

# **Creating Welcoming Services for LGBT Older Adults...An Overview**

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# Agenda

- Define terms
- Explore messages we received
- Listen to voices of LGBT older adults
- Begin to think about how to make your organization more inclusive for LGBT older adults

# Informal Poll

Do you currently work with a LGBT older adult?

Do you know anyone who identifies LGBT?

# Facts about today's LGBT older adults

- There are expected to be around 3 million LGBT older adults by 2030 (double today's population)
- More than 80% of long term care in US provided by family members
- Compared with heterosexual counterparts, LGBT older adults are:
  - Twice as likely to be single
  - Twice as likely to live alone
  - Three to four times less likely to have children
- LGBT older adults are more likely to establish “families of choice”
  - 3 out of 4 expect to become caregivers
  - 1 in 5 are unsure who will care for them
  - Number increased to 1 in 3 of those without partners

*Sources: Improving the Lives of LGBT Older Adults (2010) , Out and Aging (2006), National LGBT Health and Aging Center (2011)*

# Facts about today's LGBT older adults

- Government laws and corporate policies currently exclude extension of rights to same gender partners
  - Social security, Medicaid, FMLA, pension rights, visitation, Veterans benefits, end of life decisions, estate taxes, and more
- Stigma still exists for many around their LGBT identity
  - More than 20% do not disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity to their physician
- Almost two-thirds have been victimized three or more times because of their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity
- One third report instances of depression

# Key events as seen through eyes of LGBT older adults

- 1933 – 45: An estimated 50,000 gay men convicted in Nazi Germany under Paragraph 175
  - Between 5000 – 15,000 sent to concentration camps
- 1941: US Selective Service classifies “homosexual proclivities” as disqualifying condition for military draft and service
- 1952: Supreme Court upholds laws banning immigration of homosexuals
- 1953: Eisenhower signs order declaring “sexual proclivities” as security risk, resulting in denial of employment and grounds for dismissal of known LGBT citizens

# Key events as seen through eyes of LGBT older adults

- 1953: American Psychiatric Association lists homosexuality as “sociopathic personality disturbance”
  - 1968: Reclassified as “sexual deviation”
- 1965: Illinois becomes first state to decriminalize consensual relations between consenting adults of the same gender
- 1969: Time Magazine refers to homosexuality as a “pernicious sickness” in a cover story article
- 1940s through 1970s: Police raids on gay and lesbian bars common in most urban cities
  - Pictures of those arrested often featured in newspapers

# Inclusion

*The active, intentional and ongoing engagement of people so that each person feels welcomed, valued, respected and supported*

# What our LGBT Older Adults Need

Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment includes three key words “see, hear, feel”.

- ❖ See: In the physical environment are there positive signs/symbols displayed (rainbow flags, images of same sex couples), posters/info relevant to the local LGBT community, upcoming events, newspapers, magazines.
- ❖ Hear: The language heard within the agency. Written forms and assessments do not assume heterosexuality as the norm (ie, partner, gender neutral language); Broad definition of “family” to include family of choice; Staff and volunteers knowledgeable and comfortable in the use of inclusive language.

# Older Adults need.....

- ❖ Feel: The environment gives a sense of being safe and affirmed. LGBT seniors and their families/friends identity is acknowledged, affirmed and respected;

Non-discrimination policies are in place and followed;

Access to processes that allow for issues and concerns to be raised and communication for appropriate follow through.

# Next Steps

- ❖ What have you learned?
- ❖ What questions and/or concerns do you have?
- ❖ General feedback/evaluation.

# Contact Information

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