

Promoting Equitable and Inclusive End-of-Life Care for LGBTQ Older Adults



sage | Advocacy &
Services for
LGBTQ+ Elders
**National Resource Center
on LGBTQ+ Aging**

Copyright ©2022, SAGE, All Rights Reserved

SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBTQ Aging (NRC) is the country's first and only technical assistance resource center aimed at improving the quality of services and supports offered to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) older adults.

The NRC offers educational resources meant to assist you in learning the best ways to create an inclusive, safe, and welcoming environment for your LGBT older adult population.

sage | Advocacy &
Services for
LGBTQ+ Elders
**National Resource Center
on LGBTQ+ Aging**

Dementia and LGBTQ Older Adults

“LGBT adults living with dementia may face a particularly challenging set of circumstances in terms of accessing support. They are more likely to age without a spouse or partner, more likely to live alone and less likely to have children to support them...In addition, they are more likely to encounter barriers to quality care and support, including discrimination and a lack of cultural competency among providers.”

<https://lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=967>

Dementia and LGBTQ Older Adults

“I think there needs to be more training of people in the dementia field ... the LGBT community has unique needs ... many of us don't have biological families or children ... people in my generation are dying of HIV or aging and can't help me ... people are isolated and won't always seek services.”

– LGBT person living with dementia

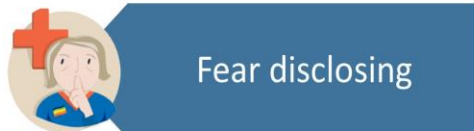
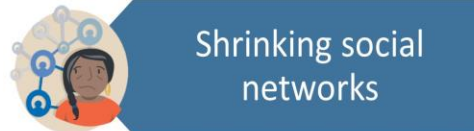
<https://lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=945>

Health & Aging Concerns



Social Supports

SAGE, Out and Visible Survey Report,
<http://sageusa.org/resources/outandvisible.cfm>



Legal Concerns



Important Forms

- ✓ Health Care Durable Power of Attorney
- ✓ Visitation Lists/HIPPA Release
- ✓ Rights of Sepulcher
- ✓ Transgender Inclusive End of Life Documents

Consult with an LGBTQ+ competent attorney to address specific concerns for your organization.

Story of Joe



- Separated from Life Partner & admitted to hospital under "John Doe"
- Joe tried to re-establish relationship with partner but feared losing family support
- Family kept Joe's declining health and eventual death secret from Joe's partner and close friends.

Strategies for Engaging LGBTQ+ Older Adults and Caregivers



Update Intake Forms

Emergency Contact vs. Next of Kin

Use stated name and pronouns

Ready to listen and support

Key Considerations

- Many LGBTQ individuals do not connect with families of origin
- Support them in talking about chosen family.
- Ask who is important to them.
- End-of-life planning is critical to ensure wishes are followed.
- Take the time to listen, ask questions, and build trust slowly.
- Avoid rushing - can be a challenge in some work environments.

sageusa.org and agingrainbows.org

Key Considerations

- LGBTQ patients and families deserve the same compassionate care, respect and dignity.
- LGBTQ patients may not be out. Respect their privacy and ask permission to share information with other staff and even family members.
- Show willingness to listen and be open-minded toward each individual patient.
- Take a gentle approach initially if not sure of the relationship. For example, just say something like "Sue seems like a really important person in your life." Look for their responses (verbal and non-verbal). And then just treat them with respect.
- Be sensitive to spiritual distress, and ask permission to call a LGBTQ-welcoming hospice chaplain. Older LGBTQ pts in particular may be struggling with guilt, shame, and grief issues around religious upbringing and rejection from their church communities.

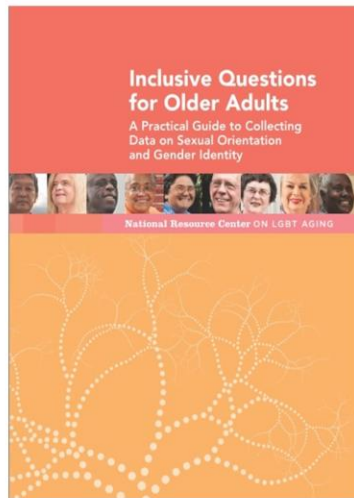
Resources

- *Creating End-Of-Life Documents for Trans Individuals: An Advocates Guide*
- *Take the Power: Tools for Life and Financial Planning*
- *Simple Steps in Supporting Older LGBTQ+ Friends and Loved Ones at End-of-Life*

These articles as well as additional resources are available through the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging website at:

www.lgbtagingcenter.org

Best Practice Guide



Inclusive Questions for Older Adults guide is available for download and /or request printed guides at:

www.lgbtagingcenter.org

Stay in touch



Sherrill Wayland, MSW
Director of Special Initiatives, SAGE
swayland@sageusa.org