

# An Assessment of Cohesion Among Professionals Who Serve LGBTQ+ Youth in Kansas City

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## MODEL & IMPLEMENTATION

The Tri-Ethnic Center's Community Readiness Model (CRM) uses Stage of Change Theory to help identify how ready a community is to address an issue. The assessment explores five dimensions of readiness—community knowledge of efforts, leadership, community climate, knowledge of the issue, and resources—through one-on-one interviews with stakeholders. Those interviews are scored based on a nine-point readiness scale, then averaged to find the approximate stage of change (i.e. how ready a community is to change).

Organizers can use the community's stage of change to formulate an appropriate action plan, thus focusing on sustainable, community-led change. In this case, the model was used to answer the question:

How ready is the community to improve cohesion among professionals who serve LGBTQ+ youth in Kansas City?

Ten anonymous stakeholders were interviewed, ages 28 to early 60s, ranging from psychologists to board members to chaplains. Their perceptions of the community were used to arrive at the final score.

## FINDINGS

Based on the participants' perception, the community scored 4.1 or Pre-Planning Stage. That means Kansas City's LGBTQ+ community is aware that cohesion among providers is an issue and wants to take action, but isn't quite sure what to do. The weakest dimensions were the community's knowledge of cohesion as a concept and the community's knowledge of existing programs.

## MOVING FORWARD

Based on the community's score, the actions most likely to improve cohesion are:

- Bring leaders together
- Simplify access to up-to-date information
- Focus on uplifting historically marginalized voices

The community is largely volunteer-based, and those volunteers exist within systems of oppression which traumatize them, especially those with intersecting marginalized identities (people of color, transgender people, women and femmes, disabled people). Any actions must take into account the limited capacity of the community.

## LIMITATIONS

This research was conducted by a white, masculine-presenting person with academic privilege. Since participant recruitment was done through networking, a major limitation was the author's lack of connection with BIPOC activists and organizations. The project was unfunded, meaning there was no compensation available to participants for their time and emotional labor. Asking for unpaid labor from marginalized people is not trauma-informed.

Only two of the ten interviewees were people of color. No youth were interviewed.

When using the Community Readiness Model, the best practice for scoring interviews is to have two scorers. This project used only one scorer (the author).