

lgbt caregiver concerns

Important considerations
for LGBT caregivers



*Gordon, living with Alzheimer's,
and his care partner, Larry*

lgbt caregiver concerns

As a caregiver for someone with Alzheimer's disease, you will face various challenges. Some are common among all caregivers, while others may be specific to those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). The Alzheimer's Association® offers support to all individuals who are facing the disease and provides assistance in finding the right community resources.

LGBT caregiver considerations

Planning for the future

Making long-term care and end-of-life care decisions can be emotional and difficult. Openly discussing these situations with the person with dementia while he or she is still able to participate in the conversation can help ensure you understand his or her wishes. It can also prevent stress or disagreements with family when the time comes to make the decisions.

In addition to understanding the person's wishes, it's important to have legal documents in place. Because couples who are not in legally recognized relationships are especially vulnerable to limitations in making decisions for each other, it's important for LGBT individuals to complete **advance directives** — legal documents that specify preferences regarding treatment and care, including end-of-life wishes.

The two primary types of advance directives include:

- › **Durable power of attorney for health care** — allows a person with dementia to name a health care agent to make health care decisions on his or her behalf when he or she is incapable of doing so
- › **Living will** — a document that expresses how a physically or mentally incapacitated person would like to be treated in certain medical situations, including the person's wishes for artificial life support.

Many legal forms can be completed without professional help. However, if you have a complex situation or questions, it's a good idea to seek legal advice and

services from an attorney. It's also important to know your local laws, as laws affecting LGBT caregivers differ from state to state.

Visit [alz.org/care](https://www.alz.org/care) to learn more about planning for the future.

Accessing quality health care

LGBT individuals may access routine health care less frequently than other individuals for fear of inadequate treatment or discrimination. It's important for you and the person with Alzheimer's disease to seek supportive health care providers who make you feel comfortable. Check for referrals to health care providers from the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association ([GLMA.org](https://www.glma.org)) or an LGBT community center in your area to find a provider who is sensitive to your concerns.

Finding support

For some LGBT individuals, a family of origin is not present in their lives and cannot be relied on during difficult times. If this is true of your situation, it's important to find other sources of support as you face the demands of caregiving. The Alzheimer's Association is available all day, every day through our 24/7 Helpline. Give us a call at **800.272.3900** if you need information, advice or simply need to talk. All calls are confidential.

Disclosing your sexuality

To whom and when you disclose your sexual orientation and/or gender identity is a very personal choice. You may worry that service providers will respond negatively to your LGBT identity. Remember to trust yourself and make sure you're comfortable with what you share.

Support all day, every day.

24/7 Helpline – **800.272.3900**

Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiver Center – [alz.org/care](https://www.alz.org/care)



alz.org/care

The Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiver Center provides reliable information and easy access to resources, including:

- › Alzheimer's Navigator® – Assess your needs and create customized action plans of information and support.
- › Community Resource Finder – Find local resources.
- › ALZConnected® – Connect with other caregivers who can relate to your situation.
- › Care Team Calendar – Organize family and friends who want to help with caregiving.



alz.org/findus

Support groups, education programs and more available in communities nationwide.



800.272.3900

24/7 Helpline – Available all day, every day.

alzheimer's association®

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's®.

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