



Diverse & Resilient

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For Immediate Release

LOCAL AGENCY TO ADDRESS HEALTH DISPARITIES IN PARTNER VIOLENCE THROUGH WEB-BASED RESOURCES

January 20, 2012 –[Milwaukee]– Brenda Coley, Director of Special Projects for Diverse and Resilient, today announced the launch of a campaign to promote healthy relationships among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and to increase access to prevention and treatment services for same-sex couples and transgender people.

Diverse and Resilient has created a website, www.rm2bsafe.org, in partnership with other LGBT organizations, domestic violence and sexual assault prevention organizations and coalitions, and public health agencies in response to an unmet community need for culturally competent services and education about intimate partner violence in the LGBT Community.

“LGBT community members seeking information on healthy relationships, LGBT partner abuse survivors, LGBT people who are abusers, partner abuse agencies, case managers, legal advocates and law enforcement will all find something useful on this website,” said Coley. She went on to say, “This website is designed and directed towards the community to educate about healthy and unhealthy relationships.”

LGBT victims of partner abuse have difficulty finding support from systems originally and still predominately designed for heterosexual woman. Within the LGBT community, seeking support may also be limited by a survivor’s fear of bringing on more negative stereotypes about the LGBT community.

This website helps create a safe virtual environment that has built-in safety features for survivors seeking information and help. It is a resource designed to educate a wide array of people about healthy and unhealthy relationships among gay, lesbian bisexual and transgender people.

Rm2bsafe.org is a first step for service providers to gain information on the issues that many LGBT people face reporting intimate partner violence. Issues considered in this resource include disclosure being a major life decision, the potential for isolation that exists upon disclosure or reporting violence, and the myth that relationship violence is mutual. This website also provides information and specifics on unhealthy relationships

and recognizes that perpetrators of partner abuse are members of the community that need to be held accountable for their actions and also assisted to get help.

The website includes tips on how survivors can get additional help, possible legal issues, safety tips, and guides to separating myth from facts related to partner violence. Community members and agencies alike will find a useful glossary of terms and the availability of training and consultation.

This project was significantly aided by the involvement of LGBT organizations across Wisconsin, namely FORGE, LGBT Community Centers in Chippewa Valley and the Seven Rivers Region, the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, and OutReach in Madison. The Wisconsin Coalition against Domestic Violence (WCADV) and The Wisconsin Coalition against Sexual Assault (WCASA) contributed significantly, as did the Center for Urban Population Health.

Gary Hollander, Executive Director of Diverse and Resilient, observed, "The support of Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin really helped us put this project together." Diverse and Resilient was awarded a one-year Congressionally designated grant through the US Department of Justice to complete the extensive background work and research that went into this project.

ABOUT DIVERSE AND RESILIENT, INC.

Diverse and Resilient, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose mission is the healthy development of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in Wisconsin by creating and sustaining groups and communities to take action. The organization's name is intended to serve as reminder that LGBT people are everywhere, engage in interesting and meaningful lives, and contribute to the welfare of each other and the broader community.

In addition to its work on partner violence, Diverse and Resilient has implemented programs in alcohol abuse, tobacco use, and HIV prevention, mental health promotion, reproductive justice, and public health leadership development for LGBT youth and adults.

For additional information, visit www.diverseandresilient.org, www.rm2bsafe.org, www.journey3accept.org, and www.rm2breathe.org.