

## Tips for Service Providers:

### What can you do?



- ◆ Develop an organizational culture that recognizes and includes people of all gender identities and sexual orientations.
- ◆ Participate in training and education about the lives and health care needs of LGBTQ2+ seniors.
- ◆ Examine your own assumptions and beliefs about the LGBTQ2+ community.
- ◆ Create policies and procedures that recognize and support LGBTQ2+ staff and clients/residents/patients.
- ◆ Use inclusive language and images of LGBTQ2+ seniors in your forms and physical spaces.
- ◆ Find out what resources and LGBTQ2+ groups exist in your community.
- ◆ Ensure that members of the LGBTQ2+ community have an opportunity to provide input and feedback related to the care and programming you provide.

## LGBTQ2+ RESOURCES ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

**AIDS Vancouver Island:** *Serves the needs of people infected and affected by HIV and hepatitis C.* <http://avi.org/>

**Trans Vancouver Island:** *Resource and information site for transgender and gender diverse people and their allies.* <http://www.transvancouverisland.ca/>

**Victoria Pink Pages:** *A resource listing gay-owned and/or gay friendly businesses and services.* <http://victoriapinkpages.ca/>

**The Victoria Lesbian Seniors Care Society:** *Supports lesbian health and social needs on Vancouver Island.* [www.vslcs.ca](http://www.vslcs.ca)

**Prime Timers:** *social, educational and recreational needs of gay and bisexual men 18+.* <http://primetimersvictoria.weebly.com/>

**Comox Valley Pride:** <http://comoxvalleypride.ca/>

**DAISSI:** *A community organization for LGBTQ+ people on Salt Spring Island.* <http://daissi.org/>



**Island Health LGBTQ2+ Seniors Advisory Council:** *working towards safe and inclusive health care services for all LGBTQ2s seniors on Vancouver Island.* [Nicole.Tremblay@viha.ca](mailto:Nicole.Tremblay@viha.ca)



## Who are LGBTQ2+ Seniors?

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queers and Two Spirit (LGBTQ2+)** Elders on Vancouver Island are a diverse group of seniors who come from many different backgrounds.

This cohort has experienced a lifetime of discrimination and marginalization that has many seniors in the community feeling anxious about the loss of independence and increased health care needs that can accompany aging.

**We can make a difference.** By learning about the experiences and needs of this population and proactively making our services safer and more inclusive, we can ensure that LGBTQ2+ seniors receive the type of care that welcomes and affirms all of who they are.



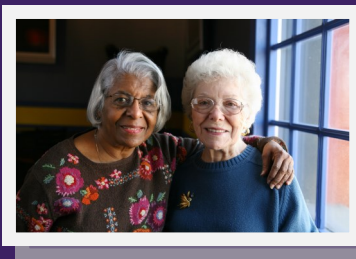
# LGBTQ2+ Aging Issues

Although there is limited research about LGBTQ2+ seniors, several themes have emerged from the research that does exist:

- ◆ **Isolation:** Many LGBTQ2+ seniors do not have the informal support networks of children and extended families that their non-LGBTQ2 peers enjoy.
- ◆ **Health disparities:** Higher rates of disability have been noted in older LGBTQ2+ populations relative to non-LGBTQ2+ peers.
- ◆ **Resilient:** Despite the challenges they have faced, LGBTQ2+ seniors forge onward with resilience, living full lives and building strong communities.
- ◆ **Anxious about healthcare:** Several recent reports have documented the anxiety that LGBTQ2+ seniors feel about increased care needs related to aging and how they will be treated by service providers and peers in the health care system.

Quote from participant in LGBTQ2+ seniors research project *Stories from the Field*

*“Two friends of mine, Vera and Zayda, had been together for 58 years. When Vera’s Alzheimer’s became too much, Zayda moved her to an assisted living facility. Zayda could barely trust family or neighbors with the truth, let alone strangers, so she and Vera became “sisters.” Much later, after Vera’s death, Zayda needed to move into an assisted living facility herself. She had many, many photos of the love of her life, but dared not display them in her new home. The other residents would talk about husbands, children and grandchildren, but she felt too vulnerable to tell the truth. Zayda was hiding and terribly isolated.”*



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LGBTQ2+ seniors are often not immediately visible. Many were quite adept at hiding for decades to stay “safe”. For that reason, we can’t operate from the assumption that all our residents /patients/clients are heterosexual and cisgender (meaning that they identify with the sex they were assigned at birth).

Everyone comes to our services with a whole history of loves, losses, joys, fears, sorrows, life experiences, likes and dislikes. Our goal of providing quality, person-centered care cannot be realized by “treating everyone the same.”

**Together we can make sure that everyone feels safe and welcome in our care!**

