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Immediate Release

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## **Diverse & Resilient Announces Statewide Help Line for Survivors**

Diverse & Resilient is pleased to announce the new Room to Be Safe program and resource line serving Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) survivors of intimate partner or community violence and their loved ones. This work has been made possible by a grant through the Department of Children and Family Services. Diverse & Resilient is proud to partner with its statewide partners End Abuse Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

“LGBTQ community members have indicated to us through community readiness assessments that one of their main desires is to have their first ‘outcry’ to talk about violence in their relationships be with an LGBTQ person. It is our hope that the Room to Be Safe resource line reduces a barrier for survivors reaching out for help,” stated Kathy Flores, statewide LGBTQ Anti-Violence Coordinator for Diverse & Resilient.

Survivors or their loved ones can call or text 414-856-LGBT (5428) to receive assistance, referrals, support and safety planning. This is not a 24-hour crisis line, but help will be available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is monitored nights and weekends.

"WCASA congratulates Diverse & Resilient and its partners in establishing the Room to Be Safe Program and resource line for LGBTQ survivors and their families," stated Pennie Meyers, executive director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault. "We are excited to see services and resources that will be accessible and culturally appropriate for the LGBTQ community."

According to The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs report on LGBTQ & HIV-Affected Intimate Partner Violence 2015 report, we know that 44% of LGBTQ survivors attempting to access emergency shelter were denied and 71% reported being denied because of their gender identity. The Room to Be Safe resource line will help connect survivors to open and affirming programs. Advocates working with the Room to Be Safe Program will also work with mainstream Domestic Violence programs across the state to help provide more inclusive and accessible services for LGBTQ survivors in Wisconsin.

“While all domestic violence programs in WI serve LGBTQ victims of violence, have received extensive training to ensure non-discrimination and supportive services, and employ many LGBTQ staff, the resource line offered by Diverse and Resilient will

ensure that LGBTQ victims always have someone to talk to who understands and supports them for who they are to safety plan and connect them to services,” said Patti Seger, Executive Director of End Domestic Abuse WI.

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