

# Welcome!

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- The presentation will be recorded & posted on [www.familyjusticecenter.org](http://www.familyjusticecenter.org)
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# Your host today:



Casey Gwinn, J.D.  
President

Family Justice Center Alliance



# Thank You to Our Sponsor

Thank you to the US Department of Justice,  
Office on Violence Against Women  
for making this training possible!

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# The FJC Alliance Team



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# Webinar Download Reminders

This webinar presentation is being recorded and will be posted on our website by the end of today's business day. We would like to remind you that in order to download webinar files and other materials from our Resource Library on our website, FJC Alliance Membership is required- it's free, quick, and easy to do. Members can log in to access members-only information.

**Please note that registering for today's live webinar training does not sign you up as a member of the FJC Alliance.** If you wish to become a member and obtain login credentials, please visit our website at [www.FamilyJusticeCenter.org](http://www.FamilyJusticeCenter.org) and click on “**Get Involved**” → “**Become a Member**”. Please allow 24 hours for your application to be reviewed. Once your membership application is approved, you will be notified via email.



# Today's Presenter:



Ted Farley, Esq.  
LGBTQ Initiative Coordinator  
Domestic Violence Project  
Urban Justice Center



*"Local Services, Global Reach"*

# **Working with LGBT Clients at a Family Justice Center**

# **Part 1: Definitions**

## **The LGBTQQI Community: Making Sense of an Endless Acronym**

# Part 1: Definitions

**Lesbian:**  
**A woman attracted to women.**

# Part 1: Definitions

## Gay:

**Often used to refer to men attracted to men,  
but also colloquially used as an umbrella  
term to include all lesbian and gay people.**

# Part 1: Definitions

## **Bisexual:**

**A person who is attracted to two sexes or two genders, but not necessarily simultaneously or equally. Traditionally, Bisexual people are defined as having erotic, affectionate, romantic feelings for, fantasies of, and experiences with women and men, and/or who self-identify as bisexual.**

# Part 1: Definitions

## **Transgender:**

**Transgender people are those whose psychological self ("gender identity") differs from the social expectations for the physical sex they were born with. One example would be a female with a masculine gender identity or who identifies as a man. Transgender is not a sexual orientation; transgender people may have any sexual orientation.**

# Part 1: Definitions

## Queer:

**A simple label to explain a complex set of behaviors and desires related to sexual orientations and/or gender identities. For example, a person who is attracted to multiple genders may identify as queer.**

# Part 1: Definitions

## **Questioning:**

**Questioning is a term that can refer to a person who is questioning their gender, sexual identity or sexual orientation. People who are questioning may be unsure of their sexuality, or still exploring their feelings.**

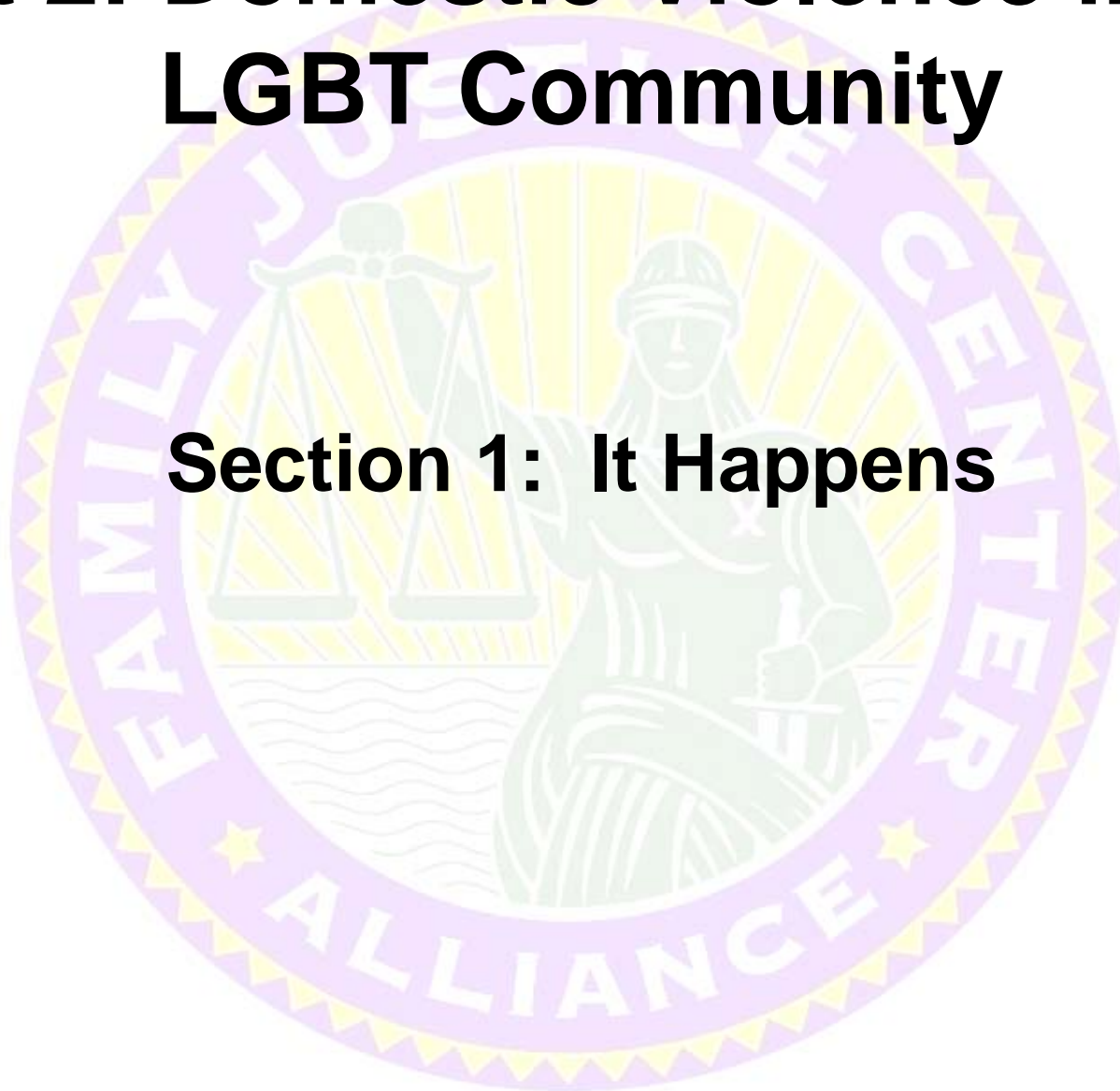
# Part 1: Definitions

## Intersex:

**A set of medical conditions that feature congenital anomaly of the reproductive and sexual system. That is, intersex people are born with "sex chromosomes," external genitalia, or internal reproductive systems that are not considered "standard" for either male or female.**

# **Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community**

## **Section 1: It Happens**



# Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community

## Section 1: It Happens

- **February 2010** – Nicole Chiminsky was convicted of setting fire to her ex-girlfriend's home, killing two of her children. Friends reported that the couple had publically argued at a wedding on the night the fire was set.
- **April 2011** – James Costello was arrested and charged with the murder of his partner, David Walton.

# Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community

## Section 1: It Happens

- **July 2011** – John Lacoy stabbed and killed his boyfriend after the two had an argument. Lacoy then buried the body beneath the couple's home, before calling a friend and reporting that the victim had drowned at a nearby beach.
- **Currently** – the alleged murder of AnnaMarie Rintala is under investigation after her body was found in the basement of the home she shared with her wife, Carla Rintala. Carla had been arrested in 2008 for punching AnnaMarie in the back of the head.

# **Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community**

## **Section 1: It Happens**

**Surveys consistently show that Domestic Violence happens at an equivalent rate amongst all couples regardless of sexual orientation. Statistics report that anywhere from 1 in 4 to 1 in 3 individuals in same-sex relationships experience violence at the hands of an abusive partner during their lifetime.**

# **Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community**

**Section 2: If it happens, why don't we  
hear about it?**

# Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBTQ Community

## Section 2: If it happens, why don't we hear about it?

- People in same-sex relationships who experience domestic violence may not report it
  - What types of messages about same-sex relationships are sent to the LGBTQ community?
  - Language makes a difference: “Family Court,” “battered woman.”
  - Do they know that DV can happen to them?
  - Who can they tell?

# Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community

## Section 2: If it happens, why don't we hear about it?

- It's not reported as domestic violence by law enforcement
  - A fight between two men is just that, a fight, not domestic violence
  - A fight between two women is a cat fight, not domestic violence
  - Difficulty with primary aggressor analysis.

# Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community

## Section 2: If it happens, why don't we hear about it?

- It's not reported as domestic violence in the media
  - All of the murders I cited happened in one state (MA). What does this tell us?

# **Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community**

## **Section 2: If it happens, why don't we hear about it?**

**If domestic violence is about the dynamics of power and control, we must remember that those dynamics can exist between people of the same sex. Just because two people may be more equally matched in size and strength does not mean one cannot manifest control over the other.**

# **Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community**

## **Section 3: When it happens, what does it look like?**



# Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community

## Section 3: When it happens, what does it look like?

- Similarities to DV in heterosexual relationships
  - Victims are often blamed for the abuse by partners, and sometimes even family, friends and professionals can excuse or minimize the abusive behavior.
  - It is difficult for victims to leave abusive relationships.
  - Abuse usually worsens over time.
  - The abuser is often apologetic after abusing, giving false hope that the abuse will stop.

# Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community

## Section 3: When it happens, what does it look like?

- How DV in Same-sex relationships may differ
  - The threat of “outing” as a control tactic.
    - What does this mean?
  - Very limited services exist specifically for abused and abusive LGBT people.
  - Shelters for abused women may not be sensitive to same-sex abuse (theoretically, shelters are open to all women and therefore, a same-sex victim may not feel safe as her abuser may also have access to the shelter). Abused gay and trans men have even fewer places to turn for help in that there are no agency-sponsored safe places to stay.

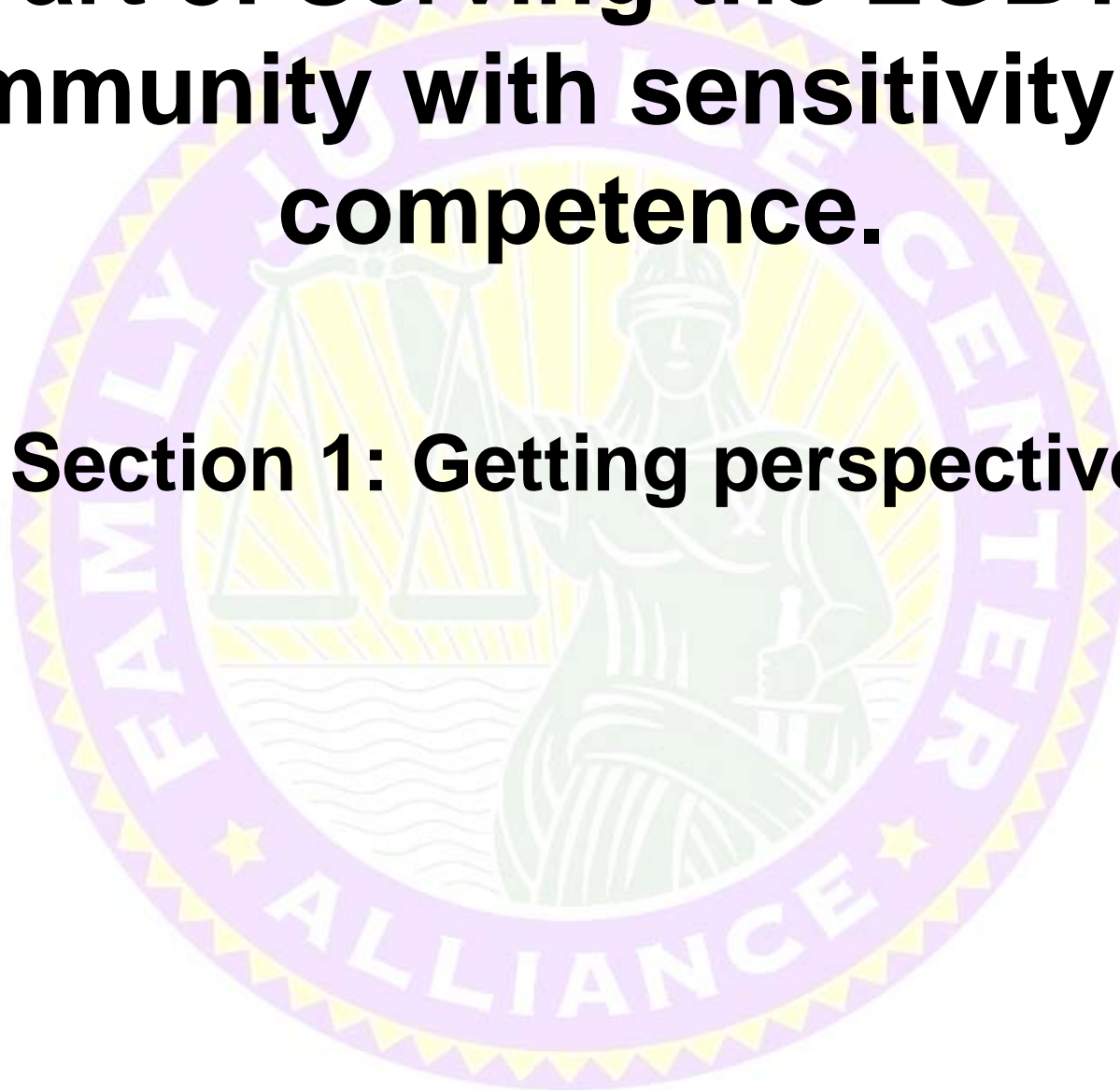
# Part 2: Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community

## Section 3: When it happens, what does it look like?

- Example cases
  - TG: Outed by partner who remained closeted. Kicked out of home.
  - ER: Initially assessed as a victim of DV.
  - JB: a textbook case of the cycle of violence.

# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 1: Getting perspective**



# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 1: Getting perspective**

- If we allowed our own judgments of our client's choice in partner to impact the level of service we provide, we would probably be significantly less helpful.
  - The person who matters is our client. The person who is suffering is our client. We are here to help them.

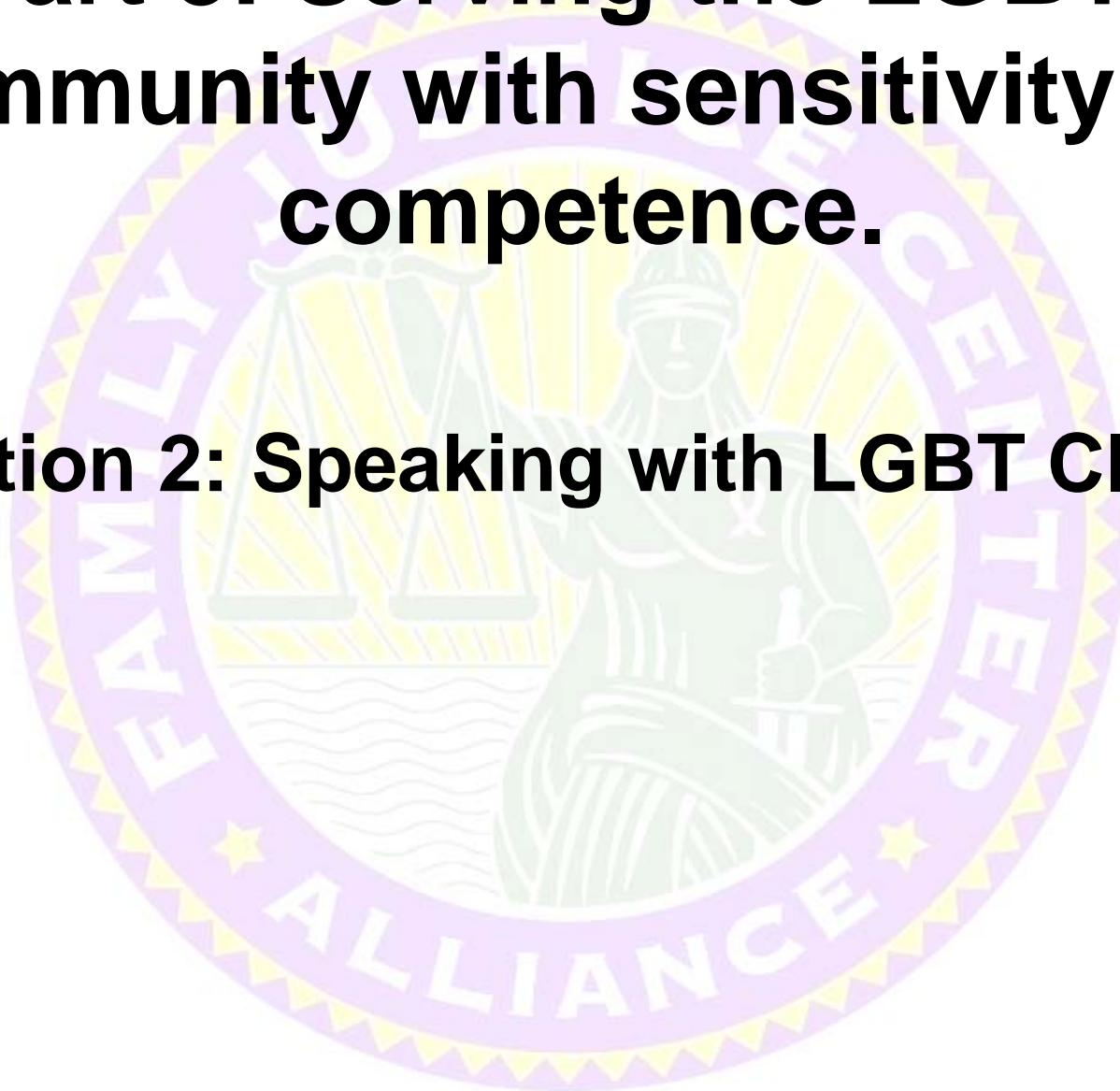
# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 1: Getting perspective**

- The focus should be on providing high quality services to those in need, not on who those in need are falling in love with.
  - As DV advocates we already know that there are things about our clients that we can help with and things that are none of our business.

# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 2: Speaking with LGBTQ Clients**



# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 2: Speaking with LGBTQ Clients**

- What do your assessment instruments look like? Do they have appropriate questions and answers for LGBTQ folks?
- Use sensitive and direct questions
- Standardize your questions
- Make it a matter-of-fact thing
  - Your comfort level with these questions will affect the comfort level of the person being asked.

# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 2: Speaking with LGBT Clients**

- Don't assume someone is "out" – ASK
  - Who knows about your life/relationships?
  - Where else are you comfortable or safe to share this information?

# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 3: Assessing the client and primary aggressor analysis**

# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 3: Assessing the client and primary aggressor analysis**

- When domestic violence occurs in heterosexual relationships, the female is the victim 95% of this time. While this information should not create work environments that assume women to be victims and men to be batterers, it certainly informs the way we do our jobs on a daily basis.
  - So, what do we do when the couple in question is of the same sex?

# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 3: Assessing the client and primary aggressor analysis**

- Examine your assumptions about what a “normal” relationship is
- Take stock and assess your own biases which may contribute to perceptions of the situation and the final assessment
  - Biases along the lines of: race, class, gender, butch/femme, transgender, immigration status, ability, education, etc.

# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 3: Assessing the client and primary aggressor analysis**

- **Consider during the assessment**
  - Context in which behavior occurred
  - Motivation of use of the behavior
  - Impact on each person (whose life gets smaller)

# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 4: Safety Planning**

# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 4: Safety Planning**

- Ask about problems they may have faced due to their sexual orientation/gender identity.
- Figure out if they are open about their sexual orientation/identity. Find out where they are out and to whom.
- Identify possible areas where they may have support- family, chosen family, friendships.

# Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.

## Section 4: Safety Planning

- Ask if they are involved with any LGBTQ service organizations.
- Realize they may want to disclose their identities to people in particular
- Respect confidentiality
- Consider social location & context
  - Race, class, religion, education, ability, etc.
- Discuss the potential benefits and risks of disclosures and interactions with police, medical system, criminal justice system, service providers

# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 5: Creating an Inclusive Environment**

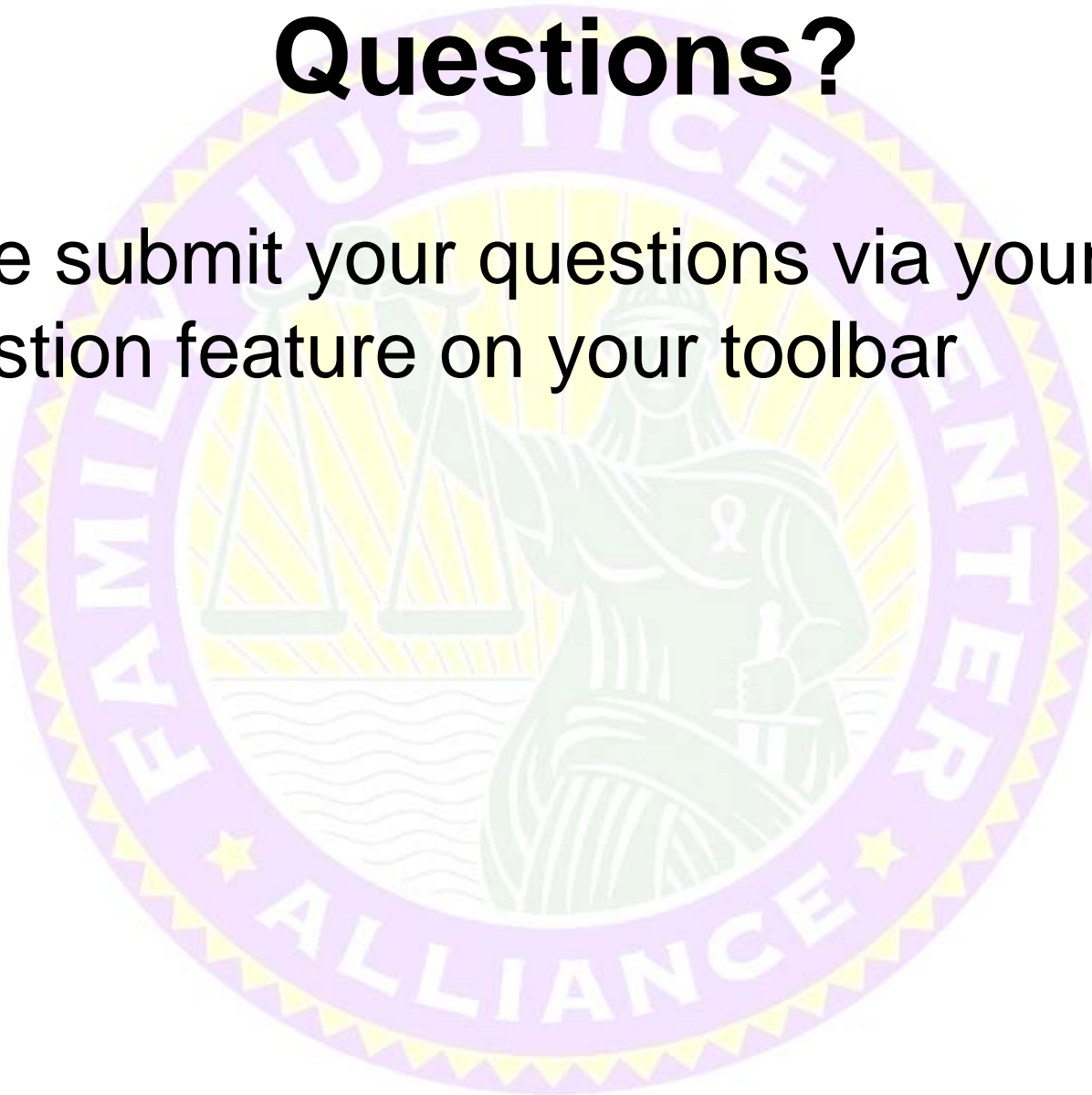
# **Part 3: Serving the LGBTQ community with sensitivity and competence.**

## **Section 5: Creating an Inclusive Environment**

- Intake forms and printed materials should be inclusive of all identities.
- Create all-gender restrooms. If this is impossible, tell clients where both the men's room and women's room are when directing them.
- Create visual cues around the office that identify the space as "safe."
- Train ALL staff- especially security, reception, intake – in LGBTQ sensitivity and anti-oppression work
- Create connections with LGBTQ service providers & programs

# Questions?

Please submit your questions via your question feature on your toolbar



# Registration Now Open!

## 2012 International Family Justice Center Conference

April 17-19 2012 in New Orleans, LA



[www.familyjusticecenter.org](http://www.familyjusticecenter.org)

The three-day conference will include discussions on issues related to the handling of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, and elder abuse cases in the context of the Family Justice Center model.

The conference faculty includes nationally and internationally recognized subject matter experts, advocates, and survivors. During the conference participants will have the opportunity to meet with survivors and professionals who currently work in Family Justice Centers in the United States and internationally.



# Thank You

Thank you for joining today's presentation

Family Justice Center Alliance

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