

Love Makes a Family

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Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH

Background

- Health resources and programs often bear heterosexist assumptions
- LGBT families face barriers in optimizing their health in the preconceptual and prenatal period
- These are some of the barriers – This is not an inclusive list!

Legal

- Birth Certificate
- Known or Unknown sperm donor
- Surrogate mother
- Adoption by non-biological partner

Health Care

- Fear of coming out to Health Care Provider
- Necessity of supportive health care in fertility clinic
- Scarce print resources, lack of inclusive pictures or forms

Health Care

- A lesbian couple was made to feel uncomfortable at a prenatal class by a comment that “it is so nice for a single parent to have a friend’s support at a time like this”.
- A new mother may be termed an “at risk” single parent, even though she has been in a stable relationship with another woman for many years.

Discrimination

- Fear of coming out to parents and the community
 - May be worse in small towns
- Unsupportive workplaces
- Inability to talk about family at work
- Children bullied, unsupportive school environment

My Story

- Education
- Access and Equity group at work
- Got together with LGBT Parents
- OEYC Mom's group
- Tri-Pride
- Prenatal Health Fair



My Challenge to You:

- Act as an advocate for LGBT families!
- Push the envelope!

If your mandate is to serve families,
then your mandate is to serve LGBT
parents as well

- How?
 - At the meeting table
 - Print materials
 - Public events
 - Pride Day events
 - Ask questions
 - If we have program money for a Fathers group, new Canadian groups then why not LGBT groups.
 - Encourage LGBT parents to call into your agency and ask for services

Discrimination

- “We don’t serve that group”
 - Ahh Fact – 8-10% of our population is that group
- “Don’t Ask” “Don’t Tell”
 - If you don’t ask, most people will not tell

- Timing is important
- Educate yourself....Use your privilege to effect change.

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