

## **Queer Affirmative Counselling Practice (QACP) In-Person Course, Mumbai, May 2025**

Mariwala Health Initiative (MHI) started the Queer-Affirmative Counselling Practice (QACP) Course in January 2019 with 22 participants and now, as of February 2025 we have crossed 730 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 Mumbai-based In-Person 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 it<sup>1</sup>.”*

Sec 377 of the Indian Penal Code that criminalised non-normative sexualities was read down on September 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup>Alternative 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](http://altlawforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/RightToLove_PDFVersion-1.pdf)

**Eligibility:**

This course is open to Mental Health Practitioners, viz. Psychologists, clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists, counsellors, social workers, and psychiatric social workers, preferably with experience of working with queer-identified clients/their families.

**Course schedule:** 6 days

**Dates**

**Module 1** - 8th, 9th and 10th May (Thursday to Saturday)

**Module 2** - 29th, 30th and 31st May (Thursday to Saturday)

**Timings**

9 am to 5 pm every day.

**Medium of Instruction:** English

**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:** Subsidised fee by MHI: 35,000 INR (Includes breakfast and lunch on course days)

**Venue:** Mumbai

## **Last Date for Applications: 23 March 2025**

### **How to apply?**

Apply for the course by filling out [the Google Form here](#) by 23rd March 2025.

### **For more information:**

For further questions, please write to [qacp@mariwalahealthinitiative.org](mailto:qacp@mariwalahealthinitiative.org) with the subject line **QACP In-Person Mumbai, May, 2025**.

**Selected applicants will be informed by 31st March 2025.** A limited number of scholarships are also available. Please indicate whether you'd like to avail a scholarship in the application form. You can also email MHI ([qacp@mariwalahealthinitiative.org](mailto:qacp@mariwalahealthinitiative.org)), with your reasons for seeking a scholarship, so that your request can be assessed.

Please note that scholarship requests are assessed only after the registrations are closed and the participants are selected.

### **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 counseling 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.