

Training Guide for Managers: Serving Couples & Families Without Making Assumptions

Purpose

To create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all guests by avoiding assumptions about relationships, family dynamics, and roles within couples and families. This training will help staff treat all customers with respect and ensure that everyone feels comfortable, regardless of their relationship or family structure.

Key Concepts

1. Avoid Assumptions About Relationships

- Don't assume that two people of the same gender are just friends; they could be a couple. Romantic relationships come in many forms, and it's important to treat all couples with equal respect.
- Similarly, don't assume that a couple of different genders are necessarily romantic partners. Allow guests to define their relationship without jumping to conclusions.

2. Be Mindful of Family Structures

- Families don't always consist of a mother, father, and children. Families can consist of two mothers, two fathers, a single parent, extended family members, or other configurations.
- Avoid making assumptions about who the "parents" are or who holds specific roles within the family. For example, don't automatically assume that one person is the father just because they are sitting next to a child.
- If you are inclined to offering highly personalized a respectful way of identifying a family group could include asking a question such as, "Is this a family or friends get together?"

3. Use Inclusive Language

- Greet couples with phrases like "Welcome, what drinks can I get for the two of you?" rather than "Welcome, what drinks can I get for you and your friend?"
- Don't focus on an individual based on gender or assumptions when offering things like kids' menus or asking about seating preferences, e.g., "Would anyone like a kid's menu?" instead of directing it toward a specific adult.
- Use Neutral Terms: Use terms like "partner" or "spouse" instead of assuming gender-specific roles.





4. Handling Mistakes:

- If you mistakenly assume a relationship or family structure, apologize and correct yourself. For example, if you mistakenly refer to two mothers as “friends,” simply say, “I’m sorry. How should I address your family?” and move forward with respect.

Practice Scenarios

- Greeting and serving a same-gender couple with children.
- Greeting and serving a mixed-gender group of friends, where staff might assume a couple but should avoid it.
- Greeting and serving a man and woman with child and another adult who is are not partners.

When roleplaying, care must be taken not to engage in harmful language or stereotypes. If you are not comfortable or unsure about your ability to effectively lead and moderate roleplaying scenarios in a psychologically safe manner, we encourage you to reach out and have us facilitate your training.

This resource was developed by FIC Human Resource Partners for the Pride 365 initiative. As part of FIC Human Resource Partners’ commitment to fostering safe, welcoming and affirming spaces for LGBTQ+ community members in Lancaster City, they are offering PRIDE 365 participants a 20% discount on their services. FICSales@fichrpartners.com

