

## Workshop Highlights & Next Steps

### Hey RainbowFam community!

We're excited to bring you the first edition of our newsletter, highlighting the progress we've made with the RainbowFam project!

Recently, we hosted "Share Your Concern" (alignment) workshops, in the Netherlands, Italy, and Cyprus to gather insights from the LGBTQIA+ community on how we can improve mental health care. The input will help shape the Resource Guide we're creating for mental health professionals, ensuring it truly reflects the needs of LGBTQIA+ individuals across different countries and communities.



### What's RainbowFam all about?

Together, we're working to create a Resource Guide that will provide mental health professionals with the tools they need to offer more inclusive and compassionate care for LGBTQIA+ clients and their families. By addressing real concerns and challenges, we aim to make mental health care safer and more accessible for LGBTQIA+ communities across Europe.

### Why These Insights Matter for Mental Health Care.

In our workshops, we uncovered some common themes and challenges that LGBTQIA+ individuals face when seeking mental health support. Here's what stood out, and why it's crucial to address these issues in the Resource Guide:

#### **Misconceptions & Misinformation**

Many participants shared their frustrations about mental health professionals sometimes holding harmful stereotypes or outdated beliefs about LGBTQIA+ identities, such as linking them to "sin" or "illness." It's vital that professionals understand how damaging these misconceptions can be. Our guide will focus on providing accurate information to help create safer, non-judgmental spaces for all queer clients.

#### **Intersectionality & Inclusivity**

Participants highlighted the importance of intersectional support, particularly for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), transgender, non-binary, and intersex individuals. Our guide will emphasize the need for professionals to recognize and respect the full complexity of each person's identity, ensuring mental health care that's holistic and inclusive.

#### **Facilitation & Safe Spaces**

We also heard from participants about how crucial it is for facilitators and mental health professionals to step back and allow space for LGBTQIA+ individuals to share their experiences. Too often, facilitators take up too much space, making it harder for clients to feel heard. The Resource Guide will include practical tips on creating safer environments where professionals can support without dominating the conversation.

By addressing these key areas, we hope the Resource Guide will provide professionals with the knowledge and empathy needed to improve the mental health care experience for LGBTQIA+ individuals in all our communities.

### What's Next?

After gathering all of this amazing input, we met in Rotterdam for a 3-day workshop to start turning these insights into actionable guidelines. We're now working on drafting the Resource Guide and are excited to share more updates with you soon!

If you've got your own experiences, stories, or thoughts to share, we'd love to hear them. Your voice matters, and together we can make mental health care more inclusive for everyone!

## Thanks for being part of the RainbowFam!

