

5.4 Life Stories Discrimination

Purpose	Improve awareness of the impact of discrimination on LGBT+ older people's lives
Target group	Teachers and trainers in vocational education and their students
Level	Level 2-3-4 in vocational education.
Execution	Extra support from the teacher might be necessary depending on the ability of the students to work independently
Sources	weblinks to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) One of four LGBT people experience hate speech http://kjonnsforskning.no/en/2019/03/one-four-lgbt-people-experience-hate-speech ii) Ageing as LGBT: Two stories https://www.justiceinaging.org/aging-as-lgbt/ iii) 'Bisexual' poem by Joanna Harker Shaw https://www.pinterest.ie/pin/396387204689086944/ iv) Utube video: LGBT Elders go back into the closet in record numbers

Introduction

Many LGBT+ older people have experienced fear, discrimination, harassment, hate crimes or actual violence in their lives. Many grew up in homophobic, transphobic and biphobic environments where coming out to family, workplace and community meant marginalisation from family and community and loss of employment and career should their sexual orientation be made public. Studies have also record high incidence of verbal abuse and physical assault on LGBT people, with higher rates of violence and discrimination experienced by people who identify as transgender. Even if not out, the threat of being 'outed' is a significant fear for the older population, as this could expose them to the possibility of violence or significant discrimination. Considering this context, it is hardly surprising that many LGBT people, for safety and economic reasons, hid their sexual orientation and gender identities and some LGBT+ older people continue to hide their sexual orientation and gender identity because of fear of discrimination. Considering their possible life-time exposure to discrimination, it is understandable that these fears of discrimination remain with LGBT as they age. LGBT+ older people have repeatedly aired their concerns that discrimination will be present within health and social care services. Consequently the response of many LGBT+ older people is to retreat to the closet and hide their sexual identities, as disclosure could carry the risk of discrimination from service providers and other non-LGBT service users.

Activity 1

Read [One of four LGBT people experience hate speech](#) and consider how the how the cumulative impact of discrimination over a life time can leave LGBT+ older people more vulnerable to mental health issues.

Activity 2

Read [Ageing as LGBT: Two stories](#) and identify how the cumulative impact of discrimination over a life time can leave LGBT+ older people at increased risk of poverty.

Activity 3

Read the poem ['Bisexual' poem by Joanna Harker Shaw](#) and discuss how the sentiments expressed can lead to an older Bisexual person hiding or being fearful of discussing their sexuality. How might the sentiments expressed impact on a person self-concept.

Activity 4

Watch this video [LGBT Elders go back into the closet in record numbers](#) and discuss what factors issues from the past may increase LGBT+ older people concerns about coming out in health care environments.

Activity 5

In groups think about you own country and consider whether

- i) legislation on Marriage or Adoption supports or discriminates against same sex relationships)
- ii) equality legalisation exists and if so how inclusive is it of sexual orientation and gender identities beyond male/female.



Keep on Learning

- Barrett, C; Cramer, P; Lambourne, S & Latham, J (2015). [We are still gay ... An evidence based guide to inclusive services for LGBT people living with dementia.](#) Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne Australia.
 - Judit Takács – László Mocsonaki – Tamás P.Tóth (2007) Social Exclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) People in Hungary
- Lorenzetti A & Viggiani G MAKING EQUALITY REAL LGBTI PERSONS AND LABOUR DISCRIMINATION IN ITALY
https://ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/it_making_equality_real_short_version.pdf
- Mallory C, Brown T, Russell S & Sears B (2017) The Impact of Stigma and Discrimination Against LGBT People in Texas
<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Texas-Impact-of-Stigma-and-Discrimination-Report-April-2017.pdf>