

Supporting the Rainbow Community: Real Stories

Scenarios and Suggestions

This handout has been prepared as a supplement to the webinar entitled “Supporting the Rainbow Community: Real Stories”, which was hosted by the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care (CLRI) in collaboration with Senior Pride Network Niagara (SPNN) and Ottawa Senior Pride Network (OSPN) in August 2019. This webinar explored questions and situations that individuals working in long-term care homes submitted through the webinar registration. Thank you to those who provided scenarios to help the team guide the content of the webinar. We have organized these scenarios into three main topic areas, and provided some suggested actions and relevant resources for individuals and long-term care homes to explore for further learning.



A recommended early step (and one that is relevant for most if not all scenarios listed below) is to implement **training and education** across the organization in LGBTQI2S+ cultural competency. See suggested educational resources in the Ontario CLRI package: [“A Home for All: LGBTQI2S+ Resources for Long-Term Care Homes”](#).

Culturally Competent Team Members

SCENARIO	SUGGESTED ACTION(S)
<p>Team members are uncomfortable with the topic.</p> <p>A team member who is LGBTQ feels unsafe at work.</p>	<p> Training and Education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recruitment: Consider the language used in job postings – add clear language welcoming candidates from diverse backgrounds, specifically mention LGBTQI2S+. ✓ Screening of Potential New Employees: Add a simple question or scenario involving LGBTQI2S+ that can be altered to fit the position being interviewed for. ✓ Orientation: Have new team members and volunteers sign off on anti-discrimination policies. Provide new employees training and educational resources by integrating the topic of supporting LGBTQI2S+ people into orientation and employee / volunteer handbook. Offer ongoing training with specific scenarios / case studies to bring a human face to the topic. ✓ Clarity of Home’s Position & Relevant Laws: Discuss at departmental or general staff meeting, and include information and available resources in Employee Handbook.
<p>Inappropriate and offensive comments made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ by team member(s) ✓ by resident(s) 	<p> Training and Education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Legislation: Familiarize yourself with relevant laws, including those related to human rights, employment equity, worker’s rights and the Resident Bill of Rights. The Ontario Human Rights Commission website offers plain-language tools and resources in the topic areas of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

<p>Myth that being LGBTQ2S is a choice by frontline staff, gay men getting labelled as "sexual predators" by management.</p> <p>Confidentiality...team members thinking this is something everyone has a right to know, gossiping about it, discussing without purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Call out and report inappropriate and offensive comments every time. ✓ Policy and Procedure review and revision: Consider policies and procedures related to workplace violence, harassment and discrimination and complaint procedures. ✓ Visible Signs: Put up posters that promote acceptance and inclusion. Suggestions can be found in the 'Awareness Raising Materials' section of the Ontario CLRI resource package: "A Home for All: LGBTQI2S+ Resources for Long-Term Care Homes" ✓ Practical Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mount Sinai Handout: "What Can an ALLY Say?" → Mount Sinai Handout: "How Can I Be an ALLY?" → Mount Sinai video series: "Are you an ALLY?" → The 519 Printable Posters: #RespectYourElders → Fondation Émergence French & English Posters: « L'Homophobie Affecte Tous Les Âges » / "Homophobia Affects All Ages"
<p>Lack of commitment from senior leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider: Often in organizations, the process towards becoming more inclusive starts with one person – often an LGBTQI2S+ individual or an ally who begins to ask questions within the organization. Support for organizational change requires support from leadership, but remember that leadership happens at all levels of the organization. If you have concerns about resident or employee rights not being respected, it is your responsibility to bring this up with your supervisor. Try to connect with like-minded individuals and consider suggesting a working group convene to reflect on where the organization is at and identify any gaps and barriers that may exist. ✓ Share Relevant Resources with senior leadership, including the practical tools listed below. ✓ Organizational Self-Assessment. Several tools exist that allow organizations to reflect on their own environment and practices. These offer a starting point for beginning the conversation and identifying potential gaps. ✓ Practical Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ottawa Senior Pride Network and Centretown Community Health Centre: "Organizational Assessment of LGBT Cultural Competency" → The 519: "Still Here, Still Queer Handbook" (Best Practices Scorecard) → Ontario CLRI webinar recording: "Supporting the Rainbow Community: A Home For All" → Ontario CLRI at RIA webinar recording: "Put Living First: Creating a Culture Where Everyone Thrives"
<p>Uncertainty around the proper use of pronouns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Training and Education. ✓ Adopt Gender Neutral Language. Utilizing gender neutral language respects and acknowledges the gender identities of all

<p>Misunderstanding about sexual orientation vs gender identity vs gender expression.</p>	<p>persons. Shift to terms like ‘folks’ or ‘everyone’, instead of ‘guys’ or ‘ladies and gentlemen’.</p> <p>✓ Practical Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mount Sinai “Are You an ALLY resources” → Video by Mount Sinai: Are you an ALLY: “Being an ALLY to Trans, Intersex and Two-Spirit People” → Ottawa Senior Pride Network: “Tips for Allies of Transgender People” → True Colors United: short video explaining sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression
<p>Resident moving in who is transgender and team unsure of how to place this resident in basic (shared) accommodation (male or female).</p>	<p> Training and Education about transgender individuals and their perspectives.</p> <p>✓ Shifting Culture towards more person-centered, social model of living by exploring the Working Together to Put LIVING First: Guidebook to Change the Culture of Aging in Long-Term Care</p> <p>✓ Pre Move-In Planning. When a potential resident is going through the assessment process, gender identity is an important consideration for case managers to be mindful of and sensitive to. If the trans individual requires basic accommodation, explore their preferences. If they are requesting a private room, explore the option of wait listing the person for care homes that offer private rooms at the basic accommodation rate. If the level of urgency is high, this may conflict with the reality of wait times.</p> <p>✓ Gaps Exist and Further Dialogue Needed. This is an area where currently there are gaps. Opportunity exists for dialogue and consideration to appropriate policies and processes as there are ethical and privacy layers involved. It is advisable to involve trans individuals in this dialogue.</p>
<p>Team members’ are uncomfortable with same-sex relationship (between two capable, consenting residents who previously had opposite sex spouses).</p>	<p> Training and Education</p> <p>✓ Resident Rights. Engage in a conversation with the team about the Ontario Resident Bill of Rights, which is embedded in the Ontario Long Term Care Homes Act (LTCHA), 2007, accompanying Regulations (O. Reg. 79/10). All residents have the right to have his or her lifestyle and choices respected, to form friendships and relationships, and to be treated with courtesy and respect.</p>
<p>Male resident exposed self to male staff. I am female so no problem but male staff would avoid resident due to this behaviour.</p>	<p>✓ Consider: Is this an LGBTQ issue? How would you handle any situation where a resident is exposing themselves to a team member? Consider if there may be some underlying sexual politics (e.g., homophobia) in this situation.</p> <p>✓ Refer Situation to BSO Support Person for in-depth assessment</p>
<p>We had a resident that identified as gay, but his children continued to have challenges accepting it.</p>	<p>✓ Refer to Social Worker for psychosocial assessment and exploration of the situation and impact on the resident, and the family. Point to consider: <i>is the family’s lack of acceptance interfering with the rights and quality of life of the resident?</i></p>

Shift the Culture Towards Helping LGBTQI2S+ Individuals Feel Safe

SCENARIO	SUGGESTION
LGBTQ resident returns to the closet in LTC for fear of discrimination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The home is responsible for providing a safe place to be out, whether a resident chooses to do so or not. ✓ Shifting the Culture through training and organizational policy – suggested listed above.
Trans resident socially isolated as they did not feel comfortable coming to the lounges or joining in programs.	<p> Training and Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support Connection Building. Connect with recreation professional and/or social worker to work with resident to determine whether or not the programs are of interest, and if not, what program(s) would be of interest. Explore opportunities to bring in outside volunteer support. Reach out to local LGBTQI2S+ agencies to inquire what support is available.
Very rural community. Little of the population identifies as LGBTQI2S+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider: Just because no one identifies as LGBTQI2S+ openly does not mean that they are not there. It may be that they are but do not feel comfortable to be 'out'. Explore opportunities and suggestions listed in this handout and other resources to explore steps your organization can take towards fostering a welcoming, safe space. Keep in mind that even if you have done those things, people may not come out immediately, but what is important the home is a welcoming, inclusive space.
Residents do not tend to speak openly about their sexuality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review Move-In Assessment Tools – Consider what questions included relate to sexuality and intimacy (if any). What opportunities exist for residents to speak openly, in a safe and private space, about a personal topic?
<p>Resident speech, actions / attitudes. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>At Resident Council meeting, discussing resident's right to have lifestyle choices respected. LGBTQI2S rights came up, Resident Council chair left meeting</i> ✓ <i>Other residents making inappropriate comments about someone transitioning. How to help all involved.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Resident Rights. Engage in a conversation with residents about the Ontario Resident Bill of Rights, which is embedded in the Ontario Long Term Care Homes Act (LTCHA), 2007, accompanying Regulations (O. Reg. 79/10). All residents have the right to have his or her lifestyle and choices respected, to form friendships and relationships, and to be treated with courtesy and respect. ✓ Consider: If this were a racial prejudice/bias, what would we do? Consider as well sometimes what people lack awareness of or exposure to can make them uncomfortable. Consider ways to create opportunities for residents to learn and understand different lifestyles. Remember that a lot has changed in our society over the last 50 years when it comes to the LGBTQI2S+ community. ✓ Group Guidelines at Resident Council: Consider adopting and using the Ontario Association of Resident's Councils' (OARC) tool entitled "Opening and Closing Guidelines" – this provides a reminder of the purpose of the meetings as an opportunity to

<p>✓ <i>We have a resident who stays away from the rest of the residents, because he belongs to this community.</i></p>	<p>come together and share, and also sets the tone for a respectful meeting.</p> <p>✓ Practical Tools:</p> <p>→ OARC recorded webinar “LGBTQ2S: Moving Toward an Inclusive Culture in Long-Term Care – One Home’s Journey”</p>
<p><i>Creating a group support for residents who identify as LGBTQI2S+.</i></p>	<p>✓ Create a Gender Sexuality Alliance (also referred to as Gay Straight Alliance): a group that brings LGBTQI2S+ community together with allies. Some LTC homes have worked with local LGBTQ senior pride groups to offer a casual discussion group open to all residents.</p>

Communication with Community that you are a Safe Accessible Space

SCENARIO	SUGGESTION
<p><i>Our LTC home has a pride flag on a pole at the entrance, one member of our council is asking that it be removed.</i></p>	<p>✓ Consider: Has your care home conducted training? Was the member of council involved in that training? Is it a welcoming care home? If not, consider removing the flag until more work is done. If the home is welcoming, provide opportunity for that member of council to receive education and resources. Explore through conversation why they want the flag removed.</p>

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