

Aging in the LGBT Community



*First Annual Mayor's Senior
Symposium*— Washington, DC

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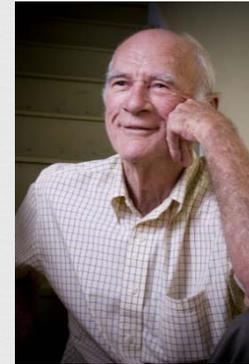


Who Are You?



☞ Your Name,

☞ Date of Birth



The Way Things Were



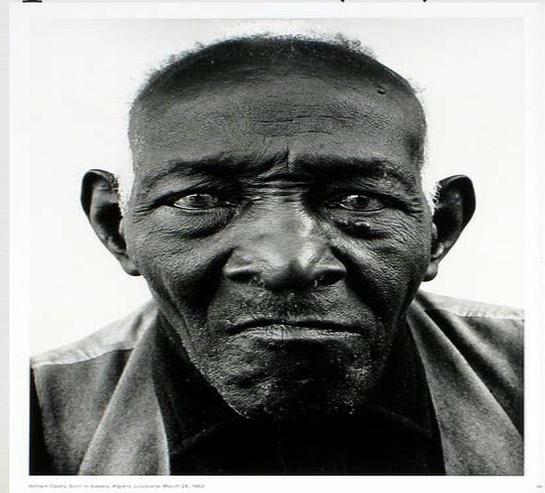
- ❧ Could be arrested, fired or hospitalized
- ❧ In 1973 the AMA removed homosexuality as a mental disorder
- ❧ Sex-realignment surgery unavailable
- ❧ Countless put in mental institutions
- ❧ Many married and had children to fit in



The data show that LGBT elders age with fewer supports



- 80% of LGBT elders age without a partner vs. 40% of overall older adult population (10)
- 90% of LGBT elders don't have children vs. 20% of overall older adult population (10)



General Experiences of LGBT Elders



- ❧ Sense of Being Different
- ❧ Aversion to Labels
- ❧ Deliberate Concealment of Sexual Identity and Orientation
- ❧ Fear of Rejection and Loss from Biological Family
- ❧ Sense of Grief and Loss related to aging and its effects on the quality of one's life
- ❧ Levels of Intolerance and Coping Strategies

Impacts on Health



- ❧ Health disparities based on access to health care
- ❧ Higher rate of stress related to systematic discrimination. Experience Minority Stress on at least 2 fronts, ageism, and sexual orientation/sexual identity
- ❧ Isolation
- ❧ Substance Abuse
- ❧ Suicide



Just the Facts



❧ 3 million LGBT elders in the United States

❧ Lesbian and Gay Older Adults more likely to be childless and living alone

❧ LGBT elders have survived by scanning for clues

❧ By ignoring or avoiding LGBT issues, service providers contribute to isolation





Recommendations

- ☞ Aging community and social services should create environments that are visibly welcoming and inclusive and programs that specifically address the needs of lesbian and gay African American elders.
- ☞ Invest in diversity and inclusion training
- ☞ Produce materials that celebrate the lives of older, lesbian and gay African Americans
- ☞ Dismantle institutional levels of ageism, heterosexism, classism, through staffing and policy.



Thank You!



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