# Celebrating Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Rapelje Lodge Long-Term Care Home


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## Overview

As part of Niagara Region's broader commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism (EDIAR), Rapelje Lodge looks for ways each year to deepen its understanding of residents' backgrounds, identities, cultures and lived experiences. The home aims to embed equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism and respect into day-to-day work, while building staff capacity through practical tools, education and resources that support culturally responsive, person-centred care. Working with the interdisciplinary team, residents and families, the home identified opportunities to strengthen its diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work and focused on four change ideas: more DEI activities on the recreation calendar, implementing the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) DEI Best Practice Guideline (BPG), reviewing policies to include cultural perspectives at end of life (EOL), and hosting in-home potlucks. The initiative addressed the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) priority issue of equity and was tied to the indicator: percentage of staff (executive-level, management, or all) who have completed relevant equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism education.

## Key Elements of Initiative

### Change Ideas Tested or Implemented

- **Monthly DEI activities:** Use the DEI calendar to plan one DEI activity or event each month, guided by Residents' Council input, ongoing staff feedback and support from the DEI committee and leads.
- **RNAO BPG implementation:** Form a BPG team to complete a gap analysis, implementation, education, communication and a sustainability plan, and identify Nursing Quality Indicators for Reporting and Evaluation (NQuIRE). The DEI committee will complete the Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care (CLRI) assessment and build an action plan.
- **Culture and EOL policy review:** Review policies to redefine "family" inclusively and review cultural perspectives at end of life.

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- **Potlucks:** Hold two DEI potlucks through the DEI committee to build awareness of different cultural foods.

### Objective of the Change Ideas

- Enhance staff DEI engagement and increase DEI programming for staff, residents and families through consistent monthly planning aligned with the Niagara Region DEI calendar.
- Move DEI beyond annual education, embed it into day-to-day practice, and celebrate staff diversity to support workplace wellbeing.
- Use the DEI in Long-Term Care (LTC) Assessment and Planning Tool and a month-six gap analysis to identify opportunities, monitor progress and guide next steps.

### Team Members Involved

- Administrator, Manager of Clinical Practice, Program Manager and CQIA
- All frontline staff
- Residents and families

### Target Population

- Residents and families
- Staff

### How Progress Was Measured

- **Monthly DEI activities:** Number of DEI activities completed and number of residents and staff attending.
- **RNAO BPG:** Communication of the new BPG to staff and training sessions offered.
- **EOL policy review:** Number of gaps identified.
- **Potlucks:** Number of potlucks held and number of staff participating.

# Implementation Experience: Successes & Challenges

### Results and Early Wins

- Consistent planning, high visibility and strong participation drove early success. Leaders promoted each event through posters, newsletters, emails and council communication, and staff enthusiasm created a positive, social space for residents, staff and families to learn about diverse cultures, traditions and identities.
- Rapelje Lodge was the first Niagara Region home to welcome Pride Niagara during Pride Month in 2023, and Pride Niagara is now a partner to all the regional homes. Other partners include the Niagara Local Immigration Partnership, the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Brock University, the Welland Public Library, Casa Dante and the Welland SPCA.
- **Monthly DEI activities:** From January to June, highlights included:
  - St. Patrick's Big Green Machine: 89 residents
  - Spread Kindness Cookie Gram fundraiser: 82 residents received cookies
  - Casa Dante Pasta Night: 72 residents
  - Easter Bunny visits: 63 residents
  - Pride drag show: 58 residents
  - Francophone painting party and crêpe lunch: 11 and 9 residents
- Other activities included a Ramadan Best Practices for Allies workshop, Black History Month, Lunar New Year, Pink Shirt Day, Autism Awareness Day, Mental Health Awareness Month, a smudging ceremony for a resident at end of life, and charity drives.
- **RNAO BPG:** CQIAs completed Best Practice Champion and facilitator training in February.
- **EOL policy review:** By Quarter 2, cultural perspectives at end of life were reflected in policies and procedures. Linking this work to the BPG allowed workflows to adapt quickly.
- **Potlucks:** Two potlucks were held: February Favourites (12 staff) and Diversity Month in April (26 staff).

## Enablers of Success

- Leaders who plan, implement and take part in DEI events, maintaining momentum and reinforcing DEI as part of person-centred care
- Monthly interdisciplinary DEI committee meetings to plan opportunities to showcase different cultures
- Visible promotion of DEI programming for residents, staff and families
- Community partners such as Pride Niagara and the Niagara Local Immigration Partnership

## Challenges and Solutions

- Staff participation in potlucks was slow at first. DEI committee members visited each home area to promote the potluck and talk with frontline staff, and attendance rose sharply.

### Advice for Other Teams

- Use your organization's existing DEI calendar to stay consistent with corporate topics.
- Involve residents in choosing DEI activities, and spotlight the diversity of residents and staff.
- Space potlucks out so staff don't burn out on the activity.

# Future Steps & Sustainability

### Next Steps and Embedding the Work into Practice

- Continue monthly DEI spotlights based on the Niagara Region DEI calendar.
- Expand community partnerships by learning from other homes' DEI partners.
- Hold regular DEI committee meetings and recruit new members.
- Engage staff through partners with lived experience and interactive learning.
- Use the gap analysis to guide policy reviews and future DEI initiatives.
- Align home-level DEI topics with corporate-wide education through central support staff educators.
- **Embedded in practice:** Recreation staff include DEI activities in monthly calendars approved by the Program Manager, and DEI programming is a standing item on Residents' Council and Family Council agendas.
- EOL policies and the BPG supporting cultural perspectives will be finalized and implemented across Niagara Region's seven LTC homes.

### DEI Initiative Poster




*Figure: Poster promoting February DEI initiatives at Rapelje Lodge*

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