



TIPS FOR WORKING WITH LGBT OLDER ADULTS

- It is imperative that all who interface with the LGBT older adults respect the person's gender identity and gender expression by using the name and pronoun (e.g. he, she, they) used by the older adult, regardless of identity or appearance. When in doubt, ask the older adult what name and/or pronouns they use.
- Connect and build rapport with the LGBT older adults by asking about their career/profession, friends, interests, and personal effects.
- Listen especially carefully to the LGBT older adults input and desires.
- Be aware that not all LGBT couples have legally married or adopted the heteronormative terminology of wife and husband. Use the same terminology used by the older adult (e.g. partner, roommate, friend, spouse) when referring to the other member of the couple. Ask the older adult if the partner/roommate/friend can be counted on to provide care or financial assistance to them. Keep in mind that a large age gap between partners in a LGBT couple doesn't necessarily imply an exploitative relationship.
- Be prepared to be able to connect the person to community resources for LGBT older adults should they so desire (e.g. LGBT community groups, hotlines, counseling services).
- LGBT older adults may have close networks of friends that may serve as a protective factor. Be open to expanding definitions of family caregiver and including people identified by the older adult in any support meetings.
- Be aware that intimate partner violence is at least as frequent among LGBT couples as heterosexual, cisgender couples are. Be familiar with some of the unique ways in which LGBT identity and culture can be weaponized against an LGBT partner.

Cook Daniels, L. (1998). Lesbian, gay male, bisexual and transgendered elders: Elder abuse and neglect issues. *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 9(2), 35-49. Can be accessed from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J084v09n02_0. Revisions to TIPS made for SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, 2020.

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