



## LGBT Seniors Fact Sheet

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender seniors constitute a population that suffers significant disparities in their health:

- ❖ LGBT seniors are half as likely to be partnered, twice as likely to live alone, and four times as likely to be childless as heterosexual and cisgender older people. Many have lost friends, partners/loved ones and social networks to HIV/AIDS. All of this adds up to an older population with far thinner support networks.
- ❖ Because LGBT seniors have been negatively impacted by decades of discrimination and stigma, they are less likely to access health and social services, putting them at higher risk as they age.
- ❖ Many LGBT seniors deny/hide their sexual orientation or transgender status to avoid discrimination, hostility and exclusion. Hiding who they are may lead to alienation, depression and low self-esteem.
- ❖ Many LGBT seniors are isolated from the wider, organized rainbow community because they perceive that these activities are too “out” for them or that they are designed to meet the needs of younger LGBT people.
- ❖ The transgender population has been identified as one of the most marginalized communities, being at risk for poverty, unemployment, high levels of discrimination, abuse, and isolation.
- ❖ The upcoming generation of LGBT seniors include activists who have been “out” for most of their lives and have assumed rights and equal treatment. They are concerned that the elder care system will not meet their needs.
- ❖ There are more than 20,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Ontario, many of whom are gay men. Currently in their 30s, 40s and 50s, indications are that they are aging at a very accelerated rate, suffering from multiple conditions in middle age that are usually associated with old age.

**“What is LGBT appropriate care? LGBT appropriate care is care that positively reinforces LGBT identities, rather than forcing LGBT individuals back into the closet.”**

S. Ryan B. Brotman and R. Cormier, “The health and social service needs of gay and lesbian elders and their families in Canada.” *The Gerontologist*. 43(2), 192-202. (2003).

\*This fact sheet was adapted from the Ottawa Senior Pride Fact Sheet.