

Accountable Spaces: Improving VHA Provider Readiness to Serve 2SLGBTQI+ Clients in the Community  
TAHSNp Health Professions Innovation Fellowship Program



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Background

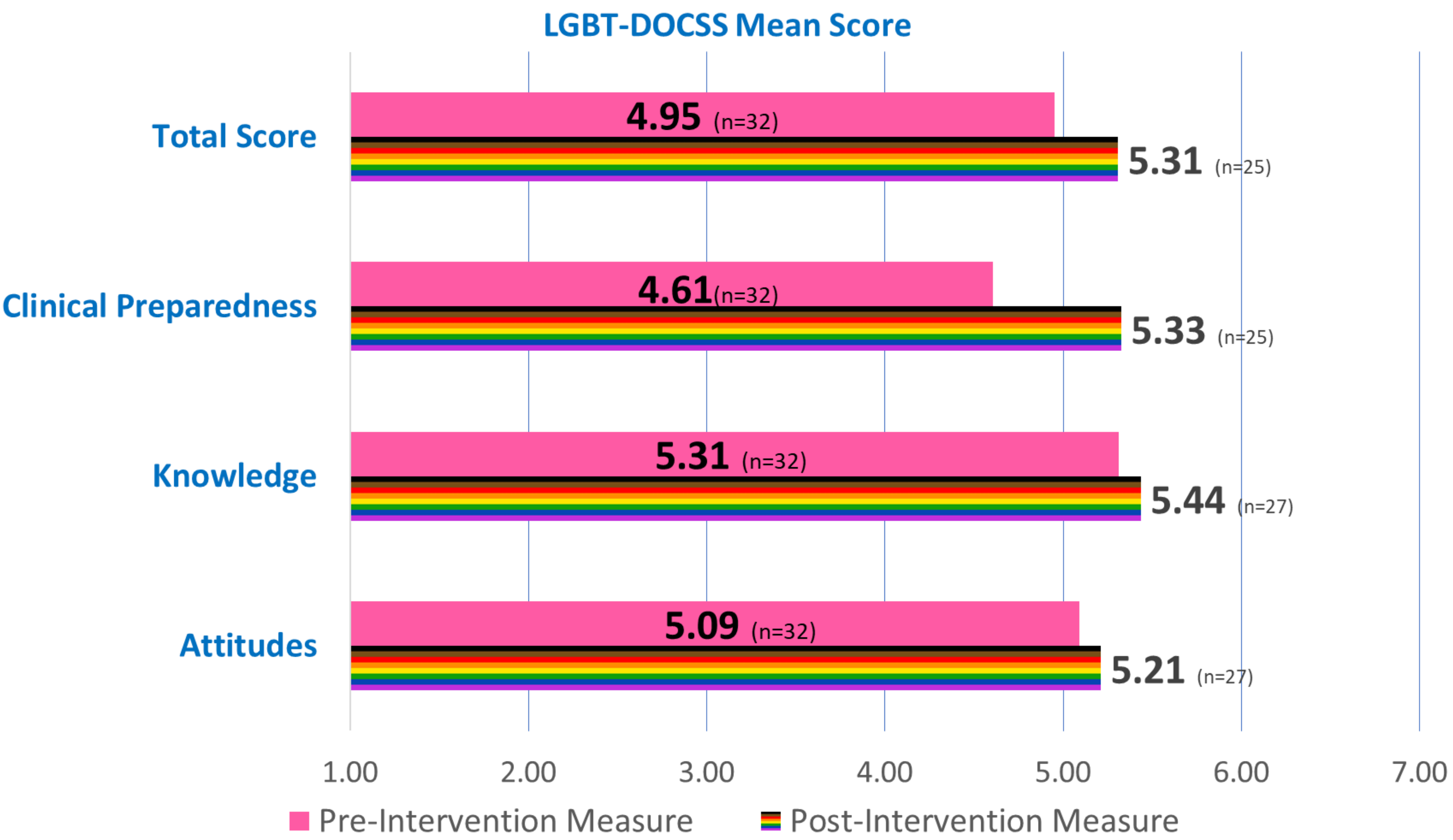
Approximately 90% of rehab providers in VHA’s Toronto Central Team were not confident in their ability to access support and information to address the needs of 2SLGBTQI+ clients, when informally surveyed in July 2021. This represents a significant risk to client experience of home care services. Historically a lack of awareness of the unique needs of 2SLGBTQI+ individuals by health providers has created barriers to inclusive care. Many 2SLGBTQI+ people report negative experiences with healthcare providers which prevent them from seeking much needed services. VHA has an ongoing opportunity to engage rehab providers in creating a safer space for these clients, optimizing health outcomes and client satisfaction. This is in line with VHA’s strategic priority “CARE to connect” which focuses on championing the voices of our clients and families. This project proposed the development of resources with client partner and community engagement in order to enable VHA rehab providers to cultivate safer more accountable spaces for their clients

Aims

- Support 2SLGBTQI+ clients in the community by increasing VHA’s Toronto Central rehab providers’ knowledge, attitude and preparedness to work with these clients, by 20% by March 2022.
- This project was conducted between September 2021 and March 2022 with VHA’s Toronto Central rehab team.
- Opportunity to engage with interventions was made available to all members of the team which included approximately 80-90 providers.
- The rehab team consists of occupational therapists, physiotherapists, dietitians and speech and language pathologists.
- Client partners and community organizations who work with 2SLGBTQI+ populations and provide education in this area were consulted.
- These stakeholders reviewed the content developed through literature review and an environmental scan of available training in the community.
- The interventions developed during this project included:
  - An educational intervention 30 minutes to one hour in length delivered virtually and recorded.
  - A resource hub launched on VHAs intranet containing community resources, access to wider training resources, and the recorded educational session.
  - Practice tools in the form of pronoun buttons to be worn by providers to serve as a visual representation of openness to provide an accountable space for clients.
  - Weekly emails delivered in February and March sharing practical tips to incorporate into daily practice.

Outcome Measure

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Development of Clinical Skills Scale (LGBT-DOCSS) was used as a pre and post intervention measure. The LGBT-DOCSS is a validated measure with 18 items on a seven-point Likert scale. The measure has three subscales: clinical preparedness, attitudes, and knowledge.



When measured, the mean overall LGBT-DOCSS score increased by 7%. Clinical Preparedness increased by 16% and both knowledge and attitudes increased by 2%.

Process Measures

- Number of views of the resource hub in the month of march: 69 views
- Number of pronoun buttons requested by staff: 42 Buttons (approximately half of providers)
- Post education survey: 82% of participants rated the education sessions as very good or excellent



Conclusion & Future Directions

- Although we did not meet the aim of 20% increase, the overall results are promising. The significant increase in clinical preparedness (16%) is likely to be of significant impact to our clients’ experience of care.
- This project has increased awareness of unique needs of 2SLGBTQI+ clients, and has improved provider knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- Attitudes are very challenging to change, however in this project with an improvement in knowledge there appears to be an improvement in attitudes too.
- Resources are now readily available for providers to consult.
- There is still a significant opportunity for more frequent education opportunities.
- This project has highlighted that VHA providers would like to continue learning so that they can provide inclusive, equitable, and safer care.
- This project is just the beginning of this work, the nature of this work requires ongoing learning.
- The VHA 2SLGBTQI+ committee has the opportunity to sustain and spread this intervention across the organization highlighting the existing resources and providing the education to more teams, supporting a better experience for our clients.