

Addressing the needs and concerns of LGBTQ elders

In recognition of Pride Month — a month of festivities commemorating the [Stonewall Uprising](#) and celebrating the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and other individuals to society — we're focusing on SASH's growing attention to the challenges facing LGBTQ older adults.



SASH devotes a section of the staff intranet to resources on this topic and is working to educate staff and partners about the issues of older LGBTQ individuals and how to better support this growing population. As part of our work in this area, the monthly training webinar for SASH staff in July will be led by the [Pride Center of Vermont](#) and focus on best practices.



The health challenges of LGBTQ older adults

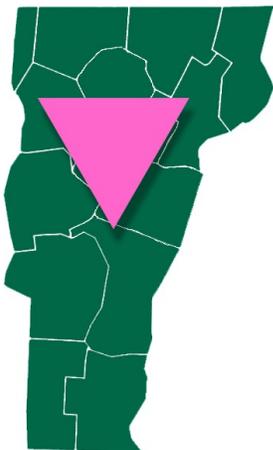
LGBTQ individuals are five times less likely to seek preventive medical care or social services than the general public, which may be attributed to the fear of discrimination by traditional health providers and facilities. [\(Source\)](#) This has multiple ripple effects, particularly for LGBTQ older adults, compared to their heterosexual counterparts:



- They are more likely to **delay testing and screening** for illnesses such as heart disease and breast cancer, or to obtain the care and medications they need. [\(Source\)](#)
- They are more likely to **rely on hospital emergency rooms for care.**
- They tend to have **high rates of stress**, much of which can be related to systematic discrimination. [\(Source\)](#)
- The population as a whole experiences **higher rates of obesity, smoking, alcohol and drug misuse, suicide and depression.** [\(Source\)](#)
- They are at **greater risk of developing Type 2 diabetes** and related health complications because of these factors. [\(Source\)](#)
- **LGBTQ communities of color are four to six times more likely than their white counterparts to develop Type 2 diabetes.** They also are more likely to suffer severe complications such as blindness and amputation. [\(Source\)](#)
- Long-term care in the U.S. is typically provided by family members, but LGBT elders are **twice as likely to live alone as they age and four times less likely to have children** than their heterosexual counterparts. [\(Source\)](#)



LGBTQ Groups & Programs for Older Vermonters



Both the [Pride Center of Vermont](#) and the [Rainbow Umbrella of Central Vermont](#) have programs for older adults.

[Momentum](#), the group affiliated with the Pride Center, offers programming targeted to adults age 65+, organizes Monday walking groups, and hosts monthly social events for adults age 40+. Meetings are held at the Pride Center in Burlington the first Monday of the month. (The Center is accessible.) [Email \[greg@pridecentervt.org\]\(mailto:greg@pridecentervt.org\)](mailto:greg@pridecentervt.org) or call 802-860-7812 for information.

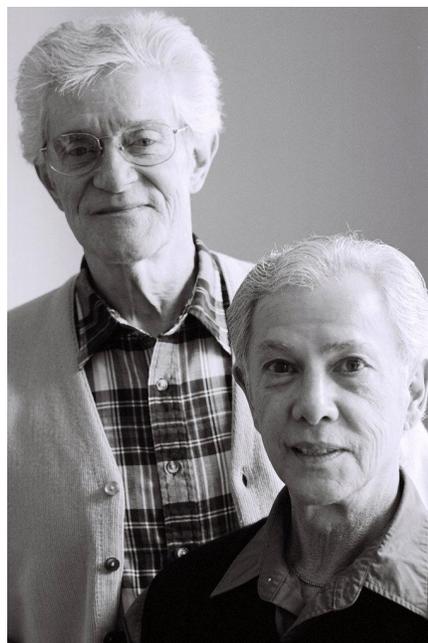
The Montpelier-based Rainbow Umbrella hosts discussion groups at the [Montpelier Senior Activity Center](#) as well as restaurant outings and other social gatherings. Connect with the group [on Facebook](#) or email rucvtdadmin@pridecentervt.org for information.



Resources for further learning

ORGANIZATIONS:

- [SAGE: Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders](#) (national organization established in 1978)
- [SAGECare](#) (cultural-competency training for caregivers and health providers)
- [National Resource Center on LGBT Aging](#) (a project of SAGE)
- [Movement Advancement Project](#) (research and communications tools pertaining to equality)
- [GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality](#) (previously the Gay & Lesbian Medical Association)



SELECTED PUBLICATIONS, STUDIES & TRAINING:

- [Understanding Issues Facing LGBT Older Adults](#)
- [Maintaining Dignity: Understanding and Responding to the Challenges Facing Older LGBT Americans](#)
- [Out & Visible: The Experiences and Attitudes of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Older Adults, Ages 45-75](#)
- [Building Respect for LGBT Older Adults](#) (free, six-part online session for care and service providers)
- [Chronic Health Conditions and Key Health Indicators Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Older US Adults, 2013-2014](#)
- [LGBT Older Adults and Health Disparities](#)
- [Where We Call Home: LGBT People in Rural America](#)

- [Key Considerations in Developing LGBT-Friendly Service Enriched Affordable Housing](#)
- [LGBT Aging: A Review of Research Findings, Needs and Policy Implications](#)

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Partners represented on SASH teams throughout Vermont include members and affiliates of these organizations:



A comprehensive list of all SASH partners can be found in the [SASH Partnership](#).



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