Care of the Older Adults: LGBT Residents in LTC
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Objectives

- Provide examples of the history and resilience of individuals within the older LGBT community.
- To raise awareness of LGBT older adult concerns in LTC facilities
- To identify communication techniques to facilitate a welcoming environment for LGBT residents and significant people in their lives
- To broaden the dialogue on LGBT aging in West Michigan
- To highlight important resources for LGBT older adults
Video: Gen Silent
Stu Maddux
Gen Silent: Discussion

• What did you learn about communication with LGBT old adults (social worker)?
• How may the history of older LGBT people influence them?
• Has anyone faced or heard of a similar situation?
• What is your perspective on how to best address the problems in this film?
How Many Americans Identify as LGBT? (Fredrikson-Goldsen, 2015).

- Approximately 2.4 million adults 50 and older in the US identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT)
- 2.4% of the population
Myths: LGBT

• You can tell a person is gay by their looks and mannerisms
• Most experts agree that homosexuality is a choice
• Older LGBT persons are more likely to disclose to medical and service providers about their sexuality than are younger LGBT persons
-isms/phobias

- Homophobia is an irrational fear of people who are attracted to persons of the same gender.
- Heterosexism is the concept that only heterosexuality is natural, normal, superior, and expected.
- Queer
Experiences of Discrimination Over a Lifetime

1952
- The American Psychiatric Association lists homosexuality as a mental disorder. It would be removed 20 years later in the DSM IV, 61 years until transgender is removed.

1962
- Illinois becomes the first state to decriminalize private, consensual homosexual acts. Until then, sodomy could be punished by lengthy terms of imprisonment of hard labor.

1969
- Patrons of the Stonewall Inn respond to a police raid with a violent riot, inciting a series of protests and sparking the modern gay civil rights movement.

1980s
- The AIDS crisis galvanized the LGBT community, but also showed lack of governmental action to protect LGBT individuals' health.
- The “Moral Majority” starts crusade against LGBT community.

1993
- President Clinton implements the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy prohibiting LGBT service men and women from serving openly in the military. The policy was repealed in 2010.

2008
- Californians pass a state constitutional amendment banning gay marriage after the state supreme court had ruled previous bans as unconstitutional. The Supreme Court ruled the amendment unconstitutional in 2013.
Improving the Lives of LGBT Older Adults: Policy Report (March, 2010)

The LGBT older adult population will double by 2030

Q: Is this surprising to you? Have you experienced older adult LGBT individuals in your field?
Challenges & Opportunities: General
(Summit for LGBT older adults coming, 2012)

- 90% LGBT older adults have no children
- Twice as many LGBT older adults live alone compared to heterosexual older adults
- 3 times as likely to live in poverty as heterosexual adults
- Federal and state civil rights laws do not include the terms sexual orientation and gender identity, and therefore do not protect these individuals
- Due to the lack of policy, aging providers are not required to go through cultural competency training
Challenges & Opportunities: LTC Facilities

• Hiding sexual identity is necessary to moved to a retirement home, (Johnson, 2005)

• One half of senior centers do not welcome LGBT people who are open about their sexual identity, (Knauer, 2009).

• Gay elders are likely to be rejected by retirement communities and nursing homes (Haber, 2009)
LGBT Older Adults in Long-Term Care Facilities

Stories from the Field
Possible Issues Affecting LGBT Older Adults

- Total number of respondents: 649
- Abuse and/or neglect by staff: 346
- Isolation from other residents: 500
- Discrimination by residents: 526
- Discrimination by staff: 578
Quotes

• Most feel that there are no LGBT residents in their facilities.
• A gay couple moved into my mother’s facility. The residents kept talking about: “Which one is the man and which one is the woman?” They moved out in a couple of months.”
• Several residents’ offhand comments about gays and fags make me (and any gays) uncomfortable.
• My partner was in the long-term skilled nursing facility for 30 days— it was a difficult time for both of us, but particularly because of some staff who seemed to “resent” our relationship and my advocacy on his behalf.
• I have been haunted for years by what happened to two lesbian friends of mine. They had been “married” for more than 50 years, when they both fell ill. Their families sent them to separate nursing facilities despite all protests. They each shortly passed away. It was heartbreaking.
Enhancing Resilience

• Learn to cope with stigma from an early age
• Role flexibility
• Ability to cope with crises
• Importance of social support in successful aging: social support from other LGBT members is crucial in healthy aging

Berger, 1982
Enhancing Resilience

- 91% engage in wellness activities
- 89% feel good about belonging to the LGBT community
- 71% percent reported having a person in their life to love and make them feel wanted
- 83% have people with whom to do something enjoyable
Supportive Organizations

- National Senior Citizens Law Center
- National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
- Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)
- Lambda Legal
- National Center for Lesbian Rights
- National Center for Transgender Equality
- National Council on Aging
- AARP
- Family Caregivers Alliance
- Old Lesbians Organizing for Change

Resources

- American Society on Aging (ASA)
- The LGBT Aging Issues Network (LAIN)
- LGBT older adults in Long term care facilities: [http://www.lgbtlongtermcare.org](http://www.lgbtlongtermcare.org)
- Gay and Lesbian Medical Association
  - [www.glma.org](http://www.glma.org)
- American Society on Aging
  - [www.asaging.org](http://www.asaging.org)
- National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
  - [www.thetaskforce.org](http://www.thetaskforce.org)
- Improving the Lives of LGBT Older Adults, March 2010
Be Aware

Be Open

Be Knowledgeable
References


