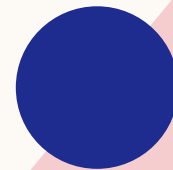


# LGBTQ+ OLDER ADULTS



# PRIMARY CHALLENGES

- Social Isolation & Loneliness
- Access to Healthcare
- Familial & Cultural Exclusion
- Economic Insecurity





# **SOCIAL ISOLATION & LONELINESS**

- 75% of LGBTQ+ older adults live alone. They may not have ever had a partner, their partner may have passed away or they may be estranged from siblings, children, and extended relatives.
- LGBTQ+ older adults may go back “in the closet” and transgender elders may choose to “de-transition” to protect themselves.
- Nearly 60% of LGBT older adults report feeling a lack of companionship
- More than 50% reported feeling isolated from others

# ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

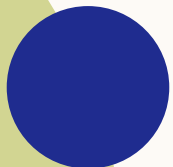
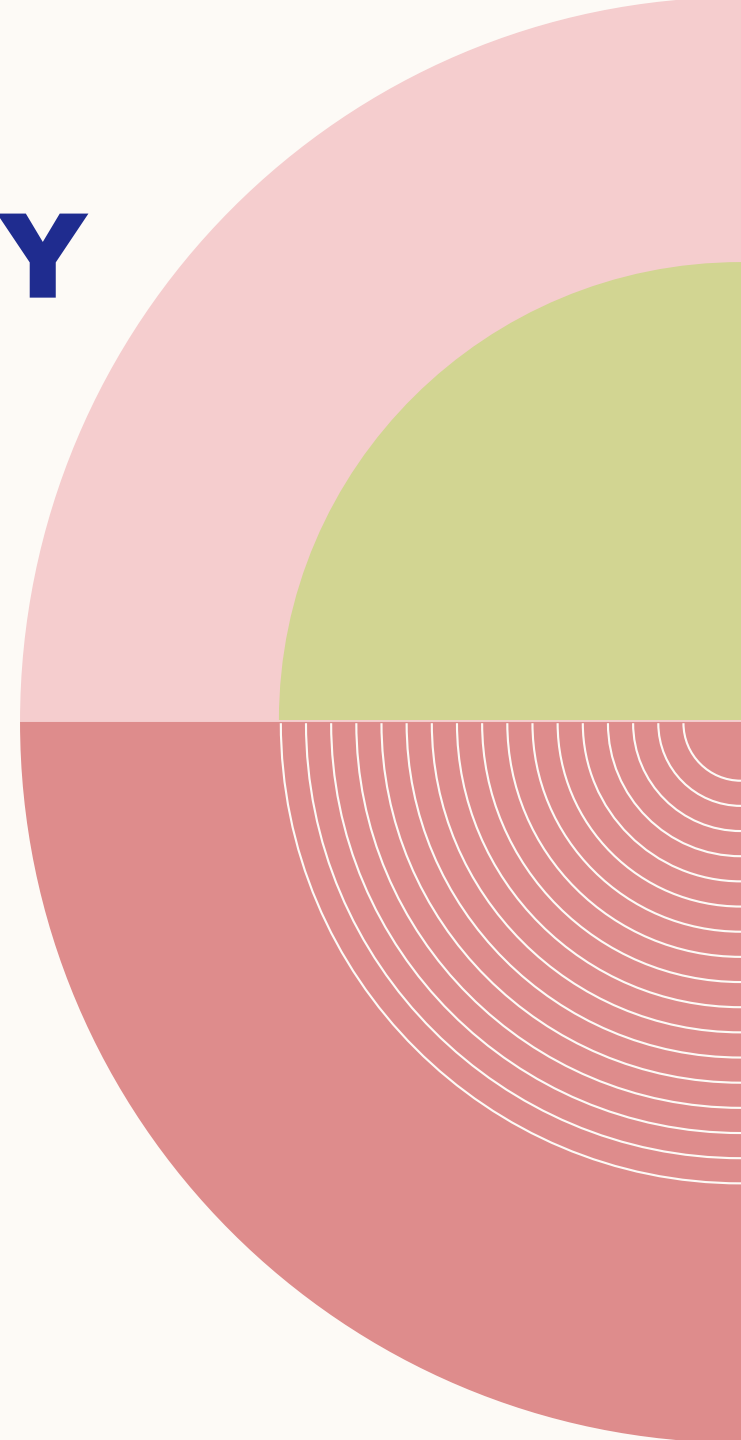
- LGBTQ+ older adults are 5x less likely to access health and social services for fear of being exposed and mistreated in healthcare and housing needs.
- 41% of LGBT older adults report having a disability, compared to 35 percent of heterosexual older adults
- LGBTQ+ adults more than twice as likely as heterosexual adults to experience a mental health condition and often encounter difficulty finding specialized mental health care.
- LGBTQ+ older adults are more likely to experience higher rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and some chronic health conditions like heart disease and cancer.

# FAMILIAL & CULTURAL EXCLUSION

- Face fear the rejection of family, children and neighbors at a time in their lives when they may be most vulnerable.
- This familial rejection has led many LGBTQ+ people to form their own family units. These “families of choice” are comprised of significant others, partners and long-time companions.
- Experience higher rates of premature institutionalization due to the to lack of an identified caregiver.
- For people of color, the need for family and culture to protect against racism may outweigh the need to identity with the LGBTQ+ community.

# ECONOMIC INSECURITY

- 90% of LGBTQ+ elders do not have children to help take care of them as they age.
- On average, LGBTQ+ older have lower economic status, and are less financially secure than American older adults as a whole.
- LGBT people are likelier to be subject to hiring or salary discrimination, making their earnings—and their Social Security payments are generally lower.



# CREATING AFFIRMING SPACES FOR LGBTQ+ OLDER ADULTS

- Openly acknowledge, include and recognize LGBTQ+ elders in collateral material.
- Include pictures of same-sex couples in marketing materials and on your website.
- Include references to serving the LGBTQ+ community to affirm your agency is a welcoming place.
- Ask clients about their partner or companion, instead of spouse.
- Ask them to tell you stories from their past as you would any other client.
- Don't be afraid to speak up against anti-LGBTQ+ comments, jokes by peers, clients or residents.



## SOURCES

- Rainbow Connections ATX  
<https://www.rainbowconnectionsatx.org/>
- SAGE – Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders  
<https://www.sageusa.org/>