

13 Things A Therapist Needs to Know Working with Gender, Sex & Relationally Diverse Clients

Gender, Sex and Relationally Diverse clients (GSRD), sometimes thought of as LGBTIQ+ clients, justifiably assume a certain level of expertise and familiarity with subcultural contexts both in terms of psychological knowledge and social context when they seek professional help.

They do not expect to teach their therapist about their community.

These 13 points might help you assess whether you have sufficient knowledge to work confidently with GSRD clients or whether you might benefit from some additional training.

1 Be familiar with some of the core psychological theory and research surrounding the mental health of GSRD people, in particular, distal and proximal minority stressors, microaggressions theory and groups most at risk of developing mental health problems.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2 Be familiar with current preferred terms and access to treatment and support for people who are exploring their gender and who are gender diverse as well understanding the impact of cisnormativity and cisgenderism on everyone's lives.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3 Understand the implications of intersectionality on the development of gender and sexuality identity formation.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4 Be able to work with requests for changing sexual orientation or gender identity that stay within the guidelines of the UK Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy v2.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5 Be knowledgeable about how to decontaminate shame and internalised oppression, enhance resilience and build stronger interpersonal support.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6 Be able to manage professional boundaries and dual relationships of living in and working with one's own community - i.e. meeting implications of running into clients in social and sexualised spaces and online via dating apps.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7 Have an enhanced understanding of the impact of self-disclosure of therapists' own sexual or gender identity and its likely impact on the therapeutic relationship.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Be able to critique models of identity formation and understand when coming out might be contraindicated and other ways of managing minority identity issues.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9 Become familiar with the impact of developmental lag when people come out in adulthood.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10 Describe some of the challenges experienced by GSRD parents and how they differ from each other - i.e.gay parents compared with trans parents or bisexual parents.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 Understand the impact of heteronormativity on LGBTQ, Kink or Consensually NonMonogamous relationships.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12 Understand the place of spirituality and the impact various religions have played on the lives of GSRD clients.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

13 Be familiar with how gender, sexuality and relationship diversity might impact people across the lifespan.

How well do I master this point?

What could I do to improve myself on this point?

How would you grade yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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Dominic Davies is Founder and CEO of Pink Therapy. He has worked as a psychotherapist, clinical sexologist and practice consultant for over 40 years.

In 2016 he was made a Fellow of the National Counselling & Psychotherapy Society and in 2019, Dominic received the Lifetime Achievement Award for Sexual Freedom.

Dominic is also a Fellow of the National Council of Integrative Psychotherapists. Fellowship is the highest level of membership for these professional bodies. He has pioneered the development of Gender, Sex and Relationship Diversity Psychotherapy in the UK and Europe.



He has co-edited five textbooks on GSRD Therapy - the first three with Charles Neal (1996 & 2000), the latest two books with Silva Neves. *Erotically Queer* and *Relationally Queer* were published in April 2023 by Routledge.