Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ+

1. Conduct a Self-Assessment

Develop a committee of staff, volunteers or clients of community partners, including those who self-identify as part of the LGBT community or LGBT Allies to conduct a self-assessment of your organization. The committee will review policies, procedures, paperwork, marketing, the physical location, and training Practices to make recommendations for improvement and develop a plan for implementation.

2. Update Policies, Procedures & Paperwork

Review all organization policies, procedures, and paperwork for inclusivity. Including, but not limited to:

- **Nondiscrimination Policy:** Confirm your agency has a nondiscrimination policy. Review the policy to ensure it includes protections for discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This policy should be viewed and signed by staff, volunteers, and clients and/or residents.

  - **Sample Nondiscrimination policy from SAGE**: http://wearesage.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/SAGE-Nondiscrimination-Policy.pdf

- **Code of Conduct Policy:** Organizations may have code of conduct policies for participants or residents. Review the policy to make sure it includes anti-bullying policies. SAGE sample language found https://sagenyc.org/nyc/centers/code-of-conduct.cfm includes:

  - "SAGE supports an individual's right to express their chosen identity and experience. This includes respecting and using an individual's chosen name, pronoun (e.g. he, she, they, etc.) and identities (e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, queer, etc.). Behavior or language that infringes upon this right is prohibited.
  - SAGE is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination and sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome or unwanted sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Staff, consultants and participants should not be subjected to sexual harassment. If a report of sexual harassment is received, the person accused of the harassment will be subject to immediate suspension pending an investigation involving all parties and witnesses. Reports of harassment should be reported immediately to the Site Manager.
  - Behavior, presentation, and actions which create an unsafe environment (e.g., not responding to direction by staff, verbally or physically aggressive behavior) are not allowed. This includes communication on SAGE social media platforms, as per SAGE policy.
  - Actions, behavior, and language that is or may be construed as abusive, threatening, harassing, and/or insulting is not allowed."

- **In-take Paperwork:** Review all intake paperwork to be sure the language is inclusive. Include sexual orientation and gender identity questions.

- o Inclusive Questions for Older Adults: A Practical Guide to Collecting Data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: https://assets2.hrc.org/thelei/documents/Inclusive_Questions.pdf

3. Creating a Welcoming Agency

- **Marketing & Environment:** What does your organization's marketing communicate? Is it inclusive? Review marketing materials. Is there anything that indicates inclusivity? Diversity? Images like same sex couples, inclusive language, non-discrimination statements etc. help to communicate a facility is inclusive. Are there signs or symbols on site that indicate inclusivity such as Rainbow flags, Safe Zone images etc.?

  - o Inclusive Services for LGBT Older Adults: A Practical Guide to Creating Welcoming Agencies: https://assets2.hrc.org/thelei/documents/SAGEGuidebook_2020.pdf

- **Programming:** What kind of programming is offered to educate individuals about or celebrate the LGBT community? Does your agency host organizations such as PFLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and GSA (Gay, Straight Alliance)? Do you schedule programming during Pride month?

  - o LGBT Programming for Older Adults: A Practical Step by Step guide: https://assets2.hrc.org/thelei/documents/LGBT_Programming.pdf

4. Training

Training is essential in creating an inclusive organization. SAGE Care provides a variety of training opportunities for serving the LGBTQ+ population.

- https://sageusa.care/our-services/coaching-training/
- https://sageusa.care/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SAGEtrainingsheet-03.pdf

Resources for Information and Advocacy

National Resources

SAGE: Services and Advocacy for GLBT Seniors
Website: https://www.sageusa.org/
Phone: 877-360-LGBT (5428)

American Society on Aging (training)
Website: https://www.asaging.org/education/5

PFLAG (Formerly known as Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)
Website: https://pflag.org/
Find a local chapter: https://pflag.org/find-a-chapter

Human Rights Campaign
(Work locally, nationally and globally on issues that affect the LGBTQ community)
Website: https://www.hrc.org/

Lambda Legal
Lambda Legal, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and everyone living with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.
Website: https://www.lambdalegal.org/

National Resource Center on LGBT Aging
The National Resource Center on LGBT Aging is the country's first and only technical assistance resource center aimed at improving the quality of services and supports offered to lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender older adults.
https://www.lgbtagingcenter.org/

North Carolina Resources

SAGE Central North Carolina
SAGE CNC, is an active program of the LGBT Center of Raleigh and an affiliate of SAGEUSA that advocates for and provides services to LGBTQ persons 50 and older.
Website: https://www.lgbtcenterofraleigh.com/programs/adult-programs/sage-central-north-carolina.html

Glossary of Terms

Ally (Heterosexual Ally, Straight Ally): A person who is not LGBTQ but shows support for LGBTQ people and promotes equality in a variety of ways.

Androgynous: Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine.

Asexual: The lack of a sexual attraction or desire for other people.

Biphobia: Prejudice, fear or hatred directed toward bisexual people.

Bisexual: A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.

Cisgender: A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Closeted: Describes an LGBTQ person who has not disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Coming out: The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others.

Discrimination: The different and unfair treatment of certain groups of people based on specific characteristics, such as race, religion, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Equal Protection: A constitutional guarantee that the government will treat one person or group of people the same way that it would treat any other person or group of people under the same circumstances.

Gay: A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.

Gender dysphoria: Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify. According to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the term - which replaces Gender Identity Disorder - "is intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults."

Gender: A set of social, physical, psychological and emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations, that classify an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous or other.

Gender-expansive: Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system.

Gender expression: External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

Gender-fluid: According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person having or expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

Gender identity: One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Gender non-conforming: A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.

Gender Role: The social expectation of how an individual should look or behave, often based upon the sex assigned at birth.

Genderqueer: Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.

Gender transition: The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions.

Harassment: Actions or words that harm or distress a person, and do not otherwise serve a legitimate purpose. Harassment often interferes with the ability to take full advantage of educational opportunities.

Heterosexism: The assumption that sexuality between people of different sexes is normal, standard, superior or universal and other sexual orientations are substandard, inferior, abnormal, marginal or invalid.

Homophobia: The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex.

Intersex: An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, these traits are visible at birth, and in others, they are not apparent until puberty. Some chromosomal variations of this type may not be physically apparent at all.

Lesbian: A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women.

LGBTQ: An acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer."

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Living openly: A state in which LGBTQ people are comfortably out about their sexual orientation or gender identity – where and when it feels appropriate to them.

Non-binary: An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do.

Outing: Exposing someone's lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.

Pansexual: Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.

Queer: A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with "LGBTQ."

Questioning: A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Same-gender loving: A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.

Sex assigned at birth: The sex (male or female) given to a child at birth, most often based on the child's external anatomy. This is also referred to as "assigned sex at birth."

Sexual orientation: An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

Transgender: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender

does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Transgender Man: Describes the trajectory of a person who is changing or has changed their body and lived gender role from a birth-assigned female to an affirmed male. Also, trans male, trans man, FTM or transman.

Transgender Woman: Describes the trajectory of a person who is changing or has changed their body and lived gender role from a birth-assigned male to an affirmed female. Also, trans woman, MTF or trans female.

Transphobia: The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people.

Sources:
Human Rights Campaign https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms
We Are Family https://www.wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az

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1920's

*U.S. Navy uses sailors to identify and at times, seduce gay men in order to report their names to authorities. The scandal is the first-time gay rights & governmental prosecution of LGBT people becomes a public issue.

*The African-American organized Hamilton Lodge Ball of Harlem attracts thousands of cross-dressing men, women and spectators from all over the nation, marking the emergence of the social category, "homosexual".

*Police raid the many gay bars and restaurants in New York and other large cities. This marks the beginning of decades of police violence and harassments against LGBT people.

*"Gay" starts to be used for homosexuals.

1930's

*Hitler bans gays and lesbians groups from forming in Germany, beginning the persecution of LGBT people under his rule.

*LGBT people become targets of violence and fear after new U.S. crime laws under homosexuality among a list of broader violent crimes, such as rape and child molestation.

*Electric shock therapy is reported as a treatment for homosexuality at an American Psychological Association meeting

*Gay men are forced to wear a pink triangle in Nazi concentration camps. This is the first use of the pin triangle as a symbol for LGBT identities.

1940's

*It is revealed that 10,000-15,000 LGBT people were killed in Nazi concentration camps.

*First use of "transsexuality" to reference homosexuality and bisexuality.

*U.S. military bars gays and lesbians from serving. LGBT people currently serving are committed to military hospitals, examined by psychiatrists, and discharged.

*First known female-to-male sex change surgery is performed in Britain.

*The Kinsey Report describes sexuality as existing on a scale and reports that homosexuality is more widespread than previously assumed.

1950's

*President Eisenhower calls for the dismissal of homosexuals from government service

*American Psychiatric Association includes homosexuality in its first official list of mental disorders

*Christine Jorgensen becomes the first widely publicized person to undergo sex reassignment surgery, in this case male to female. She creates a worldwide sensation.

*Immigrants are banned from U.S. if they have "psychopathic personality," including homosexuality

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1960's	1970's	1980's	1990's
*Transgender public uprising at Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco results in first network of support services for transgender people.	*The first Gay Pride marches take place in honor of Stonewall.	*The first reported cases of the disease known as AIDS are announced.	*Drug therapies shown to be effective in treating HIV.
*Three days of rioting between patrons and police at the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, NYC, marks the unofficial beginning of the gay civil rights movements.	*U.S. Supreme Court refuses to hear the case of a teacher fired for lesbianism, making it legal to fire teachers for being LGBT.	*Rock Hudson, Hollywood actor, admits he is dying of AIDS, bringing widespread public attention to the epidemic.	*Congress passes Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), forbidding federal recognition of state-approved same-sex marriages and access to the 1,138 benefits and rights recognized for different-sex marriages.
*National Organization for Women's president refers to the growing lesbian visibility within the organization as a "lavender menace" and seeks to exclude lesbians.	*The American Psychiatric Association declares that homosexuality is not a psychiatric disorder, ending years of medically-sanctioned institutionalization of LGB people.	*Tennis pro Martina Navratilova's female lover publicly sits in her "box" at Wimbledon and the French Open.	*U.S. military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy becomes law
*Castro, Cuba's new leader, starts a campaign to rid Cuba of LGBT people. They are frequently imprisoned and confined in labor camps.	*80% of surveyed Oregon doctors say they would refuse to treat a known homosexual.	*Berkeley (CA) becomes first U.S. city to extend domestic partnership benefits to lesbian and gay employees.	*Matthew Shephard, a gay student, is tortured, beaten severely, tied to a fence, and abandoned. He later dies.
	*Barbara Jordan becomes the South's first black congresswoman. A lesbian, she is closeted and refuses to support gay legislation.	*Supreme Court rules that the Constitution allows states to pass and enforce sodomy laws targeting homosexuals.	

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2000's	2010-2015	2015-2020	
*U.S. House of Representatives votes to extend federal laws to include attacks based on victim's sexual orientation or gender identity as "hate crimes."	*National Resource Center on LGBT Aging launched.	**The first national monument to the LGBT rights movement is created in New York City.	
*Vermont is first state to offer civil unions to same-sex couples, granting them same state rights as heterosexual couples.	*The repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" allows LGB members to serve in the U.S. military while being open about their sexual orientation.	*The ban on transgender military service is lifted in 2016 and later reinstated in 2019.	
*Massachusetts Supreme Court rules it is unconstitutional to deny marriage to gay and lesbian couples and becomes the 1st state to allow same-sex marriages.	*It Gets Better campaign starts to prevent suicide among LGBT youth by having adults convey the message that the teens' lives will improve.	*A record number of "out" athletes and politicians increase visibility for LGBT people.	
*United Kingdom allows transgender people to change their identity on their birth certificates	*Voters in Houston repeal non-discrimination legislation that included protections for LGBT people.	*Supreme Court ruled narrowly in favor of Colorado baker who refused to provide a wedding cake to a same-sex couple. But the court also refused to create a license to discriminate and made it clear that civil rights laws can still bar discrimination open to the public.	
*Two gay male teenagers are executed by the government of Iran.	*United States Supreme Court extends marriage equality to all 50 states.		

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