Connecticut Community Care, Inc. (CCCI) is a care management non-profit organization serving the needs of Connecticut citizens, particularly elders and individuals with disabilities. The mission of CCCI is to identify choices and provide services to help people of all ages, abilities, and incomes to live at home. CCCI nurse and social service care managers look at care management from every perspective, including caregiving, housekeeping, social, emotional, health and financial needs. Our CCCI team values and respects all persons and endorses the opportunity for them to self-identify with respect to gender identity, sexual orientation and families of choice.
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I Introduction

This is a guidebook to help organizations providing aging services to become aware and culturally competent with respect to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) persons. LGBT persons have made substantial legal gains in recent years, including as of June 2015 the right of same-sex persons to legally marry in every state in the U.S. However, general social acceptance and true inclusiveness lag behind.

LGBT elders have experienced a lifetime of stigma and discrimination. This often leads to mistrust and reluctance to seek services or for individuals to “go back into the closet” and hide their true identities when they do. The result is a much higher rate of social isolation among LGBT elders. Simultaneously, LGBT elders have greater support needs than their non-LGBT peers. LGBT elders are twice as likely as heterosexual elders to age alone, and more than four times as likely to have no children.¹ Thus LGBT elders are both in greater need for aging services and less likely to seek them.

Significant efforts are underway nationally and in Connecticut to respond to these facts and provide open and affirming services. Those of us at Connecticut Community Care, Inc. (CCCI), a care management non-profit organization serving the needs of Connecticut citizens, are committed to be in the forefront of this work. We are a founding participant (2013) of LGBT Aging Advocacy, a volunteer collaborative including service providers, community members and state agencies. Our collective goal is to create an environment in aging services organizations to support and affirm LGBT consumers.

In 2015 and again in 2016, CCCI was privileged to receive funding from The John H. and Ethel G. Noble Charitable Trust, administered by Deutsche Bank Trust Company, N.A., in support of these efforts. We titled our project “Getting it Right: Creating an LGBT Responsive Organization.” The purpose of the “Getting it Right” project is to systematically integrate best practices regarding service provision to LGBT elders into the CCCI organization. CCCI set the goal of being visible as an “open and affirming” organization to LGBT elders and their families. The key insight behind the project is that while training is necessary, it is not sufficient as a means to create and sustain organizational change. CCCI hired a part-time project coordinator and assembled a Steering Committee from across the organization to identify the changes needed to achieve our goal. This Guidebook shares what we have learned on our journey.

¹ LGBT Aging Project, a Program of the Fenway Institute, 2014.
II The Reasons for Change

Why seek to be LGBT-responsive?

There are many reasons for an aging services provider to ensure it is inclusive of LGBT persons in policy and practice. First of course, in Connecticut it is the law.


It shall be a discriminatory practice in violation of this section for any person to subject, or cause to be subjected, any other person to the deprivation of any rights, privileges or immunities, secured or protected by the Constitution or laws of this state or of the United States, on account of religion, national origin, alienage, color, race, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, blindness or physical disability.

It is also rooted in the social work code of ethics, and social work is the professional basis of many human services organizations.

National Association of Social Work Code 1.05: Cultural Competency & Social Diversity

a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures

b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their consumers’ cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to consumers’ cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups

c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability

In short, it is our professional responsibility.

Whether or not we know it, we already serve LGBT persons. Care managers whose awareness is raised recount instances of either known or likely LGBT consumers. They also tell us that they have witnessed the “hiding” strategies many LGBT persons use because of stigma and discrimination. They have also recounted their experiences with transgender consumers, who are less able to hide and often report experiences of inappropriate remarks and questions from care providers who have not been trained. These notes, one from a CCCI supervisor and one from a potential future CCCI consumer, say it best:

“Yesterday I met my first transgender person in the line of work (that I can recall in 29 years). Both the care manager and myself felt prepared to advocate and were comfortable with the issues that presented themselves. We noted the other professionals present were not acting appropriately. As the CCCI care manager stated: “they didn’t have the training that we had.” We have quite a bit of work to do for this person, but at least we know where we are headed.”

—CCCI Care Manager

“I am a lesbian living with young-onset dementia. CCCI’s efforts in the “Getting it Right” project and the LGBT Moveable Senior Center gives me hope that I might be able to access culturally sensitive services at times when I need them most.”

—Anonymous
III The Hallmarks of an LGBT-Inclusive Organization

Inclusivity markers are different for different types of organizations. For example, some organizations, such as senior centers, provide programming and others do not. You will need to think about and customize your approach in the context of your organization. However, there are several hallmarks of an LGBT-inclusive organization:

- **Leadership commitment**
  Becoming an LGBT-responsive organization starts at the top! This work requires training for leaders and all other staff, and the development and implementation of inclusive organizational policies, procedures and practices. Supervisors must be prepared to respond to questions on an array of topics ranging from the difference between organizational and personal values to how best to support an individual client. Sustainability strategies must be developed and implemented. Leadership commitment is the first necessary ingredient and hallmark of an LGBT-inclusive organization.

- **LGBT cultural competence training**
  A critical mass of the organization’s staff has experienced high quality LGBT cultural competence training (see training resources).

- **Visual cues**
  The organization has adopted visual cues such as Pride colors and symbols in ways that make sense for the specific organization. Visual cues are also appropriate for organizational programming or events. The cues must themselves promote inclusion. Using only opposite-sex couples on an event promotion is not inclusive. Visual cues might be embedded in: your website, social media, publications, letterhead, email signature, employee badges, program fliers, physical space and more!

- **Consumers “see” themselves in the question and answer choice responses on your intake forms**
  Just seeing themselves on your organization’s forms sends a cue that your organization is aware and inclusive. This step must also be paired with transparent information about confidentiality of information. (See Appendix A)

- **Physical infrastructure and programming**
  If your organization is site-based, then your site must be “LGBT-ready”. A very specific requirement is that transgender persons are supported in accessing the restroom aligned with their gender identity. You must make sure that your site’s staff implement LGBT inclusivity laws and policies correctly.

- **Alliances with LGBT organizations/community members and other resources**
  Get and stay connected to the LGBT community. Get connected to other service providers who are working to improve their services to LGBT consumers. (See Appendix B)

- **Sustainability strategies**
  Keep the initiative alive over time. While sustainability is important for all, it is crucial in high turnover organizations. Sustainability requires strategies for ongoing staff training and some form of periodic evaluation.
IV The Role and Limitations of Training

While LGBT cultural competence training for staff is essential, it is just the first step. Training helps to provide a foundation of knowledge and understanding, but this must be translated into concrete action. For example, one best practice for working with LGBT elders is to use welcoming symbols—such as the rainbow flag—that are easily recognized by LGBT persons. The creation and dissemination of such a cue must be endorsed, funded and created by management; it is not the responsibility of each person to do so as a personal follow-up action after the training class is over.

Most steps for implementation of best practices introduced in training must be defined and designed at the management level. Managers are responsible for ensuring their staff members follow practices and policies created and required by the organization. They must be provided with tools such as talking points and reinforcement materials, as well as concrete responses to staff unwilling to follow organizational policy, up to and including disciplinary action.

Training Roll-Out Tips:

An optimal order of training roll-out within a large organization would be:

- Executive Leadership alone (or seek to join with other organizations and their executives to make this more cost effective)
- Implementation Team/Champions (or seek to join with other organizations and their implementation teams/champions to make this more cost effective)
- General Staff

The purpose of a staggered training roll-out, when feasible, is to develop a comprehensive and unified understanding among the Leadership and the Implementation Team before engaging the general staff. This will help ensure that Leadership is well-prepared for the type of change recommendations that will emerge from the Implementation Team. A staggered roll-out would be costly for a single organization, so the recommendation is to join with other organizations to share the costs. Of course this also has the advantage of expanding the LGBT responsive organizational environment.
V Change Strategy Overview

Initiating organizational change is not an individual employee’s responsibility. Conversely, it is not an employee’s prerogative to be selective about which mandatory organizational policies and practices to follow.

Organizational change related to any topic requires the following steps:

1. Employee orientation to the subject matter—training;
2. Creation of specific actions and modifications tailored to the specific organization;
3. Systematic dissemination of those specific actions;
4. Supervision and supervisory response to failure on the part of employees to follow practices in a quality manner;

VI Change Strategy Case Study

This case study is an illustration of the Change Strategy steps taken at CCCI when introducing a rainbow-colored “Ally” insignia to the employee badge.

1. Training:

   Connecticut Community Care, Inc. (CCCI) scheduled comprehensive training and a “critical mass” of staff attended the training. Everyone learned that a best practice is for organizations to signal LGBT inclusivity by using cues widely understood in the LGBT community and that the rainbow flag is a good visual cue.

   Management identified a vendor to make the stickers (www.stickeryou.com).

   Next, management created a badge sticker adoption policy. This policy states that the sticker is a required element on the badge and employees may not refuse to wear it. (Even better if possible, embed the Ally rainbow sticker into the design of the badge.) It may be tempting to forgo requiring usage of the Ally sticker and opt for strong encouragement and persuasion. This is not advised. First, it sets a precedent and

2. Creation of Specific Actions:

   Management decided to add a dime-sized “Ally” rainbow sticker to the badge to signal CCCI’s inclusivity. The existing dress code policy stipulates that employee badges must be worn in a way that is visible to consumers and to external customers.
legitimates refusal to comply with other organizational policies. It also undermines true commitment to LGBT inclusivity.

3. **Systemic Dissemination of the Specific Action:**

Systematic dissemination of the stickers required both physical distribution and the provision of talking points for managers about why the stickers were added, what the stickers do and don’t represent, and how to respond to consumers who ask questions or express opinions, particularly adverse opinions. The stickers were distributed in the regions by team leaders and managers. They were given written talking points to explain the new policy to employees and answer questions. (See Section IX and Appendix C)

4. **Supervision and Supervisory Response:**

Managers were provided with tools and strategies for supervision of employee compliance with the organizational change—adding an Ally sticker to the employee badge in this example. Managers needed a clear policy statement in order to fully articulate the policy, explore any employee reluctance to comply, and to practice supervision within the established Human Resources framework.

5. **Tools and strategies used to keep the initiative alive and to bring new staff on board:**

CCCI promotes the sharing of successes and challenges as a means to move the initiative forward and to orient new staff.

- **Sharing among managers**—success stories/challenges promote uniformity of implementation and continuity across the organization, knowledge that LGBT consumers are being served, and the development of additional tools, tips, strategies, and responses.

- **Inclusivity content is embedded in the ongoing training/education curriculum.** In the context of our “badge sticker” example, the steps above help managers work with staff experiencing the initial LGBT training. An organization will inevitably experience staff turnover and may expand. An ongoing training solution to help new staff understand the broader framework of LGBT inclusivity is a requirement of sustainability.
VII The Impact of Organizational Size and Type

Implementation of organizational initiatives is highly dependent on the size and structure of the organization and its type of work. The size of the organization affects the organization’s management complexity and the layers between management decisions and execution of those decisions. Communication, while always a key need, will be particularly important in larger environments. Organizational structure is important as well and relates to whether frontline staff are located together or regionally dispersed.

Of special note, organizations that use volunteers in a programming capacity and that are open to the public (e.g. senior centers) will need to think about how these organizational dimensions affect their training and all other dimensions of LGBT inclusivity. Organizations that serve the public and are open to people with many different viewpoints, must still directly signal LGBT inclusivity with visual cues such as the rainbow flag that is recognized by LGBT persons. Claims of inclusivity without such signals are hollow.

Organizations need to think about communication and response to those whose personal views are not inclusive. Also to be considered in the case of senior centers is the review of the center’s existing codes of conduct for all persons. A new area of attention is bullying among seniors in senior environments. While specific proven anti-bullying programs are not yet available, center directors can take advantage of the extensive school-based materials.

Programming is also highly relevant to senior centers. Programming can be thought of in three basic ways which are not mutually exclusive:

- All programming is more integrated, safe and inclusive for everyone. In this approach, LGBT people are invited to join in the ongoing programming in a safe and inclusive manner.
- Create programming that is LGBT-focused and that others may wish to attend as well.
- Create specific LGBT-targeted offerings, e.g. legal clinics for LGBT folks, lesbian discussion group, LGBT estate planning.

Of great importance is joining with like-minded others in your area. Creating or joining a service provider LGBT resource exchange is a great way to do this.
VIII Project Leadership Structure

Project leadership needs will vary based on organizational size and complexity. This section highlights some of the elements of project leadership. The key is to assess and build on your own strengths and resources. Not all organizations will have the ability to implement all of these suggestions. This does not mean that you can’t move forward. Be flexible and play to your strengths!

- **Project Manager**—Competencies in project management and change implementation as well as subject matter expertise are needed. Note that being a member of the LGBT community does not automatically confer subject matter expertise. A project manager who is an LGBT Ally can be a great choice.

- **Team/Steering Committee**—A Steering Committee comprised of all aspects of the organization is critical. This is particularly true if you obtain project management on a consultative basis. It is also important as a sustainability strategy.

- **Organizational Review**—An important first step is to review publications, intake forms, and other aspects of the work to see where change is likely to occur. Organizations should prioritize the work that involves consumer/consumer interaction.

- **Communications**—It is important for organizational leadership to announce and endorse the project and to introduce the project manager. If the project manager is new it is important to meet with as many work teams as possible, as well as individually with staff and managers.

**Project Leadership Tips**

Make sure leadership is prepared and unified, has been trained, and is able to appropriately answer key questions about this initiative.

Prioritize areas of change. Key areas may include the following:

- Interactions with consumers in multiple guises (e.g. intake forms, intake interviews).
- Visual cues that signal your organization is open to and affirming of LGBT persons. Visual cues might be embedded in: your website, publications, letterhead, email signature, employee badges, program flyers, physical space, etc.
- Data collection systems—once you have amended intake forms to be inclusive, the new questions/values will need to be collected in your data systems.
- Physical infrastructures and programming (where applicable), making sure both are inclusive—this includes visual and policy inclusivity.
IX Sample Talking Points and Scenarios

During the change implementation process, management should be prepared to answer questions from employees such as those below:

**Q** Why did management adopt the Ally rainbow sticker?

- LGBT persons are accustomed to being invisible, "straightening" their homes for example, by removing pictures that show their LGBT identity. Thus it is important for the organization to send cues that the organization is inclusive.

- Note that many transgender persons are not accustomed to being invisible; the rainbow sticker will be a relief and a welcome signal to them.

**Q** What does the sticker represent about the organization? About us as employees?

- The Ally sticker signals the policy and practice of this organization as being inclusive of and welcoming to LGBT persons.

- The sticker is not a statement about the employee’s sexual orientation, and employees are not being asked to divulge their sexual orientation.

**Q** How do we respond to consumers who ask about the sticker or voice their own LGBT bias?

- The sticker demonstrates the organization’s policy of being inclusive of all persons including LGBT persons.

- Do not get into debate or try to convince consumers who are not inclusive.

**Q** How do we respond to consumers who do come out as LGBT?

This is very specific to the type of organization and its ongoing relationship with the consumer. From the perspective of our care management firm, it would be appropriate to:

- Engage in a conversation with the consumer about the further use of this information with other providers so that they can be mindful and thoughtful about the staff they send to the consumer’s home.

- Make sure the consumer knows that while our organization has undertaken cultural competency training, not every service
provider has done so. In other words, remember there are limits to the “net of safety” the organization is able to provide. LGBT adults are familiar with this situation.

- Make sure the consumer knows they can contact their care manager about any inappropriate/biased responses they experience from the staff of other service providers.

**For Managers: Additional Considerations**

**How to help employees who might feel nervous about the sticker:**

- One method to help employees who might feel nervous about the sticker is through role play in the team. Discuss in the team what situations they feel might be challenging and role play those situations.

**How to respond to employees who express reservations about wearing the sticker:**

- Managers need a clear statement about the policy and must be able to fully articulate that policy.
- Find out what the employee’s reluctance is: stress the importance of “let’s talk more” about why this is the reaction.
- Restate that inclusivity is the current organizational policy—inclusivity of all persons; respect for all persons—this is simply a way of making sure this existing policy is evident to LGBT persons. Continue supervision and supervisory practices within the established HR framework of the organization.

**Talking Points for Managers: The Core Questions**

It is likely that leadership and management will be asked core questions with regard to the philosophy of inclusiveness. Below are common questions with suggested talking points. It is important for managers to become thoroughly familiar with the rationale behind the organization’s new policies.

**Q** Why are we singling out LGBT persons for inclusion practices? We want to be inclusive to everyone, especially persons such as individuals with disabilities and persons of color, who have experienced very significant cultural bias. Wouldn’t a generalized “all are welcome” inclusivity message be better in this regard?

**Talking Points:** It is certainly true that organizations should have a comprehensive cultural competence framework. There are many forms of diversity and cultural bias; indeed LGBT persons are themselves very diverse. However, many LGBT individuals are unique in their ability to survive by being invisible. They have experienced significant and at times life threatening bias and have adopted systematic hiding as a survival strategy. Many transgender persons are less able to survive by hiding. They have experienced extraordinary social abuse. The 2011 study “Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey” reported a 41% suicide attempt rate among transgender respondents compared to a 1.6% suicide attempt rate in the general public. An open and affirming community services organization needs to take the first step out of the closet by identifying as an Ally, rather than asking that the LGBT person do so. A general statement that the organization is inclusive to all persons is simply not direct enough to communicate effectively.
Why should we add sexual orientation and gender identity to the intake forms? Wouldn’t LGBT persons want to keep that private?

Talking Points: On existing forms organizations have addressed sexual orientation implicitly and heteronormative gender identity explicitly. Because of the question and answer categories, LGBT persons are rendered invisible on these forms. Assuming the need for privacy of LGBT sexual orientation/gender identity fails to appreciate that heterosexuality is extraordinarily visible in the culture—in family photos, in discussion of dating and weddings; pregnancies and more. Because it is normative, it is the default assumption, constituting an invisible background, thus not seen for what it is. The converse question is why wouldn’t heterosexuals want to keep their sexual orientation private?

The need for feedback and evaluation is another important reason for adding this information to your forms. You will want to assess your efforts at becoming inclusive of LGBT persons and who better to ask than your LGBT consumers!

It is important to note, however, that adding inclusive questions to intake forms should take place only AFTER the organization has had LGBT cultural competency training. There are additional best practices related to inclusive questions on intake forms. Please see Appendix A.

I treat everyone the same. Shouldn’t this be what we all strive to do?

Talking points: When this topic arises, it is helpful to engage in a discussion of “sameness.” People are not the same—their differences, including cultural differences on many dimensions is what creates the kaleidoscope of life—celebrate their uniqueness with them, by first acknowledging that it exists!
X Lessons Learned

- Success requires that organizational leaders endorse and champion the initiative.
- Cultural bias against LGBT persons exists even among good-hearted people and despite the fact that marriage equality is now the law in the U.S. This is an ongoing education and change campaign not a one-time event.
- Implementation is more complicated than often appreciated. Pulling on the yarn unravels lots of connected elements—such as the example of the seemingly straightforward “badge sticker” implementation.
- Be prepared to answer and re-answer core questions such as those stated in the sample talking points and scenarios. Your training will be critical to comprehensive understanding.

XI Conclusion

LGBT inclusivity is but one form of cultural competence. There are many other ways your organization should seek to be inclusive and welcoming to all persons.

Is your organization readily accessible in all public areas to people of all abilities? Are forms offered in large print and in a number of languages? Are interpreters available when staff capacity does not include the language of consumers? Are meal plans offered to meet the diverse needs of multiple cultures and different dietary practices? Do you have well-publicized methods to receive, review and act on suggestions and complaints from consumers?

These are just a few questions that relate to the journey of being truly aware and open to all persons in their wide diversity!
XII Training Resources and Recommendations

National Resource Center on LGBT Aging/SAGE
www.lgbtagingcenter.org

The NRC on LGBT Aging is a resource of the Federal Government provided via contract with several LGBT aging services organization. SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders) is the largest of these LGBT services organizations. Resources include:

- Training (Free, $,$$)
- Publications (Free for download; charge for printed copies)
- “A Practical Guidebook to Creating Welcoming Agencies”
- “Inclusive Questions for Older Adults: A Practical Guide to Collecting Data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity”
- And more... see the website—new publications are listed regularly

Recommendations: CCCI commissioned SAGE to provide the 4-hour training called “Improving Aging Services for LGBT Older Adults” to CCCI staff. 179 CCCI staff attended this training; our internal evaluation score was close to 3.9 out of 4.0, the maximum positive score value.

Project Visibility & Boulder, CO Area Agency on Aging Project Visibility
www.bouldercounty.org

The training program that is provided is comprehensive and includes many exercises, prompts and talking points for the trainer. To utilize this program fully would require that an organization embed it into an internal education/training department. Resources include:

- Training program with handouts, exercises ($ for DVD, printed materials)

Recommendations: CCCI had access to this training program as a member of the Connecticut LGBT Aging Advocacy. We used the 13-minute Project Visibility video as a pre-training activity for staff to begin to think about and discuss the topic. The video is excellent and consists of interviews with LGBT elders discussing their experiences. Please note that persons in the video vignettes are not racially diverse.

Lavender Seniors of East Bay
www.lavenderseniors.org (free)

Located in California, this organization was founded in 1994 by a group of about 20 seniors who were concerned about the lack of legal protections in place at the time. They have continued to advocate and promote LGBT-inclusive services. Resources include:

- Free 45-minute training program, available online that meets California statutory
criteria for LGBT cultural competence for healthcare providers. The online course, “Creating a Healthcare Practice Welcoming to LGBT Seniors” is divided into 5 sections. As the title suggests, this training focuses on healthcare providers.

- To access, go to website; under heading “Lavender Seniors Releases First Training Film of its Kind,” click “View introductory video and get more information”; set up “Udemy” account to access training

**Recommendations:** The training video highlights multiple forms of diversity and is racially/ethnically diverse. This may be an option when the budget does not allow in-person training. We recommend that several members of your Implementation Team take the course and assess its suitability for your organization. Think about assembling your staff and watching and discussing it together.

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**LGBT Aging Advocacy**

**Promoting respect and dignity for LGBT elders**

**LGBT Aging Advocacy**
Contact information:  
lgbtAgingAdvocacy@gmail.com

This is a volunteer organization of service providers and LGBT community members; begun in August 2013 in the Hartford, CT area. Its purpose is to collaborate with service providers to advocate and promote the development and provision of LGBT culturally competent aging services in Connecticut. Resources include:

- Overview presentation about the group, why it was formed, resources and data about the LGBT community needs and population in Connecticut (free; contact LGBT Aging Advocacy)

- Facebook—resources posted  
www.facebook.com/LGBTAgingAdvocacy

- Website address www.lgbtagingadvocacy.org

- “Finding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Affirming Services as You Age” (free brochure)

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**Recommendations:** CCCI is a member of the Steering Committee of this group. The overview presentation includes the 13-minute Project Visibility video. The presentation is useful as an overview of the topic. The target audience is organizational leadership.

**Connecticut TransAdvocacy Coalition**

www.transadvocacy.org/resourcesmain

“The mission of the Connecticut TransAdvocacy Coalition (CTAC) is to make Connecticut a safe and tolerant place for the trans and gender non-conforming individual through education and social advocacy. CTAC is a coalition and grassroots oriented organization comprised of individuals and organizations dedicated to the advancement and attainment of full Human Rights for all trans and gender non-conforming people in every aspect of society and actively oppose discriminatory acts.” (Quotation from the website) Resources include:

- Forms & Documents, Reading List, Links to information and support

- Training

**Recommendations:** The Connecticut TransAdvocacy Coalition is a member of the LGBT Aging Advocacy Coalition. Diana Lombardi, MSW is the Executive Director. She is an expert in the Connecticut anti-discrimination laws and what they mean for how organizations are expected to serve transgender persons. Ms. Lombardi provides training to organizations about the transgender community and what an organization must do to comply with Connecticut anti-discrimination laws.
Appendix A
Inclusive Questions for Intake forms

Introduction

Virtually all organizations have forms that include demographic information about the client/consumer/participant/patient. The vast majority of these forms are “heteronormative” meaning that they presume heterosexuality - largely by failing to ask about sexual orientation. They also presume “as assigned at birth” binary (M/F) gender identity. Such forms include referral and intake forms, assessment instruments, care plans, and many other documents.

The structure of these forms renders LGBT persons invisible. Thus it is an inclusive practice for organizations to signal awareness and acceptance of LGBT persons by directly asking about sexual orientation and gender identity. Such questions on forms need to be embedded within an overall organizational culture of LGBT inclusiveness and should be preceded by staff training. LGBT persons must feel assured that these questions are asked in an effort to be inclusive rather than to stigmatize and discriminate!

When and how the questions appear also makes a difference. Is the consumer completing the forms? Is the consumer being asked the questions in an intake setting? It is also important to be aware that LGBT persons may not reveal themselves upon the first opportunity. They may “decline to answer” a question about sexual orientation. This should always be an option.

It bears repeating that introducing inclusive questions about sexual orientation and gender identity should be preceded by LGBT cultural competence staff training.

Best Practices for person-to-person interview:

Intake interviews should include questions about sexual orientation and gender identity.

- They shouldn’t be the first questions asked;
- They should be asked of everyone (not of those “suspected” to be LGBT);
- They must be optional to answer on the part of the consumer;
- Tell consumers who will be able to access this information and how it will be used in order to help provide appropriate and quality service to them (remember the consumer has the option to decline to “choose not to respond” to the sexual orientation and gender identity questions even though the questions are to be asked of everyone).
Once an organization has decided to begin to ask LGBT inclusive questions, it will need to determine the structure of the questions themselves. An important resource is the guidebook called "Inclusive Questions for Older Adults: A Practical Guide to Collecting Data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" published by the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging www.lgbtagingcenter.org/resources.

The following two options are based on the NRC guidebook. There are additional options therein.

Option 1

This option is research-informed, and was tested in four federally qualified health centers. It adopts the recommended 2-step gender identity question to establish current gender identity and "assigned at birth" sex category. It is the combination of responses that establishes gender identity.

1. Two-step gender identity and birth sex question

   a. What is your current gender identity (choose the one that best describes your identity):
      i. Male
      ii. Female
      iii. Female-to-Male (FTM)/Transgender Male/Trans Male
      iv. Male-to-Female (MTF)/Transgender Female/Trans Woman
      v. Genderqueer, neither exclusively male nor female
      vi. Additional Gender Category/or Other, ___________________________ (text write-in)
      vii. Decline to Answer; please explain why

   b. What sex were you assigned at birth on your original birth certificate (choose one):
      i. Male
      ii. Female
      iii. Decline to answer; ______________________ (text write-in if consumer desires to elaborate)

2. Do you think of yourself as (choose one):
   i. Lesbian, gay or homosexual
   ii. Straight or heterosexual
   iii. Bisexual
   iv. Something else ___________________________ (text write in)
   v. Don’t know

Option 2

This option is the one adopted by CCCI and was suggested during the CCCI LGBT Cultural Competence training (April 2015, SAGE). It was meant to augment, not replace, the current demographic questions required by the program funder. The program funder is silent on sexual orientation. The funder’s gender question is typical, and assumes a binary male/female construct consistent with birth assignment and primary and secondary sex category characteristics.

Sexual Orientation Question

Do you identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual? with answer choices of yes, no, or choose not to respond

Gender Identity Question

Are you a person of transgender experience? with answer choices of yes, no, or choose not to respond
Appendix B
Connecticut LGBT Resource List

Connecticut Department on Aging

The Connecticut Department on Aging has developed an LGBT Resource Page on its website. The website address for the Department of Aging home page is: www.ct.gov/agingservices/site/default.asp

Scroll down to find the rainbow triangle at the bottom of the page on the left. Click on the triangle to navigate to the Resource page. This is what the Resource Page looks like. Note that Cynthia Grant is the contact person and she welcomes feedback about and additions to the Resource page. Make sure to scroll through an entire section. Resources/resource groups are not listed in alphabetical order.

Independence Unlimited

Independence Unlimited provides a variety of services including advocacy peer counseling, professional counseling, aging in place assessments, housing counseling, skills training, information and referral and assistance, transportation assistance, options counseling, social support services, and benefits counseling among others. Independence Unlimited has received grant funds to provide outreach and assistance to LGBTQ seniors with these needs. The grant is an extension of IU’s Project Independence program. Contact Candace Low, M.Ed., Director (860.523.5021) www.independenceunlimited.org

Visual Cue Resources

1. CCCI adopted an “Ally” rainbow sticker for its employee identification badge.

   This sticker was purchased from Sticker You www.stickeryou.com. This is one of their stock images. Stickeryou website navigation: Create Now/Sticker Maker Wizard/Browse Sticker You/Religion & Politics/World Pride.

2. Finding photo images can be challenging. The best resource currently is QueerStock www.queerstock.com The National Resource Center on LGBT Aging is hoping to provide images of LGBTQ elders as well www.lgbtagingcenter.org

LGBT Moveable Senior Center

“LGBT Moveable Senior Center” programming started in the Greater Hartford region in September 2015.

It is a partnership among multiple Connecticut Senior Centers to connect the LGBT community to mind-body-spirit, to each other, and to services and supports for healthy aging. Contact Dianne Stone, Director of the Newington Senior and Disabled Center for more information (860.665.8778). The schedule is available at www.lgbtagingadvocacy.org.
Appendix C

CCCI Manager Talking Points
Case Study Example

Introduction

Following the April 2015 LGBT Cultural Competency training provided by Tim Johnston, PhD from SAGE, the “Getting it Right” project Steering Committee developed specific actions for CCCI to adopt. CCCI adopted these recommendations after review by the Leadership Council and the Clinical Practice Committee.

This Technical Assistance Guide supports the implementation of two of the adopted recommendations: the addition of an Ally rainbow-colored sticker to the CCCI Identification badge, and the addition of a flyer to all welcome packets for all programs (shown at end of document). This Technical Assistance Guide is provided to help managers introduce the usage of both the Ally ID badge sticker and the Welcome Packet flyer.

Talking Points for CCCI Managers

Why did management adopt visual cues to signal its inclusivity? The visual cues are the “Ally” CCCI ID badge sticker and the Welcome Packet flyer added to the Welcome Packets of all programs (shown below):

• LGBT persons are accustomed to being invisible, “straightening” their homes for example, by removing pictures that show their LGBT identity. It is important for the organization to send cues that the organization is inclusive.

• Note that many transgender persons are not accustomed to being invisible; the rainbow sticker will be a relief and a welcome signal to them.

• The use of visual cues is a best practice stressed during the LGBT Cultural Competence training. LGBT persons will recognize the Pride colors and symbols.

What does the Ally sticker represent about the organization? About the employee?

• The Ally sticker signals the policy and practice of CCCI as being inclusive of and welcoming to LGBT persons.

• The sticker is not a statement about the employee’s sexual orientation, and employees are not being asked to divulge their sexual orientation.

• The Ally sticker does not necessarily mean that the staff member attended the April training; however, the staff member must feel confident and comfortable about being an Ally to LGBT persons. The next two questions address how to respond in such an instance.

What if an employee was not able to attend the SAGE training? Should they still have the sticker on their badge?

• Yes, the sticker is a statement that CCCI as an organization is an “Ally” to LGBT persons. Almost 80% of the frontline staff attended the SAGE training – constituting a large majority of CCCI’s frontline staff. This is an excellent result.

• A Train the Trainer (TTT) contract is being developed with SAGE so that CCCI can
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embed LGBT cultural competency training in its ongoing curriculum. Employees who were unable to attend the SAGE training will be attending this internal training.

- Employees who were unable to attend the SAGE training but who nonetheless find themselves working with an LGBT consumer should reach out to their team leader and manager for guidance. Employees must be able to represent the policies and values of CCCI. CCCI is clear that it is inclusive and respectful of all persons. The next talking point question provides an option for training prior to the availability of the TTT program.

**Are there other training options before the TTT program is available?**

An online training program is offered free of charge by Lavender Seniors of East Bay: www.lavenderseniors.org

Located in California, this organization was founded in 1994 by a group of about 20 seniors who were concerned about the lack of legal protections in place at the time. They have continued to advocate and promote LGBT inclusive services. Resources include:

- Free 45-minute training program, available online that meets California statutory criteria for LGBT cultural competence for healthcare providers. The online course, “Creating a Healthcare Practice Welcoming to LGBT Seniors” is divided into 5 sections. As the title suggests, this training focuses on healthcare providers.

- The training course is provided through “udemy” (udemy.com). Accessing the course requires that the user create an account. A certificate of completion is unlocked when the course is completed.

**How to respond to consumers who ask about the sticker; voice their own LGBT bias:**

- The sticker demonstrates the organization’s policy of being inclusive of all persons including LGBT persons.

- Do not get into debate or try to convince consumers who are not inclusive.

**How to respond to consumers who do come out as LGBT:**

- Engage in a conversation with the consumer about the further use of this information – for example with other providers so that they can be mindful and thoughtful about the staff they send to the consumer’s home.

- Make sure the consumer knows that while CCCI has undertaken cultural competency training, not every other service provider has done so. In other words, remember there are limits to the “net of safety” CCCI is able to provide. LGBT adults are familiar with this situation.

- Make sure the consumer knows to contact the care manager about any inappropriate/biased responses experienced from the staff of other service providers.

**How to help employees who might feel nervous about the sticker or the Welcome Packet flyer:**

- One method to help care managers who might feel nervous about the sticker is through role play in the teams.

- Discuss in the team what situations they feel might be challenging and role play those situations.
How to respond to employees who express reservations about wearing the sticker or presenting the Welcome Packet flyer to consumers:

- Restate the CCCI policies and values. The CCCI dress code policy is that "Employees are required to wear their CCCI identification badges in a way that is visible to consumers and external customers." CCCI management has decided to add the Ally sticker to the badge as an indication of its organizational policies and values.

- Find out what the employee’s reluctance is. Stress the importance of "let’s talk more" about why this is the reaction and draw upon relevant talking points in response.

- Restate that inclusivity is the current organizational policy— inclusivity of all persons; respect for all persons—this is simply a way of making sure this existing policy is very evident to LGBT persons.

- Continue supervision and supervisory practices within the established HR framework of CCCI.

Welcome Packet flyer adopted by CCCI