

DISCUSSION RESOURCE

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PROJECT OF
5TH NATIONAL ELDER
ABUSE CONFERENCE

HOSTED BY SENIORS
RIGHTS SERVICE



ELDER ABUSE AND SERVICE RESPONSES INVOLVING THE LGBTIQ COMMUNITY

SALLY GOLDNER





ABOUT THIS PROJECT

In February 2018, Seniors Rights Service hosted the 5th National Elder Abuse Conference, which brought together more than 500 delegates from a broad range of backgrounds. The conference culminated in an announcement by the Commonwealth Attorney-General, Hon Christian Porter MP, that a “National Plan” would be developed to ensure the protection of older people in Australian society.

To further the conversations generated by the conference, Seniors Rights Service engaged Ellen Fanning to conduct a series of interviews with experts who attended the conference. These videos, along with a discussion sheet for each video, are freely available to community members, professionals and students of all sectors, to enable engagement with the content using suggested discussion questions and to follow up with further reading.

IMPORTANT! READ THIS BEFORE HOLDING A DISCUSSION GROUP

Many people will share and benefit from participating in study and discussion on the topics.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topics, however, group leaders should ensure they are prepared to support individuals to find qualified assistance in a timely manner, should a topic generate personal concerns or issues for individuals.

As a minimum, group leaders should have available information sheets and phone numbers from the relevant seniors' legal rights service and/or elder abuse prevention service in your state or territory (on page 5 and current as of 2018).

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Ms Goldner discusses the “massive” challenges the transgender community face all their lives and into older age. She explains there is some “warming” to the issue and evidence of some services wanting to be more inclusive, but there is still a general lack of esteem given to seniors, and therefore there is a “double whammy” if you are a senior who is also transgender. Ms Goldner gives specific examples from the community where trans women and trans men are denied their hormone treatment by aged-care staff, and same-sex partners are separated on entry to aged-care facilities. However, Ms Goldner also gives positive stories, such as a service where a senior man “came out” (disclosed his sexual preference) and the service supported him to connect to a group of gay and bisexual men. The man now “walks so much taller” as the change has made a huge and positive difference to his life.

FOCUS AREA

Elder abuse and service responses involving the LGBTIQ community

RELATED TOPICS

Elder abuse prevention, elder abuse intervention, LGBTIQ, rainbow communities, diversity, discrimination

AUDIENCES

Community members, health workers, aged-care workers, community workers, researchers, students, advocates, policy officers, public servants, legal professionals, police officers

MATERIALS FOR FURTHER READING

National LGBTI Health Alliance, Submission #156, and Queensland AIDS Council (on behalf of the National LGBTI Community Visitor Scheme Auspices' Network), Submission #331, Australian Law Reform Commission Elder Abuse Inquiry, accessed from www.alrc.gov.au/inquiries/elder-abuse/submissionsSuggested%20agencies

SUGGESTED AGENCIES

Q Life (Australia) <https://qlife.org.au/> and Transgender Victoria www.transgendervictoria.com



SALLY GOLDNER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
TRANSGENDER VICTORIA

BIOGRAPHY

Sally Goldner's decades-long involvement in Victoria's queer community includes Transgender Victoria, presenter of 3CR's *Out Of The Pan*, co-facilitator of Transfamily and treasurer of Bisexual Alliance Victoria. She is the focus of an autobiographical documentary, *Sally's Story*, and a life member of four LGBTIQ organisations. She was inducted into the Victorian Women's Honour Roll in 2016 (the first trans and first known bi woman to receive the honour), was named LGBTI Victorian Of The Year in 2015, was noted in *The Age's* Top 100 most creative and influential people in Melbourne in 2011 and awarded Activist of the Year at the 2010 ALSO Awards. In 2015 she spent two weeks in St Petersburg in Russia as a juror for the Side-By-Side LGBT Film Festival. Ms Goldner is an educator, speaker, MC and occasional performer (all in contrast to her original accountancy training).

COMMUNITY EDUCATION ABOUT ELDER ABUSE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How does Ms Goldner describe the community she represents? What historical context does she give for the trauma that many people in the LGBTIQ community may have experienced throughout their lives?

Ms Goldner represents trans-diverse and gender-diverse people, and bisexual people within the broader LGBTI communities. Ms Goldner uses the term "rainbow communities", because she says it is a term that is inclusive and covers the "whole range of stripes and dots in that rainbow and not just two or three". Ms Goldner explains that although society's attitude to this form of diversity in the community is slowly changing, as evidenced by the recent marriage equality survey, there has been and continues to be a lot of trauma for members of the rainbow communities in terms of dealing with institutions and general attitudes. Examples include those who have experienced electric shock therapy or conversion therapies in the past, through to police arresting them for their sexual preferences, or being unable to get an amended birth certificate in some states and territories unless they have had gender reassignment surgery. Ms Goldner even told a story of how an older trans man was threatened with an axe by a community member while in hospital, only to be protected by a brave nurse.

How have history and current discriminatory treatment and attitudes impacted on people within rainbow communities? How is this involved in the issue of elder abuse?

Ms Goldner explains that due to the discriminatory treatment and attitudes of the broader community, there are "massive rates of mental health difficulties", where up to 48 per cent of members of rainbow communities have attempted suicide. She explains that for people who are bisexual, "lumping" their issues into "gay" or "lesbian" categories means they can be "erased" from research. In contrast, she says if diversity is considered "as a whole range of diversity", you can discover important factors in research, such as that bisexual women "face worse levels of domestic violence than lesbian and heterosexual women". With regards to elder abuse, Ms Goldner says people of rainbow communities are less likely to "come out" (disclose their diversity) in aged care because they feel they are "the odd one out", which leaves them feeling unsafe. In this context, she says, there may be greater difficulties for them to disclose instances of elder abuse, because disclosures of gender identity, sexual preference or other forms of diversity may also be involved or required, and disclosing these matters may have resulted in poor treatment in the past.

What examples did Ms Goldner give of how services can be more inclusive of rainbow communities?

Ms Goldner suggests agencies do comprehensive training on the needs of people within rainbow communities. Comprehensive training is essential, she says, but some simple things can also

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make a difference, such as changing forms to remove “male or female” and have instead “gender” (space) “optional”. This gives a clue to potential clients that the service might be willing to be sensitive to diverse needs. Forms could also ask for “contact” rather than “next of kin” because, she says, the best contact for “farmer Bob” might be “farmer John”. Another suggestion she gives is for staff to wear rainbow lapels or lanyards if they have done some training and feel comfortable working with people who are part of rainbow communities. And finally, Ms Goldner says, organisations could honour days like May 17’s International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia, or Trans Day of Visibility (also known as Trans Awareness Day) on March 31.



STATE/TERRITORY	AGENCY CONTACT	CONTACT
AUSTRALIA-WIDE	Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)	1800 700 600 Connects you with aged-care advocacy services in your state or territory
NEW SOUTH WALES	Seniors Rights Service	1800 424 079
	NSW Elder Abuse Helpline	1800 628 221
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY	Older Persons Abuse Prevention Referral and Information Line (APRIL)	(02) 6205 3535
	A.C.T. Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)	02 6242 5060
NORTHERN TERRITORY	Elder Abuse Information Line	1800 037 072
	Seniors and Disability Rights Service of Darwin Community Legal Service	1800 812 953
QUEENSLAND	Elder Abuse Prevention Unit	1300 651 192
	Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia (ADA Australia)	1800 818 338
	Caxton Legal Centre	(07) 3214 6333
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	Aged Rights Advocacy Service	(08) 8232 5377 (Adelaide)
	Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse	1800 700 600 (rural)
	Legal Services Commission of South Australia	1300 366 424 (08) 8111 5555
TASMANIA	Tasmanian Elder Abuse Helpline	1800 441 169
	Advocacy Tasmania Inc. (ATI)	(03) 6224 2240
	Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania	1300 366 611 (03) 6236 3800
VICTORIA	Seniors Rights, Victoria	1300 368 821
	Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA)	(03) 9602 3066 1800 700 600 (rural)
WESTERN AUSTRALIA	Advocare Inc.	1300 724 679 (Perth) 1800 655 566 (rural)
	Older Persons Rights Service, Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre	(08) 9440 1663 (Mirrabooka) (08) 9301 4413 (Joondalup)

DISCLAIMER

This is information only, not legal advice. If you have a legal problem, call our service directly or see your lawyer. The views expressed in the video are the views of the individual making them, not those of Seniors Rights Service Inc.