

# Aging with Pride



A Guide to Creating Inclusive Services for LGBTQ2S+  
Older Adults

Ministry of Seniors and Housing, Government of Alberta

Aging with Pride: A Guide to Creating Inclusive Services for LGBTQ2S+ Older Adults

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The Government of Alberta would be interested to hear about your experiences and successes as you use the guide. Please feel free to email a summary of your organization's inclusive services for LGBTQ2S+ older adults along with any questions or concerns to [seniorsinformation@gov.ab.ca](mailto:seniorsinformation@gov.ab.ca).

# Acknowledgements

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Seniors are a vibrant and vital part of our province as parents and grandparents, mentors and friends, employers and employees.

The Government of Alberta is committed to meeting the needs of this diverse population through programs and services that help older adults remain healthy, active and connected to their communities.

Addressing the social inclusion and full participation of older adults requires action and collaboration across organizations. The Government of Alberta thanks the contributors who helped make this guide a reality:

- Alberta Association of Seniors Centres
- Alberta Health Services, Sexual and Gender Diversity Advisory Group
- Alberta Seniors Communities & Housing Association
- Ashbourne
- Centre for Sexuality
- Edmonton Pride Seniors Group
- LGBTQ Elders Calgary
- Operation Friendship Seniors Society
- Rainbow Elders Calgary
- SHARP Foundation
- Westwinds Communities

This guide would not have been possible without the expertise of individuals and organizations working every day to support older adults and LGBTQ2S+ communities across Alberta.

# Welcome

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Every organization serving seniors strives to create an environment where clients, staff, volunteers and visitors can feel authentic and comfortable. To be truly person-centered in this pursuit, it is important to recognize and meet the needs of all older adults<sup>1</sup>, including those from LGBTQ2S+ communities.

Today, there are both legal and social expectations that LGBTQ2S+ older adults will be able to access programs and services that are inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory. To this end, this guide will help you:

- Increase your awareness of LGBTQ2S+ older adults' issues and needs.
- Identify concrete actions your organization can take to be more inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ2S+ older adults.

|    |                  |
|----|------------------|
| L  | Lesbian          |
| G  | Gay              |
| B  | Bisexual         |
| T  | Transgender      |
| Q  | Queer            |
| 2S | Two-spirit       |
| +  | Other identities |

## Who Should Read this Guide

This guide is for any organization working with older adults as volunteers, staff, clients, residents or participants, including:

- Seniors' centres and associations;
- Community outreach and frontline service providers; and
- Housing providers.

## Inclusive and Affirming: Defined

Creating and maintaining an inclusive and affirming environment is an ongoing process requiring intentional and systemic organizational work – particularly as different staff, older adults, volunteers and leaders join an organization.



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<sup>1</sup> In this guide, the term “older adult” generally refers to individuals aged 65 and older.

In the context of this guide, an organization is inclusive and affirming when:

- LGBTQ2S+ older adults can access programs and services that are appropriate and sensitive to their needs;
- LGBTQ2S+ older adults can safely access programs and services without fear of discrimination, bullying or having to hide any aspect of their identities; and
- LGBTQ2S+ older adults are recognized and celebrated as a vital part of the broader community.



Although this guide provides a foundation to work from, each organization will establish its own goals and measures of what it means to be inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ2S+ older adults.

**Everyone** has a sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression – not just people in LGBTQ2S+ communities.

## Terminology 101

As outlined in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, there are many different ways to describe ourselves. Using accurate terms is one way of showing respect for LGBTQ2S+ older adults.

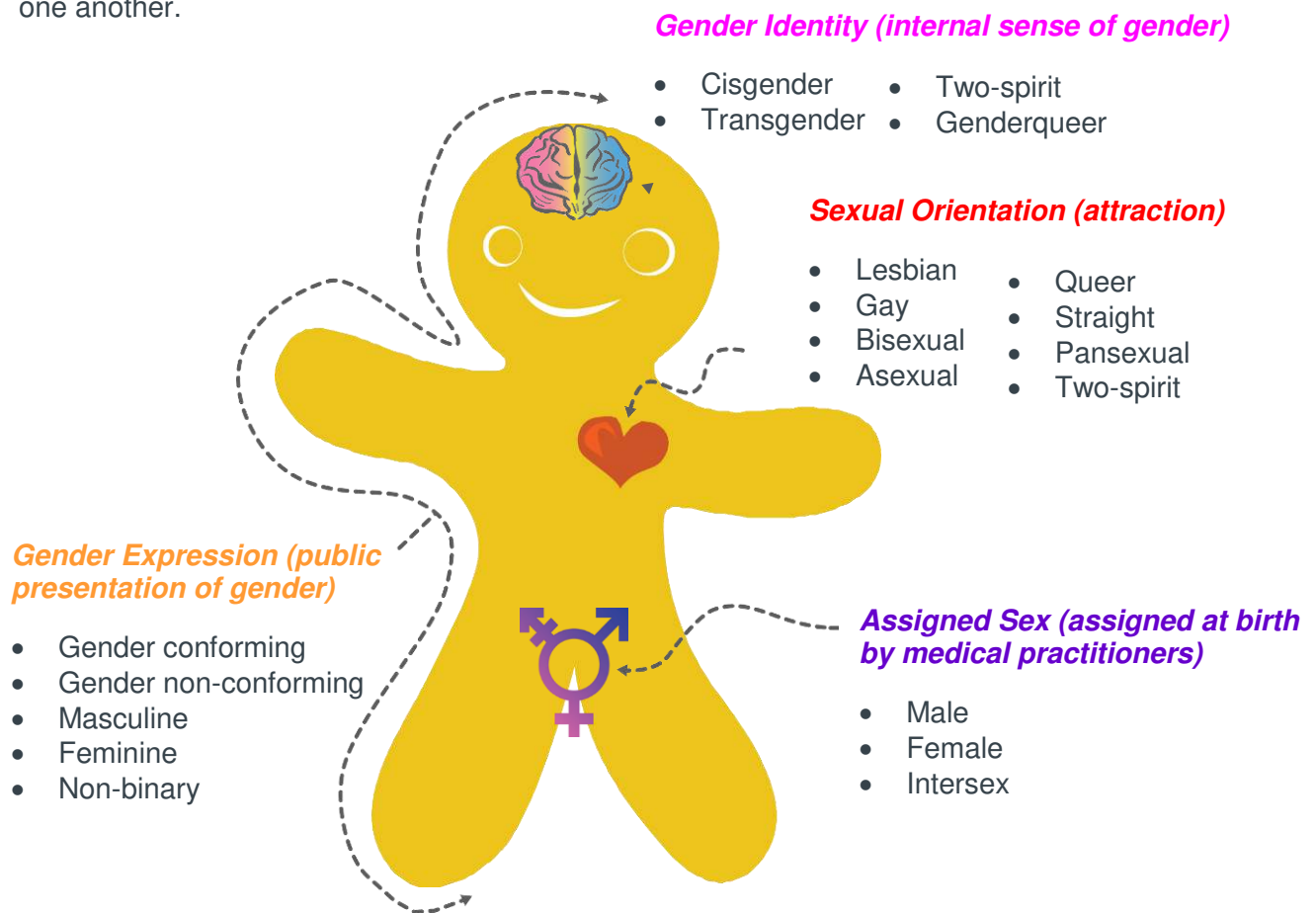
**LGBTQ2S+** refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirit. The “plus” refers

to other identities that are not captured in the LGBTQ2S acronym. A Glossary of Terms is provided in Appendix A.

It is important to know that sexual orientation and gender identity are not the same thing. For example, a trans person could identify as lesbian, gay, straight and so on.



This illustration<sup>2</sup> shows the most common terms you might hear, and how they are connected to one another.



## Sex and Gender

**Transgender/trans:** A transgender person's gender identity is not in line with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, you were assigned male at birth, but identify as a woman. You may call yourself a trans woman or, simply, a woman.

Trans is also used by some people who have diverse gender identities and gender expressions. Note, the correct term is transgender – not transgendered.

**Cisgender:** Pronounced "sis-gender," a cisgender person's gender identity is in line with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, you were assigned female at birth and you identify as a woman.

<sup>2</sup> Illustration adapted from "Genderbread Person v4.0" by Killermann (2018) and the Association of American Medical Colleges (2016).

## Two-Spirit People in Canada

**Two-spirit** is “a term some Indigenous people use to identify themselves. Indigenous people believe that Two Spirit individuals house both the male and the female spirit and that the degree of dominance of each spirit ultimately impacts the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual identity of each Two Spirit person.”<sup>3</sup>

Being two-spirit is tied to **cultural identity**, but is not a universally recognized Indigenous term. Some Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ people do not identify as two-spirit, and some two-spirit people do not identify as LGBTQ2S+. Being two-spirit may relate to a person’s gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

Two-spirit people have a tradition of being **valued and respected** in Indigenous communities, often playing important spiritual and social roles. Two-spirit people today are working to educate and raise awareness about their history and role.

Language and terminology have historical contexts, and continue to evolve over time. Terms used in the past may no longer be socially acceptable or respectful.

For example, “queer” is a term that has been reclaimed by some younger LGBTQ2S+ people. Seniors more likely grew up with “queer” being used as a slur.

The key is to **listen for, inquire about** and **use** the language **people use for themselves**.

Stay up-to-date on terminology by visiting *The LGBTQIA Resource Centre Glossary* (<https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated>), *The Radical Copyeditor* (<https://radicalcopyeditor.com>) or *The Qmunity Glossary* (<https://qmunity.ca/resources>).

“I had enough experience in my early life with people saying, “Hey, he’s a queer” ... **The word’s very loaded** from back in those years.”

*LGBTQ2S+ older adult (LIFE ElderCare, 2017)*

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<sup>3</sup> Genovese, Rousell, & Two Spirit Circle of Edmonton Society (2011).



# LGBTQ2S+ Older Adults in Context

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It is difficult to know exactly how many older adults identify as LGBTQ2S+, as this community is under-studied and often invisible in both seniors' sectors and LGBTQ2S+ communities.

However, from available data, it is estimated there are anywhere from **16,000 to 81,000** LGBTQ2S+ older adults in Alberta today.<sup>4</sup>

LGBTQ2S+ older adults are incredibly diverse, with widely varying experiences based on differences in gender, ethnicity, race, income level, geographic location, ability and so on. Despite individual diversity, there are broad shared social, legal and cultural experiences.

## What Makes LGBTQ2S+ Older Adults Unique?

Today's seniors largely grew up during a time when being LGBTQ2S+ was considered a criminal offence, immoral or a mental health condition.

Consider the Canadian milestones experienced by Pat, who was born in 1948 and is now more than 70 years old.<sup>5</sup> Pat was:

A 67-year old transgender woman of color living in Calgary will have different needs and realities than an 88-year old gay man living in Fort McMurray – yet **both** may consider themselves **part of a LGBTQ2S+ community**.

- 21 years old when homosexual activity was decriminalized under the Criminal Code of Canada (1969).
- 25 when homosexuality was no longer classified as a mental illness in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (1973).
- 29 when Canada's Immigration Act removed homosexuals from the list of inadmissible classes (1978).

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<sup>4</sup> Estimates are based on 2.6 to 13 per cent of a population of 620,000 adults 65 or older in Alberta, as of September 2019. A 2012 study found that 2.6 per cent of Canadians 65 years of age and older identified as LGBT (Forum Research, 2012). A more recent study found 13 per cent of Canadians age 18+ identify as LGBT (Jasmin Roy Foundation, 2017), with little evidence to suggest that statistics for the general adult population are different for adults over age 65.

<sup>5</sup> Historical timeline content adapted from Alberta Health Services (2018), CBC News (2015, 2017) and Canadian Encyclopedia (2015).

- 33 when the Morality Control Unit of the Edmonton Police raided the Pisces Health Spa under bawdy house laws, arresting and publishing the names of 56 men (1981).
- 43 when Edmonton college instructor Delwin Vriend was fired from his job because he was gay. It was legal to discriminate based on sexual orientation in Alberta (1991).
- 48 when the Alberta Supreme Court made it illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation (1998).
- 57 when same-sex marriage was legalized across Canada (2005).
- 68 when Alberta added gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds from discrimination to Alberta's Human Rights Act (2016).
- 69 when the Government of Canada delivered an apology to LGBTQ2S+ people for "state-sponsored, systematic oppression and rejection,"<sup>6</sup> and added gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds from discrimination to Canada's Human Rights Act (2017).

Over their lifetimes, "82% [of LGBT older adults] have been victimized at least once because of their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, and **64% have been victimized three or more times.**"

*(Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2011)*

In this cultural climate, LGBTQ2S+ older adults often grew up with socially-acceptable homophobic, transphobic and biphobic language, humor and bullying. Many experienced open discrimination and hostility when accessing legal, social and healthcare services, and as a result avoided these systems in favour of their own social supports.

"If I come out to the family, I risk **giving up** the ability to hold my grandkids."

*LGBTQ2S+ older adult (Pride Seniors Project, 2015)*

LGBTQ2S+ older adults may have chosen to keep their sexual and gender identities hidden for much of their lives. For some LGBTQ2S+ older adults, their private homes became one of the only places they could be safe and authentic.

Those who did come out to others may have experienced estrangement from biological family members, internal conflicts related to their cultural or religious identities, and trauma when the deaths of their partners and chosen family members were not recognized or validated by others. Disenfranchised grief and

<sup>6</sup> CBC News (2017).

**“I **depended** on my neighbours. I didn’t know how they felt about gay people, and so I just hopped **right back in the closet.**”**

*LGBTQ2S+ older adult  
(LIFE ElderCare, 2017)*

trauma was and continues to be a concern for those LGBTQ2S+ older adults who lived through the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s.

At the same time, LGBTQ2S+ older adults also learned how to advocate and build communities during these periods of activism and social change. By creating families of choice made up of trusted friends, LGBTQ2S+ older adults often developed strong values of self-reliance, resilience and the ability to find creative solutions in the face of adversity.<sup>7</sup>

## Current Realities for LGBTQ2S+ Older Adults

Discrimination in housing, employment, legal, social service and healthcare systems has real implications for LGBTQ2S+ older adults. When compared to non-LGBTQ2S+ peers, LGBTQ2S+ older adults:

- Are more likely to experience mental and physical illnesses and health disparities, particularly among transgender people;<sup>8 10</sup>
- Have smaller support networks over time;<sup>9</sup>
- Are more concerned about “being lonely and growing old alone;”<sup>9</sup>
- Are more likely to live in poverty and have fewer financial resources;<sup>9 10</sup> and
- Are less likely to “reach out to providers, seniors centers, meal programs and other programs because they fear sexual orientation- or gender-based discrimination and harassment.”<sup>10</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Alberta Health Services (2018), Espinoza (2014), Fredriksen-Goldsen, Hoy-Ellis, Goldsen, Emler, & Hooyman (2014), Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. (2011), Kim, Jen, & Fredriksen-Goldsen (2017), Movement Advancement Project & SAGE: Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (2010), Pride Seniors Project (2015).

<sup>8</sup> Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. (2011).

<sup>9</sup> Espinoza (2014).

<sup>10</sup> SAGE: Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (2018).

LGBTQ2S+ older adults also share unique demographic factors that can impact their aging experience. For example, when compared to non-LGBTQ2S+ peers, LGBTQ2S+ older adults:

- Are twice as likely to live alone;<sup>11</sup>
- Are twice as likely to be single;<sup>11</sup>
- Are four times less likely to have children;<sup>10</sup> and
- Are three times more likely to have provided care to friends.<sup>10</sup>

**“34 per cent** of LGBT older adults fear having to **re-closet** themselves when seeking **seniors’ housing**.”

*(SAGE: Services & Advocacy for LGBT Elders, 2018)*

Despite some shared demographic and historical experiences, it is important to recognize that there is also broad diversity within and among LGBTQ2S+ older adults:

- **Indigenous people** in Canada have been negatively impacted by the Indian Residential School System, the Sixties Scoop and other forms of discrimination. Intergenerational trauma for Indigenous people may be compounded by homophobia, transphobia and racism.<sup>12</sup>
- **People of colour** have unique histories and experiences as members of racial and ethnic communities, including documented higher rates of ongoing day-to-day discrimination.<sup>13</sup> Discrimination and stigma can negatively impact mental health and social opportunities. Unfortunately, LGBTQ2S+ people of colour may experience homophobia and transphobia in racial and ethnic communities, as well as racism in LGBTQ2S+ communities.
- **New immigrant and refugee** seniors in Canada can experience increased marginalization and vulnerability

“People often feel *any* housing is a plus. ...

You’re dealing with a **triple whammy** if you’re **Aboriginal, gay, and senior.**”

*LGBTQ2S+ older adult (Pride Seniors Project, 2015)*

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<sup>11</sup> Movement Advancement Project & SAGE: Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (2010).

<sup>12</sup> Genovese, Rousell, & Two Spirit Circle of Edmonton Society (2011).

<sup>13</sup> Kim, Jen, & Fredriksen-Goldsen (2017).

due to economic, cultural and language barriers.<sup>14</sup> While seniors represent only a small portion of new immigrants and refugees (3.3%), whereas 30% of seniors in Canada are immigrants, and the former are more likely to arrive in Canada through the family reunification program to support their families.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that not all



immigrants are newcomers, and that the experiences of new immigrants and immigrants may vary. Immigrant and refugee older adults are more likely to live in poverty and have poorer health status than other seniors in Canada.<sup>15</sup> Although there is a wide range of immigration experiences and pathways, some may be arriving from countries that have different legal and social approaches to LGBTQ2S+ populations.

- **Multiple generations** exist within the 65+ age cohort, including the Silent Generation (born in the 1920s-1940s) and Baby Boomers (born in the 1940s-1960s). Baby Boomers came of age in an era of civil rights activism and legal challenges to LGBTQ2S+ discrimination, while members of the Silent Generation may be more likely to view sexual orientation and gender identity as a very private and personal issue.<sup>16</sup>

**“You’re asking me to *live with people* who *bullied* me 40 years ago?”**

*Gay older man discussing seniors’ housing in Alberta*

**“One of the residents, we were talking about our children. And she says, “Oh, where’s your *husband*?” I said, “I never had a husband...My partner was a woman and we raised a son.”**

**“It got out and I *thought, oh no, here we go again.* Gay hate.”**

*Lesbian resident living in seniors’ housing (Lambda Legal, 2016)*

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<sup>14</sup> Zenev and Associates (2015).

<sup>15</sup> Employment and Social Development Canada (2018).

<sup>16</sup> Fredriksen-Goldsen, Hoy-Ellis, Goldsen, Emlet, & Hooyman (2014).

## Your Responsibility as a Service Provider

Although organizations strive to be inclusive and welcoming, there can be organizational barriers to providing appropriate services for LGBTQ2S+ older adults.

For example, organizations may:

- Not realize or recognize that they serve seniors who identify as LGBTQ2S+;
- Maintain they treat all people equally and fairly regardless of gender or sexuality by taking a “don’t ask, don’t see, don’t tell”<sup>17</sup> approach;
- Operate from specific religious and cultural values that impact how LGBTQ2S+ issues are perceived by staff and volunteers; and
- Have staff who are uncomfortable with or lack knowledge about sexuality and sexual identities of seniors in general.

“You serve LGBTQ2S+ seniors, **whether or not you know it.**”

*Alberta LGBTQ2S+ educator*

Both the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Alberta Human Rights Act protect people from discrimination based on their actual or perceived gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.<sup>18</sup>

### Protected Grounds in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*<sup>18</sup>

**Gender:** The state of being male, female, transgender or two-spirit.

**Gender identity:** Refers to a person’s internal, individual experience of gender, which may not coincide with the sex assigned to them at birth. A person may have a sense of being a woman, a man, both, or neither. Gender identity is not the same as sexual orientation, which is also protected.

**Gender expression:** Refers to the varied ways in which a person expresses their gender, which can include a combination of dress, demeanour, social behaviour and other factors.

**Sexual orientation:** This ground includes protection from differential treatment based on a person’s actual or presumed sexual orientation, whether gay, lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual or asexual.

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<sup>17</sup> Saskatoon Council on Aging & Out Saskatoon (2014).

<sup>18</sup> Alberta Human Rights Commission (2018).



In Alberta, organizations cannot discriminate against people in the following areas, among others:<sup>18</sup>

- Statements, publications, notices, signs, symbols, emblems or other representations that are published, issued or displayed before the public;
- Goods, services, accommodation or facilities customarily available to the public; and
- Tenancy.

LGBTQ2S+ older adults who feel their rights have not been respected can make a formal complaint to the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

## Inclusive Language

Using inclusive language can help to avoid making incorrect assumptions. In the context of this guide, inclusive language is particularly important when discussing gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, family structure and relationships.

**Pronouns** are an important part of inclusive language. Pronouns are words used to refer to someone instead of their name, such as he/him, she/her and they/their. Trans people may have different pronouns and names on their legal documentation. Regardless, it is important to use the pronouns and name a person goes by in their daily life – just like if someone asked to be called Bob rather than Robert.

It is important to **listen for, inquire about** and **use** the language people use for themselves. Using correct pronouns and inclusive language helps everyone feel safe, respected and understood.<sup>19</sup>

## Discrimination and Bias

Individuals are often not aware of their everyday beliefs and biases. When someone intends to treat everyone the same, they may actually end up treating everyone as if they are straight and cisgender until proven different.

Sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are important parts of a person's identity, with implications for one's health, wellbeing and hopes for the future.

Here are several key terms to know in relation to LGBTQ2S+ discrimination and bias.

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<sup>19</sup> Alberta Health Services (2017).

“I genuinely haven’t heard any homophobic comments from members of staff or in fact anything judgemental or negative said, which is a lovely thing.

**But because I haven’t heard it, that doesn’t mean the issue still isn’t one which is very real for some people.** As a straight woman my experience and sensitivities are different and I might not have picked up on things.”

*Palliative care provider  
(Marie Curie Foundation, 2017)*

**Homophobia, transphobia and biphobia** refer to an aversion, intolerance, fear or hatred towards LGBTQ2S+ people and communities – specifically towards lesbian and gay people, trans people and bisexual people, respectively.

**Heterosexism and heteronormativity** can be more subtle. These refer to the belief that heterosexuality is normal and there are clear male/female gender binaries. For example, a heteronormative bias would include asking about someone’s husband or wife when you first meet, rather than using a more inclusive term such as partner. Programming, language or imagery that implies all seniors are heterosexual also demonstrate a heteronormative bias.

The terms **cisgenderism** or **cissexism** might also be heard. These are when assumptions are

made that everyone is cisgender by default, with transgender identities being stigmatized or denied.

These biases and beliefs can be subtle, unconscious and unintentional, but the impacts on LGBTQ2S+ communities are real. By learning about history, current realities, terminology and inclusive language, you can work with LGBTQ2S+ older adults from a place of greater authenticity and trust.



# Strategies for Inclusion

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The remainder of this guide outlines six broad areas your organization can address to create a more inclusive and affirming environment for LGBTQ2S+ older adults.<sup>20</sup>

- 1) **Champions and Leadership**
- 2) **LGBTQ2S+ Community Engagement**
- 3) **Formalized Policies**
- 4) **Environment and Experience**
- 5) **Education and Training**
- 6) **Program Implementation**

These strategies are grounded in the following values:

- **Person-centered and strengths-based approach.** Every LGBTQ2S+ older adult has their own personal experiences and context. It is important to recognize and build on LGBTQ2S+ older adults' strengths and resilience in order to support their unique needs.
- **Multiple LGBTQ2S+ communities.** There is no single homogenous LGBTQ2S+ community or voice. Rather, there is broad diversity within and between LGBTQ2S+ communities. It is important to engage and learn from multiple perspectives within LGBTQ2S+ communities.
- **Language is powerful.** Language influences how people see themselves and how people see others. It is important to learn and use language that is inclusive and respectful of LGBTQ2S+ communities and supports self-definition.
- **Diversity beyond LGBTQ2S+ identity.** Many aspects of identity affect our everyday experiences, including our age, gender, race, ethnicity, geographic location, income, ability and so on. It is important to consider the multiple and intersecting identities of LGBTQ2S+ older adults, in addition to their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
- **Imperfection and ongoing learning.** Creating an inclusive and affirming environment for LGBTQ2S+ older adults is an ongoing process, and people will make mistakes along the way. It is important to actively seek new learning that will help the broader community do better and be better.

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<sup>20</sup> Titles of the strategies for inclusion are adapted from Daley, MacDonnell, & St. Pierre (2016).

# 1. Champions and Leadership



## What

Individuals at any level in an organization can lead the way when it comes to creating a more inclusive and affirming environment for LGBTQ2S+ older adults. As a champion and ally, you may individually implement new behaviors and practices to be more inclusive in your daily work. However, in order to make broader change across an organization, it is important to pay attention to how you build partnerships and gain support to shift organizational culture.



## How

- ☐ Bring together natural champions to discuss what it means to be an inclusive and affirming environment for LGBTQ2S+ older adults. Natural champions are the people in your organization who are familiar with LGBTQ2S+ issues and may already be working to create a more inclusive and affirming environment for LGBTQ2S+ older adults, including allies, seniors, staff, board members or volunteers.
- ☐ Map out what your organization is currently doing to create a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ2S+ older adults. Use this analysis to identify things you could start, stop or continue doing, including what support or resources you need in order to move forward and potential barriers to making change.
- ☐ Identify who else needs to be on board in order to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for LGBTQ2S+ older adults. This may include funders, regulators, leadership teams, other older adults/residents, frontline staff, board members or volunteers. Identify formal and informal avenues you could use to introduce the issues and concerns of LGBTQ2S+ older adults to these stakeholders.
- ☐ Identify how having a more inclusive and affirming environment for LGBTQ2S+ older adults aligns with existing goals or mandates in your organization. For example, there may be alignment with strategic plans, stated values or funder requirements. Draft key messages highlighting these alignments and use them when proposing changes or new ideas to leadership in your organization.



## Tools

- ✓ [Appendix B – Defining the challenge](#)
- ✓ [Appendix C – Communicating change](#)



### **Inclusion in Action:**

#### **Ashbourne**

Ashbourne is a non-profit housing provider located in Edmonton, Alberta offering independent and assisted living apartments for older adults.

Ashbourne is well-known in local LGBTQ2S+ communities as a respectful and inclusive organization. This has been the result of purposeful and concrete actions taken by leadership in Ashbourne, including:

- Partnering with The Pride Center of Edmonton;
- Being a member of the Edmonton Pride Seniors Group;
- Receiving Affirming Status from the United Church of Canada, which formally affirms the organization as inclusive for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities;
- Hosting a booth at Edmonton Pride celebrations, staffed by seniors who live at Ashbourne; and
- Creating a vision statement centered on inclusivity: “Our vision is of a community where people are welcomed regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identification, faith or cognitive/physical abilities.”

The leadership team of Ashbourne shared the following advice for other organizations seeking to be more inclusive and affirming for LGBTQ2S+ older adults:

“What we can do is twofold. First, create and insist on a respectful environment and community. We need to act in circumstances when this is not the case. Policies need to be clear about what respect does and does not look like, and what happens when discrimination/bullying occurs.

“Second, create opportunities for people to get to know each other based on a person’s assets or strengths, so people can see the essence of others and not a label. Encourage participation and leadership from older adults themselves.

“The process at Ashbourne continues and will not end in the foreseeable future as we work to maintain what we have achieved as new staff and residents come to Ashbourne. Creating and maintaining a culture that promotes welcoming inclusion is a continuous task.”

Find out more at <http://theashbourne.ca>.

## 2. LGBTQ2S+ Community Engagement



### What

An important principle within many marginalized communities is, “Nothing about us, without us.” It is important to put the voices of LGBTQ2S+ older adults at the center of your efforts to become more inclusive and affirming so your efforts are meaningful and relevant.



### How

- ☐ Intentionally engage with and listen to the voices of LGBTQ2S+ older adults when identifying strategies and designing programs. This may include formal consultation through an advisory group, engagement event or Resident and Family Council.<sup>21</sup>
- ☐ Develop working relationships and referral networks with organizations that have specialized knowledge related to the needs of LGBTQ2S+ older adults, such as healthcare providers who understand the medical needs of transgender older adults, cultural supports for two-spirit older adults or settlement services friendly to LGBTQ2S+ newcomers.
- ☐ Provide tangible support and resources for initiatives led by LGBTQ2S+ older adults. This may mean contributing meeting space, providing administrative support, acting as a fiscal agent for funding applications, sharing staff expertise and promoting events.
- ☐ Conduct a needs assessment to understand gaps, issues, and opportunities within your organization to better meet the needs of LGBTQ2S+ older adults.
- ☐ Assess and address barriers to community engagement. For example, it may be difficult for LGBTQ2S+ older adults to work with you due to social or cultural barriers, lack of transportation, language differences and inaccessible facilities.
- ☐ Partner with academic institutions to engage in high-quality and ethically-sound research regarding the experiences and needs of LGBTQ2S+ older adults. This will help increase understanding and identify better practices to support this often-overlooked population.

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<sup>21</sup> In Alberta, residents in long-term care and licensed supportive living facilities and their families have the right to establish self-governing councils. These councils enable residents and families to discuss concerns and issues related to quality of life with operator staff. Chosen family and friends are included in the definition of “family” used for these councils (Government of Alberta, 2018).





## Tools

- ✓ [Appendix D – Engagement spectrum and methods](#)
- ✓ [Appendix E – Empathy mapping](#)



### **Inclusion in Action: Sage Seniors Association & Edmonton Pride Seniors Group**

Sage Seniors Association (Sage) is a non-profit organization providing social services, health and wellness programming for seniors in Edmonton, Alberta.

Edmonton Pride Seniors Group is a grassroots, volunteer-run group working to raise awareness and support inclusion of LGBTQ2S+ older adults.

Since 2014, Sage and the Edmonton Pride Seniors Group have shared resources and supported one another's work. As a large, registered charity, Sage acts as an intermediary for grant applications, manages funding, provides meeting space and promotes the group's events and initiatives.

Meanwhile, the Edmonton Pride Seniors Group has introduced new volunteers, community events and a more inclusive atmosphere within Sage.

Find out more at [www.epsg.ca](http://www.epsg.ca).

### 3. Formalized Policies



#### What

Formal policies and procedures help set expectations and establish consistency across an organization. To become more inclusive, your organization may need to review or create policies related to harassment and bullying, confidentiality, data collection, recruitment, performance measurement and other areas of operation. Policies in these areas help everyone know their roles and responsibilities in creating a more inclusive and affirming environment for not only LGBTQ2S+ older adults, but also LGBTQ2S+ staff, volunteers, family members and visitors.



#### How

##### ***Discrimination and harassment***

- ☐ Ensure your organization has a formal anti-discrimination policy addressing discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. This will help ensure your organization is in alignment with current Canadian and Alberta human rights legislation.
- ☐ Include references to homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in policies related to bullying, abuse or harassment of staff, clients and volunteers.
- ☐ Display anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies or signage in places visible to seniors, staff, volunteers, families and visitors.
- ☐ Create formal avenues for LGBTQ2S+ older adults to voice complaints and concerns to your organization, including anonymous options.

##### ***Data management***

- ☐ Ensure your organization has data management and confidentiality practices protecting older adults' personal information, including consequences for disclosing



#### **Deep Dive: Data collection**

The National Resource Center on LGBT Aging offers a free guide to collecting data on sexual orientation and gender identity. “Inclusive Questions for Older Adults: A Practical Guide to Collecting Data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity” is available at [www.lgbtagingcenter.org](http://www.lgbtagingcenter.org).

information without consent. Policies should apply to anyone who may have access to personal information.

- ☐ Proactively provide information about your organization's confidentiality and data management policies, including what personal information is collected, why the information is collected, how it is stored and who has access to it. This will help LGBTQ2S+ older adults make informed decisions about how much information they choose to share with a service provider.
- ☐ Collect data about gender identity and sexual orientation sensitively and purposefully, including options not to disclose this information. This will help you better understand who you serve and support advocacy efforts. As stated by the Diverse Elders Coalition, "diverse communities have different health, language, economic and social needs, and those needs cannot be recognized or met if we don't collect the data. ... If your organization serves diverse elders, it is recommended to collect comprehensive, disaggregated data about our racial, ethnic and LGBT identities."<sup>22</sup>

### ***Recruitment and hiring***

- ☐ Advertise job openings, board member and volunteer positions through media and networks tied to LGBTQ2S+ communities. This will help you intentionally recruit staff, board members and volunteers that reflect the diversity of the communities you serve.
- ☐ During interviews, include questions that address diversity and inclusion values and practices. These types of questions help demonstrate your organizational culture and set expectations.



#### **Deep Dive: Recruitment**

The Human Resource Council for the Non-Profit Sector provides tools to support more inclusive recruitment and hiring practices in Canada. Learn more at <http://hrcouncil.ca>.

### ***Outcomes and performance measurement***

- ☐ Add diversity and inclusion outcomes and indicators to your evaluation or performance measurement frameworks. For example, high-level outcomes may include:
  - LGBTQ2S+ older adults can access programs and services appropriate and sensitive to their needs;

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<sup>22</sup> Diverse Elders Coalition (2018).

- LGBTQ2S+ older adults can safely access programs and services without fear of discrimination, bullying or having to hide any aspect of their identities; and
  - LGBTQ2S+ older adults are recognized and celebrated as a vital part of the community.
- ☐ Undertake a formal auditing or certification process to assess LGBTQ2S+ inclusiveness within your organization.



## Tools

- ✓ [Appendix F – Formal auditing and certifications](#)

## 4. Environment and Experience



### What

LGBTQ2S+ older adults will experience your organization as safe and welcoming based on what they can see and hear in the physical space, including reading materials, posters, language and terminology on paperwork/forms. This is where your behind-the-scenes work to become more inclusive is made visible to the people you serve. However, it is important you do not promote yourself as LGBTQ2S+ inclusive (e.g., displaying rainbow symbols), if foundational work has not yet been done to ensure LGBTQ2S+ older adults will have a positive experience in your organization.



### How

- ☐ Review paperwork/forms and databases to ensure they use inclusive language and current terminology. This includes providing options for a range of titles (e.g., Ms., Mx.), gender identities (e.g., man, transgender), and pronouns (e.g., she/her), including options to not disclose this information.
- ☐ Review paperwork/forms to ensure you are only collecting information that is necessary and will be used by the organization for a clear and known purpose.
- ☐ Ask for and use the pronouns individuals use for themselves, (e.g., he/him), and ensure this information is documented for other staff members to use.
- ☐ Ask about and include non-married partners, chosen family and key supports as part of intake, assessment and planning discussions. This may include using open-ended questions about support systems or important people, rather than focusing on biological family, children or spouses.
- ☐ Display visual indicators of LGBTQ2S+ inclusivity in common spaces and offices, such as rainbow pride symbols and safe space posters.
- ☐ Display pamphlets, community event posters and reading materials representing LGBTQ2S+ communities and activities.

“When a resident tells you that they want to be called as she or he, you respect that. And you **tell your staff** and you **make notes**, regardless of what you think.”

*LGBTQ2S+ older adult  
(LIFE ElderCare, 2017)*

- ☐ Use images and written examples of LGBTQ2S+ older adults in your marketing campaigns, social media and print communications. This visual representation both proactively welcomes LGBTQ2S+ older adults to your space and helps raise awareness of LGBTQ2S+ older adults in the broader community.
- ☐ Provide all-gender washroom and change room options (if applicable), while also recognizing transgender older adults have the right to use a gender-specific washroom if they choose. Consider if you can re-label an existing gender-specific or single-room washroom for this purpose. This benefits transgender and non-binary older adults, as well as others who may need mixed-gender options, such as an older man who requires personal assistance from a female carer.
- ☐ Invite an LGBTQ2S+ community member or organization to conduct a walk-through of your organization in order to provide feedback on the environment and experience.



## Tools

- ✓ [Appendix G – Inclusive language tip sheet](#)
- ✓ [Appendix H – Awareness campaign posters](#)
- ✓ [Appendix I – Asking about gender and sexual orientation on paperwork/forms](#)

**“Trauma and institutional violence** are experienced by people when any institution acts with duplicity in **stating** inclusive practice **without engaging** in the necessary deep understanding and change that is required to truly provide LGBTQ2S+ inclusive spaces.”

*Alberta LGBTQ2S+ educator*



## 5. Education and Training



### What

Education and training regarding LGBTQ2S+ older adults' experiences and needs can be provided to people throughout your organization, including staff, volunteers, students and interns, board members, managers and older adults themselves. Targeted learning opportunities can help increase understanding, build relationships, break down myths and develop practical intervention skills.



### How

- ☐ Deliver foundational training for staff, volunteers and seniors on unconscious bias. Unconscious bias refers to unintentional and implicit stereotyping and assumptions learned from the broader social environment. Learning about unconscious bias can open up conversations about homophobia, transphobia and biphobia, heterosexism and heteronormativity, and cisgenderism and cissexism.
- ☐ Provide practice opportunities and sample scripts to help staff and volunteers engage in discussions about potentially sensitive issues such as sexuality and aging, sexual wellbeing and healthy relationships.
- ☐ Provide multiple and ongoing learning opportunities. For example: bring in LGBTQ2S+ organizations to present about their services; role-play ways for staff to ask about pronouns, gender and sexual orientation during intake processes; host discussion groups regarding videos, news articles or books on LGBTQ2S+ issues; include anti-discrimination policies and expectations as part of orientation; and invite LGBTQ2S+ older adults and experts to facilitate educational workshops.
- ☐ Publicly display information about your organization's anti-discrimination policies so it is visible to clients, residents, visitors,



#### Deep Dive: Training

Based in Calgary, Alberta, the Centre for Sexuality offers professional development workshops related to LGBTQ2S+ older adults, supporting sexuality in long-term care and addressing harassment in the workplace, as well as audits to help organizations integrate inclusive practices. Find out more at [www.centreforsexuality.ca](http://www.centreforsexuality.ca).

staff and volunteers. Ensure you include how people can submit complaints (anonymous or otherwise) if they experience harassment or bullying.

- ☐ Provide staff and volunteers with specific strategies, scripts or steps they can use if they see or hear harassment or bullying in your organization. Ensure they are able to practice role-playing what they would do or say. You may want to offer formal bystander intervention training to help people act in these situations.
- ☐ Integrate concepts of Trauma and Violence-Informed Care into staff and volunteer onboarding and training. Trauma and Violence-Informed Care frameworks recognize most people have experienced trauma at some point in their lives and seek to reduce re-traumatizing people when they access services. This is especially important for communities that have been marginalized and oppressed.
- ☐ Increase understanding among seniors by facilitating educational and awareness-raising discussions about LGBTQ2S+ issues (e.g., screening and discussion of “Gen Silent,” a documentary film regarding the experiences of LGBTQ2S+ older adults).



## Tools

- ✓ [Appendix J – Alberta LGBTQ2S+ referrals and training](#)
- ✓ [Appendix K – LGBTQ2S+ self-directed learning](#)

## 6. Program Implementation



### What

You can use your organization's programming and services to respond to the needs and interests of LGBTQ2S+ older adults. For example, when considering information and social services, it is important to account for diverse family structures. LGBTQ2S+ older adults may not be legally married to same-sex partners. They may be estranged from or not out to their families of origin and may place high importance on friends as chosen family. When thinking about referral networks and programming, LGBTQ2S+ older adults may also have unique interests in relation to aging, such as finding housing options that allow companion animals.<sup>23</sup>



### How

- ☐ Provide information and resources to help LGBTQ2S+ older adults consider their wishes in relation to finances, living arrangements, medical care and end-of-life decisions. Facilitating educational sessions about personal directives and enduring powers of attorney can help prevent elder abuse and ensure LGBTQ2S+ older adults' personal values are respected as they age.
- ☐ Design activities to raise awareness of and celebrate LGBTQ2S+ people. This may include themed social programs (e.g., viewing movies with LGBTQ2S+ stories) and recognition of significant LGBTQ2S+ days (e.g., International Transgender Day of Recognition).
- ☐ Visibly involve your organization in LGBTQ2S+ community events, such as participating in Pride activities, tabling at LGBTQ2S+ resource fairs or sponsoring LGBTQ2S+ events.
- ☐ Facilitate intergenerational initiatives and events bringing together older and younger LGBTQ2S+ people in order to share knowledge, learn self-advocacy skills and create stronger community connections.

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<sup>23</sup> Pride Seniors Project (2015).

- ❑ Provide programming targeted to unique issues and interests of LGBTQ2S+ older adults, such as presentations on aging with HIV or field trips to LGBTQ2S+ inclusive seniors housing.
- ❑ Ensure your organization's events and social activities are inclusive of a wide range of family structures, including single older adults, same-sex partners and chosen family members. This includes paying attention to language and images used for posters, invitations and other written communication.
- ❑ Offer LGBTQ2S+ services facilitated by people who are LGBTQ2S+ themselves or have experience within LGBTQ2S+ communities. This may include services related to grief and loss, family dynamics or cultural supports.
- ❑ Support the development of programming led by older adults themselves, such as peer-support, self-advocacy or gender-sexuality alliance (GSA) groups. This may include providing staff support, meeting space and other in-kind resources.



### **Inclusion in Action: Intergenerational LGBTQ2S+ Tea**

Rainbow Elders Calgary is a volunteer-run group of LGBTQ2S+ older adults and allies that acts as an advocate and support for LGBTQ2S+ older adults.

In 2018, Rainbow Elders Calgary kicked off Calgary Pride Week by hosting an Intergenerational Tea at the Kerby Centre. This special event brought together younger and older LGBTQ2S+ community members to share experiences and build connections. Learn more at <http://rainbowelderscalgary.ca>.



## **Tools**

- ✓ [Appendix J – Alberta LGBTQ2S+ referrals and training](#)
- ✓ [Appendix K – LGBTQ2S+ self-directed learning](#)



### Deep Dive: Starting a GSA

The Alberta GSA Network provides resources and mentoring to help set up a GSA. Although focused on GSAs in schools, much of their information can be applied to LGBTQ2S+ older adults.

The acronym “GSA” originally stood for Gay-Straight Alliance, but now includes many group names, including Rainbow Alliances, Pride Clubs and Gender-Sexuality Alliances.

A GSA is a volunteer group working to create safe and inclusive environments for people with diverse genders and sexual orientations. Find out more at <http://albertagsanetwork.ca>.



# Going Forward

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Creating an inclusive, affirming and non-discriminatory environment for LGBTQ2S+ older adults requires ongoing and intentional work.

One of the most foundational elements of this work is engaging with and listening to the experiences and aspirations of LGBTQ2S+ older adults – including voices that may not always be heard, such as transgender, Indigenous, immigrants and refugees. Involve members of LGBTQ2S+ communities in the design, implementation and evaluation of your efforts to be more inclusive, and draw on the expertise and experiences of other organizations that are further down the path.

Finally, encourage colleagues, board members, volunteers, older adults and others to be LGBTQ2S+ allies. Allies actively demonstrate support for LGBTQ2S+ communities and people.

## How can you be a better ally?

- Keep educating yourself about LGBTQ2S+ communities, histories, terminology and social issues.
- Strive to use inclusive language by default.
- Intervene when you hear comments or language negative or hurtful towards LGBTQ2S+ people.
- Correct stereotypes and myths about LGBTQ2S+ people and communities.
- Influence and advocate for LGBTQ2S+ inclusive policies and practices in your own organizations and broader systems.
- Celebrate and support LGBTQ2S+ community events, initiatives and accomplishments.

“No one should have to **leave a part of themselves at the door** when they are accessing service or coming to work each day.”

*(Ontario Council of Immigrant Serving Agencies, 2014)*

## Commitment to Action

Below are three actions I will take to make my organization more inclusive and affirming for LGBTQ2S+ older adults:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



# Appendices

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## Appendix A – Glossary of Terms<sup>24</sup>

### Gender Identity (internal sense of gender)

**Cisgender:** a gender identity, or performance in a gender role, that society deems to match the person's assigned sex at birth. The prefix cis- means "on this side of" or "not across." A term used to call attention to the privilege of people who are not transgender.

**Transgender:** Adjective used most often as an umbrella term, and frequently abbreviated to "trans." This adjective describes a wide range of identities and experiences of people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from conventional expectations based on their assigned sex at birth. Not all trans people undergo medical transition (surgery or hormones). Some commonly held definitions:

- Someone whose determination of their sex and/or gender is not validated by dominant societal expectations; someone whose behavior or expression does not "match" their assigned sex according to society.
- A gender outside of the man/woman binary.
- Having no gender or multiple genders.

**Two Spirit:** Two-Spirit, a translation of the Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe) term *niizh manidoowag*, refers to a person who embodies both a masculine and feminine spirit. Activist Albert McLeod developed the term in 1990 to broadly reference Indigenous peoples in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community. Two-spirit is used by some Indigenous peoples to describe their gender, sexual and spiritual identity.<sup>25</sup>

**Gender Queer:** A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression falls outside of the dominant societal norm for their assigned sex, is beyond genders, or is some combination of them.

### Sexual Orientation (attraction)

**Lesbian:** A woman whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same gender.

**Gay:** A sexual and affectional orientation toward people of the same gender.

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<sup>24</sup> All terms in Appendix A – Glossary of Terms are sourced from The LGBTQIA Resource Centre Glossary (2019; <https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary>) unless otherwise noted

<sup>25</sup> The Canadian Encyclopedia, Two-Spirit, Article by Michelle Filice (2015)

**Bisexual:** A person whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same and other genders, or towards people regardless of their gender.

**Asexual:** A sexual orientation generally characterized by not feeling sexual attraction or a desire for partnered sexuality. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity. Some asexual people do have sex. There are many diverse ways of being asexual.

**Queer:** One definition of queer is abnormal or strange. Historically, queer has been used as an epithet/slur against people whose gender, gender expression and/or sexuality do not conform to dominant expectations. Some people have reclaimed the word queer and self identify as such.

For some, this reclamation is a celebration of not fitting into norms/being “abnormal.” Manifestations of oppression within gay and lesbian movements such as racism, sizeism, ableism, cissexism, transmisogyny as well as assimilation politics, resulted in many people being marginalized, thus, for some, queer is a radical and anti-assimilationist stance that captures multiple aspects of identities.

**Pansexual, Omnisexual:** Terms used to describe people who have romantic, sexual or affectional desire for people of all genders and sexes.

**Two Spirit:** See Gender Identity section.

**Intersex:** Adjective used to describe the experience of naturally (that is, without any medical intervention) developing primary or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female. Intersex is an umbrella term and there are around 20 variations of intersex that are included in this umbrella term.

## Appendix B – Defining the challenge

**What:** Use this worksheet to begin considering how your organization can be more inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ2S+ older adults. Context and history play a large role in the actions and strategies your organization will choose to move forward.

**Why:** These questions help keep the needs of the people you are serving at the center of your decision-making and solutions.

**How:** Work through these questions with a group of natural champions in your organization.

### What is the issue

1. What is the issue, problem, need or opportunity your organization is trying to address? How do you know this is an issue? What data or information are you using?
2. Why does this issue matter – to your organization, to others and to the broader community?
3. How did your organization get here? What is the larger context and history of your organization and broader community?

### Who is impacted

4. Who is this primarily a problem for? Who are you solving an issue for? (e.g., LGBTQ2S+ older adults and staff)
5. What needs does this group want to meet? What goals are they trying to achieve? What are they trying to accomplish? What assumptions are being made about this group? How do you know who they are and what they want?
6. Who else is involved or impacted? Have you consulted with those who are affected? Whom might you be leaving out? Are you okay leaving them out?

### How might you approach the issue

7. What is currently stopping you from addressing this issue?
8. What are the constraints, guardrails or requirements for your solution(s), if any?
9. What strategic priorities or organizational goals does this issue relate to or impact?
10. What are three steps you can take to move forward?

## Appendix C – Communicating change

**What:** Whenever you propose a new process, approach or method in your organization, you are asking other people to make a change in how they work. This means you need to consider how to manage change effectively.

**Why:** Being able to address key change management questions will help enhance buy-in and support for your idea.

**How:** There are many ways to propose a new idea or change. The approach you use will depend on your audience. Some people prefer concrete data while others are more influenced by personal stories. Make it as easy as possible for other people to say yes to your idea.

### Checklist for presenting a new idea

#### Preparation: Think through these foundational questions first

- ☐ Why is this change needed (what are the drivers of the change)?
- ☐ What will be different as a result?
- ☐ What are the risks of not changing?
- ☐ Who has what to lose with this change?

#### Presentation: Share the answers to these questions

- ☐ What issue or problem does the new idea solve?
- ☐ What data or evidence is being used to define the issue and come up with solutions?
- ☐ What value or benefits will the new idea deliver to the people being served, your organization and other key stakeholders?
- ☐ How does this idea align with strategic priorities or organizational goals?
- ☐ What resources might you need? (e.g., staff, money, tangible goods, physical space, time)
- ☐ How will you know if you are successful?
- ☐ When might this idea start and end?
- ☐ Who else has been collaborated with, consulted or involved so far?
- ☐ If this idea is approved, what would be the immediate next steps?
- ☐ What is the specific “ask” or request right now?
- ☐ What other information would be important to your specific audience?

## Appendix D – Engagement spectrum and methods

**What:** Engage LGBTQ2S+ community members in your organization's efforts to be more inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ2S+ older adults. There is a spectrum of methods you may use when engaging others, with different methods used for different purposes.

**Why:** Listening to the voices and experiences of LGBTQ2S+ older adults can increase program participation and ensure you are providing relevant and meaningful services.

**How:** Use this spectrum to consider how your organization currently engages with LGBTQ2S+ community members and how you may want to involve LGBTQ2S+ people going forward. This spectrum is adapted from the International Association for Public Participation ([www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org)).

| Purpose            |  | Sample engagement methods <sup>26</sup>   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| <b>Inform</b>      | Educate and provide information about an issue or solution to community members. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentations</li><li>• Open houses and resource tables</li><li>• Websites and fact sheets</li></ul>                      |
| <b>Consult</b>     | Gather information and feedback from community members.                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Surveys and polls</li><li>• Interviews and focus groups</li><li>• Public meetings</li><li>• Individual meetings</li></ul> |
| <b>Involve</b>     | Discuss and incorporate feedback and ideas with community members.               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advisory groups and councils</li><li>• World cafés</li><li>• Working groups</li></ul>                                     |
| <b>Collaborate</b> | Work together to develop options and solutions with community members.           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Serious games and real-world simulations</li><li>• Planning workshops</li><li>• Co-design of programming</li></ul>        |
| <b>Empower</b>     | Implement decisions made by community members.                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Co-delivery of programming</li><li>• Participatory decision-making projects</li><li>• Labs</li></ul>                      |

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<sup>26</sup> Centre for Public Involvement (2015); Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition (2018).

## Appendix E – Empathy mapping

**What:** Empathy mapping helps you take the perspective of other people and consider their thoughts, feelings, experiences and goals in a particular context.

**Why:** The purpose is to keep the needs of the people you are serving at the center of your decision-making and problem-solving.

**How:** Empathy mapping is a method developed out of human-centered design and design thinking. The below template is adapted from the work of IDEO ([www.designkit.org](http://www.designkit.org)) and the Stanford d.school (<https://dschool.stanford.edu>).

### Empathy mapping process

- Identify a hypothetical “persona” (e.g., Asha is a 67-year old trans woman living in a rural Alberta community), or group of people (e.g., LGBT2S+ older adults living in Lethbridge, Alberta) to base your empathy map on.
- Specify a situation or scenario the empathy map is based on (e.g., the experience of visiting your seniors’ centre for the first time).
- Work with a group of people to create an empathy map, rather than working on your own.
- Include specific quotes and phrases that the person or people your empathy map is based on would actually use themselves.
- You may find it easier to draw the template on a large flipchart paper and fill in the sections using sticky notes.
- This process will often highlight assumptions or gaps in your knowledge about the people you are serving, and indicate that you need to learn more about their first-hand perspectives and experiences.

## Empathy Map Template

**WHO:** My empathy map is about...

**WHAT:** The situation or experience they are in is...

### HEAR?

- What do they hear from other people?
- What do they hear from staff and people in positions of authority?

### THINK and FEEL?

- What are they thinking and feeling?
- What worries them?
- What is most important to them?



### SEE?

- Who and what else is in the environment?
- What do they see on the walls, tables and displays?

### DO and SAY?

- What are their actions and behaviours?
- What are they saying?
- What questions do they have?

### PROBLEMS and PAINS

- Fears?
- Frustrations and challenges?
- Obstacles and barriers?

### GOALS and GAINS

- Wants and needs?
- What they are trying to achieve?
- Measures of success?

**NOW WHAT:** Insights, tensions, ideas, contradictions, next steps...



## Appendix F – Formal auditing and certifications

**What:** There are a number of auditing and certification options for organizations that wish to formally assess or demonstrate their status as inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ2S+ people.

**Why:** Having a formal audit or certification is one way to demonstrate an organization-level commitment to being inclusive and affirming.

**How:** Audits and certifications have a wide range of requirements, fees and processes that range from on-site facilitated discussions to simply submitting organizational documentation for review. Research different options to determine which one is a fit for your organization, both practically and philosophically.

| Certification   | Organization  | Location                 |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Affirming Ministries Program (restricted to United Church-affiliated organizations) | Affirm United: United Church of Canada<br><a href="http://affirmunited.ause.ca">http://affirmunited.ause.ca</a>                 | Toronto, Ontario, Canada |
| LGBT Inclusive Designation  | Centre for Positive Aging<br><a href="http://www.centerforpositiveaging.org">www.centerforpositiveaging.org</a>                 | Atlanta, Georgia, USA    |
| Organizational LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Audit (on-site/in-person process)                 | Centre for Sexuality<br><a href="http://www.centreforsexuality.ca">www.centreforsexuality.ca</a>                                | Calgary, Alberta, Canada |
| Positive Space Assessment Tool  | Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants<br><a href="http://assess.positivespaces.ca">http://assess.positivespaces.ca</a> | Toronto, Ontario, Canada |
| Rainbow Tick Standards  | Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria<br><a href="https://www.glhv.org.au">https://www.glhv.org.au</a>                                | Victoria, Australia      |
| SAGECare Credential   | SAGE: Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders<br><a href="http://sageusa.care">http://sageusa.care</a>                              | New York, USA            |

*Please note this list is not exhaustive.*

## Appendix G – Inclusive language tip sheet

**What:** Use more inclusive language by default.

**Why:** Inclusive language helps to avoid making incorrect assumptions and helps people feel respected and understood.

**How:** Listen for, inquire about and use the language people use for themselves. Use open-ended questions that allow people to decide how much they would like to share. If you are not sure about someone's name or pronouns, ask them privately.

What if you **make a mistake**?

**Acknowledge** the error, **apologize** and keep **practicing** for next time.

| Less inclusive<br>(when unknown)                                       | More inclusive options<br>(when unknown)  | For example...  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Pronouns:</b><br>He/Him, She/Her                                    | <i>They/Them</i> , use their proper name, or reword to remove the pronoun           | " <del>She</del> is downstairs in the café."<br>→ "They are downstairs in the café."                  |
| <b>Groups of people:</b><br>Men, Guys, Women, Girls, Ladies, Gentlemen | <i>Folks, People, All, Everyone, or Friends</i>                                     | "Hi <del>guys</del> , welcome to the workshop!"<br>→ "Hi <del>folks</del> , welcome to the workshop!" |
| <b>Titles:</b><br>Mrs., Mr., Miss                                      | <i>Ms.</i> for women, <i>Mx.</i> as a gender-neutral option, or use only their name | "Dear <del>Miss</del> Jenkins..."<br>→ "Dear <del>Reza</del> Jenkins..."                              |
| <b>Descriptors:</b><br>Gentleman, Sir, Lady, Ma'am                     | <i>Person, Individual</i> , use their name, or omit the descriptor                  | "Hello <del>ma'am</del> , how may I help you?"<br>→ "Hello, how may I help you?"                      |
| <b>Relationships:</b><br>Husband, Wife, Daughter, Son, Mother, Father  | <i>Partner, Spouse, Children, Parent, Guardian</i> , or use their name              | "What is your <del>husband's</del> name?"<br>→ "What is your <del>partner's</del> name?"              |

### How to Ask about Relationships and Family

"Who would you say are the most important people in your life?"

"Who in your life would you call if you needed support or assistance?"

### How to Ask about Pronouns

"Hi, my name is Ali. I use the pronouns he and him. What pronouns do you use?"

## Appendix H – Awareness campaign posters

**What:** Targeted campaigns can help raise awareness of the unique experiences and concerns of LGBTQ2S+ older adults in the broader community.

**Why:** LGBTQ2S+ older adults are often invisible in both seniors' sectors and LGBTQ2S+ communities.

**How:** Take advantage of existing resources (such as the campaign examples below), or create your own featuring local LGBTQ2S+ older adults. Ensure imagery represents the broad diversity within older adult populations.

### Campaign: “Respect Your Elders”

- Produced by The 519, a Toronto-based organization that supports LGBTQ2S communities.
- Available at [www.the519.org/education-training/training-resources/respect-your-elders](http://www.the519.org/education-training/training-resources/respect-your-elders).
- Free to use and reproduce.



## Campaign: “Losing Your Independence Shouldn’t Mean Losing Your Identity”

- Produced by Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, a Toronto-based organization that advocates for LGBTQI2S people.
- Available at <https://egale.ca/shop/lgbtqi2s-seniors-poster/>.
- Free to use and reproduce.

When returning to the closet  
is no longer an option...

Many LGBTQI2S seniors fear going into assisted living centers and long term care facilities. They often feel they must hide their identities and partners to stay safe from abuse and discrimination.

Go to [egale.ca/seniors](https://egale.ca/seniors) for resources and training opportunities.

**Egale**  
Canada Human Rights Trust

Shoshana, 69  
transwoman

losing your independence  
shouldn't mean losing your identity

When returning to the closet  
is your only choice...

Many LGBTQI2S seniors fear going into assisted living centers and long term care facilities. They often feel they must hide their identities and partners to stay safe from abuse and discrimination.

Go to [egale.ca/seniors](https://egale.ca/seniors) for resources and training opportunities.

**Egale**  
Canada Human Rights Trust

Lezlie, 61  
dyke

losing your independence  
shouldn't mean losing your identity

## Appendix I – Asking about gender and sexual orientation on paperwork/forms

**What:** Demographic information is commonly collected by service providers. Ensure data is collected purposefully, using current language and options that allow self-definition.

**Why:** Collecting information beyond male and female categories demonstrates inclusivity of a range of gender identities. It can also be important to collect information about sexual orientation so that you understand who you serve and their unique concerns.

**How:** First, consider if you need to collect certain information at all. Is a response optional or required? How will the information be used (e.g., program reporting)? Does the person know how their information will be used, and who will have access to it? How do you maintain privacy when collecting and storing this personal information? If you determine you do need to collect information about gender and sexual orientation, consider the following options.<sup>27</sup>

| Gender   |   |
|--|---|
| Provide a blank space for people to write in their response.   | Provide a broad list of options for people to select from, including a blank option that can be filled in. Ensure people can select more than one option, as someone who is transgender may select both “Transgender” and “Man” or “Woman.”   |
| Q: What is your gender?<br><input type="checkbox"/> _____<br><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer             | Q: What is your gender? Select all that apply.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Woman<br><input type="checkbox"/> Man<br><input type="checkbox"/> Transgender<br><input type="checkbox"/> Two-spirit<br><input type="checkbox"/> I do not identify with a gender<br><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer<br><input type="checkbox"/> Another option not listed: _____                       |
| Sexual Orientation   |   |
| Provide a blank space for people to write in their response.   | Provide a broad list of options for people to select from, including a blank option that can be filled in.  |
| Q: What is your sexual orientation?<br><input type="checkbox"/> _____<br><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer | Q: What is your sexual orientation? Select all that apply.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Bisexual<br><input type="checkbox"/> Gay<br><input type="checkbox"/> Lesbian<br><input type="checkbox"/> Queer<br><input type="checkbox"/> Straight<br><input type="checkbox"/> Two-spirit<br><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer<br><input type="checkbox"/> Another option not listed: _____ |

<sup>27</sup> Options adapted from Alberta Health Services (2017).



## Appendix J – Alberta LGBTQ2S+ referrals and training

**What:** There is a wide range of LGBTQ2S+ expertise and support available in Alberta. Some LGBTQ2S+ organizations further specialize in older adult issues (indicated with an asterisk\*).

**Why:** Connect with experts to grow your referral network, consult on complex situations, develop communities of practice and bring in LGBTQ2S+ education and training.

**How:** Draw on the list of resources here or search InformAlberta. InformAlberta is Alberta's province-wide service directory. Search by keyword (e.g., "LGBT") for information and referrals across the province: <https://informalberta.ca>. Note that grassroots or volunteer-led groups may not be listed in InformAlberta.

| Organization  | Scope      | Information | Presentations & Training | Client support |
|---|------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Alberta LGBTQ+ Newcomers Project<br><a href="https://www.centrefornewcomers.ca/lbgqtq">https://www.centrefornewcomers.ca/lbgqtq</a> | Provincial | ✓           | ✓                        | ✓              |
| Calgary Outlink: Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity<br><a href="http://www.calgaryoutlink.ca/">www.calgaryoutlink.ca/</a>       | Calgary    | ✓           | ✓                        | ✓              |
| Centre for Sexuality*<br><a href="http://www.centreforsexuality.ca">www.centreforsexuality.ca</a>                                   | Calgary    | ✓           | ✓                        | ✓              |
| Compass Centre for Sexual Wellness<br><a href="http://www.compasscentre.ca">www.compasscentre.ca</a>                                | Edmonton   | ✓           | ✓                        | ✓              |
| Edmonton 2 Spirit Society<br><a href="http://www.edmonton2spiritsociety.com">www.edmonton2spiritsociety.com</a>                     | Edmonton   | ✓           | -                        | -              |
| Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers: Rainbow Refuge<br><a href="https://emcn.ab.ca">https://emcn.ab.ca</a>                      | Edmonton   | ✓           | -                        | ✓              |
| Edmonton Pride Seniors Group*<br><a href="http://www.epsg.ca">www.epsg.ca</a>   | Edmonton   | ✓           | ✓                        | -              |
| Pride Centre of Edmonton<br><a href="http://www.pridecentreofedmonton.ca">www.pridecentreofedmonton.ca</a>                          | Edmonton   | ✓           | ✓                        | ✓              |
| Rainbow Elders Calgary*<br><a href="http://rainbowelderscalgary.ca">http://rainbowelderscalgary.ca</a>                              | Calgary    | ✓           | -                        | -              |
| Trans Equality Society of Alberta<br><a href="http://www.tesaonline.org">www.tesaonline.org</a>                                     | Provincial | ✓           | -                        | -              |

## Appendix K – LGBTQ2S+ self-directed learning

**What:** Organizations around the world are engaging in research, developing educational materials and actively advocating for LGBTQ2S+ older adults.

**Why:** Doing your homework and educating yourself about LGBTQ2S+ older adult issues and concerns is an important part of being an LGBTQ2S+ ally. It helps you keep aware of current language, research and emerging practices.

**How:** Draw on these resources\* to engage in personal learning, bring together a discussion group, design a training session or build a case for making changes in your own organization.

| Expertise and Research                                       | Access  |
|--|---|
| Aging with Pride: LGBT+ National Aging Research Center (USA) | <a href="http://age-pride.org">http://age-pride.org</a>                       |
| LGBT Aging Project: Fenway Health (USA)                      | <a href="https://fenwayhealth.org">https://fenwayhealth.org</a>               |
| LGBTQI2S Seniors: Egale Canada Human Rights Trust (Canada)   | <a href="https://egale.ca/seniors">https://egale.ca/seniors</a>               |
| National Resource Center on LGBT Aging (USA)                 | <a href="http://www.lgbtagingcenter.org">www.lgbtagingcenter.org</a>          |
| Transgender Aging Network: FORGE (USA)                       | <a href="https://forge-forward.org/aging">https://forge-forward.org/aging</a> |

| Free Online Learning   | Format                       | Access  |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| Creating a Healthcare Practice Welcoming to LGBT Seniors (Lavender Seniors of the East Bay, USA)           | Online course, self-directed | <a href="https://www.udemy.com/creating-a-healthcare-practice-welcoming-to-lgbt-seniors/">https://www.udemy.com/creating-a-healthcare-practice-welcoming-to-lgbt-seniors/</a> |
| Gen Silent (The Clowder Group, USA)  | Video, 89 min                | Via your local library  |
| Hostile Homes & LGBT Seniors: Marsha's Story (Lambda Legal, USA)   | Video, 8 min                 | <a href="https://youtu.be/d8qd7-pq0E8">https://youtu.be/d8qd7-pq0E8</a>   |
| LGBTQ2S+ Continuing Care Clients: Creating Safer and More Welcoming Care (Alberta Health Services, Canada) | Recorded lecture, 60 min     | <a href="http://www.ahs.ca/lgbtq2s">http://www.ahs.ca/lgbtq2s</a>   |
| Person-Centered Care for LGBT Older Adults (Boulder County Area Agency on Aging, USA)                      | Online course, self-directed | <a href="https://projectvisibility.networkofcare4elearning.org">https://projectvisibility.networkofcare4elearning.org</a>   |
| Quality Healthcare for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender People (Health                                 | Recorded lecture, 90+ min    | <a href="http://www.glma.org">www.glma.org</a>  |

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\* These resources have informed the development of this guide.



|   |                          |   |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality, USA)   |                          |   |
| Safe and Visible: Creating a Care Facility Welcoming to LGBT Seniors (LIFE ElderCare, USA)      | Video, 33 min            | <a href="https://youtu.be/ZuDPWYfVn6g">https://youtu.be/ZuDPWYfVn6g</a>   |
| Understanding and Supporting LGBT Older Adults (SAGE: Services & Advocacy for LGBT Elders, USA) | Recorded lecture, 28 min | <a href="https://www.lgbtagingcenter.org/training/understanding/index.cfm">https://www.lgbtagingcenter.org/training/understanding/index.cfm</a> |
| Violence and Trauma in the Lives of Transgender Older Adults (FORGE, USA)                       | Recorded lecture, 76 min | <a href="https://forge-forward.org/event/trauma-and-aging/">https://forge-forward.org/event/trauma-and-aging/</a>                               |
| What Makes LGBTTTQ Older Adults Unique? (Age-Friendly Edmonton, Canada)                         | Recorded lecture, 44 min | <a href="https://youtu.be/rmyKudYD_6Q">https://youtu.be/rmyKudYD_6Q</a>   |

| Specialized Topic Toolkits  | Produced by  | Access  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>End-of-Life Planning</b><br>Crossing the Rainbow Bridge: A Resource Supporting End-of-Life Planning and Needs of LGBTQI2S Older Adults in Ontario (2017)                                       | Egale Canada Human Rights Trust (Canada)                             | <a href="https://egale.ca/crossing-rainbow-bridge">https://egale.ca/crossing-rainbow-bridge</a> |
| <b>Long-Term Care</b><br>Diversity Our Strength: LGBT Toolkit for Creating Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Culturally Competent Care at Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services (2008) | Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services & City of Toronto (Canada) | <a href="http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca">www.rainbowhealthontario.ca</a>                    |
| <b>Newcomers</b><br>Positive Spaces Starter Kit: Support for LGBTQIA+ Newcomers (2014)  | Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (Canada)              | <a href="http://www.positivespaces.ca">www.positivespaces.ca</a>                                |
| <b>Healthcare</b><br>Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Gender Expression (SOGIE) Safer Places Toolkit: An Introduction for Creating Safer and More Welcoming Healthcare (2018)                | Alberta Health Services (Canada)                                     | <a href="http://www.ahs.ca/lgbtq2s">www.ahs.ca/lgbtq2s</a>                                      |
| <b>Social Isolation</b><br>Social Isolation of Seniors: A Focus on LGBTQ Seniors in Canada (2018)   | Employment and Social Development Canada (Canada)                    | <a href="http://www.seniors.gc.ca">www.seniors.gc.ca</a>  |

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