WIO
working it out

# Leadership Development in Tasmanian LGBTIQA+ Organisations: guideline & tools

About Working it Out (WIO)

www.workingitout.org.au

WIO is Tasmania's only dedicated support, advocacy and education service for Tasmania's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and asexual (LGBTIQA+) population. We have been providing services in Tasmania for over 25 years. WIO's vision is for of a just and inclusive society that celebrates people of diverse sexualities, sex and genders.

WIO provides 1:1 support, peer groups, volunteer programs, information and community events, support and activities statewide. We also deliver professional learning and advice across Tasmania to government and the broader community on inclusive practices and issues impacting the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians. We are a statewide organisation with offices in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.
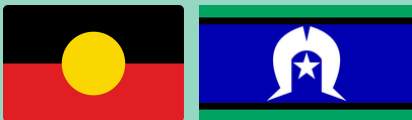
Acknowledgements

Working It Out acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Lutruwita (Tasmania), their diversity, histories and knowledge and their continuing connections to land and community. This always was, always will be, Palawa land; sovereignty was never ceded. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

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Acronyms

- **CSO:** Community sector organisations.
- **LDP:** Leadership development program.
- **LGBTIQA+:** acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual. The '+' symbol represents the diversity of other sexualities, genders, and bodies not explicitly mentioned in the acronym. There are variations of the acronym in general use. Where another literature uses one of these variations the document will reproduce that variation to ensure accurate reflection of community they engaged with.
- **WIO:** Working It Out. Tasmanian LGBTIQA+ organisation.

Note about population group representation

While the project was for an LGBTIQA+ organisation, and the research and interviews included content across sexuality, gender identity, and innate variations of sex characteristics (IVSC), participants were only recorded if they identified with the LGBTIQA+ acronym – this was done to protect the confidentiality and identity of a small and marginalised population group in Lutruwita (Tasmania). There were no indicators of leaders having an IVSC. Caution should be applied about assuming if all letters of the acronym's communities were explicitly included.

"Through interviews and research, a common thread about important leadership styles aligned with the Transformational Model of Leadership, an approach which 'stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity' (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p.3). This leadership framework helps access relevant development resources, ways to transform our thinking, and how to enable transformation in others (Pearson, 2012; Quinn, n.d.)" (p. 25)

Summary

This document is designed to assist community sector organisations (CSO) understand and navigate factors that impact on LGBTIQA+ leadership, and to help these organisations develop leaders to enact effective change and enable effective change in others.

This project's main activities were:
- A literature search of effective LGBTIQA+ leadership development tools,
- Interviews with Tasmanian Leaders in CSOs who identified with being part of the LGBTIQA+ community,
- And development of guidelines and tools to help develop LGBTIQA+ Leaders.

By bringing together the ideas, experiences, and insights this guide has been created for developing existing and emerging LGBTIQA+ leaders and the workforce in Tasmanian CSOs. This tool incorporates the structure of Leadership Development Programs and activities, a transformational leadership perspective, and has targeted content specifically aligned to unique experiences of Tasmanian LGBTIQA+ Leaders in CSOs. This guide has been shaped particularly for WIO but contains content that others are welcome to apply if relevant.

Figure 1
Flowchart of Project Activities
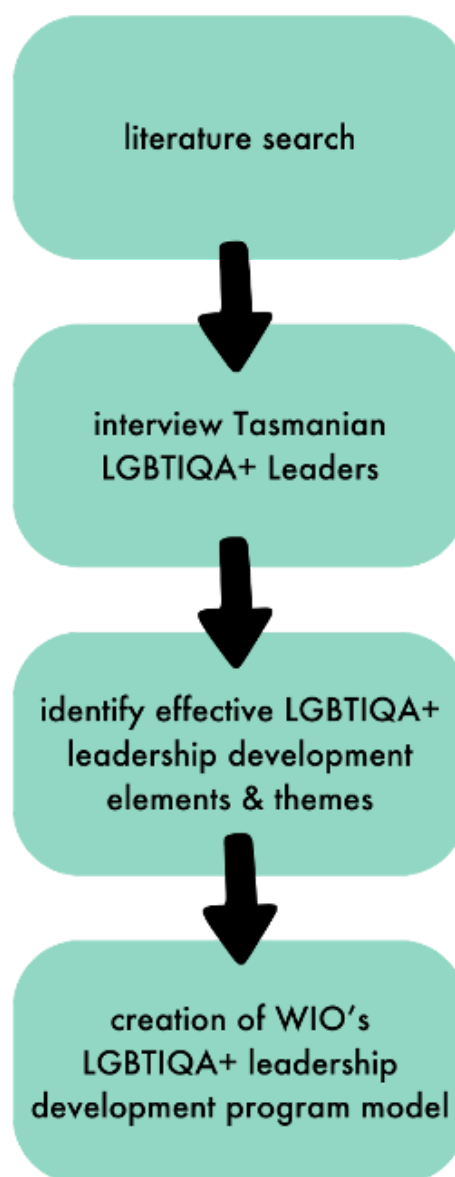
Purpose

This project explored effective LGBTIQA+ leadership in Tasmanian community sector organisations, with the intent for WIO to better understand the unique factors influencing LGBTIQA+ leaders and workforces to ensure both the leadership and their teams can flourish in community and mental health service settings. The intended outcome was the creation of tools to support existing LGBTIQA+ leaders and develop LGBTIQA+ populations into effective leadership roles, through identifying best practices for LGBTIQA+ leadership within WIO and/or leadership in LGBTIQA+ (peer) organisations.

Objectives

1. Identify effective LGBTIQA+ leadership elements.
2. Creation of an LGBTIQA+ transformation leadership model for WIO with tools of practice for the organisation's leadership to support staff and effectively affect change.

Background

Topics about leadership and their approaches can evoke positive and negative reactions in people. For some, it conjures imagery of visionaries, peacemakers, achievers, reformers, or challengers (The Enneagram Institute, 2024). For others, leadership evokes traditional elitism, mechanisms of assigned authority that might not be benevolent, of a title not yet earned, or even an uneasy collision of how someone sees themselves versus how others perceive them. In literature there are an array of leadership styles and approaches with each containing a particular emphasis – with leadership examples described as Authoritarian (Bass & Riggio, 2006), Situational (Northouse, 2018), Positive (Cameron, 2012), Authentic (Northouse, 2018), Transformational (Northouse, 2018), Collective (Archer & Cameron, 2013), Transactional, (Lovaglia et al., 2012), or Laissez-Faire (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

For some workplace environments, the social perceptions of leadership continue to hold a traditionalised view of power and idealised leadership traits (Benmira & Agboola, 2021) which can unfairly preference rigid masculine and dominance-themed leadership styles (Sayers-Brown, 2024). These views can exclude people deemed to not have the presumed right qualities, skills, or experience – with LGBTIQA+ populations often excluded for not fitting idealised heteronormative beliefs (Sayers-Brown, 2024).

Looking at societal structures broadly, LGBTIQA+ populations are affected by social systems of oppression and marginalisation across the globe (Pichler & Ruggs, 2018), with additional intersecting identities "influenced by larger interpersonal and structural systems of oppression such as racism and sexism" (Bauer et al., 2021). For LGBTIQA+ people in the workplace, they are more likely to experience barriers of participation, opportunity, and career-growth (Maji et al., 2024; Grant & Pisanu, 2021), which includes hiring, wage penalties, delayed promotion, and experiencing subtle or unintentional workplace biases.

These environment challenges mean non-heterosexual workers are found to incorporate "adaptive career behaviour" (Maji et al., 2024, p.352) to manage their safety. This response can include deciding whether to disclose their identity at work and be their authentic self or not – with research indicating positive and negative outcomes for disclosing an LGBTIQA+ identity in the workplace (Maji et al., 2024). Locally, LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians are more likely to experience greater instability around income, employment, housing, and health compared to the general population (Grant & Pisanu, 2021), and Tasmania's largest LGBTIQA+ community survey found widespread systemic issues contributing to inequality (Dwyer et al., 2021).

An examination of LGBTIQA+ strategic organisational change frameworks highlight

how effective system change outcomes can occur by recognising and applying unique elements to address marginalised population barriers (Eckstrand et al., 2017). The need for unique elements provides a thought-provoking reflection of what might be needed for authenticity and transformative (Bass & Riggio, 2006) workplace behaviours to occur for both the manager and workforce if they are LGBTIQA+ identifying, and how being LGBTIQA+ may influence safety, effectiveness, enablers, and barriers when implementing leadership development opportunities.

By recognising these experiences and the perspectives of systems theory (Loosemore & Cheung, 2015) and intersectionality (Bauer et al., 2021), workplaces can not just take a generalised approach to leadership development for a population group who experiences marginalisation. To give emerging leaders a better chance to participate in leadership opportunities, active consideration is necessary to understand LGBTIQA+ Tasmanian experiences within the historic and continuing elements of structural inequality in society that negatively influence opportunity and growth.

Methodology

Methodology

The project selected a qualitative methodology, was informed by a literature search, and examined and collated themes from interviews with Tasmanian LGBTIQA+ leaders in community service sector settings. The researcher's epistemological positioning was informed by a transformative lens worldview, recognising oppressive structures and elements which impact on marginalised groups, and focusing on social justice perspectives to improve equity in society (Mertens, 2017; Mathison, 2005). The principles of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) were selected to help frame data collection steps and identify themes from the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2012).
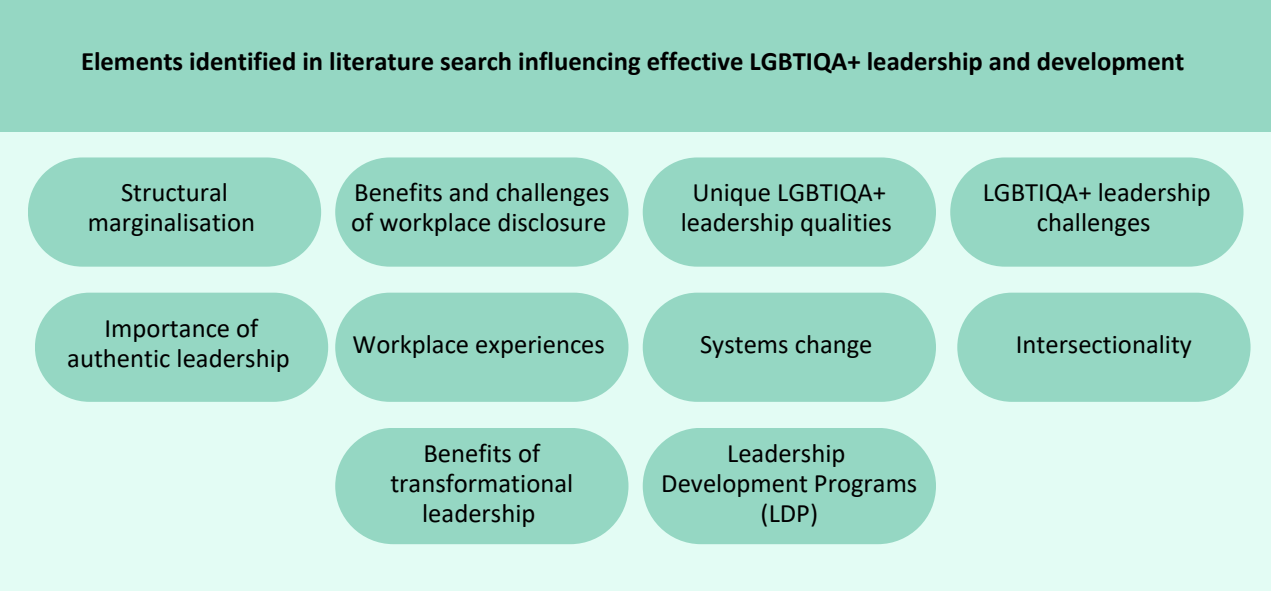
Literature Search & Interviews Activities

A preliminary search of Google Scholar was used to identify and review keywords (e.g. LGBT; transformational leadership) and inform the development of Silo columns using the Population, Concept, Context (PCC) framework (University of South Australia, 2024) to create a search string and develop search terms and Boolean operators, which can be viewed in Appendix A. Articles were considered between 2015-2024 to ensure LGBTIQA+ social factors remained relevant. Databases reviewed included Google Scholar, Scopus, SAGE Journals. Snowballing (University of Cambridge Medical Library, n.d.) occurred by reviewing citations of relevant articles and grey literature were also considered. Articles which examined LGBTIQA+ workforce

experiences around leadership had data extracted to identify unique factors influencing LGBTIQA+ leaders. The majority of data came from international research, however one study examined the experiences of LGBTIQ+ Employees in Tasmanian Workplaces (Ezzy et al., 2019), which helped to provide a localised comparison. Based on the literature search findings, questions were crafted to interview LGBTIQA+ community leaders. See Appendix B for a list of guiding interview questions.

From the answers provided in interviews, responses were summarised and coded to identified themes from the analysis activity. The combination of literature search findings and interview findings helped to inform the creation of this document.

Literature Findings

Figure 2

Elements identified in literature

Elements identified in literature search influencing effective LGBTIQA+ leadership and development

- Structural marginalisation
- Benefits and challenges of workplace disclosure
- Unique LGBTIQA+ leadership qualities
- LGBTIQA+ leadership challenges
- Importance of authentic leadership
- Workplace experiences
- Systems change
- Intersectionality
- Benefits of transformational leadership
- Leadership Development Programs (LDP)

Structural Marginalisation

Macro, meso and micro levels in society impact LGBTIQA+ workers and leaders (Dutta & Srinivasan, 2024; Pichler & Ruggs, 2018). LGBT workers and organisations are positively and negatively impacted by social factors such as public opinion, legislation, other's ideologies, and political beliefs; particularly if there are discriminatory views held (Pichler & Ruggs, 2018). Queer leaders report experiencing tensions of being publicly queer and a leader in a heteronormative culture (Gamboa et al., 2020). LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians appear more likely to be treated better in their careers/workplaces when compared nationally, and possibly related to Tasmania's better anti-discrimination legislation protections (Ezzy et al., 2019).

Benefits & challenges of workplace disclosure

Disclosure can be positive and negative experiences in workplaces (Dutta & Srinivasan, 2024; Fletcher et al., 2024),

referred by one study as the "disclosure dilemma" (Chang Bowring, 2015). The notion of 'coming out' was identified as having advantages such as better mental health outcomes (Fine, 2017), making connections (Change Bowring, 2015), and if in a supportive environment - improves authenticity in the workplace (Fletcher & Everly, 2021). Disadvantages were identified such as unwanted pressure to disclose personal aspects at work (Change Bowring, 2015), risk of isolation without supportive networks, and becoming a target of discrimination – including denied career opportunities (Fine, 2017). LGBTQ+ leaders also reported feeling pressure to conceal or mute their personality and identity (Sayers-Brown, 2024) to better align with societal expectations - with some transgender employees experiencing more intense negative workplace responses than LGB individuals for not aligning to 'prevailing views of gender categories' (Ozturk, 2011

cited in Sayers-Brown, 2024, p.21). Workplace disclosure is not universally necessary or required, as workplace disclosure was more likely to be helpful where an LGBT identity was central to sense of self, but less positive if other identities were centralised (Fletcher & Everly, 2021). In Tasmania, "LGBTIQ+ people are much less likely to be 'out' in the workplace compared to how 'out' they are with their family and friends" (Ezzy et al., 2019, p.15). Tasmanians are also less likely when compared to other Australian states or territories to think it is important to disclose their identity in the workplace (Ezzy et al., 2019).

Unique LGBTIQA+ leadership qualities
LGBT leaders develop skills in identifying injustices, advocacy, speaking up for people, and developing relationships with followers by valuing differences (Fletcher et al., 2024). Queer identity helps to see and value differences in the workforce (Chang & Bowing, 2015). Sexual orientation impacts on advocacy capacities both positively and negatively - some leaders used their lived experience of feeling different to speak up for others, other leaders experienced challenges included feeling allies should do this work using their non-marginalised identity to provide legitimacy to the cause (Chang & Bowring, 2015). Increased skillsets of empathy, ambition, resilience, creativity, safety, supporter, protector traits were identified in LGBTIQA+ leaders (Sayers-Brown, 2024). Research suggests gay men and

lesbians may develop stronger skills for management roles (e.g. creative problem-solving) because of their outsider status in society (Pichler & Ruggs, 2018).

An individual's intersecting queer and leadership identities help them to more effectively see and become empowered against oppressive power structures (Gamboa et al., 2020; Sayers-Brown, 2024).

LGBTIQA+ leadership challenges
LGBTIQ+ leadership can experience discrimination when not possessing societal notions of traditional leadership (e.g. masculine, dominant), and not seen as possessing leadership qualities (Sayers-Brown, 2024). LGBTQ+ leaders may experience anxiety around workplace judgements of their identity (Sayers-Brown, 2024), and LGBTQ+ workers may experience hypervigilance and minority stress about their identity, leading to "excessive monitoring of the environment for potential threats to physical and psychological harm" (Sayers-Brown, 2024, p.104). Some LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians noted barriers of career advancement or promotion because of their identity (Ezzy et al., 2019).

Importance of Authentic Leadership
Authentic expression helps to create an inclusive organisational environment (Dutta & Srinivasan, 2024) and can lead to improved life satisfaction (Fletcher & Everly, 2021), however Authentic Leadership is difficult for LGBT leaders because of their stigmatised

identity (Fletcher et al. 2024). Gender and Sexuality Minority (GSM) leaders may experience resistance to their attempts of authenticity in the workplace because of societal heteronormativity expectations. GSM leaders (transgender and intersex communities explicitly identified) may be perceived as inauthentic if they don't follow societal expectations of gendered norms (Fine, 2017). Queer theorists have been critical of authenticity concepts as the concept also relies on others' perceptions of the individual and not just self-understanding (Fine, 2017). Authentic Leadership may be better for LGBT leaders than Transformational Leadership in domains of role engagement and career satisfaction (Fletcher et al., 2024). One report recommended LGBT leaders should be trained in Authentic Leadership, focusing on developing self-awareness, decision-making skills, interpersonal communication, and awareness of LGBT colleague's challenges in the workplace (Fletcher et al., 2024; Fine, 2017). LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians seek authentic workplace role models (Ezzy et al., 2019).

Benefits of Transformational Leadership

Sexual orientation influences leadership and relates to Transformational leadership themes, including connection, engaging in inquiry, advocacy, and disclosure/authenticity (Chang & Bowring, 2015). Authentic leadership helps create transformative leadership-follower relationships and transparency in the workplace (Fine, 2017). One research identified an inner transformational development map for LGBTQ+ leader identity, where the leader goes through a 3-step model of leadership development: 1.) reconciling the dual identity of LGBTQ+ and leadership, 2.) recognising strengths from LGBTQ+ identity and shapes

their leadership, and 3.) using the merged identities as a platform for others and to protect others (Sayers-Brown, 2024).

Workplace experiences

Social Capital is an important factor for developing networks and relationships in organisations (Sayers-Brown, 2024). Building on trust creates psychological safety in the workplace (Dutta & Srinivasan, 2024). LGBT identity will influence income levels and workplace fields, where gay men may accept lower wages and less prestigious roles to work with other non-heterosexuals (Pichler & Ruggs, 2018). Lesbian women earn more than straight women but less then straight men, and are also more likely to be higher educated than straight women (Pichler & Ruggs, 2018). Transgender populations experience lower wages and also experiences gendered inequality - transwomen experience decreased salary post-transition, and transmen experience a salary increase (Pichler & Ruggs, 2018).

Systems Change

Supportive leadership is not enough for creating an inclusive LGBTQ work environment - with a need for enabling systems and elements on macro, meso and micro levels (Dutta & Srinivasan, 2024). Workplaces should work towards active not reactive inclusive workplace environment activities (Fine, 2017). Macro level protective legislation is beneficial for reducing discrimination (Pichler & Ruggs, 2018). Workplaces can utilise mechanisms to attract diverse workforce populations, including visibility in advertisement, alternative assessments to identify competency and skill, diversity training to reduce biases, networking groups

to help connection making, influencing stakeholders to provide development opportunity to marginalised groups, and ensure maintenance of leadership diversity (Sayers-Brown, 2024). System change activities need to include LGBT supportive practice benchmarking (Fletcher & Everly, 2021). Identified Tasmanian workplace practices to improve LGBTIQ+ experiences include: Explicit LGBTIQ+ inclusive workplace policies, and implemented with communication, training, and leadership support; LGBTIQ+ and ally role models; and inclusion messaging and support by LGBTIQ+ and ally leadership (Ezzy et al., 2019).

Intersectionality

Organisations should not frame LGBTQ as a single community (e.g. the diversity of the acronym), recognising the differences between sexuality, gender, and bodies (Dutta & Srinivasan, 2024). Intersectionality is needed for consideration of any leadership development model (Sayers-Brown, 2024), and an important component to effectively use authentic leadership in workplaces (Fine, 2017). LGBTIQA+ leadership can help overcome structures of oppression via embedding an intersectionality lens in their leadership environment (Gamboa et al., 2020). Living through different periods of LGBTIQA+ history and specific experiences will influence and impact queer leaders of other generations (Chang & Bowring, 2015). Disclosure is more likely to be helpful where LGBT identity is central to sense of self, but less positive if other identities are centralised. Effective activities around disclosure and authenticity need to consider intersectionality for its effectiveness.

For some employees, they may have another marginalised identity (e.g. racial/ethnic minority group), which is more centralised for their sense of self (Fletcher & Everly, 2021).

Leadership Development Programs (LDP)

LDP are an effective tool for emerging leaders, however LDPs targeting marginalised groups such as LGBTIQA+ identities have limited literature focused on them (Sayers-Brown, 2024). LGBT leadership development programs should include capacity development and strength-recognition in the leader's identity and the benefits of organisational diversity - especially for emerging leaders who struggle with their identity in work (Fletcher et al., 2024). Relevant identified benchmarking activities for LGBT supportive practices in organisations include: Management training on LGBT issues, career development opportunities for LGBT employees, LGBT inclusion in people management strategy, and LGBT employee networks (Fletcher & Everly, 2021).

Image: (Lovell, 1988).

Interviews with LGBTIQA+ Tasmanian Leaders in Community Sector Organisations

This project spoke with LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians who had held recent leadership roles in creating change for LGBTIQA+ populations and/or managing an LGBTIQA+ workforce. Participants were invited who were Tasmanian, identified as LGBTIQA+, and held a leadership or manager role. These interviews were voluntary and confidential, and as the topic was about a marginalised specific subpopulation and a small number of participants, records were de-identified, and quotes were not attributed.

Interviewees were asked about their experiences as an LGBTIQA+ leader and leadership tools that helped them and their staff. The data gathered was used to identify effective LGBTIQA+ leadership elements in LGBTIQA+ (peer) organisations and help with the creation of an LGBTIQA+ transformation leadership model for WIO.

9 leaders were interviewed between August-September 2024. The approached leaders were a mixture of community members internal and external to WIO, and lived in different areas of Lutruwita (Tasmania) - including the North-West, North, and South.

Guided interview questions were used that explored aspects such as the positive and difficult elements of being an LGBTIQA+ leader, systemic factors for LGBTIQA+ service organisation, effective leadership tools used, characteristics to develop LGBTIQA+ leaders, and what helped emerging leaders. Questions were framed around their experiences, knowledge, and reflections in LGBTIQA+ leadership roles, and were guided around examining personal experiences along with applying a systemic lens to their knowledge. The questions can be viewed in Appendix B. Interviewee's answers were recorded and summarised, with the responses collated into codes to help identify themes and create an interpretive analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Image: (Transforming Tasmania. 2019)

Interview Findings

The good and difficult things about being an LGBTIQA+ Leader in Tasmania

Almost all LGBTIQA+ leaders spoke about the enjoyment of being in a role involved in change, particularly affecting systems and social change for a marginalised population they were a part of. For LGBTIQA+ leaders this was a call to action, and creating positive outcomes around safety, community connection, and sharing knowledge. One leader identified the benefits of being in a same-sex relationship positively impacting on their leadership role noting that without heteronormative roles in their personal life - that often leads to assigned domestic duties to the female partner - this balanced relationship provided more time to leadership actions.

However, difficult things about being a leader related to many characteristics around hypervigilance holding a leadership role in a marginalised group. Leaders spoke of feeling community pressure to perform change, and tensions of being a workplace leader and LGBTIQA+ community leader. This collision of identities continued with wanting to be authentic but also feeling external and internal community pressures to maintain publicly approved personal queer and professional leadership identities that fit social expectations. This included participants describing prioritising muting their LGBTIQA+ identity to be an effective leader. The reason for this hypervigilance related to minority stress, with the ongoing hypothetical and/or real external threats to safety, intracommunity violence or judgements, and managing a workforce impacted by discrimination, while also trying to protect organisations from threats to funding and persistent under resourcing. Only one participant struggled to identify any major difficulties being an LGBTIQA+ leader, highlighting only minor level hetero-normativity in a positive workplace.

Opportunities, factors, and challenges in Tasmanian LGBTIQA+ service organisations

With some participants noting that leaders set the tone, many identified factors focused on interpersonal relationships and communication. This included navigating diverse perspectives and workplace dynamics, challenging traditional notions of leadership, the ability to recognise positives, holding positive communication of open dialogue rather than debate, demonstrating compassion, and taking positive approaches. Leaders also spoke about ensuring goals are community needs focused and not organisation focused.

When asked about the unique opportunities, factors, or challenges for leaders of an LGBTIQA+ service organisation, participants identified opportunities of doing frontier work in an underdeveloped space, enacting system change, and helping create allies and learning spaces. Direct work with the LGBTIQA+ community and being a part of community was seen as a positive experience, leading a lived experience workforce,

representing community, and providing mentoring and knowledge sharing. Challenges identified included dealing with external threats, under-resourcing because of current societal systems providing less priority for marginalised groups who are seen as less important to general populations, fewer career opportunities because of marginalisation, managing internal community conflict, muting identity in workplace (identity collision), and ensuring diverse communities who experience compounding and unique discriminations (intersectionality) are included. Groups who leaders identified as experiencing additional barriers included intersecting identities around race, disability, and neurodiversity.

Some leaders spoke of the unique history, social, and geographic elements of Tasmania compared to the rest of Australia (mainland). Isolation, and lack of a larger population or accessible options, meant there were fewer formal LGBTIQA+ professional networks or opportunities. There was an expressed concern of mainland groups undervaluing Tasmania's LGBTIQA+ achievements because of previous history and biased assumptions on Tasmania's capacity to deliver positive change, and thus disempowering local causes and voices.

Effective leadership tools, activities, or resources that helped them

Leadership tools/resources that helped participants included: development programs, leadership learning courses, frameworks (e.g. feminist perspective, transformative), mentors / role models (particularly others who are queer), observational learning, job crafting, mindfulness tools, individualised leadership learning tools, guides/documents to frame leadership, and researching.

Activities that helped Tasmanian LGBTIQA+ leaders included: building trust, being authentic, positive-orientated, collaborative, being strategic, being efficient to get things done, valuing diversity, being innovative, creating safety, open dialogue, setting expectations, respect, open to feedback and learning, reflective, role modelling, and courage.

Identified skills that helped the participants included: systems change, communication, research, networking, knowing local systems, and addressing workplace needs.

Necessary characteristics, tools, & activities to develop LGBTIQA+ leaders:
Participants discussed other needed characteristics, tools and activities to develop LGBTIQA+ leaders. These are grouped to three main domains in a table below.

Table 1
Identified LGBTIQA+ leader development themes

Domains to develop LGBTIQA+ leaders	Identified development themes
Characteristics	• LGBTIQA+ subject matter expert / research skills • Ethical framing / justice perspective • Knowing how to influence • Vigilant to external threats to LGBTIQA+ resourcing and priorities • Vision for change • Confidence in self • Capacity/willingness to learn • Empathy, compassion, and forgiveness of others • Collaborative • Role modelling • Positive orientation perspective • Patience / endurance / resilience • Strong sense of mission and ultimate goal • Reflection skills • Listening ability
Tools	• Positive stakeholder management (internal and external) • Public role modelling • Networking (inside/outside of community) • Mentoring options • Understanding system change • Strategic skills – seeing goals, visions, and taking an emergent approach to opportunities, laying groundwork
Activities	• Supporting emerging leadership • LGBTIQA+ professional networking • LGBTIQA+ specific leadership development training • Diversity in leadership and approaches • Activating community as leaders • Shadowing opportunities

What helped develop leadership skills as an emerging LGBTIQA+ leader
Participants were also asked to reflect on their early steps into leadership spaces and identify what helped them develop their leadership skills. Their answers were grouped into three domains – opportunities, training/learning, and inner work.

Table 2
Opportunities, training/learning, and inner work domains to help emerging LGBTIQA+ leaders

Opportunities	- Opportunities to develop. - Different environments for experience and learning. - Practicing leadership decision making. - Leadership giving opportunities, recognising everyone has a role in leadership and change, and recognising leadership diversity beyond traditional notions. - Access to low/no-cost development options. - Environment that recognises barriers for community groups.
Training / Learning	- Qualification/formal learning. - Leadership development programs. - Training that is queer inclusive/informed. - Understanding systems. - Communication skills – including workforce, media, advocacy.
Inner Work	- Courage. - Positive outlook on environment, vision, celebrations. - Reflections - including self-examination of bias. - Recognising leadership in self.

Other elements needed to help develop emerging leaders LGBTIQA+ organisations
Participants were given the opportunity to raise additional areas or discuss topics further. Additional discussions focused on programs for learning, networking, mentoring, reflection, and opportunities to develop emerging leadership in LGBTIQA+ organisations. Specifically, this included topics of confidence building, leadership identity formation, mentoring, opportunities, leadership development programs, skill building in advocacy and lobbying, Community of Practice spaces, and understanding intersectionality and marginalisation impacts on workforce. Many leaders spoke of the value and need of mentoring and role modelling. Both from the perspective of benefits they received from the opportunity, and the importance of leaders offering it to emerging leaders.

Discussion

Figure 3
Elements for developing effective LGBTIQA+ leaders

Elements for developing effective LGBTIQA+ leaders

Transformative Leadership Characteristics & Approaches	Power of Opportunity	A Tool Specific for LGBTIQA+ Populations
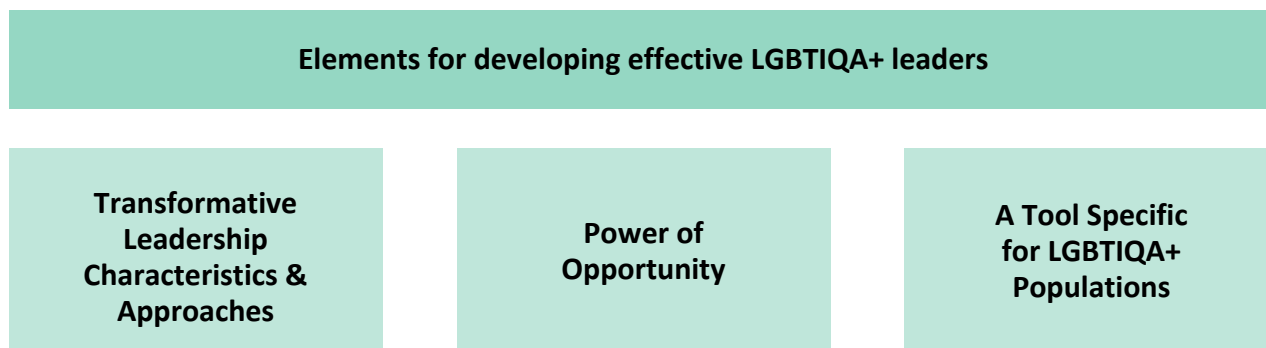
The interview findings align with identified themes in the literature search, authentic and transformative leadership models, and the identified need for leadership development program opportunities. These have been grouped into three elements for developing effective LGBTIQA+ leaders in Tasmanian CSO settings.

1. Transformative Leadership Characteristics & Approaches

While there are many different approaches to leadership, the literature and interviews into preferred LGBTIQA+ leadership styles rejected traditional notions of leadership focused on power of compliance (Lovaglia et al., 2012) and aligned to alternative approaches akin to Transformational Leadership - which had a focus on influencing and activating motivation through alignment of individual and collective goals towards a common mission (Lovaglia et al., 2012). Another similar approach was Authentic Leadership, which involves relational transparency, internal morality, adaptive self-reflection, balanced processing, and positivity (Lewis, 2011). Interviewed leaders noted the challenges of balancing their personal and professional lives, with expectations from within community to be the 'right' role model

and a hypervigilance of external threats to their mission. The concept of muting their identity to address these barriers and threats was an action leaders took, and matched the literature on the challenges of bringing authentic self to the workplace and being LGBTIQA+ (Fletcher et al., 2024). However, authenticity was still noted as an important trait for LGBTIQA+ leaders, and an element to help develop emerging leaders. In the literature and interviews, aligned themes of the Transformational Leadership model were present. This Transformational Leadership style helps "followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers' needs by empowering them" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p.3) with core components involving coaching others, encouraging innovative thinking, inspiring others, and acting with integrity and building trust (Quinn, 2015). A framework for leadership development has drawn upon a 3-phase Transformational Leadership framing (Pearson, 2012; Quinn, n.d.) which has three elements - Transformed Thinking, Transformed Being and Enabling Transformation in Others – and matches the activities that interviewees thought would help develop emerging leaders based on their own insights and experiences in current roles and previous emerging phases.

2. Power of Opportunity

A strong theme that came across both the literature and interviews was the importance of recognising, creating, and offering opportunity for Tasmanian LGBTIQA+ workers to develop their leader identity and be given activities to hone leadership skills. Structural inequality and marginalisation on micro, meso and macro levels in society meant that out LGBTIQA+ workers were less likely to be given fair opportunity in employment and education (Grant & Pisanu, 2021), career advances (Ezzy et al., 2019), and even at risk of experiencing workplace rejections because of their sexuality or gender identity, or IVSC (Fine 2017). LGBTIQA+ identifying workers were even more likely to prioritise safety to career advancement (Pichler & Ruggs, 2018).

The repeated message from interviewees was the power of creating opportunity, and the role existing leadership had in this. A needed element was addressing the lack of opportunity in Tasmania because of smaller population and resourcing challenges. Interviewees noted how opportunity given to them as emerging leaders enabled transformation in their leadership skills. Recognising leadership beyond traditional notions (such as attribute, qualifications, role, skills, title) and focused more about values and approaches was a key step for giving opportunity – essentially recognising everyone has a role in leadership and change.

Recognising barriers was identified as a key factor in effective leadership development and ensuring opportunity. This included creating visible role modelling, mentoring, ensuring experience from learning and being in different environments, access to low/no-cost development opportunities (including workshops, training, formal qualifications), and practicing decision-making.

Numerous interviewees also spoke about the importance of recognising additional barriers of LGBTIQA+ populations with intersecting identities – such as race, disability, neurodiversity, geographic location, and the necessity of leadership to create inclusive environments and proactively create authentic and safe opportunities for these emerging leaders.

3. A Tool Specific for LGBTIQA+ Populations

The interviews asked LGBTIQA+ leaders about different skills, activities, and tools they saw as leaders that were effective, what helped them develop, and what would help develop emerging leaders. Interviewees provided a range of examples, as seen in Tables 1 and 2 of the previous section.

Interviewees also identified that formal structures of training/learning were a key part of leadership development, and that this process needed to focus on providing opportunities to develop skills, abilities, experiences both in the external environment and also inner work. Some interviewees spoke of their own benefits accessing Leadership Development Programs (LDP) and courses, and the value of implementing these for LGBTIQA+ emerging leaders. While many of the identified tools aligned with the general elements of LDPs, leaders identified the necessity of development including a queer/LGBTIQA+ perspective to capture nuanced learning and establishing a space of safety.

LDPs help to enhance "employees' leadership and managerial competencies on both personal and professional fronts" (Tenney, 2024) and are identified as an effective tool to help emerging leaders. However, there is

limited literature examining LDPs focused on supporting LGBTQ+ leaders, with leadership development initiatives used by organisations not deeply incorporating LGBTQ+ voices and identities into design and delivery (Sayers-Brown, 2024).

While Sayers-Brown (2024) identified that LDPs are useful tools to develop leaders framed around four transformative overarching "domains of personal growth, conceptual understanding, skills building, and feedback" (p.26), he also found no primary literature of LDPs targeting LGBTQ+ communities. Searching for grey literature, international LGBTIQA+ LDPs included localised programs exclusively to the USA (Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida, 2024; Harvard Division of Continuing Education, 2024). In Australia, within grey-literature there were a range of identified LDPs or general professional development models with LGBTIQA+ inclusion (The Equality Project, 2024; Pride Professionals, 2023; University of Sydney, n.d.), however while offering valuable development pathways, these programs involved non-LGBTIQA+ community members (allies), were not exclusively delivered by LGBTIQA+ leaders to LGBTIQA+ leaders, and with most delivered outside of the workplace as intensive workshops.

One program, developed by the State Government of Victoria (2024), delivers an LGBTIQA+ leadership program which aligned to many of the values of interviewees. This includes ensuring informal leaders and intersectionality aspects are recognised, and provides a Community of Practice space to "explore issues, challenges and opportunities unique to LGBTIQA+ communities and

contemporary leadership theory and practice" (State Government of Victoria, 2024). However, this program is not available for people outside of Victoria, and no LGBTIQA+ LDPs were found to be operating in Tasmania.

These findings from the literature search and aligned themes in the interviews highlight the benefits of LGBTIQA+ organisations developing LDPs for exisiting and emerging LGBTIQA+ leaders, with some additional benefits using localised and available development opportunities. The next section will summarise key aspects of developing LDPs and shapes a guide which incorporates Transformational Leadership and LGBTIQA+ factors.

Implementing an LGBTIQA+ Community Sector Organisation Leadership Development Program

In this section, a mapping model has been developed for guiding organisations when developing LDPs for Leadership in LGBTIQA+ Tasmanian Community Sector Organisation (CSO) settings.

Leadership development involves "expanding the collective capacity of organisational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes" (Day, 2000, p.582), and can include leaders with or without a formal leadership employed role. Core development areas can include training to develop skills or abilities such as interpersonal relationships, political awareness, and problem solving, with an intended outcome of strengthening and protecting the workplace's existing and emerging leaders as a key element of effective system design (Day, 2000). LDPs provide a structured approach to developing a person's leadership skills, and more broadly provide opportunities to serve the whole person - which includes developing characteristics and skills around relationships, and providing opportunities to lead at work (Pernick, 2001). Importantly, LDPs can not be seen as a "one-size-fits-all program" (Holt et al., 2018), and requires the organisation and participant to identify individual needs and areas of development - such as "skill levels, experience, personality, and the change in behaviors necessary for success" (Holt et al., 2018).

Through interviews and research, a common thread about important leadership styles aligned with the Transformational Model of Leadership, an approach which "stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p.3). This leadership framework helps access relevant development resources, ways to transform thinking, and how to enable transformation in others (Pearson, 2012; Quinn, n.d.).

This developed LGBTIQA+ CSO model has been structured to address needed areas to best support existing and emerging LGBTIQA+ leaders in Tasmania, particularly focusing on creating a map to help guide mentors and mentees to grow development areas identified as effective LGBTIQA+ leader characteristics, skills, and tools. These growth areas could include concepts like positive mindsets, positive interpersonal relationships, authenticity, inner thinking, transformation in others, and system changes. Unique LGBTIQA+ elements that need to be considered for development plans include hypervigilance as a minority group, and the existing leadership role in providing opportunity and flexible/compassionate understanding to a workforce experiencing marginalisation – particularly intersectionality aspects.

Developing an LDP requires an organisation to examine the leadership roles and traits that align to their organisation – considering representation diversity, technical skills, and strategic direction (Pernick, 2001).

Other considerations include creating pathways to participate in the program, assessing currently capabilities, crafting a development plan, involving the organisation system collectively, strategic leadership development planning, and evaluating the activities (Pernick, 2001).

Common traits of LDP best-practices include (Holt et al., 2018):
- Being linked to organisation's mission, strategy and values.
- Embedded into organisational activities, including recruitment, promotions, and succession planning.
- Learning opportunities via practising behaviours and skills in assigned workplace activities.
- Leadership development activities tied to achieving workplace results.
- Receiving feedback from different people and engaging in self-assessment to identify strengths and development areas.
- Individualised development plans, created by the subject.
- Coaching for continuous learning.

Useful LDP elements for an organisation when developing an LGBTQ+ leader focused program (Sayers-Brown, 2024):
- Content on supporting the leader with guided reflection about responsibilities being an LGBTQ+ leader.
- Processes include group/network creation for group discussion to learn from each other.

- Positive psychology principles implemented for LGBTQ+ leadership to address minority stress factors. This includes strength-based approaches to their identity and how to use this approach, which could build upon self-knowledge, awareness, and confidence in authenticity. These improvements would help with navigating disadvantaging structures.

Cacioppe (1998) collated a list of evidence-based tools and methods for developing leaders, which have generalised applicability. These align to tools identified by interviewed LGBTIQA+ leaders, and have been incorporated into the model.

To embed Transformational Leadership principles, a three phase framing from Pearson (2012) and Quinn (n.d.) has been used to guide aspirational leadership development and implementation. These are:
1. **Transformed Thinking** - "Exploring the nature and understanding of transformation and how it relates to leadership." (Quinn, n.d., p.17)
2. **Transformed Being** - "developing inner capacity for leadership through profound personal change." (p.18)
3. **Enabling Transformation of Others and Systems** - "access their own unconscious knowledge to help others." (p.18)

By bringing these elements together, a Leadership Development Program guide has been created which includes specific factors and outcomes for LGBTIQA+ leadership development in WIO. This guide has been presented as a visual flow chart.

Figure 4

LGBTIQA+ Community Sector Organisation Leadership Development Program guide

1. identified aligned development areas for the organisation and individual

Identify the organisation's strategic objectives, needed leadership skills and any other relevant areas. Align individual development goals with the organisations goals, and identify fit-for-purpose individualised leadership development activities (Cacioppe, 1998).

2. tools for leadership development (Cacioppe, 1998)

Building leadership, team, and interpersonal skills:
- Project work.
- Problem-solving team exercises.
- Leadership models/frameworks.
- Role plays.
- Interpersonal skills.
- Development workshops.

Contributing to strategic direction:
- Strategic focused team projects.
- Job rotation.
- Leaders developing leaders.
- Simulation learning.
- Systems thinking mentoring.
- Writing case studies.

Self-development:
- 360 feedback.
- Coaching.
- Group feedback.
- Work/life balance.
- Leadership personality tests.
- Journalling of learning.
- On-the-job and follow up.

3. LGBTIQA+ considerations

Factors:
- Structural marginalisation (impacting on safety, costs, opportunity, authenticity).
- LGBTIQA+ cultural safety.
- Benefits and challenges of workplace disclosure.
- Professional and personal identity collision/conflicts.
- Systems change elements.
- Intersectionality.
- Hypervigilance behaviours.

LGBTIQA+ specific activities:
- LGBTIQA+ mentors.
- Supporting emerging leadership.
- LGBTIQA+ sector networking.
- LGBTIQA+ specific leadership development training.
- Diversity in leadership, approaches, and frameworks.
- Activating community as leaders.
- Public role modelling.

4. transformational leadership phases

Transformed Thinking
"Exploring the nature and understanding of transformation and how it relates to leadership" (Quinn, n.d., p.17)

Transformed Being
"Developing inner capacity for leadership through profound personal change" (Quinn, n.d., p.18)

Enabling Transformation of Others and Systems
"Access their own unconscious knowledge to help others" (Quinn, n.d., p.18)

5.1 developed characteristics for effective LGBTIQA+ leaders

- LGBTIQA+ subject matter expert.
- Ethical framing / justice perspective.
- Knowing how to influence.
- Vigilant to external threats to LGBTIQA+ resourcing and priorities
- Vision for change.
- Confidence in self.
- Capacity/willingness to learn.
- Empathy, compassion, and forgiveness of others.
- Role modelling.
- Positive-orientation perspective.
- Patience / endurance / resilience.
- Strong sense of mission and ultimate goal.
- Reflection skills.
- Listening ability.
- Collaborative.
- Recognising Intersectionalities.

5.2 developed skills for effective LGBTIQA+ leaders

- Positive stakeholder management (internal and external).
- Research skills.
- Public role modelling.
- Networking (inside/outside community).
- Mentoring skills.
- Understanding system change.
- Strategic skills – seeing goals, visions, and taking an emergent approach to opportunities, laying groundwork.

6. impact

- Changed leadership skills in LGBTIQA+ community and health settings.
- Improved employee satisfaction.
- Increased self-reported and demonstrated leadership skills in WIO leadership team and workforce.
- Increased advocacy for LGBTIQA+ health outcomes.

Future Directions

It is hoped that this developed mapping model helps promote the development of LGBTIQA+ leaders in Tasmanian Community Sector Organisation settings, informed by current evidence-based best practices both in literature and local leadership insights.

By including an understanding of localised LGBTIQA+ experiences, factors, and individualised needs, leadership development activities will more effectively transform developing and emerging leaders, and help with enabling transformation in others and systems. This aligns well with WIO's mission to create change through lived-experience based education, support and advocacy which enables LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians to live their best lives, as the organisation works towards a vision of a just and inclusive society that celebrates people of diverse sexualities, sex and gender.

Limitations

While sexuality, gender identity, and IVSC content was included from interviews and research, the interviews were designed to only record if participants were LGBTIQA+ identifying to protect confidentiality of LGBTIQA+ leaders in Lutruwita (Tasmania). There were no indicators of leaders having an IVSC. In alignment with the findings on the importance of intersectionality, future research could explicitly record and examine the multiple intersections of leader identities.

Conflicts of Interest

Nil to declare.

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Appendix A

Table 1

Search string design

Population, Concept, Context (PCC)	Population: LGBTIQA+ Concept 1: Leadership Development Concept 2: Transformational / Authentic Context: NFP/NGO Workforce (Tasmania)
Search terms and Boolean operators	(lgbt*) AND (leadership AND development) AND (workforce)

Appendix B

Interview topic: Creating LGBTIQA+ leadership tools in Tasmanian Community Sector Organisations in 1:1 interviews with WIO policy manager
August-September 2024

Guiding Interview Questions
1. What are the good things about being an LGBTIQA+ leader? (individual focus)
2. What are the difficult things about being an LGBTIQA+ leader? (individual focus)
3. What do you think are unique opportunities, factors, or challenges for leaders of an LGBTIQA+ service organisation? (systemic focus)
4. What are some effective leadership tools, activities, or resources that have helped you? (individual activity focus)
5. What characteristics/tools/activities are needed to develop LGBTIQA+ leaders? (systemic activity focus)
6. If you were an emerging LGBTIQA+ leader, what helped you develop your leadership skills? (individual - reflective)
7. What else do you think would help develop an emerging leader in an LGBTIQA+ organisation? (systemic – future planning)
8. Anything else you would like to mention that was not asked?