



Providing education,  
tools and resources  
to improve the  
quality of life of LGBT  
people as they age

## CREATING AN LGBT WELCOMING SERVICE

We all hope to be welcomed when we walk through a door, yet we know LGBT older adults fear, and sometimes receive, poor service and abuse when looking for help. The 2012 survey of Twin Cities lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) older adults<sup>1</sup> showed fewer than one in five believed they would receive sensitive services if a provider knew they were members of the LGBT community. This fear often keeps elders from seeking services and can make their situation worse.

### How do you signal your service is LGBT welcoming?

We know that most LGBT baby boomers and older adults would prefer to use the services of providers that welcome everyone, including LGBT clients. They look for signals that indicate a service is LGBT friendly such as:

#### Interpersonal communication & behavior signals

- Partners and same-sex spouses are acknowledged and included in care discussions.
- Provider practices good body language that is supportive and does not show surprise, shock, or other negative emotions when LGBT status is revealed

#### Intake and interviewing signals

- Intake form language includes options for diverse sexual orientations and gender identities

#### Onsite visual signals

- LGBT artwork or images of same-sex couples
- Rainbow stickers or other LGBT recognized signage
- Prominently posted inclusive or non-discrimination statements

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<sup>1</sup>2012 Twin Cities LGBT Aging Needs Assessment Final Report available at [www.trainingtoserve.org](http://www.trainingtoserve.org).

## 10 SIMPLE THINGS YOUR ORGANIZATION CAN DO...

- Include articles on LGBT topics or clients in your newsletter
- Make LGBT resources such as the LGBT Aging Resource Guide available to your clients and families
- Update assessments and forms to include LGBT welcoming language relating to sexual orientation and gender identity
- Include visible anti-discrimination statements on materials or in your office
- Train staff on LGBT aging sensitivity
- Use same-sex couples or transgender clients in marketing materials
- Advertise or list your organization in publications used by the LGBT community – this includes employee recruitment
- Create materials from your organization specifically for LGBT clients and families
- Hang rainbow or inclusive/safe space signs in public areas
- Sponsor LGBT community events to increase visibility within the LGBT community