

3.5 Identities and Intersectionality Poverty in LGBT+ older people's lives

What	Examples of Intersectionality in LGBT+ older people's lives
Purpose	Addressing poverty in LGBT+ older people's lives
Target group	Teachers and trainers in vocational and higher education and their students
Level	Level 2-3-4 in vocational education, higher education (level 5-6)
Execution	Extra support from the teacher, outside quest (e.g. member of an LGBT NGO) or person with experience is advisable (depending on the ability of the students to work independently).
Sources	Adams, Michael (2016), An Intersectional Approach to Services and Care for LGBT Elders. GENERATIONS – Journal of the American Society on Aging. Summer 2016 issue. Retrieved from: https://www.asaging.org/blog/intersectional-approach-services-and-care-lgbt-elders

Cronin, A. and King, A. (2010) Power, Inequality and Identification: Exploring Diversity and Intersectionality amongst Older LGB Adults. *Sociology*, 44 (5). pp. 876-892. Retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a766/12c042ea460d651329050853eea26d207794.pdf>.

IGLYO (2014), Intersectionality Toolkit. Retrieved from: <https://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Inter-Toolkit.pdf>

Introduction

The purpose of the theme

- The purpose of this theme is to highlight the socio-economic status, especially low socio-economic status as an important factor shaping the lives of many LGBT+ older people and affecting their ability to access good care in old age.

The socio-economic status indicates an individual or group's social standing or class in respect to others in society. While considering the socio-economic status it is also important to understand how it affects an individual's opportunities and abilities to access rights and how it relates to an individual's perceived position and access to privilege in society. Often within the LGBT+ community there is a white, cis-male, middle class and highly educated hierarchy, that should be challenged by making space and letting other people's voices be heard and taken into consideration (IGLYO, 2014).

One issue that illustrates the complexity of LGBT+ older people's lives is finance and retirement. Whilst some evidence suggests that they have economic advantages compared to heterosexual adults, other studies suggest the opposite. Such studies may overlook significant differences among LGBT+ older people themselves, particularly those associated with gender (Cronin and King, 2010).

The following story is from the interviews conducted by Cronin and King (2010). Maz, a fifty-four year old single lesbian, explained that her dreams about the retirement were overshadowed by financial commitments.

“...I've never had any money, and its only really since I've been working full time the last few years that I've had any money at all and what I have now is, you know, sort of split... for the mortgage and about a third for my pension... which I didn't have at all because it was with my husband and so that's all gone, so I have nothing, and about a third which is... living and... a big chunk towards saving things and pension and trying to save some so that I've got something to live on, because otherwise I'm going to have nothing, and a big chunk goes towards supporting the kids.” (Maz, 54)

Her story was widespread amongst the older lesbians in the sample, many of whom had previously been in heterosexual relationships and had children. For some, 'coming out' about their sexuality had occurred later in life. Like Maz, this had affected them financially. Thus, although LGBT+ older people may experience later life differently to their heterosexual counterparts, an intersectional analysis draws out the biographical complexity encapsulated within this statement. In this instance, gender inequalities appear to be more salient (in Cronin and King, 2010).

The poverty rates among LGBT+ older people with refugee status are notably higher than among host LGBT+ older population. There are differences among rural and urban areas. Poverty also tracks to gender. Older

lesbian couples are much more likely to live in poverty than older heterosexual couples and older gay male couples, which can influence their access to good care.

Overcoming such issues is not easy, as the system has deep roots in the preservation of the current societal structures and the separation of different people within society (IGLYO, 2014). Considering good care of LGBT+ older people, these hidden voices will bring a valuable input that you wouldn't have access to otherwise. Care services should have strong inclusion policies and responsibility to include also those LGBT+ older people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Activity

Source

Aging as LGBT: Two Stories <https://www.justiceinaging.org/aging-as-lgbt/>; <http://lgbtmap.org/file/lgbt-older-adults-infographic-aging-lgbt-lp.pdf> (iconographic of the two stories).

In this video clip, we can observe how cumulative impact of discrimination over a lifetime leaves LGBT+ older adults at increased risk for poverty. First, systemic discrimination, especially in housing and employment, and a long-term lack of legal and social recognition combine to create deep economic insecurity for LGBT+ older people.

Assignment

Discuss the following questions:

- How does the story apply to the reality of LGBT+ older people in your country?
- In what ways multiple discrimination impacts the fact that the LGBT+ older adults are less likely to access necessary social and health services and decent accommodation?
- Not all the LGBT+ people are poor. In your opinion, what are other possible factors or circumstances that put LGBT+ older people at greater risk of becoming poor and limited access to the necessary social and health services?

Discuss these issues while thinking about different possible scenarios, such as a transgender older person living in a small town, an older gay man who just came to your country as a refugee, an older lesbian woman with the label of intellectual disability who still lives with her parents, LGBT+ older people who spent most of their lives in close types of institutions, and others.

Results

- The students will get a basic understanding of how inequalities in socio-economic status interplay in the lives of LGBT+ older people.
- The students will understand the importance of socio-economic status for access to good care and get some examples and ideas on how to enable inclusive community services for economically deprived LGBT+ older people.
- The students know where to find web-based information and guidance.

Evaluation for students

Discuss this theme individually or in groups. Use the following reflective questions:

- What have you learned from this block?
- What did you already know?
- What kind of impact did the information make on you as a professional health or social care taker?
- What are you taking into practice?
- What are you not taking into practice? Why not?

Keep on learning

- Adams, Michael (2016), An Intersectional Approach to Services and Care for LGBT Elders. GENERATIONS – Journal of the American Society on Aging. Summer 2016 issue. Retrieved from: <https://www.asaging.org/blog/intersectional-approach-services-and-care-lgbt-elders>
- Christensen, Ann-Dorte & Sune Qvotrup Jensen (2012), Doing Intersectional Analysis: Methodological Implications for Qualitative Research, NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research, 20:2, 109-125, DOI: 10.1080/08038740.2012.673505.
- Cronin, A. and King, A. (2010) Power, Inequality and Identification: Exploring Diversity and Intersectionality amongst Older LGB Adults. Sociology, 44 (5). pp. 876-892. Retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a766/12c042ea460d651329050853eea26d207794.pdf>.
- IGLYO (2014), Intersectionality Toolkit. Retrieved from: <https://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Inter-Toolkit.pdf>