

INFOSHEET

Acknowledging and Celebrating LGBTI Events in Aged Care

LGBTI older people have often lived through discrimination, exclusion and invisibility. Aged care services have an important role in creating environments that affirm the diversity and histories of LGBTI communities. Acknowledging and celebrating LGBTI events is one way to demonstrate visibility, respect and inclusion for both care recipients and staff.

By engaging with LGBTI events, aged care providers can meet some of the Aged Care Quality Standards including Standard 1: The Individual (person-centred care) and Standard 7.1: The Residential Community (daily living). Celebrating LGBTI events shows that inclusion goes beyond an organisation's policies and is demonstrated through everyday practices.

Why it matters

- Many LGBTI older people have lived through times when being open about who they are was unsafe. Acknowledging LGBTI events can bring visibility to lives otherwise hidden
- Inclusive celebrations help reduce social isolation and send a strong message that LGBTI older people and their families are valued. They can build connection to other LGBTI people and communities
- Visible support builds trust and safety for LGBTI older people who may be hesitant to disclose who they are.
- It can build a positive workplace culture where all staff feel safe to bring their true selves to work.

Visibility builds
trust. Inclusion
creates belonging.

Key events to acknowledge



Transgender Day of Visibility

– 31 March

Celebrates trans and gender-diverse people and raises awareness about their experiences.



Pride Month

– June (or relevant local dates)

Celebrates LGBTIQ+ culture, visibility and achievements.



Intersex Awareness Day

– 26 October

An internationally observed awareness day designed to highlight human rights issues faced by intersex people.

Other community-specific days – e.g. Mardi Gras (NSW- February), Midsumma (Victoria- January), Top End Pride (Northern Territory- June), other local LGBTIQ+ festivals (see links in Resources below).



International Day Against LGBTQIA+ Discrimination

Raises awareness of ongoing discrimination and promotes inclusion.



Wear It Purple

– last Friday of August

Shows support for LGBTIQ+ young people and also an opportunity to highlight intergenerational stories.



World AIDS Day

– 1 December

Recognises people living with and affected by HIV and commemorates those lost to AIDS.

How to celebrate in aged care

- Visible support: Display rainbow flags or symbols, posters and themed decorations in common areas. Digital displays of support may include websites and social media (source from LGBTIQ+ community-controlled organisations listed in Resources below).
- Education: Host short talks, videos or discussions about the history or significance of the event.
- Activities: Organise arts and crafts, movie screenings, afternoon teas or musical events that tie into themes of inclusion or celebration.
- Guest speakers: Invite local LGBTI advocates, artists or older people to share stories or lead events.
- Staff involvement: Encourage staff to wear colours, badges or participate in themed days to show support.
- Life stories: Use events as opportunities to invite LGBTI staff and older people (if they choose) to share memories or reflect on changes in society.
- Individual support: Assist LGBTI older people to attend LGBTI celebrations, events and activities in their local area.

Tips for safe and respectful inclusion

- Participation should always be optional. Respect the privacy and comfort levels of staff and older people.
- Partner with LGBTIQ+ community-controlled organisations to celebrate days of significance (refer to *Partnering with LGBTI Community Organisations* guide in this toolkit).
- Avoid assumptions – not all LGBTI people are ‘out’ or comfortable being recognised as such.
- Offer quiet or private ways to participate, like one-on-one conversations or personal displays.
- Be mindful of trauma. For some, these events may bring up difficult memories such as those involved in the first Mardi Gras in 1978. Many were arrested and violently bashed by police, while others were publicly outed by the media losing their jobs and becoming estranged from their families.
- In residential care, discrimination from other residents is a real fear for LGBTI older people. Ensuring a safe space is created for activities celebrating LGBTI events is crucial.
- Ensure correct pronouns and names are used and acknowledge chosen families in planning.

Case study

Creating space for Pride in residential care

Leisure Lea is a residential home in a regional area. Staff recently completed LGBTI inclusion training and decided to run a Pride Month activity to show Leisure Lea is a safe and inclusive service. There was some resistance by other staff because they were not aware of any LGBTI residents. A Pride afternoon tea was organised with a rainbow cake and speaker from a local LGBTI community organisation. A small group of residents attended who had expressed interest and staff attended to show their support. The afternoon tea was enjoyed by everyone and there was some positive discussion with the guest speaker. After the event, one of the men in the group told staff that he is gay and that he lost his partner 10 years ago. He said it meant a lot to see other residents at the morning tea and that seeing staff support the event had made him feel safe to come out.

Case study

Pride at home through inclusive care

Harmony Home Support is a community-based aged care service providing in-home care across several inner-city suburbs. The LGBTI champion within the service spoke to staff to brainstorm ideas to acknowledge Pride Month. The organisation had previously rolled-out LGBTI inclusion training so there was overwhelming support for the initiative. With approval from the leadership team, staff developed 'Pride packs' for interested clients. Each pack included a rainbow coaster, booklet on LGBTI-inclusive care and an invitation to a Pride event held by a local LGBTIQ+ community-controlled organisation. Clients were offered support with transport or to participate online. Staff wore a rainbow badge throughout the month and content about the organisation's Pride activities were promoted on social media. One of the clients who attended the Pride event said they felt reconnected to their community for the first time in years and plan to stay engaged with the organisation's LGBTI seniors program.

Resources



[Many Ways to Have a Good Time: LGBTI inclusive practice guide for recreational therapists](#)
LGBTIQ+ Health Australia and Australian Recreational Therapy Association have partnered to develop this resource for recreational and diversional therapists who are providing support to LGBTI people. It aims to give insight into the unique needs of LGBTI older people and to provide inspiration for creative activities to engage that audience.

Links to LGBTI days of significance:

[Australian Pride Network](#)
[Bisexual Visibility Day](#)
[Diversity Council Australia – Diversity & inclusion days & dates](#)
[IDAHOBIT Australia](#)
[Intersex Awareness Day](#)
[Transgender Day of Visibility](#)
[Wear It Purple](#)
[Welcome Here - Diversity days](#)
[World AIDS Day](#)



[Silver Rainbow factsheet series](#).
LGBTIQ+ Health Australia has developed a series of factsheets for the aged care sector including LGBTI 101, Coming Out and Disclosure of LGBT Older People, LGBT Older People and Isolation, LGBT People and Dementia, LGBT Older People and Families of Choice, and more.



[List of LGBTIQ+ organisations](#). Refer to the LGBTIQ+ Health Australia members directory for community-controlled organisations across Australia.
