LGBT Aging: Social Supports, Outreach, and Policy

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Disclosures

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Polling Question

Did you attend the January 22, 2013 Fenway/SAGE webinar on LGBT aging, featuring Dr. Mark Simone-Skidmore?
- Yes
- No
- Not Sure
Polling Question

Where do you currently work?

a. Health care setting (e.g. FQHC, office, hospital, short-term rehab)
b. Aging services (e.g. long-term care, senior center, SUA, AAA, ADRC)
c. Academia/research
d. Government agency not listed above
e. Community-based agency not listed above
f. Other
Learning objectives

- Describe current research on the psychosocial needs of LGBT older adults
- Identify services and supports currently available for referral and replication
- Understand key legal and policy issues affecting LGBT older adults
Why focus on these objectives?

- Aging patients need more support
  - LGBT older adults have other unique needs
Who are LGBT Older Adults?

- Older LGBT Adults:
  - 1 million to 2.8 million today
  - 2 million to 6 million by 2030

- Geographically and racially diverse

- Older LGBT people have higher rates of poverty

Sources: Cahill et al. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Foundation 2000
Albeda R et al. “Poverty in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community” The Williams Institute, March 2009
Disparities

The Aging and Health Report, Disparities and Resilience among LGBT Older Adults (2011) found:

- Nearly one-half have a disability
- Nearly one-third report depression
- Almost two-thirds have been victimized three or more times
- Thirteen percent have been denied health care or received inferior care
- More than 20% do not disclose their sexual or gender identity to their physician
- About one-third do not have a will or durable power of attorney for health care.
Resilience

The Aging and Health Report, Disparities and Resilience among LGBT Older Adults (2011) found:

- Most (91%) engage in wellness activities
- 89% feel good about belonging to the LGBT community
- 38% attend spiritual or religious services or activities
- 83% have people with whom to do something enjoyable, but...
Risk for Isolation, Loneliness

In comparison with heterosexual and non-transgender older adults, LGBT older adults are:

- Significantly more likely to be isolated
- Half as likely to have a significant other
- Half as likely to have close relatives to call for help
- Four times more likely to have no children to help them


- 49% of gays and lesbians over 50 years live alone compared to 33% of heterosexuals over 50

Source: MA Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey (BRFSS)
Risk for Isolation, Loneliness

10-25% of LGBT older people are unable to identify someone to call in a time of need

Inhospitable Health Care Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Delay or Not Seek Health Care</th>
<th>Neglected by a Caretaker Because of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Het. elders</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGB elders</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans elders</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary - LGBT older adults...

- Less likely to have children, spouses
- Less likely to access to health and social services
- Fear discrimination from providers
- Have developed resilience skills
- Looking to LGBT-specific services & supports
Accessing Services

Several studies show that LGBT older adults access essential services less frequently than the general aging population:

- visiting nurses
- food stamps
- senior centers
- meal plans

Possible Issues in Long-Term Care:

- Potentially hostile staff members and fellow patients
- Denial of visits from family of choice
- Refusal to allow same-sex partners to room together
- Refusal to involve family of choice in medical decision-making
- Refusal to respect gender identity of transgender patients

Sources: Improving the Lives (id.)
LGBT Older Adults in Long-Term Care Facilities, Stories from the Field, lgbtlongtermcare.org
“Isolation, finding friend support, caregiving and health are the biggest issues older gay persons face. Who will be there for us, who will help care for us without judgment?”

- 66-year-old lesbian

The SAGE Center: Portal to care

In March of 2012, through an Innovative Senior Center Initiative launched by NYC’s mayor, Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE), opened the nation’s first full time LGBT Senior Center.
Health and Wellness

The SAGE Center’s Health and Wellness programs have been designed to address the issues and barriers that LGBT older adults experience in accessing care.
Overall Goal

The overall goal of the SAGE Center’s Wellness Programming is to:

- Help LGBT older adults navigate the health care system
- Bring information and education to them
- Reduce the isolation and stigma that often results in poor follow-up and adherence.
H&W programming examples

- Health and nutrition education
- Targeted support groups for high risk populations
  - Cancer support groups
  - Fitness and nutrition programs to achieve healthy weight
  - HIV and Aging program focusing on community support
Education

The goal of The SAGE Center is to provide, in community, the tools to empower LGBT older adults to age in place and in health.
Partnerships

The SAGE Center currently has relationships with:

- Major medical center (*Beth Israel/Continuum*)
- Community Health Centers (*Callen Lorde*)
- Managed Long-Term Care programs
- Nutrition providers (*The Food Bank of New York City*)
- Community wellness providers (*YMCA, Walgreen’s Pharmacies*)
- CBOs (*CancerCare, Ctr. for Medicare Rights, Iris House, GMHC*)
Through these partnerships, The SAGE Center:

- Provides on-site RN services
- Created a “Meet the Doctors”
- Offers congregate and take-home meals, and creating a food bank
- Educates seniors on benefits counseling
- Provides flu-shots and HIV testing
- New programming added monthly
The National Resource Center on LGBT Aging

- Project of SAGE, in partnership with 14 national orgs
- Funded by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
- Provides clearinghouse information (www.lgbtagingcenter.org)
- Trains service providers on culturally competent care
www.lgbtagencingcenter.org

NATIONAL LGBT HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER
A PROGRAM OF THE FENWAY INSTITUTE

SAGE
Services & Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders
Find Resources in Your Area

All older adults, and LGBT older adults in particular, need to have certain legal and financial plans and documents in place to ensure that their wishes regarding healthcare, pensions, inheritance and more are respected. Because state laws vary widely, the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging has compiled state-by-state resources so you can find the help you need in your community. Please note, this resource will grow over time to include resources on health, housing, and more. Tell us what you'd like to see. Read our disclaimer policy.

More Community Resources

Across the country, a growing number of federal offices and state organizations offer tools and resources to help older adults find services, benefits, and other forms of aid that may be available to them. Go to our listing of these resources for more information on health care, LGBT community centers, housing services and more.

More Resources in Your Area

Select State
In Massachusetts

NEW LGBT AGING PROJECT
A non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender older adults have equal access to the life-prolonging benefits, protections, services, and institutions that their heterosexual neighbors take for granted. more >
Go to Web Site | 617-522-1282
Read more: Caregiving, Community, Cultural Competence, Health & Wellness, Aging Providers, LGBT Organizations, LGBT Older Adults

Q&A WITH BOB LINSBROOK OF THE LGBT AGING PROJECT
Bob Linscott, Assistant Director of The LGBT Aging Project in Boston, speaks with us about his organization's caregiving services. more >
Read more: Caregiving, Aging Providers, LGBT Organizations, LGBT Older Adults

NEW OVER THE RAINBOW SUPPER CLUB (NORTH SHORE)
LGBT community meals in Massachusetts more >
Go to Web Site | (978) 624-2281
Read more: Community, Aging Providers, LGBT Organizations, LGBT Older Adults

NEW RAINBOW LUNCH CLUB (WORCESTER AREA)
LGBT Community Meals in Massachusetts more >
Go to Web Site | (508) 755-1545 X339
Read more: Community, LGBT Older Adults

NEW LAKE SIDE CAFE (METRO EAST)
LGBT Community Meals in Massachusetts more >
Go to Web Site | (781) 784-4944
Read more: Community, LGBT Older Adults

NEW CAFE EMMAVANAL (BOSTON/BAY)
LGBT Community Meals in Massachusetts more >
Go to Web Site | (617) 477-5816
Read more: Community, LGBT Older Adults

NEW OUT TO BRUNCH: MONTHLY BRUNCH FOR OLDER LBT WOMEN
LGBT Community Meals in Massachusetts more >
Go to Web Site
Read more: Community, LGBT Older Adults

BROWSE RESOURCES

BY SUBJECT
- Aging & Ageism
- Bisexuality
- Caregiving
- Community
- Cultural Competence
- Elder Abuse
- Employment / Workforce Issues
- End of Life Decisions
- En Español
- Families
- Financial Security
- General Issues
- Health & Wellness
- Health Care Access
- HIV & Aging
- Homophobia & Transphobia
- Housing & Homelessness
- Legal Resources
- Lesbian
- Medicaid & Medicare
- Mental Health
- Racial Equity
- Retirement
- Social Security
- Spirituality
- Transgender

BY TYPE
- Articles
- Publications
- Multimedia
- Videos
- Webinars
- Slideshow
- Audio
- Local Resources

BY AUDIENCE
- For Aging Providers
- For LGBT Organizations
- For LGBT Older Adults

ADVANCED SEARCH
Across the Country

- LGBT older adult meal sites:
  - New York, NY
  - St. Louis, MO
  - Chicago, IL
  - Across MA
  - Rochester, NY
  - Tulsa, OK
SAGE Affiliates with H & W Programming

Learn more: sageusa.org/advocacy/sagenet
Financial, Legal, and Policy Challenges for LGBT elders
Advance Directives

- Two main types
  - Living will
    - Provides instruction if person incapacitated
    - Disadvantage: doesn’t pick a decision maker
  - Health care power of attorney
    - Allows the individual to designate a surrogate decision maker
- Often combined into an “Advance Health Directive”
Advance Directives

- Many elders don’t have the means to obtain them
- Even if legal, some health providers may disregard them, and patients may not know their rights
- LGBT elders must carry these documents with them at all times
Hospital Visitation Rights

The New York Times

Kept From a Dying Partner’s Bedside

Aggrieved Janice Langbehn, with her children, Danielle, 15; David, 13; and Katie, 12 (back to camera), has sued the hospital that treated her partner.

By TARA PARKER-PÓPE
Published: May 18, 2009
The Lisa Pond Case, 2007

- Ms. Pond collapsed during a vacation and was taken to a Miami trauma center
- She died while her partner, Janice Langbehn, and their children, were trying to visit
- She filed a lawsuit but it was dismissed in federal court
2010 Executive Order on Visitation

- Executive order, April 2010 for Medicare/Medicaid facilities
- Must honor visitation rights and advance directives of LGBT patients
Default Surrogate Selection Laws

- In the absence of advance directives, states have laws for default surrogate decision makers
- Some already recognize gay unions
- Others offer leeway in letting people select “close friends” as decision makers
- Others create “legal strangers”
Default Surrogate Selection Laws

- Tier 1: Offer some legal recognition
Default Surrogate Selection Laws

- Tier 2: Include a “close friend” category
Default Surrogate Selection Laws

- Tier 3: “Legal stranger” states
Default Decision Makers - Bottom Line

- In “legal stranger” states, LGBT people need to be aware of availability of advance health directives, and use them.
- Also need to be aware of their rights so they can exercise them when needed.
Polling question

In your experience, what have been the greatest challenges of older LGBT people that you know or care for?

a. Isolation, loneliness (not having someone to care for them if become ill)

b. Access to culturally competent care and services

c. Caring for ill or disabled partner/spouse

d. Medical decision making

e. Financial security

f. Something else/ not sure
Financial Security for LGBT Elders

- Stereotype of affluent LGBT people doesn’t apply

- Older LGBT couples face higher poverty rates than heterosexual counterparts (Williams Institute, 2009)
  - Older lesbian couples even more disadvantaged because of wage differentials
  - Social security access
Rate of Poverty

- Senior straight couples: 4.6%
- Senior gay couples: 4.9%
- Senior lesbian couples: 9.1%

Source: Goldberg, Naomi G. “The Impact of Inequality for Same-Sex Partners in Employer-Sponsored Retirement Plans,” The Williams Institute, May 2009

Obtained from “Improving the Lives of LGBT Older Adults”, 2010
Access to Medicaid

- Medicaid is the largest payer of nursing home care in US
- Nursing home care is costly: $90,250 annually (Metlife LTC survey, 2012)
- To qualify for Medicaid, programs require elders to “spend down” their income
- Most states have provisions to prevent a healthy spouse from living in poverty to fund nursing home care for a spouse
- Same-sex couples, even in states with marriage rights, did not qualify until recently
Medicaid (2)- Spousal Impoverishment

- Until recently, same-sex couples did not have access to spousal impoverishment protections
- CMS released guidance in 2011 that allowed states to offer these protections to same-sex couples
- States are free to offer or not offer protections
Summary

- Aging LGBT people face unique challenges that affect their health and well-being, including:
  - Risk of isolation and lack of family supports
  - Reduced access to aging programs
  - Fear of discrimination in long-term care settings
  - Risk of financial insecurity / barriers to accessing spousal benefits
Summary

Health care providers can help by:

- Recognizing risks and barriers, as well as areas of resilience for their older LGBT patients
- Offering support and linking patients to behavioral health care as needed
- Finding appropriate local and national programs and referring patients to these
- Encouraging LGBT patients to complete advance directives
- Understanding and honoring visitation rights