Inclusive LTC for 2SLGBTQIA+ Seniors



Dignity Seniors Society

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Prepared for: FHA LTC CME Rounds - Aug 2025

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. **Recognize** the unique historical, social, and health contexts that shape the experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ older adults in long-term care.

2. **Identify** key health disparities and systemic barriers impacting care, including challenges faced by trans seniors and those aging with HIV.

3. **Understand** the importance of culturally appropriate care models, and how facility environment, staff training, governance, and programs influence resident well-being.



Presenter Disclosures

Labhrás Quigley has no relationship with financial sponsors.



Relationship with Financial Sponsors:

- No direct financial relationships, including receipt of honoraria
- No membership on advisory boards or speaker's bureaus
- No patents for drugs or devices
- No other investments or relationships that could reasonably be seen as a potential conflict of interest

Dignity Seniors Society

Who we are

Advocacy

- We advocate for, and provide culturally appropriate services for 2SLGBTQIA+ seniors in B.C.

What we do

Resources

- Trusted resource for seniors and providers
- Financial, Advance Care & End of Life Planning

How we do it

Collaborate

- Partnering with government, seniors care, and health providers
- Supporting research and public education

DSS Projects

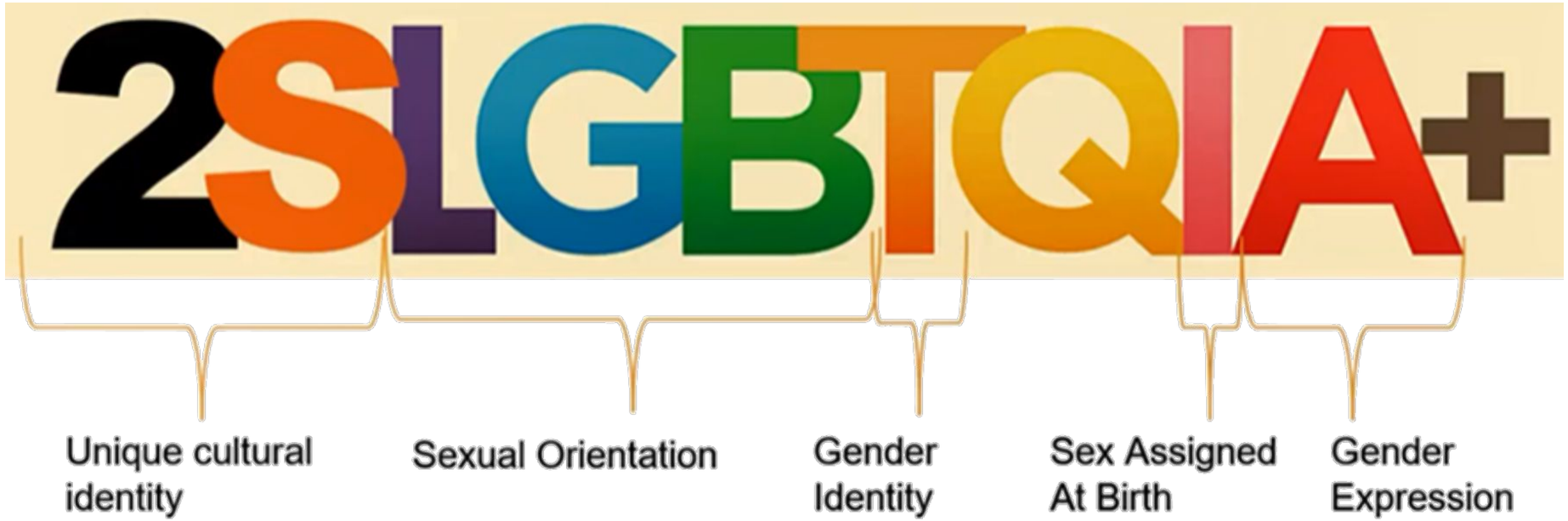
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Q-Elders Project

We Are Familee

Inclusive LTC

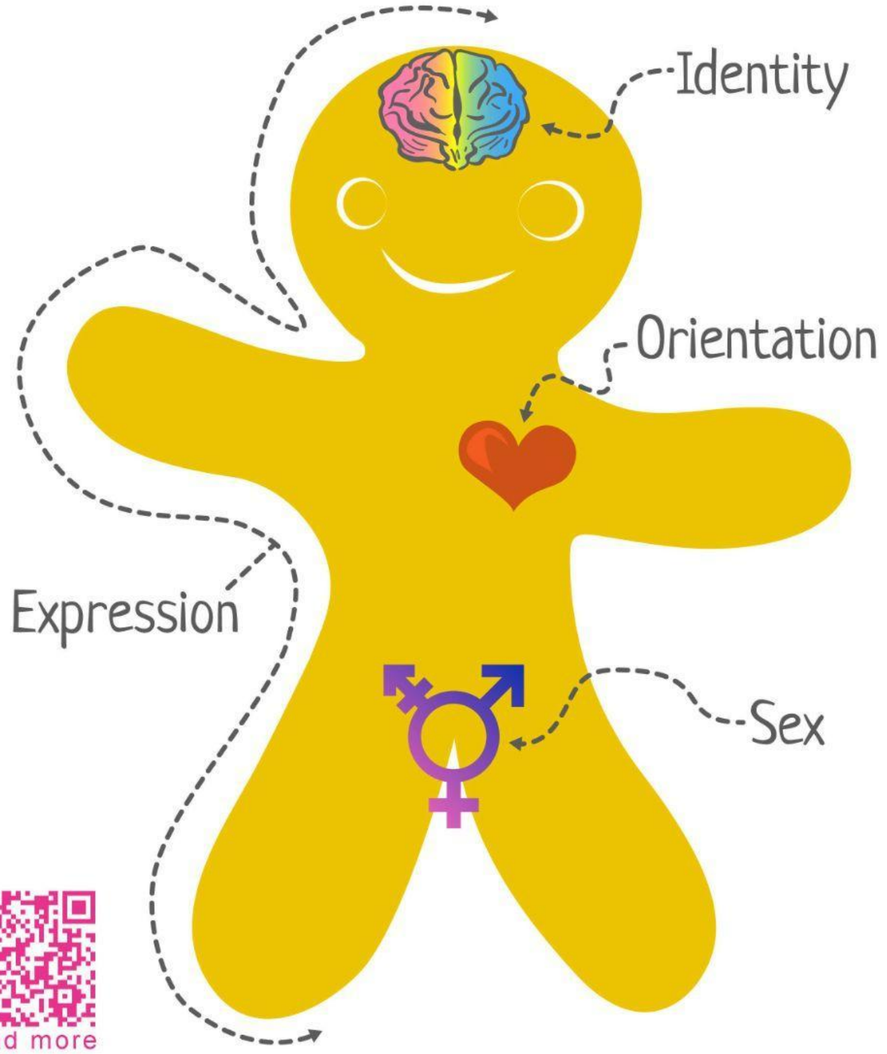
Seniors Social Inclusion



- To keep up with evolving language, we use **Sexual and Gender Diverse** (SGD)
- **Queer** and **Gender Diverse** can help simplify the language
- The ✚ symbol represents other identities not listed.

The Genderbread Person

by www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com



Gender Identity

Woman — Genderqueer — Man

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, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.

Some 2SLGBTQIA+ History: Canada

- **1969** – Homosexuality decriminalized
- **1973** – Removed from DSM as a mental disorder
- **1975–1990s** – *The Purge*: mass dismissal of 2SLGBTQIA+ people from federal & military service
- **1980s** – HIV/AIDS crisis
- **1996** – Sexual orientation added to Human Rights Code
- **2005** – Marriage equality nationwide
- **2017** – Gender identity & expression protected in Human Rights Act
- **2022** – Conversion therapy banned

Evolving Vocabulary

- **1989** – “Transgender” enters common use
- **1997** – “Two-Spirit” coined in Indigenous contexts
- **2015** – “Non-binary” gains recognition

Lived Experience: The Cohort Model



Invisible Cohort

Born: 1900 - 1927



Silent Cohort

Born: 1927-1947



Pride Cohort

Born: 1947-1964



HIV Cohort

Diagnosed: 1984 - 1996

2SLGBTQIA+ Seniors: By The Numbers

Some research shows:

- **Global Context:** 9% of populations in 30 countries identify as queer.
- **Canada's Estimate:** 10-12%, varying by geographic location.
- **Current Population Challenges:**
  - Many queer seniors we support have not come out.
  - A history of discrimination, high suicide rates, and the HIV epidemic has deeply impacted this generation.
  - We believe 60% of this generation was lost due to these factors.
- **Queer Senior Population in BC:**
  - Currently, there are 1 million seniors in BC, with approximately 40,000 (4%) identifying as queer.
  - By 2030, the number of queer seniors in BC is projected to double to 120,000.
- **Focus Areas:**
  - **Immediate**: Addressing the needs of the current 4% of queer seniors.
  - **Future**: Preparing systems and support structures for the rapid increase in the queer senior population.



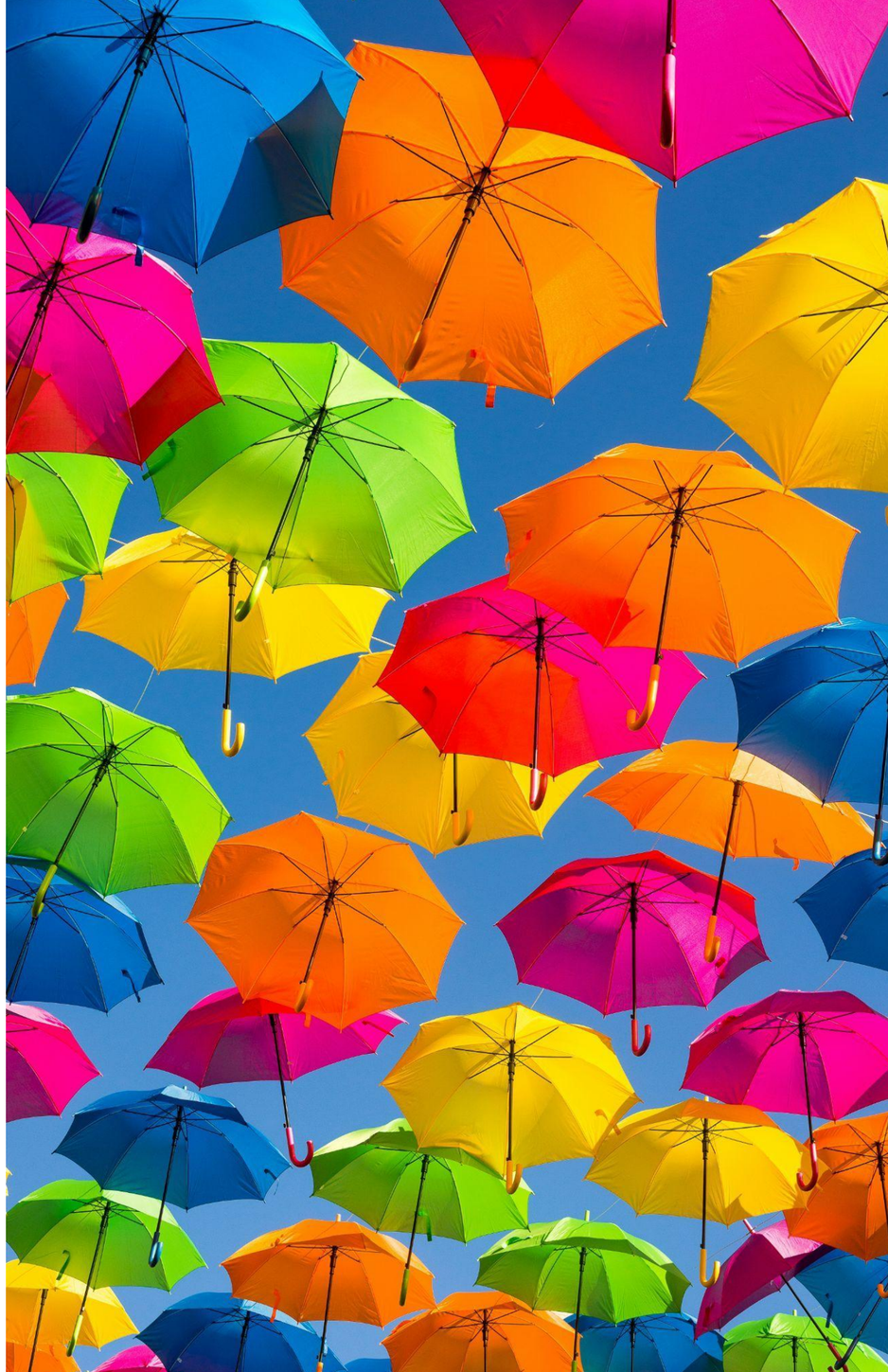
Aging with HIV:
2SLGBTQIA+ Seniors

- In BC, the median age of people with HIV on treatment is rising (55 years as of Sept 2022).
- 2SLGBTQIA+ seniors with HIV face:
  - **Triple stigma:** Diagnosis, sexual/gender minority status, ageism.
  - **Complex care:** - Polypharmacy (multiple medications)
    - Comorbidity (co-existing conditions)
    - HAND (HIV-associated neurocognitive disorder)
  - These factors create barriers to quality, culturally competent care.



Trans Seniors: Unique Challenges

- Unique challenges in long-term care:
  - Medical and transition-related needs, including perineal care & dementia considerations
  - Legal and identity document barriers
  - Greater risk of social isolation & rejection
- Face discrimination due to lack of trans-specific care knowledge



Beyond Statistics: Voices of Experience

A non-binary elder in long-term care spent the final year of their life advocating for their needs, as the team supporting Queer elders had limited experience up until that point.

Instead of focusing on preparing for the end of their life, they were forced to fight for their rights, a struggle that took much of their energy and attention during their last months.



KAI

A Trans elder was initially assigned to a faith-based long-term care unit but was forcibly transferred after six months due to an internal campaign by other residents.

This experience highlighted the challenges they faced in a setting that was not supportive of their identity.



PAM

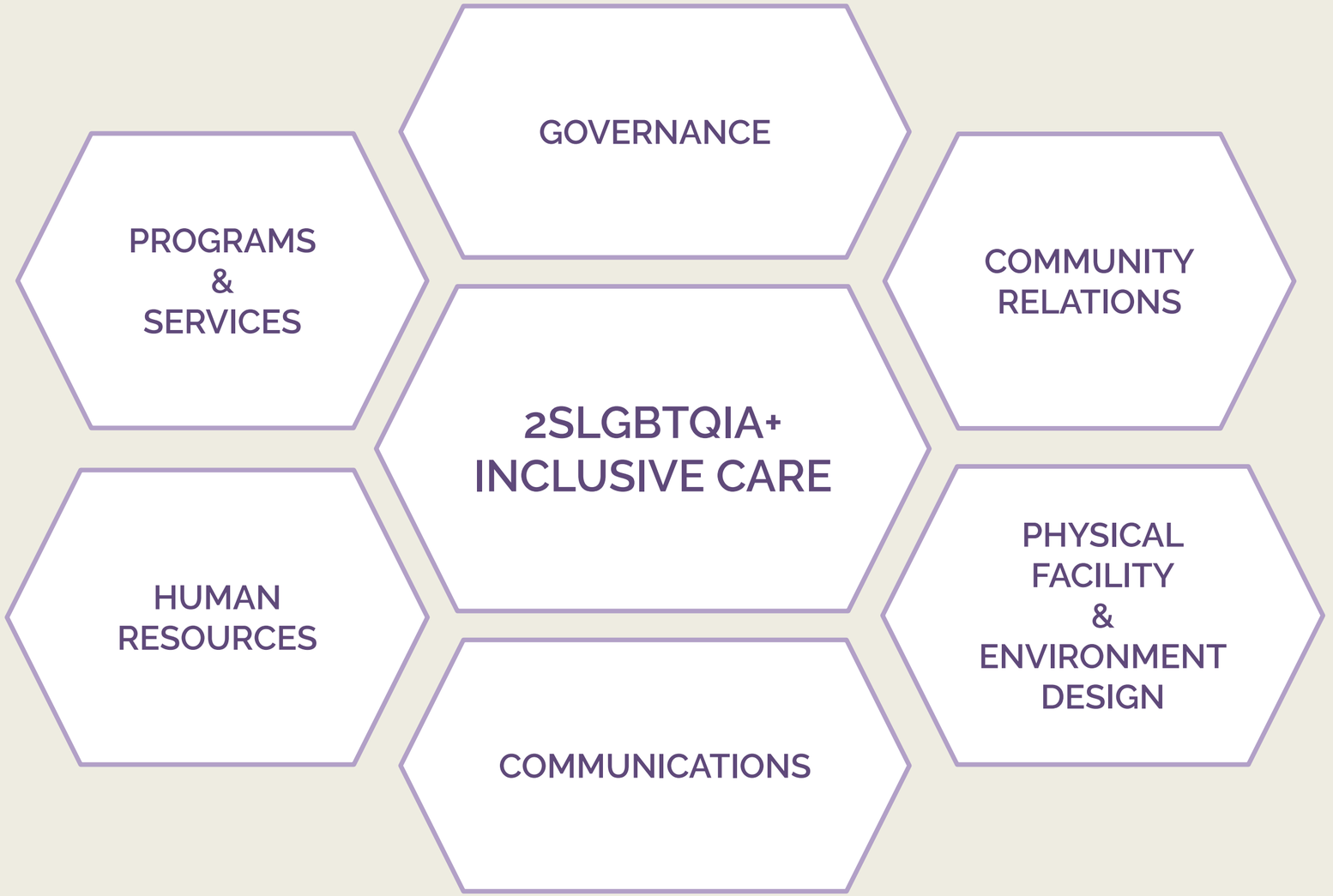
Beyond Statistics: Voices of Experience

Ferenc was reluctant to enter long-term care because he didn't want to go back into the closet. He felt safer at home, even though his care needs were beyond what independent living could provide, and this led to frequent hospital visits—sometimes every few weeks.

When his care workers and home aides discovered he was gay, he shared that their reactions caused noticeable changes in how they treated him.



What Is A Culturally Appropriate Facility?



Culturally Safe Long-Term Care Centres in BC

ASIAN

- Villa Cathay Care Home (Chinese)
- New Vista Care Home (Korean)
- Nikkei Seniors Health Care & Housing Society (Japanese)

EUROPEAN

- Swedish Canadian Rest Home Association
- Finnish Home
- Villa Carital (Italian)
- German Canadian Care Home

JEWISH

- Louis Brier Home & Hospital



Recommendations: Health Authorities

Identify Culturally Appropriate Facilities

Collaborate with DSS to designate and adapt at least three long-term care facilities as culturally appropriate for 2SLGBTQIA+ older adults.

Strengthen InterRAI Training and Assessment

We recommend enhanced training for assessors to effectively use new gender identity fields and apply cultural competency in assessments.

Integrate 2SLGBTQIA+ Self-Identification into Intake Documents and Procedures

Updating intake forms and procedures to include self-identification options will help match residents with homes that respect their identities and cultural needs.

Key Takeaways

- **Growing Need:** 2SLGBTQIA+ seniors have unique care needs and are an increasingly visible population.
- **Challenges:** Stigma, discrimination, and barriers to care lead to fear, isolation, and poorer health outcomes.
- **Specific Populations:**
  - Trans seniors face distinct medical, legal, and social challenges.
  - Seniors with HIV experience "triple stigma" and complex health needs.
- **Systemic Issues:** InterRAI assessments are critical but need better implementation and access to appropriate placements.
- **Recommendations:** Staff training, inclusive policies, culturally competent care, and anti-discrimination measures are essential.



Resources

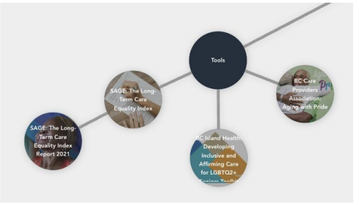
General

QMUNITY
BC'S QUEER, TRANS, AND TWO-SPIRIT RESOURCE CENTRE

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[Tapestry: Diversity & Inclusion in LTC]

HIV+

CATIE

[Catie]

Ribbon Community

[Ribbon Community]

realize

[Realize]

Trans

Trans Care BC
Provincial Health Services Authority

[Trans Care BC]



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Thank you!

For follow up conversations: Labhras@DignitySeniors.org