



Promoting LGBTQ+ Inclusivity in Long-Term Care

As ombudsmen, we can help providers create a safe and inclusive environment for all residents. According to Sage: Advocacy and Services for LGBTQ+ Elders, approximately 10% of the population identifies as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. This means we can assume some long-term care residents are part of this community. We can support these residents by having volunteers and staff educate providers about how to create a safe and inclusive environment for their residents, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Engagement opportunities:

- Perform in-person advocacy visits and phone calls to residents and their representatives and ask questions related to inclusivity and discrimination. Ombudsmen should not ask about anyone's gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Provide facilities with LGBTQ+ inclusivity fliers to hang if they choose to. Facilities may want to review the non-discrimination statement with their legal teams.
- Ombudsmen can work with Activities Departments to identify LGBTQ+ friendly movies or documentaries and encourage activity staff to schedule a showing.
- Provide an in-service related to inclusive language, person-centered care, confidentiality, the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation, and what they can do to signal that they are an ally of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Encourage facility administration to purchase, and provide staff and residents with, rainbow ribbons or pins, to show LGBTQ+ residents that they have support.

What to ask residents and/or representatives during visits or calls:

- Have you ever felt discriminated against by staff because of your race, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, economic status, parental or marital status?
- Have you ever witnessed discrimination?
- Do you know if the facility has an anti-discrimination policy or policies against bullying or harassment? Have you seen it? Do you have a copy?
- Have you ever felt bullied or harassed by other residents? If yes, were facility staff aware and how did they respond?
- Have you ever witnessed bullying or harassment?
- Do you feel like this facility welcomes and respects all people? Do they create a safe and inclusive environment?
- How could the facility administration and staff provide a more inclusive environment?

What to ask providers during visits or calls:

- Do you have an anti-discrimination policy for staff and residents? Do you provide residents and staff with a copy? Can I have a copy?
- Do you have a bullying and harassment policy for staff and residents? Do you provide residents and staff with a copy? Can I have a copy?
- Do staff receive any Diversity Equity and Inclusion training? Do staff receive any inclusivity training related to LGBTQ+ residents?
- Would you be willing to celebrate Pride Month by purchasing pins for your staff, showing an LGBTQ+ movie or documentary, and/or posting signage related to Pride Month in your facility?
- Would you like the ombudsman program to speak with your staff about creating a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ residents?

Resources for ombudsmen and providers:

- Safe and Visible: Creating a Care Facility Welcoming to LGBT Seniors: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuDPWYfVn6g>
- Sage, Advocacy and Services for LGBTQ+ Elders: www.sageusa.org/
- Lavender Seniors, Helping LGBTQ+ older adults age with health, happiness, and pride: www.lavendarseniors.org

- The National Consumer Voice: www.ltcombudsman.org/issues/lgbt-elders
- Round Rainbow Heart Button Pins (25 pins for \$10) https://fundraisingforacause.com/collections/rainbow-products/products/round-rainbow-heart-button-pins?_atid=1vnh6gtKVb1FIJ6gIMogssiONsiFqp
- Rainbow Awareness Ribbons (125 ribbons with pins for \$22) https://ribbonfactory.com/store/display_item/1217.html?msclkid=f886a153deae1ce960a3c32fc71b1e87&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=**LP%20Shop%20-%20Awareness%20Ribbons&utm_term=4584551173753007&utm_content=ALGRAIN%20%7C%20125%20Rainbow%20Awareness%20Ribbons%20-%20125%20Pack%20with%20Safety%20Pins%20-%20LGBT%20%26%20Gay%20Awareness%20Ribbons%20%7C%20%2420.25

If you have any questions about how to engage your volunteers or staff in LGBTQ+ inclusivity outreach, please don't hesitate to call the State Office at 1-800-282-1206.