

Seniors Aging OUT: Health & Community working together for safe communities for LGBTQ2+



BC Association of
Community Response
Networks

Stopping Adult Abuse and Neglect ... Together

Four Polaroid-style photographs are arranged on a light grey background. From left to right: a smiling Black man, a woman with glasses and a blue shirt, a woman with blonde hair and glasses, and two women embracing. The photos are slightly tilted and overlap each other.

LGBTQ2S Seniors

(Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2-Spirited)

Providing Inclusive Care in Island Health

Nicole Tremblay, MSW, MPA



Agenda

1. What is the issue? Why now?
2. Where have we been? Where are we now? Where are we going?
 - a) Island Health Training Initiative – Nicole Tremblay
 - b) BCCRN Community-based Project
3. Questions / Discussion?



What is the issue?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fV3O8qz6Y5g>
- **Vera & Zayda's story**



Scenario 1



Two friends of mine, Vera and Zayda, had been together for 58 years. When Vera's Alzheimer's became too much, Zayda moved her to an assisted living facility. Zayda could barely trust family or neighbors with the truth, let alone strangers, so she and Vera became "sisters." Much later, after Vera's death, Zayda needed to move into an assisted living facility herself. She had many, many photos of the love of her life, but dared not display them in her new home. The other residents would talk about husbands, children and grandchildren, but she felt too vulnerable to tell the truth. Zayda was in hiding and terribly isolated.

**Participant story from 'Stories from the Field'*

What can we do for Zayda?



What does LGBTQ2+ mean?

- **L**esbian, **G**ay, **B**isexual, **T**ransgender, **Q**ueer & **2**-spirited (IH: LGBTQ2s)
- The **+** incorporates queer questioning, gender fluid, asexual, pansexual, ...
- We include allies or supporters of members of these communities
- LGBTQ2+ seniors are diverse people from many backgrounds; not readily identifiable

LGBT Seniors' Experiences

- o Mentally ill
- o Criminal
- o Immoral/Perverted
- o National security risk
- o Threat to “the family”



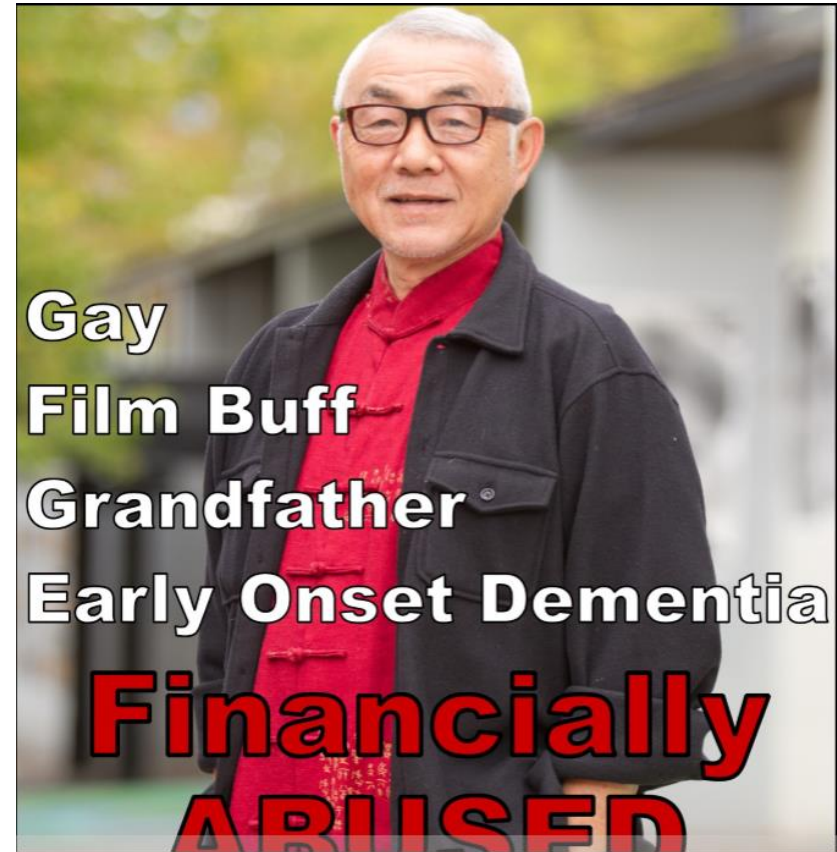


Where have we been?

Island Town Hall in Victoria

- Feb. 3, 2016
 - 1 of 6 in province
 - SFU's Gerontology Research Centre – Gloria Gutman (Youth for Change / Quirk-e)
 - Island Health – Adult Protection
 - BCCRN

www.sfu.ca/lgbteol.html





Four primary reasons we are talking about this now

1. Demographics
2. Invisible in many parts of the Island – we don't ask; IH doesn't collect data
3. LGBTQ2+ more likely to age alone
4. Older adults may return to the closet because of stigma; because they do not feel safe



Demographics ...

- Senior citizens will soon outnumber children in Canada, according to Statistics Canada. For the first time ever, the senior population is expected to outnumber children under the age of 15 sometime between 2015 and 2021.

*SOURCE: Statistics Canada reprinted in National Post, May 27, 2010
from 2006 Canada census figures*



Demographics from Central & South Island Communities

- The total Nanaimo population is expected to grow by 28% by 2036, while the proportion over 75 is expected to grow 104%.
- The total Ladysmith population is expected to grow 22% between 2014 and 2036, while the population 75+ is expected to grow 117% in the same period.
- Cowichan's population is expected to grow 23% by 2036, while the proportion aged over 75 is expected to grow by 110% in that same period.
- The overall population in Greater Victoria is expected to increase by 14%; however, the population aged 20-44 is expected to decrease by 7%, while the population aged 75+ is expected to increase by 115% between 2014 and 2036.

SOURCE: Island Health, Local Health Area Profiles



Demographics ...

- Younger Canadians are far more likely to say they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender than older Canadians, with 10% of those aged 18 to 34 answering the question with a “yes,” compared to 2% or 3% in the four older cohorts.

SOURCE: FORUM Research Poll commissioned by National Post, July 2012

- In 2013 a Qmunity volunteer visited all of the White Rock & surrounding area residential care facilities and staff in all those facilities said that none of their seniors were LGBTQ2+

SOURCE: Qmunity.ca Aging Out Project



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- In 2013 a Qmunity volunteer visited all of the residential care facilities in White Rock and the surrounding area and each facility said that none of their seniors were LGBTQ.

SOURCE: Qmunity.ca Aging Out Project



Why is it important?

- LGBTQ2+ seniors need to feel safe to come out to health/community service providers – not just tolerated but welcomed & included
- Voices of LGBTQ2+ seniors, supporters and allies need to inform how we provide services and supports to them as they age
- As the population begins to grow, we need to ensure all communities engage to provide needed services and supports



Where have we been?

Island Health Initiative

- Created LGBTQ2s Advisory
- Toolkit to support leaders to implement policy, practices, programs
 - Includes curricula, brochures, lanyards ...
- Developing face to face education module
- Showing Gen Silent in community



Where are we now?

Island Health Initiative

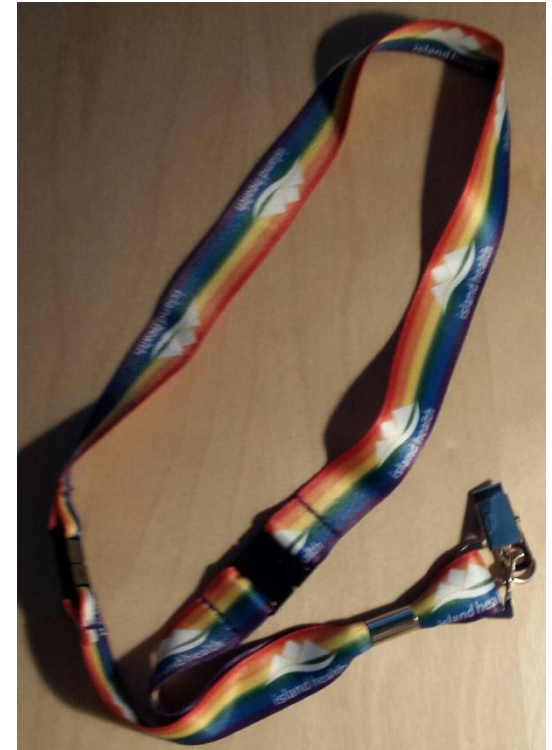
- Continuing to engage with community – Gen Silent
- Delivering presentations, e.g. Gerontological Nurses Association
- Planning and preparing for Island Health wide in-house training
- Focusing on services that support clients where they live – home and community care, residential care



Where are we now?

Island Health (2)

- Prioritised residential care for initial training
- Piloted the education module in 4 workshops in a Victoria area residential care facility
- Evaluating and planning
(Nicole.Tremblay@viha.ca)





LBGTQ2s Aging Issues



Who are LBGTQ2s Seniors?

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queers and Two Spirited (LBGTQ2s) Elders on Vancouver Island are a diverse group of seniors who come from many different backgrounds.

This cohort has experienced a lifetime of discrimination and marginalization that has many seniors in the community feeling anxious about the loss of independence and increased health care needs that can accompany aging.

We can make a difference. By learning about the experiences and needs of this population and proactively making our services safer and more inclusive, we can ensure that LBGTQ2s seniors receive the type of care that welcomes and affirms all of who they are.



Although there is limited research about LBGTQ2s seniors, several themes have emerged from the research that does exist:

- ◆ **Isolation:** Many LBGTQ2s seniors do not have the informal support networks of children and extended families that their non-LBGTQ2s peers enjoy.
- ◆ **Health disparities:** Higher rates of disability have been noted in older LBGTQ2s populations relative to non-LBGTQ2s peers.
- ◆ **Resilient:** Despite the challenges they have faced, LBGTQ2s seniors forge onward with resilience, living full lives and building strong communities.
- ◆ **Anxious about healthcare:** Several recent reports have documented the anxiety that LBGTQ2s seniors feel about increased care needs related to aging and how they will be treated by service providers and peers in the health care system.

Quote from participate in LGTBQ2s seniors research project *Stories from the Field*

"Two friends of mine, Vera and Zayda, had been together for 58 years. When Vera's Alzheimer's became too much, Zayda moved her to an assisted living facility. Zayda could barely trust family or neighbors with the truth, let alone strangers, so she and Vera became "sisters." Much later, after Vera's death, Zayda needed to move into an assisted living facility herself. She had many, many photos of the love of her life, but dared not display them in her new home. The other residents would talk about husbands, children and grandchildren, but she felt too vulnerable to tell the truth. Zayda was hiding and terribly isolated."



Stock image



Where have we been? **BCCRN Initiative**

- Nanaimo-centred working group
- Initial consultation July 2016
- IG partnership: Brechin United Reaching Out & Crimson Coast Dance Society



2017-01-12



Where have we been?

Setting Goals & Priorities

1. LGBTQ2+ seniors feel safe to come out: welcomed and included, not just tolerated.
2. Isolated seniors are supported in ways that work for them.
3. LGBTQ2+ programming is readily available and supported in community.
4. Broadly available resources (print and web) support LGBTQ2+ seniors in communities large and small across the province.
5. LGBTQ2+ seniors free from abuse and neglect.



Where have we been? Creating our Workplan

1. Pre-Project Activities (Summer 2016)

Roundtable discussions with community members (aged 15 to 80+ years old) through BC's Community Response Networks (CRN).

Youth perform *Young and Queer: Here and Now* at 18th Annual Infringing Dance Festival in Nanaimo.

Older adults from Brechin United's Reaching Out, Crimson Coast Dance, and others join in dialogue.

We learn an intergenerational approach introduces even more energy and ideas!

2. Discovery Phase (Now to Summer 2017)

- Engage with community to gather stories on LGBTQ2+ seniors and accessing health services on Vancouver Island.
- Produce project plan, develop materials and programs.

3. Implementation (Summer 2017 onward)

- Launch materials and programs through Vancouver Island-based CRNs.
- Gather feedback for ongoing improvements.
- Determine sustainability plan.

We Need Your Input

There is little research on LGBTQ2+ people and their experiences accessing service.

Most agencies do not collect data on how seniors describe their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Few service providers educate their staff and volunteers on the needs of this particular population.

If you identify as LGBTQ2+, or are a family member or friend of someone who does, your stories will help us better understand the health landscape for this community.

We will take all measures to ensure your privacy and confidentiality.

Contact us to arrange an



What does LGBTQ2+ Mean?

LGBTQ2+ means Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and 2-spirited. The "plus" (+) incorporates other possibilities like queer questioning, gender fluid, asexual, and pansexual. We also include allies or supporters of members of these communities.

LGBTQ2+ seniors are a diverse community of people from many backgrounds.

The Challenges Facing this Community

LGBTQ2+ elders have lived through times of legal and social discrimination that have left some individuals feeling isolated and afraid. When seeking support, particularly health and community services related to aging, many people in this population fear identifying themselves as LGBTQ2+.

LGBTQ2+ seniors are not immediately visible: some have become adept at hiding their identity to feel safe.

SENIORS AGING OUT

What can we do to ensure the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ2+ and develop safe communities for this population?

Seniors Aging OUT Project

Safe Communities for LGBTQ2+.

Contact: **Jane Osborne**
Regional Mentor, Central Island
Email: jane.osborne@bccrns.ca
Tel: 604.363.5370



BC ASSOCIATION OF
Community Response Networks
Stopping Adult Abuse and Neglect ...Together.

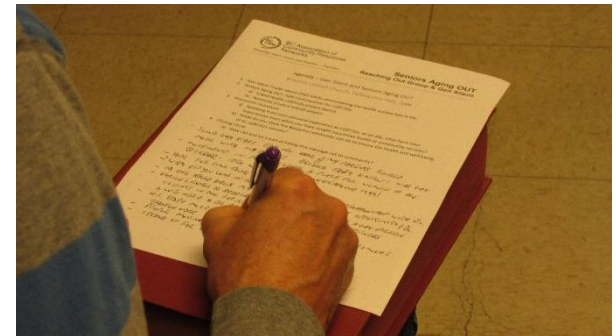
TELL US
YOUR
STORY.



Where are we now?

Seniors Aging OUT

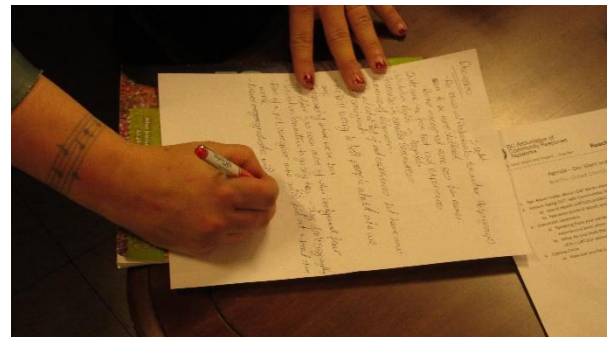
- Phase 2 – Discovery (Nov. – June)
 - Develop community outreach teams
 - Develop an outreach strategy/plan
 - Prepare materials for initial outreach, e.g. press release, presentation





Where are we going? Seniors Aging OUT Plan

- Phase 2: Discovery
 - Identify social media channels, community websites, seniors serving organization websites, community bulletin boards
 - Do information sessions for interested organizations and individuals
 - Design research interview

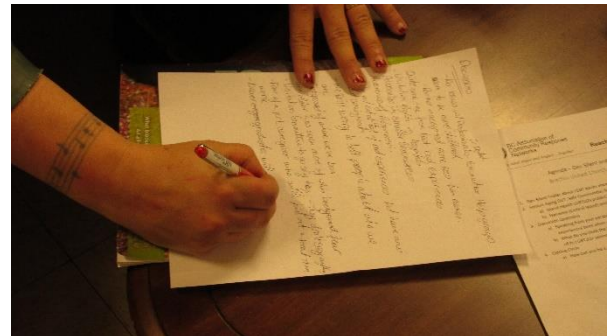




Where are we going?

Seniors Aging OUT Plan

- Phase 2: Discovery
 - Individual interviews: What has your experience been? What do you need to feel “cared for”? (Dec-Mar)
 - Design & develop set of IG training materials (Jan-Mar)
 - Pilot materials (April-May)
 - Report and Phase 3 implementation plan (June)





Where are we going?

Implementation – 2017/18

- IH – Geography 2 & 3 (Nanaimo/Cowichan) and Geography 4 (Victoria)
 - Expand program Island wide to all sectors of our communities – public and private
- BC Wide
 - Launch materials and programs through CRNs across the province
 - Support communities that want to move ahead with creating “queer-friendly” services



Where are we going? How can you support us?

- Connect with us:
 - Become an ally
 - Join a special interest group
- Connect us to:
 - LGBTQ2+ seniors / caregivers
 - Sponsor a viewing of Gen Silent



Seniors Aging OUT is a grassroots project that envisions Vancouver Island communities welcoming and including LGBTQ+ people in all aspects of community life.

Our goal is to engage people from across generations, health and health service providers, families, and friends to help LGBTQ+ seniors feel safe when accessing support.

We Need Your Input

There is little research on LGBTQ+ seniors' health.

If you are an LGBTQ+ senior, or a family member or friend of one, we need your stories and experiences to better understand the current health landscape for this community.

We will take all measures ensure your privacy and confidentiality.



How to help:

- o Don't assume everyone is heterosexual and cisgender!
- o Use neutral language to “make room” for everyone (And if you don't know – ASK!)
- o Engage in reflective practice and explore assumptions
- o Learn about health disparities and health care needs in LGBTQ2s communities
- o Challenge homophobia and transphobia when you see it/hear it. Become an ally!



Come sing and dance with us



2017-01-12



Questions / Discussion



Where is your region or community in relation to this issue?

What are the gaps? The challenges?

How can we work together and support each other as CRN-connected people?