



Important Phone Numbers
National Alliance on Mental Illness Help Line
1-800-950-6264 <https://www.nami.org/help>
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800.273.TALK
Veteran's Crisis Line 800.273.8255 *press 1*
Pastoral Care—Pastor Jim Alexander 623.792.5295

June is Pride Month! Happy Pride to our LGBTQ+ siblings and advocates! We will be celebrating Open and Affirming Sunday on June 26, 2022 as we worship together. Each Sunday on our WISE pages, we will be sharing helpful and supportive resources that address concerns and create community.

It has been estimated that there are nearly 3 million lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people age 50 and older, rising to approximately 7 million by 2030. It is difficult to estimate the number of older LGBT people due to a lack of data, differing estimates by experts in related fields, and stigma that causes under self-identification and under-counting of LGBT populations in the U.S. Current estimates indicate that by 2030, there will be upwards of 7 million LGBT age 50+.

Even with the progress that has been made regarding LGBTQ+ rights, these facts remain:

- Many LGBT older adults are at high risk for elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Fear of homophobia or transphobia keep LGBT elders from seeking help and services.
- Internalized homophobia or transphobia may affect an LGBT elder's willingness to seek help and put them at risk of self-neglect.
- Some LGBT elders choose to hide their LGBT identity and disclosure of that identity against their wishes can cause problems.
- Older gay men and lesbians place high value on self-sufficiency and may be reluctant to accept help.
- Discrimination within healthcare and retirement services is often experienced as
 - A denial of visitors
 - Refusal to allow same-sex couples to share rooms
 - Refusal to place transgender elders in wards that match their gender identity
 - Being prevented from dressing according to their gender identity
 - Refusing to allow partners to participate in medical decision making
 - Physical or psychological abuse
 - Being involuntarily "outed"
 - Refusing care, services, admission to facilities

How can a faith community help?

- A pressing need for LGBT elders is dealing with social isolation as isolation is a risk factor for elder abuse. Faith communities can provide fellowship and learning opportunities.
- LGBT elders may lack legal protections, feel unable to share feelings or concerns, may not be comfortable sharing their relationship status, and may find it difficult to find connections to the LGBT community. Faith communities can be welcoming, inclusive, supportive and engaged in these challenges and help to build bridges of support.
- When you see something, say something. Advocacy for all people regardless of age, race, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation is a social justice issue.