

Ten Tips for Bi+ Inclusion in Programs and Services for LGBTQ Elders

1. **Include Bi+ Sensitivity Training by Bisexuals:** If you are making your services more LGBT-inclusive or bi-inclusive, make sure you do specific sensitivity training about bisexuality+ and bisexual+ people. Contact a bi-specific organization to find out how they can help you with this.
2. **Use Inclusive Language:** Pay attention to the language you use both in print and speech. Learn the language of the communities you serve, and be considerate of their preferences. Don't use "gay" to refer to the entire community; use "LGBTQ" instead. Avoid the word "queer" as an inclusive term, as some LGBTQ people may find it offensive or uncomfortable. Also, don't use "bisexual" as a slur to refer to promiscuous people or to indecisive people.
3. **Respect Bisexuals in Committed Relationships:** Unless you know for sure that both members of a couple identify as gay or lesbian, do not refer to all same-gender couples as "gay and lesbian couples." Many bisexual+ people have same-gender partners and have been together for many years. If both people identify as bisexual+, they may want to be called either a bisexual+ couple or a same-gender couple. It's their choice. Also, if you are being inclusive of bisexual people, you will also have bi+ people who are in relationships with different gender partners. Consider how you can make people in all bi+ relationships welcome in your space.
4. **Use Open-ended Questions:** When you are asking questions, remember to make them open-ended so that assumptions do not silence some responses. *For example: Who do you consider family? Where is your community?*
5. **Plan Bi-inclusive Programming:** When you are building programming for LGBTQ elders, make sure to include examples of bi+ culture and bi+ information. Holding an LGBTQ History or Pride event? Use stories and images that include bi+ people, such as a bi+ group marching in a pride parade.
6. **Be Thoughtful About Visual Representations:** If you are trying to be bi-inclusive in your marketing, please don't resort to images of three people together to indicate something is for bisexuals. Most bi+ people aren't in three-way relationships, but we see these images often used in the media.

Since many bisexual+ people are in different-gender relationships, include images of people in different-gender (“straight-looking”) relationships as well as people in same-gender relationships.

7. **Respect Diverse Life Narratives:** Many elder programs use a life review activity to help individuals reflect on their lives to appreciate who they are and what they have done. A bi+ person’s experience of marriage and relationships may be very different than the experiences of gay or lesbian people. Their identity and experiences should be validated, regardless of the gender of their partner or long-term relationships that they’ve had.
8. **Reach Out to the Bi+ Community:** If you want to make sure you are serving your entire LGBTQ community, reach out to bi+ community organizations and ask them to help to reach their population. When you identify bi+ clients in your programs, make sure they are aware of any bi-specific groups in your area, as well as any bi-specific online spaces that can offer support and information. When recommending LGBTQ spaces to bisexual+ people, ensure that those spaces are actually bi-welcoming. Do not take bi+ inclusion for granted just because the letter B is in the acronym.
9. **Design Bi-specific Research:** If you are involved in demographics or data collection, make sure that you ask about bisexual+ identity and break out the results separately from gay and lesbian. Bisexual+ people often experience worse mental, physical, and social health outcomes than their gay and lesbian peers. Only by separating bisexual+ identity can we reveal vulnerabilities specific to the bi+ community and address those challenges.
10. **Talk To Your Bi+ Clients:** If you are already serving bi+ clients, ask them if they feel welcome and what you can do to improve their engagement in your programs. Ask them what bi+ inclusion would look like to them, and what services they want to see. By taking their feedback seriously and using it to guide future programming, you will become a more effective and bi-inclusive LGBTQ service provider.