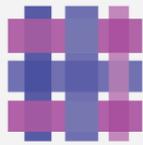


**National
Resource
Center**

ON LGBT AGING



PERSON DIRECTED SERVICES AND LGBT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

sage

Advocacy & Services
for LGBT Elders

We refuse to be invisible

National Resource Center
on LGBT Aging

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It is a breath of fresh air, that society as a whole, retailers, the food industry, and even the medical field is becoming more cognizant that it is important to view people that belong to any group, just as that, PEOPLE. Even though it looks as though we are moving in an upward direction, it is important to continually, self-assess, reflect, and identify our own biases, when looking at how to best serve people with disabilities by providing person directed services. This is no different in the LGBT community; however, the intersections of disability and LGBT identities often add additional layers of stigma and discrimination in need of greater attention and awareness.

**What are the unique challenges faced by an LGBT person with disabilities?
Consider the following scenario:**

Jana, is a woman who identifies as part of the LGBT community. She came out to her family and friends less than a year ago as a lesbian, even though she has known this about herself for many years. Jana has had a disability all her life that requires her to use a wheelchair to get around. She needs assistance with her Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and wants to be able to be herself when talking to the medical professionals and personal care workers she encounters on a regular basis. Jana is a bit hesitant, however; and wonders if by sharing that she is a lesbian will lead to being treated differently than before; to be disrespected or face discrimination. Quality, Person Directed Services empower Jane to live, work, and maximize her independence within her community.

Unfortunately, Jana is not alone in either her experience or concerns. This is why it is important to share information about people with disabilities, as it specifically relates to the LGBT community and those individuals who may need to use Person Directed Services. According to the Movement Advancement Project, or MAP, 3-5 million LGBT people have disabilities. This means 2 in 5 transgender adults, 1 in 4 LGB adults, 40% of bisexual men, 36% lesbian women, 36% of bisexual women, 26% of gay men have disabilities. **For services to be truly person directed, it is essential to know the whole person, including their sexual orientation and gender identity.**

This infographic (<https://www.lgbtmap.org/file/LGBT-People-With-Disabilities.pdf>) from MAP provides additional information on the LGBT people with disabilities.

To start providing Person Directed Services for LGBT people with disabilities, consider the following THREE principles:

- Need to be person centered in terms of **thinking** – a philosophy and believe that centers the person in living the life they want.
- Need to be person centered in terms of **planning** – how organizations support people in what they want to need in support of greater purpose, meaning, and value to their lives.
- Need to be person centered in terms of **practice** – the alignment of services and resources that support people in having access to the full benefits of community living that help them achieve their individual goals.
- For additional information on Person Directed Services see the report, Person-Centered Thinking, Planning, and Practice: A National Environmental Scan of Definitions and Principles found at <https://ncapps.acl.gov/docs/NCAPPS> .

Things to Consider when Offering Person Directed Services to a Person in LGBT Community:

- An individual may be hesitant to share medical or financial information with the intake specialist due to microaggressions experienced in the past.
- An individual’s expressed pronoun may be different than what is listed on their medical record or even given as options on the intake form; they may be fearful of being mis-gendered or use of “dead name.”
- An individual’s natural supports, may look different, due to not having children or extended families, instead they may have friends or neighbors.
- An individual may fear discrimination and therefore go back “in the closet,” when in need of long term care nursing home/personal care services.
- An individual may be hesitant to share details of marital status because of newly acquired marriage equality laws that could affect a person’s eligibility for programs.
- Organizations and programs that provide Person Directed Services need to be trained in LGBT cultural competency.
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman and State Protection and Advocacy staff and volunteers need to have LGBT competency training to assist individuals who face discrimination in long-term care services and supports.
- Organizations and programs that provide Person Directed Services need to be aware of LGBT resources, support groups, and activities.

Person Directed Services are just that - services provided for individuals that take into account the unique needs and wants of the specific person they are for. If implemented effectively, these services allow individuals to reach their fullest level of independence in their communities. This is no different for people with disabilities in the LGBT community. We hope that this fact sheet provides an awareness of some of the topics and situations that LGBT people with disabilities may face when accessing community services.

About the Author – Christie Carter is the Older Adult Program Coordinator at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center (www.mkelgbt.org). She has a Masters of Education with a focus on instructional design and is part of both the LGBT and disability communities. She uses her personal experiences in both of these groups to educate policymakers and advocate for the older adults she works with every day.

Additional Resources

Long-Term Care Equality Index

<http://thelei.org/>

Movement Advancement Project

<https://www.lgbtmap.org/file/LGBT-People-With-Disabilities.pdf>

National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) Home

<https://ncapps.acl.gov/home.html>

National Council for Independent Living

<https://ncil.org/>

SAGE (Affiliates and Centers)

<https://sageusa.org>

SAGECare

<https://sageusa.care/>