

Aging with Pride and Authenticity: Challenges and Supports for Transgender Older Adults



UC Berkeley's Center for the Advanced Study of Aging Services conducted **23** focus groups with **208** LGBTQIA+ older adults in California to explore the unique challenges, support systems, and aspirations of the LGBTQIA+ aging community. This handout presents findings from **37** transgender older adults.

CHALLENGES

GENERAL:

Transgender older adults faced financial instability and discrimination from within and outside the LGBTQIA+ community.

CAREGIVING:

Transgender older adults often experienced social isolation related to a lack of spaces to build community, intergenerational connections, and same-age or similar-identified peers.

HEALTHCARE:

Transgender older adults faced challenges accessing gender-affirming care, including long wait times and poor coordination between insurance providers and care centers.

HOUSING:

Many transgender older adults struggled with affordable housing and experienced predatory scams requiring deposits for nonexistent housing.

The health system for trans women is important. We sometimes face issues like STIs, COVID-19, or the need for critical surgeries. Where can we, as trans women, go for all these needs? A friend told me that she went to a hospital using a female name, but because of her appearance, she was told, "No, you are a man, and we cannot treat you as a woman."

I just want to say I am happy to have found community here. I got here right when lockdown started, and at that time there was an online happy hour where I met some people, and it was awesome... That helped me a lot to just get to know people here.

STRENGTHS & SUPPORTS

GENERAL:

Transgender older adults found strength in affirming relationships and community support, offering opportunities for spiritual growth and authenticity.

HOUSING:

Many transgender older adults benefitted from communal living, which can lower rent, pool resources, and offer companionship and support from individuals across generations.

HEALTHCARE:

Many transgender older adults benefitted from supportive healthcare providers and described insurance as crucial for accessing care.

CAREGIVING:

Transgender older adults often found support in local and online community networks offering understanding, solidarity, and acceptance.

NEEDED SUPPORTS & SUGGESTIONS

GENERAL:

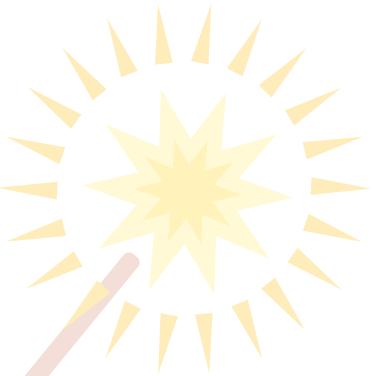
Transgender older adults called for increased funding to community organizations that have provided support to this population, as well as hiring incentives for businesses or organizations who employ people who are transgender.

HEALTHCARE:

Transgender older adults reported that they would benefit from more funding to community health organizations that have community trust and experience in providing gender affirming care and government-issued insurance to ensure coverage for this care.

I wish that [Nonprofit A] didn't have to work so hard to get funding. I wish there was more funding available because I wish they could have longer hours and have more employees and more opportunities for people to come in... They can't even be open every day. I feel more institutional support would be really helpful for people and more people would come out.

IF GIVEN A MAGIC WAND, THEY WOULD WISH FOR:



TO BE & BE SEEN AS THEMSELVES:

To live as their authentic selves and not be misgendered.

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE HEALTHCARE:

Mandated mental health coverage and gender-affirming care for everyone.

TO EXPERIENCE AND SPREAD JOY AND LOVE.

If I had a magic wand though, I consider myself a warrior for love. I just would tap that magic wand, and everybody I met, and just the love because love is such a strong energy. There's so many things that we need to fix, or that we need to change, or we need to make better, or come together on and stuff, but in the common thread of it all its love.

FURTHER DEMOGRAPHIC DATA:

This handout includes data from transgender older adults aged 46 to 75, who identified as Latina, Native American or Indigenous, Asian, and white.

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