

**LGBT ABUSE IN LATER LIFE**

with Kathy Flores  
Statewide LGBTQ Anti-Violence  
Manager, Diverse & Resilient



Diverse & Resilient

Hosted by: End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin  
In Partnership with: Department of Children and Families





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**Sharon Lewandowski**  
Domestic Abuse Program Coordinator



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**Who is Diverse & Resilient?**

Our mission is to achieve health equity and improve the safety and well-being of LGBTQ people and communities in Wisconsin.



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**Our work**



Diverse & Resilient

- Centering our LGBTQ work on LGBTQ People of Color.
- Addressing and acknowledging systems of oppression tied into race, poverty, disability.
- *“If you center LGBTQ work around People of Color, you will automatically serve all people well because we already know how to serve the white LGBTQ community. We figured that out long ago because everything has been centered on whiteness.”*

-Sebastian Margaret: Gender nonconforming queer, anti - ableism/ disability community educator and capacity builder.

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ROOM TO BE SAFE  
ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAM

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**What the Room to Be Safe Resource Line Provides:**

- LGBTQ Support via Phone
- Safety Planning
- Co-Advocacy with Programs
- Resources
- Referral

- CONTACT INFORMATION:
  - (414) 856-LGBT (5428)
  - [www.roomtobesafe.org](http://www.roomtobesafe.org)



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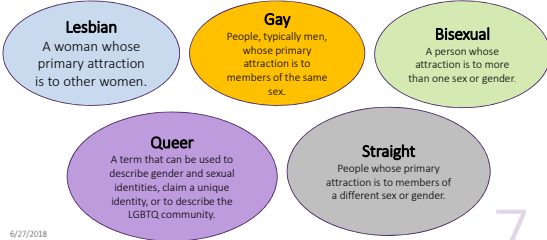
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## Brief Reminder of Understanding Sexual Orientation

A person's physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to others



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## Understanding Gender Identity and Expression

**Gender Identity:** A person's internal, deeply held sense of one's own *gender*.

**Gender Expression:** *Gender* as presented through one's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, or other characteristics.

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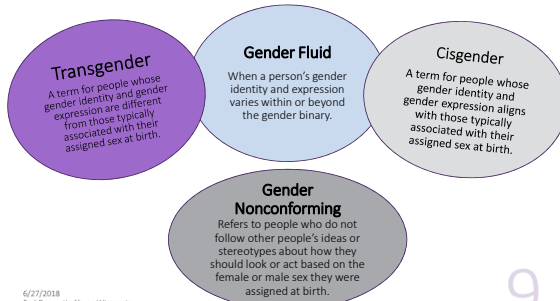
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## Brief Reminder Understanding Gender Identity and Expression, continued



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Historical Perspective is Important – 15min Video Clip

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## A Brief History of Time

An excerpt by Steven F. Dansky; For Barry Alan Safran

### The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name

Of course, for you, my beloved, Barry,  
but honestly when feminists conceived the  
maxim:  
the personal is political during the second wave  
last century,  
I've lived my life duty-bound to that maxim.  
This experiment endures  
despite living in stigma-impregnated space and  
refused recognition.  
Our union is socially imperative:  
an affirmation of those who loved and suffered,  
were imprisoned, or died for same-sex love.

We are guardians of history,  
of other unions, of ours,  
some open, other hidden,  
some punished, some  
escaped the fire.  
Perfect, unconditional, and  
inseparable in life.  
Most holy. Most pure.  
Amen.

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## A Few LGBT Symbols



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Truths About

Lesbian  
Gay  
Bisexual  
Transgender  
People



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**Poll 1:** What percentage of the population is considered to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender?



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**Poll:** What percentage of the population is considered to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender?

**Answer:** Traditionally we've seen 10-15% general population. Closer to 20% in metropolitan areas.

Recent Youth Risk Behavior Study in Milwaukee reported 21% of youth disclosed same-sex sexual contact.

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**Poll 2:** LGBT older adults have an increased risk of untreated serious illnesses.

True or False?

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**Poll:** LGBT older adults have an increased risk of untreated serious illnesses.

True

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**Poll 3:** Homosexuality is a diagnosis of mental disorder in the mental health community's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual.



True or False?

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**Poll:** Homosexuality is a diagnosis of mental disorder in the mental health community's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual.

**False**

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**Poll 4:** Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals are protected from workplace discrimination in the United States.



**True or False?**

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**Poll:** Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals are protected from workplace discrimination in the United States.

**False**

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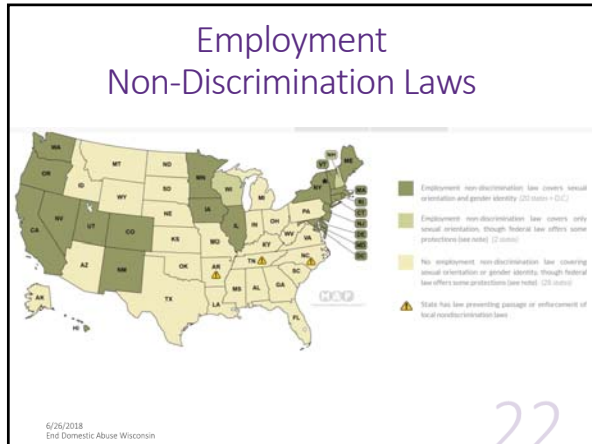
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**Poll 5:** Most older LGBT people have partners or spouses they can rely on for help.



**True or False?**

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**Poll:** Most older LGBT people have partners or spouses they can rely on for help.

**False**

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	LGBT OLDER ADULTS	OLDER ADULTS IN GENERAL POPULATION
Live Alone	75%	33%
Have No Children	90%	20%
Are Single	80%	40%

As opposed to older adults in the general population, **most LGBT older adults live alone, have no children, and are single.**

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### Significant Poverty

(From Justice in Aging)

- 21% of LGBT adults living alone on incomes of less than \$12,00/year compared to 17% non-LGBT
- Lesbian couples over 65 have poverty rates double heterosexual couples.
- Poverty rates are double for African American same sex couples and triple for Hispanic/Latinx lesbians.

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### Significant Poverty

(From Justice in Aging)

- Transgender people are 4x more likely to live in households with income of less than \$10,00 than the general community (15% to 4%)
- This is despite 87% of trans people having completed some college, and 47% having obtained a college or graduate degree.

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## Health Disparities and Discrimination

(From Justice in Aging)

- Discrimination triggers poorer health outcomes and further pushes LGBT older adults into poverty.
- Only 16% of hospitals report having any LGBT comprehensive training for physicians.
- 78% of LGBT residents in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities report being uncomfortable about being open about their identity.
- For more information and statistics on LGBT aging, visit Justice in Aging: <http://www.justiceinaging.org>

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## Types of Abuse for All Elders

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional or Psychological
- Neglect
- Abandonment
- Financial or Material Exploitation
- Self-Neglect



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## LGBT-Specific Tactics

- Abuser threatens to “out” the older adult
- Abuser says authorities won’t believe older adult (play on fears of police and shelter prejudice)
- Abuser gains control of finances and/or assets (Marriage equality laws)
- Victim fears “spending rest of my life alone” (Threat that this is what you deserve)

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### LGBT-Specific Tactics, continued

- Victim may be easier to isolate (Family estranged)
- Abuser says, "This is what it means to be LGBT." (Sexual Abuse)
- Society says, "This is the best you can expect." ("Not normal" homophobia, biphobia, transphobia)
- Victim has history of self-reliance, fears authorities (Survival tactic from family/society rejection)

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### Challenging Assumptions – What Do We Think and How Does It Affect Our Work?



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### Protecting Elders



- Help older adults/survivors stay involved (isolation is the risk)
- Recognize that "no" could signal depression
- Try to keep all topics on the table (interpersonal and other "sensitive" topics)
- Help victims safety plan
- Be willing to "go with" (police, government, etc.)
- Be resourceful (individualized plans)

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## Outreach & Welcome



- Is this organization welcoming to LGBTQ staff? How do you know?
- What message is conveyed and how?
- Does the message make a difference?
- What kind of message do you think is important to hear?

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## Outreach & Welcome



- Are you collaborating with local or statewide LGBTQ orgs?
- Are you currently advertising in statewide LGBTQ publications like Our Lives Magazine or Wisconsin Gazette
- Are you sharing posts on social media from LGBTQ organizations?
- Recognize people's ability to thrive, not just survive.

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## Outreach & Welcome

- Office settings: What visual cues do you currently have to let LGBT older adults know you serve them?
- Does your marketing materials represent survivors other than cisgender women? Do you show LGBTQ People of Color?
- Do you have non-discrimination policies that specifically include sexual orientation and gender identity and expression for both survivors and employees?

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## Removing Obstacles



- Review accessibility of program
- Let yourselves be known publicly as a support service for LGBTQ aging population
- Constant Learning – Staff, volunteers, shelter residents.
- Collaborate with LGBTQ organizations
- Get Involved with LGBTQ work

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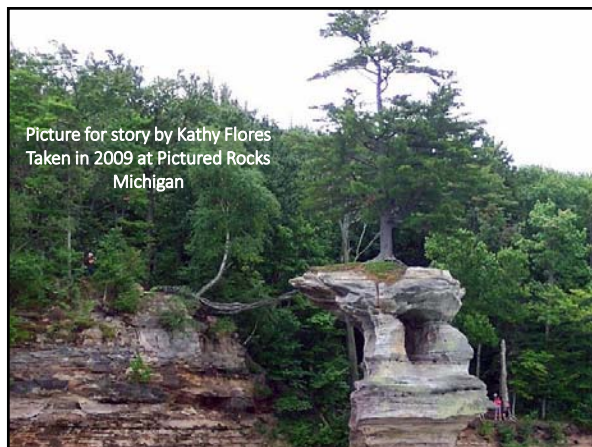
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Picture for story by Kathy Flores  
Taken in 2009 at Pictured Rocks  
Michigan




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## Aging & Protection Resources

- Adult Protective Services: [http://www.americanbar.org/groups/law\\_aging.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_aging.html)
- Long-term Ombudsman Programs: <http://www.ltombudsman.org/about-ombudsmen>
- Eldercare Locator: <http://eldercare.gov>
- Justice in Aging: <http://www.justiceinaging.org>
- SAGE National: <https://www.sageusa.org/issues/general.cfm>
- SAGE in Milwaukee: <https://www.sageusa.org/advocacy/sagenet-affiliate.cfm?ID=10>
- Madison Outreach: <https://lgbtseniors.org/>
- Gen Silent team: Stu Maddux-director and Lisa Krinsky-Director of LGBT Aging Project in Boston
- NCALL (National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life): <http://www.ncall.us/>
  - *Issues on aging and elder abuse*

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**Kathy Flores**  
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 LGBTQ Statewide Program Manager  
 Intimate Partner Violence

[kflores@diverseandresilient.org](mailto:kflores@diverseandresilient.org)

 [www.roomtobesafe.org](http://www.roomtobesafe.org) 

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 Wisconsin:  
 The Wisconsin Coalition  
 Against Domestic Violence  
[www.endabusewi.org](http://www.endabusewi.org) | [www.ncall.us](http://www.ncall.us) |  
[www.riselawcenter.org](http://www.riselawcenter.org)  
 608-255-0539

  
 Diverse & Resilient  
[www.diverseandresilient.org](http://www.diverseandresilient.org)

The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) and  
RISE Law Center are projects of End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin.

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