

# Creating an Inclusive Environment

How to better serve the ever-growing segment of LGBTQ+ seniors

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According a June 2022 AARP article, there are over 2.4 million adults over age 50 that identify as LGBTQ+, a number that is expected to double by 2030. A whopping 85% of those adults reported being concerned about facing discrimination as they begin to research their retirement living options.

So what can providers do to create a welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ prospects as well as residents? Here are key areas to focus on when creating a more inclusive culture.

## Policies, Procedures, and Resident Bill of Rights

A culture of inclusivity starts with the policies and procedures providers have in place. These include non-discrimination policies and a resident bill of rights that has a specific framework for sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.

Procedures should also include clear direction for taking action on the following items:

- Residents making discriminatory comments to or about one another
- Staff making discriminatory comments to or about residents
- Residents making discriminatory comments to or about staff
- Equal visitation rights to LGBTQ+ residents and their visitors
- Option for transgender residents to disclose information on gender identity, preferred pronouns, and name of choice on intake forms
- Option for unmarried couples to identify their relationship on intake forms (i.e. "partner" or "relationship status")



**85% of LGBTQ+ adults**

report feeling concerned about facing discrimination when searching for senior living options



Half of the LGBTQ+ community lives in states with no laws prohibiting housing discrimination against them



54.6% identify as bisexual



24.5% identify as gay



11.7% identify as lesbian



11.3% identify as transgender

An additional 3.3% identify as another non-heterosexual preference, such as queer or gender-loving

## Outreach and Programming

Here are a few ways to include LGBTQ+ individuals and couples in your marketing outreach and resident programming:

- Develop a specific marketing, advertising, or outreach campaign targeted to LGBTQ+ individuals
- Include images of LGBTQ+ individuals and couples in your promotional materials and feature them in your social posts
- Offer LGBTQ+-themed programming, services, or events for your residents
- Post LGBTQ+ flyers in a public space and share media or digital resources in your resident newsletters, on your website, and on your social channels

## Start with a Personal Assessment in Diversity Availability

### Be Diverse

Look around. Look at your friends, your books, and your film and television choices. Sometimes you have to turn the channel.

### Don't Assume

Don't assume that a man has a wife or a woman has a husband. Use non-gender specific titles such as "spouse" or "partner" or "significant other".

### Listen for Cues

This is crucial regardless of someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. Listen closely to what is being offered as well as what is not.

### Build Rapport

Rapport is a feeling created by commonality. Oftentimes, you will find that you have more in common with LGBTQ+ individuals than you don't.

### Be a Tide Riser

A rising tide lifts all boats. Speak up your LGBTQ+ colleagues, residents, and prospects. Equal rights for others doesn't mean less rights for you.

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## RESOURCES

AARP Dignity 2022: The Experience of LGBTQ Older Adults

Sage USA

Movement Advancement Project: LGBTQ Older Adults

National Resource Center on LGBTQ Aging

Rainbow Health: Aging Initiative

Coalition for Aging LGBT

*Greystone offers Understanding and Supporting LGBTQ+ Seniors Diversity training. Please reach out if you or anyone at your community are interested in learning more.*