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
- Countless put in mental institutions
- Many married and had children to fit in

- In 1973 the AMA removed homosexuality as a mental disorder
- Sex-realignment surgery unavailable
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
- LGBT elders have survived by scanning for clues
- Lesbian and Gay Older Adults more likely to be childless and living alone
- By ignoring or avoiding LGBT issues, service providers contribute to isolation
It's like you don't even know me!
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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References


References


