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switchboard.org.au
2024
QLIFE IMPACT REPORT
2024
qlife.org.au
QLife acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia, their diversity, histories and knowledge and their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to all Australian Indigenous peoples and their cultures, and to elders past and present. Sovereignty was never ceded.

HOW WE CREATE CHANGE

QLIFE’S VISION IS THAT EVERY LGBTIQ+SB PERSON FEELS CONNECTED AND VALUED, NO EXCEPTIONS.

In this document we are using the acronym LGBTIQ+SB. LGBTIQSB stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Sistergirls & Brotherboys. We use Sistergirls & Brotherboys to explicitly include LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities under the umbrella.

The + aims to cover other sexualities and genders including Asexual, as an example, who are welcome at QLife. However, we acknowledge this is not ideal, and many community members have critiques of the acronym.
Since the launch of QLife in 2013, there is increasing complexity in the issues being presented at QLife. QLife’s support relates to discrimination & violence, family & domestic violence, sexual assault, suicide, mental health issues, trauma and other psychological distress.

QLife is a critical, indispensable service to the community.

Our goals are to:

- Provide an accessible digital peer support service to LGBTIQ+SB people. Be available and easy to access for all people in the community.
- Provide an LGBTIQ+SB culturally appropriate digital peer support service that meets the unique needs and experiences of the diversity of the community, while promoting equitable access and reducing mental health disparities.
- Provide a flexible service that meets the needs of individuals who require varying levels of support and connection, including support for complex mental health and suicide.
- Provide LGBTIQ+SB people, their family/friends & health professionals with a first point of contact for information, support, and referrals.

QLife’s LGBTIQ+SB-specific peer support counteracts discrimination, stigma and isolation. The cornerstone of QLife is our national network of Peer Supporters, both paid and volunteer. They provide a sense of belonging and connection while supporting people with their mental health & wellbeing issues.

46% increase in demand for QLife since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to the years before it.
HOW WE MEASURE OUR IMPACT

QLife // PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

INPUTS

STAFF

ACTIVITIES

SERVICE PROVISION
- Helpline
- Webchat
- Referral database
- QProgram
- Real stories
- QGuides for Health Professionals

SHORT TERM
- Reduced immediate distress for service users
- Service users feel they can communicate their support needs
- Service users have an increased knowledge of where to go for support/help

QLife service users
- Improved mental health & wellbeing
- Decreased sense of isolation and
- Increased community connection

QLife service users
- feel less stigma
- help seeking
- self-efficacy
- coping skills

LGBTIQ+SB people
- get the support,
care and connection
they need to live
long and fulfilling
lives

CLINICAL & QUALITY GOVERNANCE

MEDIUM TERM
- Improved mental health and reduced risk of suicide for LGBTIQ+SB people

TECHNOLOGY

LONG TERM
- An Australia free of stigma, prejudice, and discrimination toward LGBTIQ+SB people

FUNDING

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

SERVICE QUALITY & SAFETY
- National Infrastructure
- Accreditation against the National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards
- Contract management

SERVICE QUALITY & SAFETY
- QLife team members feel they have the knowledge to provide a quality service to service users
- Services users feel the service is designed for their needs

QUALITY
- Funding acquittals and reporting
- Quality improvement

EVALUATION & DATA
- Improved data collection which leads to better understanding of how the service impacts service users
- QLife is informed by consumer needs
- QLife is a sustainable service with optimal funding

WORKFORCE TRAINING & SUPPORT
- Orientation/training
- Supervision
- Community of Practice
- Development Opportunities

WORKFORCE TRAINING & SUPPORT
- Peer supporters feel more connected to each other nationally
- Peer supporters feel they are learning new skills and/or receiving information relevant to their roles
- Peer supporters have increased skills and confidence in supporting increasingly complex presentations

RESEARCH & DATA

This model shows us the connection between the work we are doing and how it leads to positive mental health impacts for the LGBTIQ+SB community.
QLife: NATIONAL LGBTIQ+SB DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Those who identify as LGBTIQ+SB, their families, support people and practitioners

Peer support  Self-directed

Helpline – 1:1 single session phone, webchat  QGuides for health professionals

QProgram – 1:1 multi session enhanced support for complex contacts  Real stories (video / audio)

Referral database

Supported referrals and connections (internal / external)

WHAT WE VALUE

Be collaborative  Be consistent across the service  Aim for emotional safety  Act with intersectional awareness  Address systemic oppression within our structures

Accredited against safety & quality Standards\(^1\)

Clinical and Technical Governance + Partnering with Consumers + Model of Care

QLife aligns with the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan and Vision 2030. QLife can play a significant role in delivering on the 10-year LGBTIQ+ Health and Wellbeing Action Plan being developed in 2024.

QLIFE IMPACT REPORT 2024

QLife uses technology to gather meaningful and robust data that is:

- **Meaningful** – only collecting data that is necessary and that respects data sovereignty
- **User-centric** – emphasises the user voice in planning, implementation and review.
- **Continuously improving** – Collection and analysis aimed at learning and improving, as well as addressing issues and emerging trends
- **Mixed methodology** – uses a variety of methods including contact records, web analytics, surveys, feedback, meeting minutes, and interviews.

QLife IMPACT REPORT 2024
In the two years 2022 - 2023, QLife:

- **Delivered over 45,000 sessions**
- **72% calls and 28% webchat**
- **171 frontline workers / volunteers took calls / webchats**
- This includes 91 LGBTIQ+SB people newly trained as a QLife volunteer, including completing Applied Suicide Intervention skills Training.
- QLife's service users come from every state and territory, with high demand from Victoria and NSW.

WHO USES QLIFE?

QLife National Delivery Partners:

- Diverse Voices
- Twenty 10
- Switchboard
- Living Proud

QLIFE IMPACT REPORT 2024
A total 216 service users disclosed to QLife that they were Intersex, having innate variations of sex characteristics.

Just over half of the service users told us their age, of those people:

- 19% - 0-18 years
- 24.8% - 26-34 years
- 10.9% - 51-65 years
- 0.1% - 76-85 years
- 22.5% - 18-25 years
- 21.5% - 35-40 years
- 1.2% - 66-75 years
- 0.02% - 86+ years

Of those that shared their sexuality with us:

- 31% - Gay
- 17% - Bisexual
- 15% - Lesbian
- 11% - Queer
- 11% - unsure/questioning
- 7% - Heterosexual
- 4% - Pansexual
- 3% - Asexual
- 1% - Specified other

A total 216 service users disclosed to QLife that they were Intersex, having innate variations of sex characteristics.
The support I received from QLife around my grief from losing a queer friend to suicide, should really be acknowledged. QLife has been a strong support during my grief emotions and other queers experiencing grief, and its even more valuable sharing it with QLife staff who are queer themselves and have that silent understanding and deep empathy.

- Service user feedback

Your staff are truly the best. I am a survivor of both child abuse & conversion therapy, & have since been diagnosed with PTSD & other stuff. You have talked me back from the edge more then once.

I don’t know what I’d do without your help. I’ve always been able to trust you, even when I haven’t been able to trust my actual psychologist.

- Service user feedback

I don’t know the name of the person who helped me but I truly can’t tell them enough just how grateful I am for their help! I was feeling so overwhelmed and on the verge of just giving up even trying to transition completely. The help I received from this person turned it all around! I’ve been trying by myself for almost a year now and I just kept running into roadblocks and now I have hope again and a little confidence too.

- Service user feedback

I can’t even say how much I needed this, its by far been the best mental health service I have ever used.

I’ve called and hung up for four day because I was so nervous, and I am grateful I stayed on the line today.

- Service user feedback

93% of service users felt it was important that QLife is a LGBTIQ+SB specific service

91% of service users felt it was important that they were supported by someone from the LGBTIQ+SB community.

85% would contact QLife again if they needed more support*

81% reported that it was important for them to contact QLife today

*This include 75% who would need the right circumstances to contact again, EG reduced wait times. An additional 9% were unsure if they would contact again, and 6.5% would not contact again.
The wait time today was under 30 seconds, insanely grateful as I know they can be a popular service and have had to wait for long before, but they are always, always worth the wait. Also their reassurance that they are here for me tonight, was so supportive, and made me feel safe. I feel a huge cloud that was above my head, passing. I feel calm, and not distressed anymore. They also gave me really helpful strategies, and thoughts around loneliness and grief. I reach out to QLife multiple times a year and have never had a bad experience, their amazing level of support needs to be acknowledged. Thank you for everything you do for the queer community!

- Service user feedback

CONNECTING TO REDUCE DISTRESS

72% of service users report they feel less distress after speaking with QLife
Going through the training to be a QLife Peer Supporter was a right of passage for me in the queer community. I want to be the person that I really needed. I want to learn that. I want to give back.

It makes me feel safer in the community to know that hundreds of community members have had this training and experience over the years. It’s in an overall skilling-up of the community to support each other. This makes our communities safer. I feel so much more hopeful about our community knowing there are so many caring, knowledgeable people out there actively working to support everyone in our community.

Being a QLife Peer Supporter made me a better partner, friend and chosen family member. I learnt how to give feedback, how to ask about suicide and I learnt about consent. I feel more confident about how to identify abusive relationships – things I did not realise I didn’t understand before.

- Peer Supporter case study

88% state they have the knowledge to provide a quality service to service users

93% proud to work/volunteer for QLife

"As a professional group sharing lived experience – we have broadening knowledge and experience across the service which enables us to support people who contact us.

I can contribute and make a difference.

It is healing to be able to offer the one thing I didn’t have access to."

- Interview with Peer supporter

- Peer supporter
QLife’s first ten years saw the service emerge as a critical, indispensable service for the LGBTIQ+SB community, by the LGBTIQ+SB community. As we look forward to the next ten years, QLife will

1. **Further improve the impact of specialist LGBTIQ+SB peer support**
2. **Grow and scale to reach more of the community**
3. **Pilot new offerings that are responsive to the community’s needs**

"The shared lived experience of being an LGBTIQ+SB person is what makes QLife so special. We are committed to honouring and building on the histories that underpin QLife of activism and doing things for community, by community.

We see the growing complexity in the contact with QLife and are strengthening up to meet that need - and reach more of the community that need us.

– QLife Director, Sophie Potter

Thank you to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex & queer people who have worked to support the improved health and wellbeing of their peers, children, families, friends, and communities. QLife is committed to honouring and building on our proud history of grassroots, community responses to marginalisation, persecution and discrimination of LGBTIQ+SB people and communities.

QLife is also committed to peer support based on the shared lived experiences of being LGBTIQ+SB. We prioritise the lived experience of being LGBTIQ+SB across all levels of the service. We recognise the prevalence of issues relating to mental health and suicide in our communities that results from discrimination and marginalisation. We honour the expertise and wisdom that emerges from that lived and living experience. The voices and stories are essential in our collective efforts to support the mental health of our communities, and respond to the impacts of suicidal thoughts and actions.