Inclusive and Equitable Emergency Management for LGBTQIA+ Communities

OUT FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Acknowledgements

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About OUT for Sustainability

OUT for Sustainability (OUT4S), was founded in 2008 in Seattle, Washington. Originally, OUT4S devoted its time to ensuring LGBTQ2S+ individuals were involved with sustainability efforts and creating a fabulous planet. After a shift in 2022, its mission has evolved to co-create climate resilience and environmental justice by and for LGBTQ2S+ individuals. Following the leadership and principles of environmental justice and climate justice movements, OUT4S' new strategic plan is committing to four sub-missions:

Representation

OUT4S promotes equal representation, visibility, and recognition of LGBTQ2S+ folks in the climate movement and governance.

Participation

OUT4S builds capacity and readiness for LGBTQ2S+ grassroots organizations by providing fiscal sponsorship, connections, and resources.

Redistribution

OUT4S supports LGBTQ2S+ communities by promoting food, energy, and water security & land access through mutual aid, micro grants, and climate disaster risk management strategies.

Transformation

OUT4S aligns with movements for queer and transgender liberation and ecological justice, including calls for climate reparations, land rematriation, food sovereignty, and bodily autonomy.

Our current focus is on the Qready Initiative, a program dedicated to resilience Preparedness by and for LGBTQ2S+ communities that focuses on the needs of multiply-marginalized communities on the frontlines of climate injustice through partnerships and collaborations that honor their leadership in this work. Through the efforts of the Qready Director, a documentary was created titled "Fire and Flood: Queer Resilience in the Era of Climate Change" whereby they interviewed queer and transgender disaster survivors in Puerto Rico and California about their experiences. Qready also oversees fiscal sponsorships with queer and transgender people of color-founded grassroots organizations in Puerto Rico focused on climate resilience.

Introduction

Emergency managers and nongovernmental organizations with disaster response roles, often tied to faith-based communities, are the foundation of emergency preparedness and response. They lead with good intention to protect as many individuals as possible; however, disasters and emergencies do not impact communities equally. Often people who are marginalized before these events are disproportionately impacted by disasters and emergencies when they occur. The purpose of this report is to highlight systemic discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Questioning, Intersex, Asexual & Aromantic, etc. (LGBTQIA+) individuals within disaster and emergency services infrastructure leading to unintentional biases. Integrating awareness of unique disaster impacts and understanding of systemic discrimination can inform best practices when working with any individual or family. LGBTQIA+ individuals exist in every population, can have overlapping marginalized identities that exacerbate impacts, and who have needs that are often overlooked. It is necessary to shift from a one-size-fits-all, utilitarian approach to disaster equity. Disaster equity is defined as (OHSEPR 2022):

"...the provision of community-specific services and resources for disaster survivors that are accessible, and culturally and linguistically tailored to mitigate disparities in health and well-being and support resilience."

To achieve disaster equity for LGBTQIA+ communities, we acknowledge that these communities are highly diverse and intersectional[1]. In addition, compounding and cascading impacts (e.g., power outages and co-occurring climate-related events)

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1. Intersectionality was first coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in reference to how Black women were invisible in both the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Rights Movement due to the intersection of two marginalized identities (Crenshaw 1991). This term has been expanded to refer to an individual who experiences multiple compounding systems of discrimination based on two or more marginalized identities that can be made invisible in oppressive structures.

2. Equity within Executive Order 13895 "means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality."

must be integrated into disaster planning and policy making. The Biden Administration has taken leadership in promoting and ensuring that federal agencies work to create equity[2] for LGBTQIA+ communities both within the workforce as well as in their practices and activities. These executive orders (EO) include:

- Executive Order (13895) On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government
- Executive Order (13988) on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation
- Executive Order (14075) on Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which sits under The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), consistent with the EOs listed, has mapped out three new goals as part of their 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Their three goals are: 1) Instill Equity as a Foundation of Emergency Management 2) Lead Whole of Community in Climate Resilience and 3) Promote and Sustain a Ready FEMA and Prepared Nation. Equity in the strategic plan is defined the way it is in EO 13895, which includes "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons". They further describe having a "people first" approach where resources and services are accessible and are tailored to the unique needs of everyone, including underserved communities. In FEMA's 2022 National Preparedness Report, they again mention equity includes LGBTQ+ communities. FEMA Region 2, in June 2021, hosted a webinar on "The LGBTQIA+ Community: Considerations in Preparedness and Response" with a speaker from Direct Relief. FEMA's Pride Federal Employee Resource Group hosted a webinar "How LGBTQIA+ Survivors Get Left Out of Disaster Planning" in June 2022, leading to a collaboration between OUT for Sustainability (OUT4S), FEMA Region 9 (California) and the DHS's Center for Faith-based Organizations and Neighborhood Partnerships.

Other parts of the federal government, such as the Census Bureau and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA), have either collected data or provided resources on sexual orientation and gender identity related to disasters. The Census Bureau, through their Household Pulse Survey, collected data on:

- Displacement from home because of natural disaster
- Length of displacement from home because of a natural disaster and damage severity
- Experienced food and drinkable water shortage one month after natural disaster
- Experienced no electricity and unsanitary conditions one month after a natural disaster
- Experienced isolation, a fear of crime, and possible scam offers one month after natural disaster

E&E news reported using this data that lesbians, gays, and transgender individuals are four times as likely to be displaced during a natural disaster compared to heterosexual and cisgender individuals (Frank 2023). SAMHSA's Disaster Technical Assistance Center collects resources to better prepare communities, behavioral health professionals, and emergency managers through their Disaster Behavioral Health Information Series Resource Center. They include several resources on LGBTQIA+ communities for health centers, disaster professionals, and behavioral health professionals. SAMHSA also supports specialized resources through the LGBTQ Behavioral Health Equity Center of Excellence and other SAMHSA technical assistance centers. SAMHSA's March 2023 report Moving Beyond Change Efforts: Evidence and Action to Support and Affirm LGBTQI+ Youth and SAMHSA's September 2022 launch of a 988 pilot focused on LGBTQ+ youth are among the specialized resources SAMHSA integrates into disaster and emergency preparedness, response and recovery systems.

To continue the dialogue, OUT4S, FEMA Region 9, and DHS Center for Faith-based Organizations and Neighborhood Partnerships created two webinars: one focused on mitigation and preparedness, and the other focused on recovery and response. There were eight panelists and two moderators in total which included emergency managers, faith-based organizations, academics, and artists. Around 250 individuals attended across both webinars, with many more registered. This report provides a synthesis of the actions that emergency responders and faith-based organizations can take to incorporate LGBTQIA+ considerations into their work to achieve disaster equity.

Structural Inequities

This section will provide a brief overview of the unique marginalization and inequities that LGBTQIA+ individuals face and are compounded due to racism, ableism, and other forms of systemic discrimination.

The LGBTQIA+ community deals with unique internal and external stressors in addition to the general stressors everyone manages day to day. These unique stressors include discrimination and violence on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, expectation of rejection, concealment of identity, and internalized homophobia and transphobia (Meyer 2003, 2015). These additional stressors have been found to increase the rate of mental and physical health outcomes in LGBTQIA+ populations and are compounded on due to other marginalization. LGBTQIA+ communities have been found to have higher rates of mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD (Su et al. 2016; The Trevor Project 2023a; Valentine et al. 2022). as well as chronic illnesses such as certain kinds of cancers, respiratory illnesses, and cardiovascular disease (Dutra et al. 2019; Meads et al. 2018; Quinn et al. 2015). They are also more likely not to be able to access health care either because of the cost or because of discrimination. They are also more likely to be unhoused and face housing and mortgage discrimination (Goldsmith et al, 2022a). Disasters can exacerbate these poor health outcomes especially when the proper, adequate, and affirming support is not provided. These negative health outcomes are reduced with community and social support.

Climate-related disasters disproportionately affect LGBTQIA+ communities because (Goldsmith et al. 2022b):

- LGBTQIA+ communities are overrepresented in populations that are documented to be the most impacted by disasters (i.e., unhoused, low income, have a chronic illness)
- There is little representation of LGBTQIA+ individuals in disaster policies and climate infrastructure.
- In addition to economic, social, and health disparities communities face and the general impacts of disasters they also uniquely deal with:
  - Inequitable federal disaster response programs
  - Lack of recognition of LGBTQIA+ families in institutional policies
  - Historical inequities from faith-based organizations and access to services

Providing adequate services and consideration to LGBTQIA+ communities means understanding the context of their marginalization. Often those who are not within the community forget or do not know that the United States decriminalized same-sex activity due to the outcome of Lawrence v Texas in 2003. Same-sex marriage was passed through Obergefell v Hodges in 2015 and it was finally codified in law in 2022 along with interracial marriage. Lastly, LGBTQIA+ individuals were provided national protections from employment discrimination in 2020. These rights were only granted in the past twenty years and currently LGBTQIA+ individuals do not have national protections from housing or health-related discrimination. The Equality Act, if passed, can provide equal rights for LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Anti-LGBTQIA+ bills, especially those targeting transgender youth, have skyrocketed over the past year. In 2022, 180 bills were introduced in state legislatures across the United States. In comparison, as of May 26th, there have been 491 bills introduced in 2023 (ACLU 2023). These partisan bills include banning gender affirming health care, criminalizing doctors for providing necessary health care to transgender youth, drag bans, and school-related bills such as forced outings, banning LGBTQIA+ books and reference to individuals in curriculums, and banning appropriate access to sports or facilities (Choi 2023). Many of these bills are being co-drafted alongside hate groups, as identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center, such as the Alliance for Defending Freedom (Kindy 2022).

The uptick in anti-LGBTQIA+ bills is affecting the physical and mental health of LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly transgender individuals. One mother describes how her transgender son is afraid of using the bathroom at school. This has led to dehydration and a series of bladder infections (Ford 2023). Others described attempting suicide. The Trevor Project's polling in 2022, found that "86% of transgender and nonbinary youth nationwide said recent debates about state laws restricting the rights of transgender people have negatively impacted their mental health" when the amount of anti-LGBTQIA+ bills were much less than what they are now (The Trevor Project 2023b). In addition, hatred towards LGBTQIA+ individuals has grown with the proliferation of these bills including cyber bullying, destruction of community spaces, and physical violence (Jones and Kishi 2022; Martinez 2022).

Disasters and emergencies only exacerbate social marginalization, which is why there cannot be a one size all approach. Every individual based on their unique circumstances and social marginalization experiences disasters differently, even among those within the LGBTQIA+ community. It is imperative that emergency managers, and non-governmental and faith-based organizations in any jurisdiction are aware of what they can do to ensure that everyone is able to access affirming services and resources before, during, and after disasters.

2. Preparedness & Mitigation

The first webinar in the series focused on what emergency managers and faith-based organizations can do to better foster preparedness and mitigation for LGBTQIA+ communities. It is critical that everyone has access to timely and effective forecasting of extreme weather events, resources to retrofit community spaces and homes to be more resilient, affirming and accessible physical and mental health care, and culturally appropriate preparedness information.

Adding a disaster to existing struggles that LGBTQIA+ communities already face compounds vulnerabilities, risk, and suffering. However, there is an opportunity whereby disasters bring shared experiences and new relationships amongst populations that may not have previously engaged with one another.

Based on discussions from the panelists and incorporating OUT4S' expertise, we organized their recommendations into three categories:

- **Community Partnerships**
- **Cultural Humility**
- **Institutional Policies and Plans**

Community Partnerships

Foster relationships between LGBTQIA+ and faith-based communities, organizations, and leaders at large, not just those in disaster and emergency preparedness roles.

LGBTQIA+ identities and faith-based identities are not mutually exclusive. Oftentimes we hear about religious individuals who are hateful towards LGBTQIA+ communities, however, many LGBTQIA+-individuals of faith exist as well as allies. These individuals and communities can be tapped into as brokers for LGBTQIA+ communities who do not believe in or practice religion, and faith-based organizations within limited or no LGBTQIA+ membership to create those relationships of trust. The National Disaster Interfaiths Network published a fact sheet for U.S. Religious Leaders on "<u>LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender) Needs & Disaster</u>".

Also, consider incorporating organizations that may not historically have disaster and emergency preparedness roles. Reach out to LGBTQIA+ community and health centers, bars, and known leaders in the community to ask what it is that they need to start or better address preparedness and mitigation within their own communities. Oftentimes there are other immediate issues that the community is focused on such as homelessness, COVID-19, and infectious disease outbreaks, such as M-Pox. Therefore, it's necessary to connect how disasters compound or exacerbate other issues. Additionally, some of the systems of collaboration between community-based organizations (CBOs) and government led public health efforts, such as support for people living with HIV, may provide valuable models for how communities can be engaged in preparedness before a disaster or emergency event occurs.

Leverage LGBTQIA+ communities' knowledge, skills, experiences, and relationships to ensure equity within disaster and emergency preparedness and mitigation.

There is "nothing about us without us". LGBTQIA+ individuals historically have had to be resourceful and rely on mutual aid to address gaps in governmental and institutional services and resources. Because these systems already exist, particularly in areas that experience disasters often, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Meet people where they are "at". If you are not familiar with LGBTQIA+ communities, it's okay to ask for help. There are national and local organizations who can help you find resources and experts, such as OUT4S.

Take a "people-centered approach" by uplifting voices within the community by gathering stories and data regarding disaster and emergency preparedness.

When gathering data on communities facing disasters, it is necessary to capture sexual orientation and gender identity data in a way that ensures security and privacy, particularly in areas where it may be dangerous to identify as LGBTQIA+. Qualitative stories are just as important to gather as quantitative data as it captures nuances, behaviors, and can be used for educational and communication purposes.

One example of where to start is the White House recently published the "Recommendations on the Best Practices for the Collection of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Data on Federal Statistical Surveys". Additionally, the University of California, Los Angeles Williams Institute also has a plethora of resources on how to gather sexual orientation and gender identity data.

Empower local LGBTQIA+ community organizations to show up in more sophisticated/elevated ways in emergency management.

There is a need to work with LGBTQIA+ community organizations and leaders to identify and co-create what resources, services, and funding is necessary to help their communities prepare for disasters. Emergency managers cannot know everything and therefore it's important to work with communities to identify what that is. This could be providing education, training (e.g., mental health first aid training for staff), and certifications related to preparedness and mitigation for LGBTQIA+ community organizations. Imagine Water Works, a non-profit in New Orleans, for example, created a comprehensive Queer and Trans Guide to Hurricane Season.

Most federal programs have inclusive language about whole community preparedness[3]. Federal agencies may need stronger language in reports and press releases, and guidance they provide though technical assistance and services.

Provide financial and in-kind resources for LGBTQIA+ organizations to be resilient before, during, and after disaster or emergency.

It is necessary to provide specific funding support to organizations and centers that serve marginalized groups to ensure their resilience in times of disasters. Continuity of operational planning is critical to protect sensitive records, access those records, communicate with clients/community, share information about safe spaces, and more.

During disasters, such as hurricanes and wildfires, LGBTQIA+ organizations can be destroyed therefore limiting the number of available affirming spaces for LGBTQIA+ individuals and families. In addition, the rise in anti-LGBTQIA+ sentiment has led to the destruction of those spaces during disasters as well.

Cultural Humility

Understanding that the status quo for LGBTQIA+ communities are emergencies. They are often always facing the threat of something.

Emergency managers, responders, and policymakers need to be aware of the oppressive structures that LGBTQIA+ communities face prior to a disaster or emergency so they know how

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3. Whole community preparedness is defined by FEMA as 1) "Involving people in the development of national preparedness documents" and 2) "Ensuring their roles and responsibilities are reflected in the content of the materials."

to support them during a disaster or emergency event. For example, LGBTQIA+ communities do not have federal protections against discrimination in housing and health and transgender children and adults are being stripped away of their rights in many states across the US. In addition, public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic and M-Pox both disproportionately affected the LGBTQIA+ community (Dawson et al. 2021; Thornhill et al. 2022). Experiencing a disaster is adding on compounding impacts especially if they are not adequately prepared for it.

Create radical spaces of kindness and care.

Radical kindness and care are built on a foundation of empathy and trust. It requires creating long-term relationships with a variety of different communities, actively listening to the needs of those communities, and providing those services. It also means creating spaces where people can thrive as themselves and feel affirmed in their identities.

Shift from disaster utilitarianism to disaster equity.

Historically, emergency management has tried to do the most good for the most people. Emergency managers should shift to operating so that the inherent dignity of all human beings is maintained and assistance is provided with impartiality, understanding that some groups will have unique needs that will need to be met.

For LGBTQIA+ individuals and families this may look like, but not limited to:
- Instead of assuming someone's gender, ask individuals what their pronouns are.
- Providing recommendations on accommodations for LGBTQIA+ individuals and families within temporary emergency shelters so they feel safe.
- Creating relationships with LGBTQIA+ community organizations and working with them to provide necessary resources to their community.
- Recognizing "chosen family" and other forms of relationships outside of the heterosexual norm

For more recommendations, please see the Maryland Emergency Preparedness Network "LGBTQ+ Considerations for Emergency Managers, Responders and Community Providers" and Louisiana Trans Advocates' "Meeting the Needs of Transgender People in Disaster Situations."

Institutional Policies & Plans

Create and implement anti-discrimination policies on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in all aspects of disaster, health, and faith institutions.

No one should be discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics. This also includes different relationships that LGBTQIA+ (e.g., Chosen family[4], queer platonic relationships[5]) and both LGBTQIA+ and heterosexual individuals have (e.g., polyamorous relationships[6],) that are outside of heteronormative ideas of how relationships should be. Everyone has the right to adequate care and services before, during, and after disasters. The New York Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) wrote a <u>Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity anti-discrimination pledge</u> that can be used as an example.

Federal and State[7] emergency management agencies need to examine religious exemptions to understand how religious freedoms are being evoked to limit services to LGBTQIA+ members.

Some States have explicit laws prohibiting access to services, such as health care, on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity if accepting those individuals is against their religious belief. There is little research on how this is affecting LGBTQIA+ individuals during disasters and how emergency managers should take this into consideration in these States to better help everyone before, during, and after disasters. State governments can enact policies such as equity resolutions to ensure that everyone is getting the services that they need.

Amend the Stafford Act to hardwire language for equity. Ensure non-discriminatory use of federal funds across non-federal entities.

Section 308 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Management Act outlines the anti-discriminatory policies for all federal agencies that provide disaster services. Currently, they only include the word "sex". There are no explicit protections on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and/or sex characteristics. Depending

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4. Chosen family is defined as "A chosen family is a group of individuals who deliberately choose one another to play significant roles in each other's lives…[and] because of shared circumstances, chosen families in the LGBTQ+ population are considered more emotionally and psychologically supportive than biological families." (Kim and Feyissa, 2021)

5. Queer platonic relationships exist for primarily aromantic and asexual individuals. Queer platonic relationships can be defined as "…relationships that purposely defy relationship categories, and can mix elements from platonic, romantic, and sexual relationships. They are each unique depending on the people involved in them, but they often involve some level of commitment or intimacy" (TAAAP 2022).

6. Polyamorous relationships can be queer or straight and are defined as "Polyamory, often shortened to poly, is a style of consensual, non monogamous relating whereby everyone is aware of the relationships involved (in contrast with infidelity) and the emphasis is on having multiple romantic or love relationships" (Barker, 2014).

7. State (capitalized) as it is used in this report means state, tribe, territory and/or local jurisdictions

on the administration that is in office at the time, they can define "sex" to mean there are only two genders (man and woman) and that it aligns with your assigned sex at birth, or that it includes sexual orientation and gender identity in all its diversity.

Implementing non-discrimination policies among non-federal partners can be quite difficult especially if their organization does not implement them on their own or do not have their own anti-discrimination pledges. However, just because an organization doesn't have a non-discrimination policy, doesn't mean they discriminate. It just means that it's more difficult to hold those who are discriminatory accountable. Federal funding and capacity building for such implementation may be needed. This requires changing grant making systems to require inclusivity policies based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Advocate for a task force within FEMA and across agencies in collaboration with data equity officers.

Oftentimes divisions within federal agencies are siloed and it is recommended that additional communication occurs across those divisions to ensure synergy and to not duplicate efforts. Agency activities and research are stronger together. They can leverage capacity, funding, and efforts through better communication and cooperation. Many inter and intra-agency groups exist, but there should be a specific task force focused on disasters, equity, and LGBTQIA+ communities

3. Recovery & Response

When disasters hit, it is one of the worst, if not the worst days, of an individual's life. They may be displaced from their home, experience a power outage, and face mental and physical health impacts. Consider this quote from an individual who identifies as transgender talking about evacuating during wildfires in California:

"As a trans person, I've always kind of felt on the outside of things," Francis said. "When I find home and place, that's a hard-fought thing. So, to have that threatened by something so globally out of my control definitely taps on those deep fears and wounds of not having a stable home in place" (Romero 2022).

A disaster and emergency responder's role is to ensure that communities are meaningfully included in all aspects of disaster response and recovery. This includes ensuring equitable access to services and resources needed for impacted people to both survive and recover in the event of a disaster or emergency. Unfortunately, LGBTQIA+ communities often find

themselves providing resources for one another, also known as mutual aid. One panelist described how LGBTQIA+ communities and other marginalized communities face a "triple whammy of inequities": 1) discrepancies in access of health and resources, 2) the worst of disasters due to historic disinvestment, and 3) during and after disasters they tend to have no access to the resources and services. Instead of bouncing back, this continual cycle keeps people back.

Based on discussions from the panelists and incorporating OUT4S' expertise, we organized their recommendations into three categories:

- **Community and Connection**
- **Resources and Services**
- **Funding Landscape**

Community and Connection

Integrate and implement the "Whole Community" approach.

Emergency responders, first responders, disaster and emergency recovery coordinators, nongovernmental and faith-based organizations all have roles to ensure that everyone is incorporated and receiving needed resources during and after disasters and emergencies. FEMA defines "whole community approach" as "[engaging] the full capacity of the private and nonprofit sectors — including businesses, faith-based and disability organizations, and the American public — in conjunction with the participation of federal and State governmental partners".

The federal and state governments and emergency managers can do a better job providing guidance on how to operationalize whole community approaches by providing written recommendations and guidance, providing technical assistance and training, and leading by example. This includes providing training for those who specifically work with disaster survivors such as those who are a part of a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Disaster Survivor Assistance, and Disaster Recovery Centers.

Include LGBTQIA+ communities in disaster planning and response from the very beginning.

There is a need to push for more inclusiveness in all aspects of disaster response and recovery. Invite LGBTQIA+ communities to the table to provide direct input into planning either through community roundtables, town halls, and/or advisory councils. This should come from

everyone including federal and State governments, grantmakers, non-profits, faith-based organizations, etc. There could be a capacity issue, in which case there should be resources provided such as childcare, a small stipend, food, and meeting the community where they are at instead of expecting them to come to you.

There should be a communications plan to do outreach to LGBTQIA+ communities so they understand how the planning process works and how policies and guidance are created and written.

Partner with LGBTQIA+ or allied- service providers.

This can include organizations that work with, for example, homeless populations and/or LGBTQIA+ youth. They know best how to work with LGBTQIA+ communities, what their needs are, and creative ways to provide it. Create relationships with organizations that have thought through some of these issues, or you can think through these issues with so that you are not inadvertently introducing harm or inadequately preparing for the whole communities' needs.

For example, emergency managers can work and partner with shelter operators and LGBTQIA+ organizations as temporary emergency shelters can be an unsafe space for LGBTQIA+ individuals, especially transgender women of color.

Build relationships well in advance before a disaster or emergency begins.

It can be difficult to provide resources or services if there is distrust. LGBTQIA+ individuals can distrust faith-based organizations due to historical and present-day discrimination. Trust takes time to build. Reach out to LGBTQIA+ organizations, faith-based organizations, and communities early and often. If you are an allied or LGBTQIA+ faith-based organization, reach out to nonprofits that provide services to LGBTQIA+ communities. Train volunteers ahead of time (e.g., why pronouns are important) and start off small, but consistently.
Connection is important to providing adequate services, but also for resilience. Search for opportunities to connect, assess your own level of privilege and power and bring it in service to help marginalized LGBTQ+ individuals. Understand where LGBTQIA+ organizational and resource hubs are.

Educating yourself and intentional actions to make it better for LGBTQ+ communities.

LGBTQIA+ communities exist in all populations. Humans do not have siloed identities and therefore it is necessary to really embody values of dignity, human compassion for, and celebration of those who are different than you are. There is a need for emergency managers and faith-based organizations to understand how disasters can exacerbate mental and physical health issues in marginalized LGBTQIA+ communities. For example, Black and Latinx LGBTQIA+ older individuals are more likely to live in poverty and are more likely to have chronic illnesses. They are also more likely to be socially isolated which has been tied to higher rates of death in extreme heat events.

Recognize the diverse social support networks that LGBTQIA+ communities build for themselves. Chosen family, polyamorous relationships, and the wide diversity of queer platonic relationships[8] should be included in policies and planning. Currently, only the nuclear family is included, which is predicated on the idea that families are made up of one woman, one man, and their children.

Connect this work to what feels true and at home for you. Faith-based organizations and local church individuals should think through how inclusion of LGBTQIA+ communities feed into the values and beliefs you may have. Many houses of worship and faith-based communities have a core ethic is hospitality. Welcoming others as they would like to be welcomed and treating others as they would like to be treated. Also remember to tap into LGBTQIA+ individuals and organizations of faith who understand both identities.

Foster interagency collaboration where possible to share best practices, reduce redundancy, and leverage capacity and funding.

Interagency collaboration is a necessity to ensure that all agencies that provide disaster response services are on the same page, communicating with one another, reducing redundancy, and leveraging capacity and funding. This is required on the federal and State level. Many inter- and intra-agency groups exist, but more are required based on equity and LGBTQIA+ communities to holistically address their needs.

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8. Please see footnote 4, 5, and 6 for definitions

Create healing community spaces and if possible, utilize accessible green spaces for building community.

Fostering community and social cohesion is one way to cultivate resilient communities. This is especially true for LGBTQIA+ individuals who may be disowned or estranged from their biological or family of origin. The Queer Healing Arts Center organized a transgender caravan to create community bonding, art, and provide services such as food. The Center uses art as an opportunity to work with others, to push forth new initiatives, to share policies, and as opportunities to get engaged civically (e.g., signing petitions).

It is necessary to create relationships with LGBTQIA+ serving organizations to provide resources to leverage existing community spaces as part of disaster response and recovery or to foster those spaces before disasters hit. Talk with community leaders who engage with people on the ground, ask how you can meet communities where they are at, and be open to human vulnerability.

Identify circumstances that amplify harm within the community and target resources to those issues.

Disaster response and recovery take a holistic approach. Marginalized LGBTQIA+ individuals face multiple and compounding systems of discrimination in housing, health, and employment. This is especially true for Black transgender women. Identifying the circumstances that amplify harm and providing resources to those issues (e.g., unhoused) can allow you to see where resources can be provided during and after disasters. For example, transgender women and LGBTQIA+ youth are more likely to be unhoused, therefore find ways to make shelters more affirming and safe places with resources that are necessary to those populations. This can be done by providing spaces for affinity groups for those who want it, allow for LGBTQIA+ individuals to sleep near the person supervising the shelter, provide bathroom and shower facilities that align with a person's gender identity, and be respectful of an individual's pronouns or language used to identify partners.

Funding Landscape

Create emergency support funds specifically for marginalized communities such as LGBTQIA+ communities, LGBTQIA+ community organizations, and organizations that provide support and services to marginalized communities (e.g. undocumented).

According to Funders for LGBTQ Issues, "For every $100 awarded by U.S. foundations in 2020, only 23 cents specifically supported LGBTQ communities and issues" (Funders for LGBTQ Issues 2022). For transgender communities it is 5 cents for every $100 awarded. The amount of funding that went to emergency or disaster issues is unclear as that information is not collected. Most funds that are directed to LGBTQIA+ individuals come from mutual aid efforts made up of other LGBTQIA+ individuals. For example, Organización Latina Trans en Texas (OLTT) is a trans Latinx immigrant led organization that provided shelter, food, and resources to unhoused individuals, many of whom were transgender, during Hurricane Harvey. Others have found shelter or food with friends or other strangers who identify as LGBTQIA+ during disasters. Although this report has a specific focus on diverse LGBTQIA+ communities, there should also be emergency funds to aid all communities, especially those who are marginalized and underserved.

Provide funds to creatively address barriers to resilience for LGBTQIA+ communities during and after disasters.

Typically, FEMA provides financial resources to states that then distribute them locally. Depending on the political climate of a state, these funds may not go directly to LGBTQIA+ or other marginalized communities. There should be local, targeted grants meant for smaller grassroots organizations, non-profits, and community centers that serve LGBTQIA+ individuals. They will know best what to do with the funds to best help their communities. These funds should be provided for capacity building, overhead, staff and salary, and to build out programs focused on resilience and disaster response. Grants could also be used for providing cultural humility training for emergency managers and response teams working directly with individuals, and for non-disaster organizations to be activated during disasters.

Reduce administrative barriers to applying for grants.

Due to the lack of funding many LGBTQIA+ non-profits and other organizations face, there may be capacity issues to applying for grants. Therefore, there should be assistance programs and recorded webinars to aid individuals in applying. There could also be easy to access assistance grants for organizations and individuals. Communications around the grants should include the term "LGBTQIA+" in its description or show LGBTQIA+ individuals in outreach, so that organizations or individuals know the grant is meant for them to apply to. Create a listserv of LGBTQIA+ organizations that could apply for grants providing emergency support or resources so that they know the grant exists. These organizations can then also disseminate to their constituents if the grants are meant for individuals. Identify other potential barriers to applying for grants and take steps to dismantle them.

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