

**COURSE: Social Work and Christianity**

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***Imagine that you are the client seeking help with issues surrounding the LGBT issue. What would be the most important qualities in the therapist that you see? How would you expect the therapist to handle your thoughts and feelings about religious belief and practice?***

If I were a client seeking help with issues surrounding the LGBTQ+ issues, my main focus would be finding a therapist who is knowledgeable about the LGBTQ+ community and every day issues affecting it, someone who will demonstrate empathy and the ability to understand my individual needs. I would need my therapist to understand that to not be discriminated against based on sexual orientation or gender identity is a basic human right, but yet it continues to happen to many LGBTQ individuals. They experience discrimination by family, community groups, workplaces, the health system and more. "According to those surveyed the top three characteristics of competent counselors working with LGBTQ clients are

1. Knowledgeable about discrimination, oppression, prejudice, homophobia and heterosexism
2. A non-homophobic attitude
3. Sensitivity to LGBTQ client's issues, including ethics and confidentiality and a willingness to listen to all aspects of LGBTQ life" (Scales, T. L. & Kelly, M. (2016) *Christianity*

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*and social work: Readings on the Integration of Christian faith and social work practice, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. p. 233).*

As a client of the LGBTQ+ community, I would like my worker to ask me how I would like to be referred, whether it be male, female, transgender, they etc. Ask me about me! I want the therapist to ask me questions such as, “Tell me about yourself? Are you involved in a relationship?” I want my therapist to not assume anything about the relationship, the partner, or the sexual behavior. Don’t assume they know anything about my sexual behavior based on how I identify or with whom I am in a relationship with.

Regarding religious belief and practice, I would want my therapist to not assume that because I am of the LGBTQ+ community that I am not spiritual or have no religious beliefs. “Religion has been a source of both solace and suffering for many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Americans. While most LGBTQ Americans have been raised in an organized religion — and many continue to cherish their faith community — too many have been forced to leave those communities behind because of condemnation of LGBTQ people. And yet in recent years, a growing number of organized religious groups in the United States have issued statements officially welcoming LGBTQ people as members” (LGBT Faith Positions by Tradition - Human Rights Campaign [www.hrc.org/resources/faith-positions](http://www.hrc.org/resources/faith-positions)).

It is extremely important to remember that when serving the LGBTQ+ community, their biggest issue is that they are not being treated with respect or equality/equity, so treat them with such. Treat others as you would want to be treated. As a client, I would like my therapist to be my voice at times and advocate for me. The therapist is not expected to become the voice but to aid in finding it if the client has none and to help amplify that voice. Because the LGBTQ+ community needs a voice, and it is the social worker’s job to help aid

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them in finding their voices. The social worker does this by helping members of the community find their own voice and help amplify that voice. The LGBTQ + community face a lot of rejection and bullying done by family, peers and society. This leads to mental health issues. Individuals of this community have a high rate of suicide, substance use, depression etc. Have resources available to assist with these issues.

## References

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- Scales, T. L. & Kelly, M. (2016) *Christianity and social work: Readings on the Integration of Christian faith and social work practice, 5<sup>th</sup> edition*. Botsford, CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW).
- [LGBT Faith Positions by Tradition - Human Rights Campaign](#)  
[www.hrc.org/resources/faith-positions](http://www.hrc.org/resources/faith-positions)