



## **Module 14: Mazzoni Center**

### Case Study Interview: Judy Morrissey

My name is Judy Morrissey. I'm a licensed clinical social worker, director of behavioral services here at Mazzoni. I've been here for ten years and prior to Mazzoni I've worked in LGBTQ outpatient and inpatient settings in Washington D.C. and Philadelphia area.

We provide an array of support services - outpatient, mental health services, and substance abuse counseling. We provide outpatient psychiatric support for individuals who are involved in therapy in our program and we provide an array of support groups.

Well everyone who participates identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning. So I think that makes as unique that everyone comes in with that common identity however it's maybe common in some way but it's very unique in every possible way.

Well I think that we work from a relational model where we view every individual as unique and try to meet them where they are, try to really understand what they are coming for services, why -- what prompts them to come in. I'll say that a lot of times people will say oh you work in an LGBTQ counseling center, that means everyone comes into to talk about their sexual orientation or gender identity. That's just really not true. People come in with the same reason anyone seeks therapy so I think that we have to understand that sometimes people do come in to work on those specific issues but other times people are here to really just explore how their life is not really where they want it to be. So we try to use you know supportive techniques, you know, certainly unconditional positive regard and you know different types of psychodynamic relations technique to help that person achieve whatever goals they talked about.

I think that it's really important to have a multi-tiered approach to that, to really start with the foundation of wanting to do things differently and knowing that this is something that you are going to be committed to do. Not it's not just about providing a brief training. It is something that if you really want to do it well and competently you really have to look at the entire fabric of the organization, so, starting with the documentation, how you ask certain questions, what information you are seeking from people. The reception staff like support staff - how a person is going to be treated when they walk in to their lobby, not just training clinicians. I think that you have to really look at that holistically and be able to make a commitment to do that well and competently on many different levels.



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I'll say that what I think is important to know is that sometimes we hear frequently that people come to us because they've been... they've had less than positive experiences in mainstream providers. They are well attended but and I'll give you an example of that. There is a person who is seeking services at a university because they had a death in their family and this happened to be a transgender person who went to their college counseling center to work on the grief issues and the person at the center, the therapist there said, "Well I can't work with you, you're transgender." I know this is a very brief way of putting it but that was essentially the message that the person took and the person said back, "Well you know my gender is probably the one thing in my life that right now that is very clear, very stable," and they said, "Well I just don't feel comfortable working with someone. I don't think I could adequately provide that service."

So in a sense I do think that that is what you know a good thing when a clinician really feels like they can't provide good quality care to be able to know when to refer out but I think it's essential that clinicians do get that skill set so that they can treat everyone adequately.

Well I think that it's important whenever I hear of health disparities that usually... that has more of a narrow focus in general literature about health and then I think that you really have to dig your mind through that to look at maybe mental health disparities and behavioral health disparities. So I think it's important for people who are going out into the field who may have an interest in that to look at a person holistically that mental health and wellness and behavioral health has a large role in a person's physical health and well being too so I would say to kind of expand. That would be my message.

Well I think that we do a fantastic job of accommodating folks regardless of their ability to pay. We, I say that we have a very, very diverse client base which is fantastic and diverse in so many ways and people who maybe wouldn't be able to afford therapy somewhere else is able to come in and sit with a licensed master's level or doctorate level clinician and pay very, very inexpensively for that service. So I think Mazzoni does a phenomenal job of supporting the mission of access for everyone in the community.