Welcoming LGBT Older Adults in Rural Care Settings

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Objectives

• Explain biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression
• Describe the risks that LGBT elders face as they seek formal social services
• List resources to support LGBT older adults
What does LGBT mean?

The people behind the letters
Who we are…

- Race
- Religion
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
- Other

ME
Sexual Orientation

• Who you are physically, spiritually and emotionally attracted to based on their sex/gender in relation to your own
Gender Identity

• How you, in your head, think about yourself. It’s the chemistry that composes you and how you interpret what that means.
Gender Expression

• How you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.
Transgender

- People whose gender identity differs from the gender assigned at birth.

- **Transwoman**
  - Born Male,
  - Live as Female

- **Transman**
  - Born Female,
  - Live as Male

- Cisgender
How many LGBT 60+?

Extrapolated using Census data and projections from The Williams Institute (2011)

2.8 million

48,000
Why learn about LGBT older adults?

Research shows differences and health disparities between LGBT older adults and their peers.
Health Risks

• Higher rates of:
  ▪ Disability (1/2)
  ▪ Mental distress (1/3)
  ▪ Smoking
  ▪ Drinking excessively
  ▪ Cardiovascular disease and obesity (lesbians/bisexual women)

• Poor physical health (gay/bisexual men)
Social Risks

• Majority of care for older adults is provided by an informal caregiver
  ▪ Less likely to be partnered or married
  ▪ Have significantly fewer children
  ▪ More likely to live alone
• 82% have been victimized at least once because of sexual orientation
• 40% have contemplated suicide
Beliefs about Long Term Care

89% staff would discriminate

81% peers would discriminate

77% peers would isolate

53% staff would abuse
Transgender Older Adults

Diverse definition & sub-communities

Transition happens later in life

Fear of being denied hormone treatment

Assigning rooms and clothing by legal sex

Gender related health issues
Strengths

- Coping skills
- Constructed families
- Provider resource
Scenarios

John

Patricia
Foster Welcoming Services

1. Acknowledge important relationships and people
   - Validate

2. Provide person-centered care and social interactions
   - Challenge assumptions

3. Support a welcoming environment
Best Practices

• Update assessments and forms to include LGBT welcoming language relating to sexual orientation and gender identity

• Include pictures of LGBT older adults in marketing materials and on your web site
Best Practices

• Post anti-discrimination statements in your office or include them in your materials including staff recruitment materials
• Train staff on LGBT issues and sensitivity
• Hang rainbows or inclusive signs in public areas; use them on your notebook/tablet when you visit homes
Symbols