WELCOMING LESBIAN, GAY, BIOSEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT) INDIVIDUALS

LGBT 101

Housing & Discrimination
• **Define** LGBT identities and issues

• **Examine** the particular hurdles and challenges that LGBT people face in accessing housing

• **Provide** simple steps you can take to remove barriers

• **Answer** questions, provoke discussion
The Good News:
You don’t have to be an expert on LGBT culture to be culturally competent

- Basic information
- A willingness to learn
Defining Our Terms

- Sex
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
Sex refers to hormones, chromosomes, genital and reproductive anatomy, a **biological** classification.

Gender refers to concepts of femininity and masculinity, a **socially constructed** system of classification.

These may not be the same for any particular individual, i.e., a person with male anatomy may dress, speak and behave in a feminine manner.
• **Lesbian** - an *identity* label for women who have primary sexual, romantic and relational ties to other women.

• **Gay** - an *identity* label for men who have primary sexual, romantic and relational ties to other men.

• **Bisexual** - an *identity* label for people who partner with either men or women.
Gender Identity

The persistent internal sense of being a man or a woman

We all have a gender identity.

For many of us, this matches the sex we were assigned at birth. For transgender people, it does not.

Our gender identity may or may NOT match our appearance, our body, others’ perceptions of us.
Transgender people...
- Can decide to transition at any age
- May or may not change their name/pronouns
- May or may not use hormones or surgery

What to do when you meet transgender persons...
- Ask what they prefer to be called & use that name
- Ask about their pronouns & names for body parts
- Avoid invasive unnecessary questions
Includes but is not limited to:

- Transgender
- Transsexual
- Genderqueer
- Gender fluid
- Agender
- Two-spirit
- Bigender
- DMD, DSD disorders of sex development (Intersex)
According to the American Psychological Association, sexual orientation is:

- **not** a choice
- **not** an illness or emotional problem
- **not** able to be changed by therapy
- **determined** by many factors, usually at a very early age
- **different** from sexual behavior
Thinking On A Continuum

Sex
- Male
- DSD
- Female

Gender
- Masculine
- Androgynous
- Feminine

Gender Identity
- Man
- Genderqueer
- Woman

Sexual Orientation
- Attracted to Women
- Bisexual
- Attracted to Men
The Genderbread Person

Gender Identity

- Woman
- Genderqueer

Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It’s the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.

Gender Expression

- Feminine
- Androgynous
- Masculine

Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles), through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.

Biological Sex

- Female
- Intersex
- Male

Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes.

- Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes
- Male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes
- Intersex = a combination of the two.

Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual
- Bisexual
- Homosexual

Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to in relation to your own.
Remember:

• It's not always obvious who is LGBT!

• It is OK to ask questions about partners, gender, preferred pronouns, language used.

• It is OK to feel awkward as you learn how to ask
Snapshots of transgender life

The National Transgender Center for Equality surveyed 6,450 transgender individuals in the U.S. Full results are available at transequality.org.

- 41% can’t change their gender on their IDs
- 57% were rejected by families
- 19% have experienced homelessness
- 19% were refused medical care
- 47% have attempted suicide
• **Young LGBT were**
  - more likely to have attempted suicide
  - more likely to have serious depression
  - greater risk for HIV and STD’s

  Than LGBT youth with accepting families

• **HOMELESSNESS**
  - of all homeless youth are LGBT
  - High rates of abuse and victimization
  - average age NYC LGB become homeless
  - average age NYC T become homeless
  - cite family rejection as cause
Top five reasons why LGBT youth are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless

(n=381)

- Ran away because of family rejection of sexual orientation or gender identity: 46%
- Forced out by parents because of sexual orientation or gender identity: 43%
- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse at home: 32%
- Aged out of the foster care system: 17%
- Financial or emotional neglect from family: 14%
GENDER MATTERS

2008 Homelessness Risk Rates: Harris County Survey
Transgender Foundation of America | tgctr.org
GENDER - UNEMPLOYMENT & HOMELESSNESS
- Came out in a different era
  - Stonewall Cohort
- Mostly single (vs. 1/3 of heterosexuals)
- 75% live alone
- Rely less on children, family
- Depend mostly on family of choice
Q21 Would you be more inclined to use existing senior services if you knew the staff members received LGBT sensitivity training?

Answered: 423   Skipped: 9

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents who would be more inclined to use existing senior services if they knew staff members received LGBT sensitivity training. The majority responded 'Yes'.]
Q34: Have you or a friend experienced harassment, abuse, or violence because of your sexual orientation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I have.</td>
<td>46.83% 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, Friends have.</td>
<td>50.73% 208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one I know has experienced harassment, abuse, or violence because of sexual orientation.</td>
<td>22.44% 92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 410
Q33: Have you or a friend experienced discrimination due to sexual orientation or gender identity when accessing senior services or senior housing?

- **Discrimination**

![Bar chart showing discrimination experiences](chart.png)
Creating a Welcoming Environment and Overcoming Barriers
Golden Rule vs. Platinum Rule

Well meaning people often think that the most respectful and welcoming treatment is what they would like to receive themselves.

Treat other people they way THEY want to be treated.
Individual/Practitioner Level

Interventions

1. Change your LANGUAGE
   - say, “... your partner, he or she...”
   - mirror the language people use for themselves, their partners and their lives

2. SHOW your openness
   - wear a rainbow pin or an LGBT sticker
   - assure confidentiality to make coming out safe
   - have LGBT publications in your workplace

3. LEARN more
   - read more about the LGBT community
   - learn about LGBT families
Examples of How to Identify your LGBT Persons

Instead of “Are you married?”
“Are you in a relationship?”
“Are you seeing anyone right now?”
“Do you have a significant other?”
“Your partner, he or she....”

Instead of using the name/gender found on the forms
“Who are his parents?”
“What name would you prefer I call you?”
“What pronouns do you prefer, if any?”

Mirror the language people use for themselves, their partners and their lives
There are LGBT persons in every community

It is not always obvious who is LGBT

It is OK to ask and it is OK to be awkward at first.
So, what’s the law say?

- The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits housing discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and familial status.
- However, the Fair Housing Act does not specifically include sexual orientation and gender identity as prohibited bases.
- Housing providers that receive HUD funding, have loans insured by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), as well as lenders insured by FHA, may be subject to HUD program regulations intended to ensure equal access of LGBT persons.
So, what’s the law say?

- Including Iowa, specifically ban sexual orientation AND gender identity/expression housing discrimination.
- Ban only sexual orientation housing discrimination.

If you have general questions about LGBT fair housing issues or need information about HUD regulations intended to ensure equal access of LGBT persons, email LGBTFairHousing@HUD.gov.