

Aging with Pride and Authenticity: Challenges and Supports for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) LGBTQIA+ Older Adults



UC Berkeley's Center for the Advanced Study of Aging Services conducted **23** focus groups with **208** LGBTQIA+ older adults across California to explore the unique challenges, support systems, and aspirations of the LGBTQIA+ aging community. This handout presents findings from **135** BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults.

CHALLENGES

GENERAL: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults faced challenges including limited aging discussions, discrimination, economic divides, physical barriers, and difficulty accessing technology.

HEALTHCARE: Many BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults faced long wait times, limited healthcare access, privacy concerns with telehealth, high costs, and poor service causing delays in medications.

CAREGIVING: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults faced lack of representation, family support, and accessible housing and compassionate caregiving leading to social isolation and self-care challenges.

HOUSING: Many BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults struggled with stable housing due to discrimination, identity concealment, rent increases, limited affordable options, and inefficient processes.

SOCIAL SERVICES: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults reported transportation challenges, service access issues, and problems with case management, discrimination support, and program acceptance.

How do I, as an older black lesbian, think about entering the world with other people after being socially isolated? What kind of group does that look like and where is it offered so I can feel okay about being truthful?

STRENGTHS & SUPPORTS

My support is my art. I've been doing art all my life... That feel, it feeds me, feeds my soul.

GENERAL: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults drew strength from community resources, self-advocacy, resilience, and passion for justice. Mental health services, creative expression, and spirituality offered vital emotional support.

HOUSING: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults benefitted from supportive landlord relationships and improved access to affordable housing services for stability.

HEALTHCARE: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults benefitted from veterans' benefits, telehealth, compassionate providers, specialized AIDS services, and improved HIV medications.

CAREGIVING: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults often relied on family caregiving, connections through senior centers, faith communities, and support groups offering resources.

SOCIAL SERVICES: Supports for BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults included senior centers, LGBTQIA+ organizations, and increased availability of programs.

NEEDED SUPPORTS & SUGGESTIONS

GENERAL: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults highlighted the need for technology, mobility and vision assistance, creative spaces for self-expression, and improved transportation options.

HEALTHCARE: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults called for telehealth training, housing with emergency buttons, expanded mental health support, healthcare as a human right, and more HIV-focused groups.

CAREGIVING: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults called for bereavement services for same-sex spouses, supportive faith communities, inclusive senior centers, and groups for all sexual orientations (not just heterosexual older adults).

HOUSING: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults called for housing for older LGBTQIA+ individuals, improved accessibility for disabled people, and services for home upkeep.

SOCIAL SERVICES: BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults called for peer-run senior centers, live service reps, better support for LGBTQIA+ older adults, staff training on aging and HIV, and translators for accessibility.

"Community services-wise, there needs to be community senior centers that are peer-run."

"I would like to see more studios for creativity-it's stress relief, therapy, and life-affirming."

IF GIVEN A MAGIC WAND, THEY WOULD WISH FOR:

AFFORDABLE & ACCESSIBLE HOUSING:

Accessible, available, supportive and affordable housing so that we are all housed.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE:

Policies that reduce poverty for older adults and programs and services that support low-income communities, including lunch programs for older adults.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:

Funding and support for mental health, accessible medication and for older adults who are unhoused.

COMMUNITY:

Programs and services to help people feel connected, have access to joy and pleasure, and build more harmony and visibility in the LGBTQIA+ community.

FURTHER DEMOGRAPHIC DATA: This handout focuses on 3 focus groups with 24 BIPOC LGBTQIA+ older adults (6 women, 17 men, 1 non-binary/genderqueer), aged 52-76, with findings from 104 additional BIPOC participants from multiracial focus groups.

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