Center on Halsted Programs

Center on Halsted is the most comprehensive LGBTQ community center in the Midwest

• HIV Testing and Prevention
• Behavioral Health Program
• Anti-Violence Program
• Community and Cultural Programs
• Youth Program
• Senior Program

Senior Program at Center on Halsted serves 500 LGBTQ older adults each year over the age of 55

• Recreational, social and educational activities
• Wellness Programs
• Vocational Program
• Homesharing Program
• Friendly Visitor Program

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Town Hall Apartments

- LGBT-Friendly senior affordable housing
- Co-owned by Heartland Alliance and Center on Halsted
- Residents pay 30% of their income towards rent with rental subsidy from the Chicago Housing Authority
- 79 units – mix of studios and 1 bedrooms
- The building is full and the waitlist is closed
- $26 million project funded through a combination of city, state and federal funds

What is Sexual Orientation?

- Sexual orientation involves the following factors:
  - Attraction (physical, mental, and/or emotional)
  - Behavior (relationships and/or sex practices)
  - Identity (the way someone views themselves)
What is Sexual Orientation?

How much do you know about sexuality?

- Attraction to the same gender
- Attraction to the opposite gender
- Attraction to both genders
- Attraction to no gender
- Lack of sexual attraction

What is Gender Identity?

- Gender identity involves the following factors:
  - Physical characteristics (physical traits, genitalia, etc.)
  - Gender role (public, social, and perceived expectations based on one's gender)
  - Gender identity (the gender someone views themselves)

Terminology – Transgender

- Gender Queer
- Transgender
- Neutrois
- 2-Spirit
- Polygender
- Transsexual
- Agender
- Androgynous
- Third-gender
- Intersex
Terminology – LGBTQ

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Queer

Terminology Best Practices

- Respect for LGBT people can be conveyed through language.
- Words mean different things to different people.
- Language evolves over time.
- Avoid assumptions based on language.
- Ask how someone identifies.

LGBT Older Adults

- The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force estimates that there are 1.5 million LGBT people age 65 and over in the U.S.
- The Task Force estimates that by 2030 this number will double to 3 million.
Who are LGBT Older Adults?

• Ethnically and economically diverse.
• Isolated, invisible or marginalized even within their own communities.
• Resilient, proud and outspoken group.

LGBT History

• In 1952, Christine Jorgensen became the first transgender woman to receive gender affirming surgery.
• In 1969, The Stonewall Riots took place in New York City, widely considered to be the most important event leading to the gay rights movement.
• In 1973, Homosexuality was removed from the Diagnostic Statistic Manual.

LGBT History

• In 1981, the Centers for Disease Control identify the first cases of what will eventually be known as the AIDS epidemic.
• In 1994, "Don't ask, don't tell" (DADT) was the official U.S. policy on military service by gays, bisexuals, and lesbians, prohibiting discrimination as long as they didn't reveal their sexuality.
• In 1998, Matthew Shepard, an American student at the University of Wyoming was beaten, tortured, and left to die.
In 2003, the Supreme Court struck down the sodomy law in Texas and, by extension, invalidated sodomy laws in 13 other states, making same-sex sexual activity legal in every U.S. state.

In 2013, Gender Identity Disorder was removed from the DSM.

In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples can marry nationwide.

Non-Discrimination Laws by State

- Employment non-discrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity (21 states)
- Employment non-discrimination law covers only sexual orientation (2 states)
- No employment non-discrimination law covering sexual orientation or gender identity (28 states)

What factors contribute to someone aging well?

- Financial Security
- Good Health/Health Care
- Social/Community Support
LGBT Barriers to Aging Well

- Unwelcoming mainstream aging programs.
- Isolation from broader LGBT community.
- 20% less likely to access senior centers, housing assistance, meal programs, food stamps, and other entitlements.
- Twice as likely to live alone.
- 3-4 times less likely to have children.

Community Support

- Loneliness is associated with an increased risk for heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, cognitive decline and depression.
- Research shows that social isolation is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.
Health Disparities

- LGBT older adults have higher rates of chronic conditions and other health problems, such as obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, arthritis, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes.
- Additional barriers to healthcare include lack of health insurance and fear of discrimination by providers.

HIV and Aging Statistics

- Newly infected older adults account for 17 percent of all new HIV diagnoses annually.
- Annual HIV infections among gay and bisexual men aged 55 and over increased 18% from 2010 to 2014 (from 1,100 to 1,300).

HIV and Aging

- Among people aged 50 and older:
  - 49% of new HIV diagnoses in 2015 were among gay and bisexual men
  - 15% were among heterosexual men
  - 23% were among heterosexual women
  - 12% were among persons who inject drugs
- 50% of Americans living with HIV are age 50 or older
Early HIV detection remains minimal among LGBT elders (stigma, symptoms associated with aging, health discrimination).

In 2014, 40% of people aged 55 and older had late stage infection (AIDS) at the time of HIV diagnosis (i.e., diagnosed late in the course of the infection).

Research indicates that HIV may progress faster among older adults, making early detection and treatment especially important for this population.

According to the CDC, people who take ART daily as prescribed and achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load have effectively no risk of sexually transmitting the virus to an HIV-negative partner.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is when people at very high risk for HIV take HIV medicines daily to lower their chances of getting infected.

Daily PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by more than 90%. Among people who inject drugs, it reduces the risk by more than 70%.
Financial Disparities

- Medicaid long-term care
- Retiree health insurance benefits
- Tax-qualified retirement plans
- Pensions (survivor annuities)
- Veterans’ benefits
- Inheritance laws

LGBT Older Adults & Long-Term Care

- 80% of LGBT older adults go back into the closet when they move into a skilled nursing facility.
- Less than 50% of LGBT baby boomers expect that health care professionals will treat them with dignity and respect.

Best Practices

- In what ways does your organization communicate that it is welcoming of diversity?
Best Practices

- Set a tone of respect
- Send an inclusive message
- Create safety
- Advocate for LGBT constituents

Best Practices

1. Do presume your agency has LGBT clients.
2. Do ask clients about their sexual orientations and gender identities in a safe and confidential manner.
3. Do create an opening for LGBT clients to talk about family members of choice.
4. Do examine current programming to see if it can be modified for LGBT clients.
5. Do train staff in correct pronoun usage for transgender inclusion.
6. Do review your policies and definitions of “family.”
7. Do promote diversity and inclusion.
8. Do create a welcoming environment.
9. Do promote cultural competency training.
OUR MISSION AND VISION
Center on Halsted's deep commitment to supporting the LGBTQ community is reflected in both the mission and vision of the organization.

MISSION
Center on Halsted advances community and secures the health and well-being of the LGBTQ people of Chicagoland.

VISION
A thriving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community, living powerfully in supportive inclusive environments.

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