

**Organisational - Queer Affirmative Counselling Practice (QACP) Online Course,
August - September 2025**

Mariwala Health Initiative (MHI) started the Queer-Affirmative Counselling Practice (QACP) Course in January 2019 with 22 participants, and now, as of May 2025, we have crossed 750+ MHPs who have completed the QACP course. Moreover, QACP has extended its reach beyond individual practitioners, engaging in collaborations with government and international educational institutions.

To be part of the upcoming Organisational QACP Course, read below!

“An apology, in essence, has two dimensions, namely the acknowledgement of having done a wrong and the expression of a willingness to atone for it¹.”

Sec 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which criminalised non-normative sexualities, was read down on September 6th 2018. The judgement went beyond the detached language of the law to uphold the Right to Love for queer people. It acknowledged the oppression of a section of people pushed to the margins due to their genders and sexualities and stated that ‘History owes them an apology’.

The judgement also centres on collective responsibility. For too long, the mental health community has been complicit in upholding oppressive structures of gender binarism and heteronormativity by providing a "cure" for the non-normative. When we speak of being queer affirming, we are beginning to challenge these structures that pathologise and discriminate against queer persons and participate in promoting their wellbeing in a deliberate and affirming manner.

How might we, as mental health practitioners, contribute, generate and operationalise ways to make amends? This 6-day training is an opportunity for us to reorient ourselves to an anti-oppressive therapeutic practice. The training covers both perspective-building to recognise inequalities and their impact on mental health, and also provides tools to address distress and promote the well-being of LGBTQIA+ persons. These perspectives and tools will support practitioners to modify their ongoing practice to make it queer-affirmative.

¹Alternative Law Forum, (2018). Right To Love, Navtej Singh Johar v/s Union of India: A Transformative Constitution and the Rights of LGBT Persons, Available at: http://altlawforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/RightToLove_PDFVersion-1.pdf

Specific details about the Organisational QACP held online:

Private individual MHPs are often not able to offer affordable rates. To increase access to therapeutic services for the LGBTQI+ community, MHI has attempted this model of QACP for Organisations. The fee breakup for an online organisational course is unique because it is a reduced fee with a condition that QACP-trained counsellors engage in some discounted/ pro-bono work.

1. This QACP is **only open to organisations that can refer MHPs/ social workers/ counsellors/ psychologists who work at their organisation.**
2. MHI offers a discounted fee of **INR 10,000 for each participant** in this batch. The payment can be made by the participant individually or by the organisation. Please choose the correct option in the application form.
3. MHI absorbs the cost by charging only half the fee (INR 10,000) of the QACP course, and the rest is to be used to provide sessions to LGBTQI+ clients at lower rates.
4. The organisations that sign up for QACP will offer discounted fees of up to INR 10,000/- per participant who attends for clients from the LGBTQI+ community for a limited period within 6 months of completing the course.
5. Each organisation will independently work out the specifics of how to disburse this discount by offering pro-bono services or a sliding scale to LGBTQI+ clients.
6. Each MHP/ organisation that completes this course will be publicly listed on the MHI website for the next 6 months as offering discounts. This list will also be circulated within the LGBTQI+ community.
7. MHI will not monitor how discounts are disbursed. We believe that this should be a trust and ethics-led process.

Course schedule: 6 days

Dates

Module 1 - 21st, 22nd, 23rd August (Thursday to Saturday)

Module 2 - 18th, 19th, 20th September (Thursday to Saturday)

Timings

9 am to 5 pm every day.

Medium of Instruction: English

Platform: This is an online training program via the **Zoom platform**

Curriculum:

1. Understanding gender & sexuality-related norms
2. Interrogating gender-sexuality as social structures
3. Exploring sexuality in the personal and professional/ clinical context
4. Paradigms informing Queer Affirmative Counselling Practice
5. Working with Queer individuals and queer-related distress
6. Working with Queer individuals and their interpersonal relationships, addressing issues with family, peers and intimate relationships
7. Understanding the psy diagnostic frameworks from a queer affirmative lens
8. Operationalising Queer Affirmative Counselling Practice - queering some of the traditional approaches to clinical and counselling practice

***Please note:** This course will focus on both queer and trans mental health concerns, however, will not cover specifics related to gender affirmative therapies (GAT) or medical transition services for trans persons. Participants will be provided with links to resource materials related to GAT.

Registration: INR 10,000 for each participant.

Last Date for Applications: 13th July 2025.

How to apply?

Apply for the course by filling out the [Google Form here](#) by 13th July 2025.

For more information:

For further questions, please write to qacp@mariwalahealthinitiative.org with the subject line **OQACP, Online August September 2025**.

Selected applicants will be informed by **23rd July 2025**.

Faculty:

Shruti Chakravarty, PhD, (cis woman; pronouns: she, her) has 20 years of experience in the non-profit sector, as a mental health practitioner, researcher, trainer, and social worker. Her areas of engagement have been mental health, gender and sexuality, from a rights-based perspective. She has an independent therapeutic practice based in Mumbai, has in-depth experience working with LGBTQIA+ clients in the therapeutic space, and has co-authored Queer Affirmative Counselling Practice (QACP): A Resource Book for Mental Health Practitioners in India. She has completed her PhD on the subject of queer intimacies from Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Shruti is Chief Advisor at Mariwala Health Initiative (MHI, and also faculty at the Queer Affirmative Counselling Practice course run by MHI. She also leads the training vertical at MHI.

Pooja Nair (ciswoman, pronoun: she) has been part of the non-profit sector for over a decade. She has worked as a researcher, documentation consultant and trainer. She is a counsellor with an independent therapeutic practice based in Bombay. She has an MPhil from Tata Institute of Social Sciences and has worked in the areas of life-skills training, curriculum development, feminist theory, gender, sexuality, violence and child sexual abuse. She is also visiting faculty at the psychology department at KREA University. Additionally, she is a consultant therapist with Mariwala Health Initiative, and is also faculty at their flagship Queer Affirmative Counselling Practice Course, as well as co-author of the QACP Resource Book for mental health practitioners in India. Pooja also conducts trainings on peer counselling and suicide prevention in the LGBTQI+ community.

Gauri Shringarpure (ciswoman, pronoun: she/her) is a queer mental health practitioner with a private practice in Thane. She is an experienced gender-sexuality trainer, having conducted trainings for colleges and the NSS. She is a faculty at the Queer Affirmative Counselling Practice Course run by Mariwala Health Initiative. She is a positive psychology coach and active in conducting workshops on mental health and self-care. She is also a consumer behaviour consultant and researcher with over 25 years of experience in the field.