

# CREATING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

## THE PERCEIVE AND FEEL FRAMEWORK

A welcoming environment feels safe. It is a space where people can find themselves represented and reflected, and where they understand that all people are treated with respect and dignity. This happens when services consider, and are equitable and accessible to all members of the LGBTQ community, including clients, staff, and volunteers.

A SPACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN FIND THEMSELVES REPRESENTED AND REFLECTED AND WHERE THEY UNDERSTAND THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE TREATED WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY.

### PERCEIVE

physical environment and language



Service users/staff must be able to look around their physical environment and see positive and inclusive symbols, images, and artwork.



Service users/staff must be able to look around and see positive and inclusive brochures and pamphlets that represent their experiences.



Service users/staff must be able to hear positive and inclusive language and be comfortable using inclusive and positive language.

### FEEL

overall environment, which imparts a sense of safety



Service users' and employees' gender identities and expressions are acknowledged, affirmed, and respected.

SAFE PLACE

There are visible and verbal reminders that the agency is a safe place.



Accessible/supportive processes are available that allow people to raise issues and concerns, and to feel that they have been acknowledged and that there will be follow-up.



Service users and staff are aware that communication goes two ways.

### MATERIALS



Put up inclusive posters and stickers. Think about the reading material in your waiting rooms and the people represented in them.

### LANGUAGE



Make sure that inclusive and affirming language is the standard. Educate employees and make sure your policies reflect the changes to Ontario's *Human Rights Code*.

### FORMS



Make sure forms have a space for legal name and another name (some people don't go by their legal name). Make sure forms reflect only what you need to know.