly nursing competencies and impact policy through Cultural Competency Action Plan 2021 for the mental health service line.

## References

- Veterans Affairs. (2020). The Health Equity Index. Retrieved from <https://www.va.gov/HEALTHY/LGBT.asp>
- Fadus M. (2019). Mental Health Disparities and Medical Student Education: Teaching in Psychiatry for LGBTQ Care, Communication, and Advocacy. *Academic psychiatry : the journal of the American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training and the Association for Academic Psychiatry*, 43(3), 306-310.

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