

Introducing  
The ABC's  
of LGBTQIA+

IN THE OLDER  
ADULT  
POPULATION

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# Disclaimer

- I use language that is used by my community.
- I do not speak for the entire community, nor does anyone else in the community. People in the LGBTQ+ community may still use offensive language or commit microaggressions and this is not an excuse for you to speak or behave inappropriately.
- The language used by the LGBTQIA+ community is constantly evolving.
- Please keep in mind the purpose of today's training is not to debate the most current terminology or start arguments. We are here to increase awareness and provide an avenue for productive discussion that will make us all better clinicians.





# Material Covered

- Sex, Gender, and Orientation
- Pronouns, Names, Use, and Self-Correction
- LGBTQ+ Aging Considerations
- Resources for Continuing Education

# Attitude as a Clinician

- Regardless of the various demographic groups, each person is an individual with unique preferences, strengths and perspectives.
- Each of us wants to be respected and understood.
- Being more respectful with conversation
- Being open-minded
- Having a non-judgmental approach
- Being flexible and adapting to change
- Recognize we are not the expert in the room

**It is not the responsibility of the consumer to educate the staff on race, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other minority status.**

# Sex, Gender, and Orientation

- ♦ **Sex:** At birth, infants are typically assigned a sex. This is usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy (primarily genitalia), and is often confused with gender.
- ♦ **Gender Identity:** One's internal, deeply held sense of gender. Some people identify completely with the gender they were assigned at birth (usually male or female), while others may identify with only a part of that gender, or not at all. Some people identify with another gender entirely. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not visible to others.

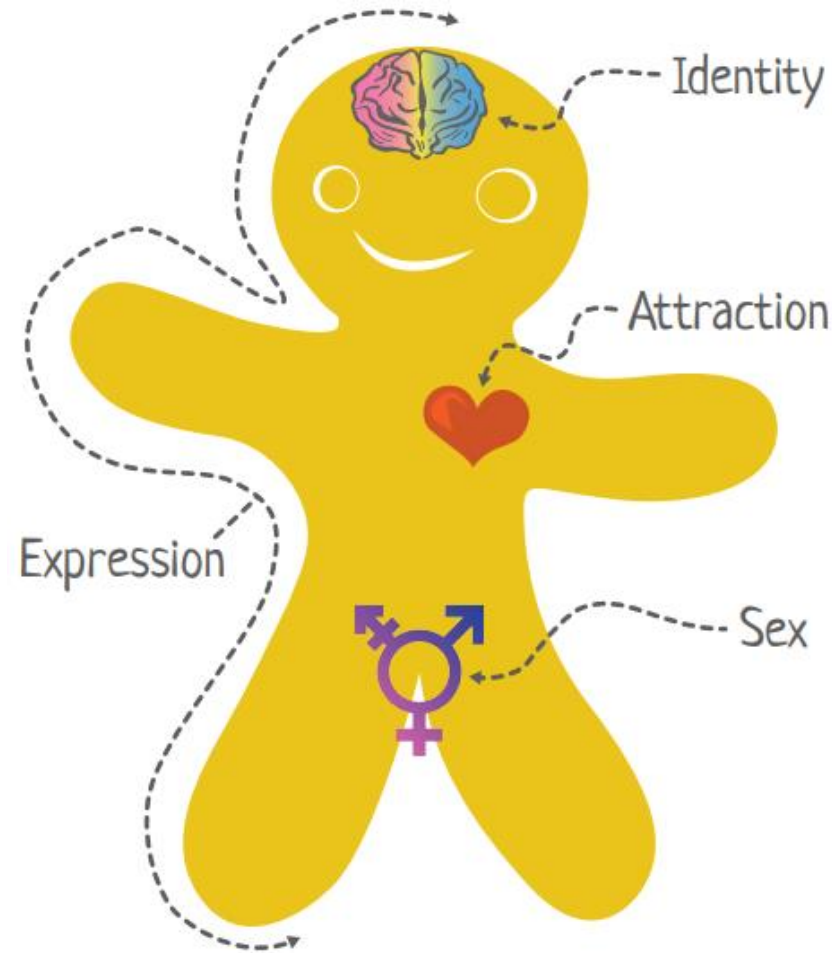


- ♦ **Gender Expression:** The external manifestations of gender, expressed through such things as names, pronouns, clothing, haircuts, behavior, voice, body characteristics, and more.
- ♦ **Sexual Orientation:** The desire one has for emotional, romantic, and/or sexual relationships with others based on their gender expression, gender identity, and/or sex. Many people choose to label their sexual orientation, while others do not.



# The Genderbread Person v4

by its pronounced [METROsexual.com](http://METROsexual.com)



⊖ means a lack of what's on the right side

 Gender Identity

- ⊖ → Woman-ness
- ⊖ → Man-ness

 Gender Expression

- ⊖ → Femininity
- ⊖ → Masculinity

 Anatomical Sex

- ⊖ → Female-ness
- ⊖ → Male-ness

Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex  
Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation

Sex Assigned At Birth  
 Female  Intersex  Male

 Sexually Attracted to... and/or (a/o)

- ⊖ → Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
- ⊖ → Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

 Romantically Attracted to...

- ⊖ → Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
- ⊖ → Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People



Let's talk about  
Pronouns...





# Pronouns and Names

- We should not assume someone's pronouns. While the majority of people may use 'she/her' or 'he/him,' we cannot always tell by looking at someone. Pronouns commonly have a gendered association; however, anyone of any gender can use any pronouns that fit for them.
- We often know a client's legal name from their chart or paperwork, but it's a good idea to ask what they prefer to be called when we meet them. This isn't only for transgender clients, as you may have clients who prefer to go by a nickname or prefer that you call them Mr./Ms./Mx.

*“What would you like me to call you?”*

# What if I don't know what pronouns someone uses?

If you don't know what pronouns someone uses, you can do one of three things:

- **Use “They”:** Use singular “they/them/theirs” for this person until you have the opportunity to ask about their pronouns.
- **Ask!:** It's perfectly acceptable to ask someone what pronouns they use.
- **Use their name until you learn their pronouns.**

Be aware that it can be challenging to do this without practice. Even though we think that we will only use someone's name instead of pronouns in an attempt to not misgender them, we often use pronouns without realizing it, so it is easy to make a mistake. If someone has told you their pronouns, and you use their name or they instead of the pronouns that they told you, this is still misgendering.

# What if I mess up?

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hoq\\_UkQ4Os0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hoq_UkQ4Os0)

- ♦ Don't beat yourself up! It happens to everyone.
- ♦ The best thing to do is to just offer a brief apology like “sorry” or “my apologies” before correcting yourself and moving on with the conversation. If you over-apologize then it draws more attention to the mistake and makes the situation much more uncomfortable.
- ♦ If you are unsure if something will be taken the wrong way, it's best to not say it unless absolutely necessary.
- ♦ It's okay to ask questions about what is appropriate and what is not to say. It's better to say less than to accidentally say a microaggression that was intended as a compliment.

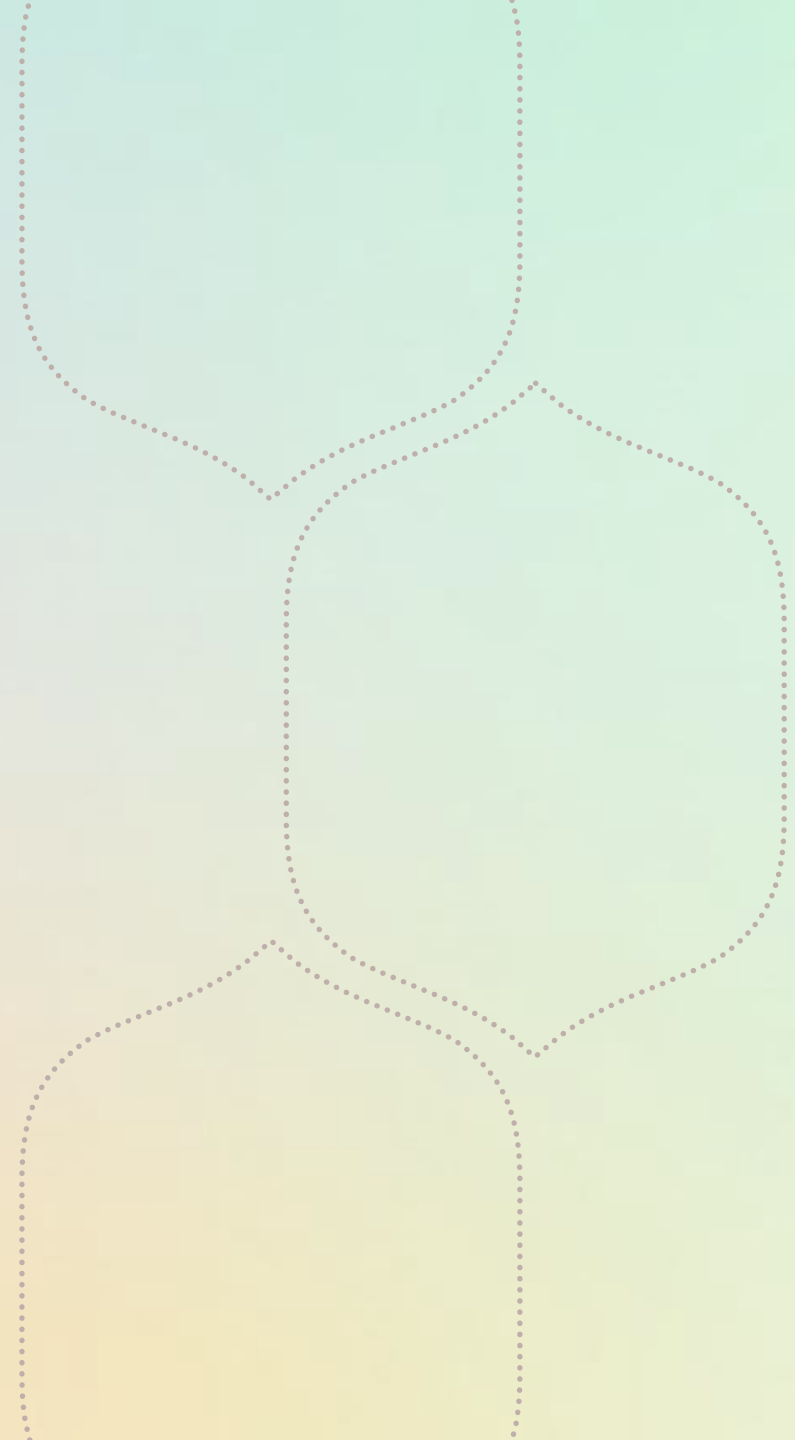
# LGBTQ+ Aging Considerations

- Approximately 3 million American adults over age 50 identify as LGBT
- Estimated to grow to around 7 million by 2030



# Stigma/Homophobia/Transphobia

- Affects income, ability to get or keep a job, and ability to get and keep health insurance
- Limits access to high quality health care that is responsive to health issues
- Trauma contributes to poor mental health and poor coping skills, such as substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors, and suicide attempts
- Makes it harder to be open about sexual orientation, which can increase stress, limit social support, and negatively affect health
- Many benefits have been unavailable to same-sex couples until very recently due to same-sex marriage bans (social security benefits, spousal survivor benefit, spousal retirement benefit, death benefit, inheritance, tax benefits, pensions, veterans benefits, immigration benefits, etc.)

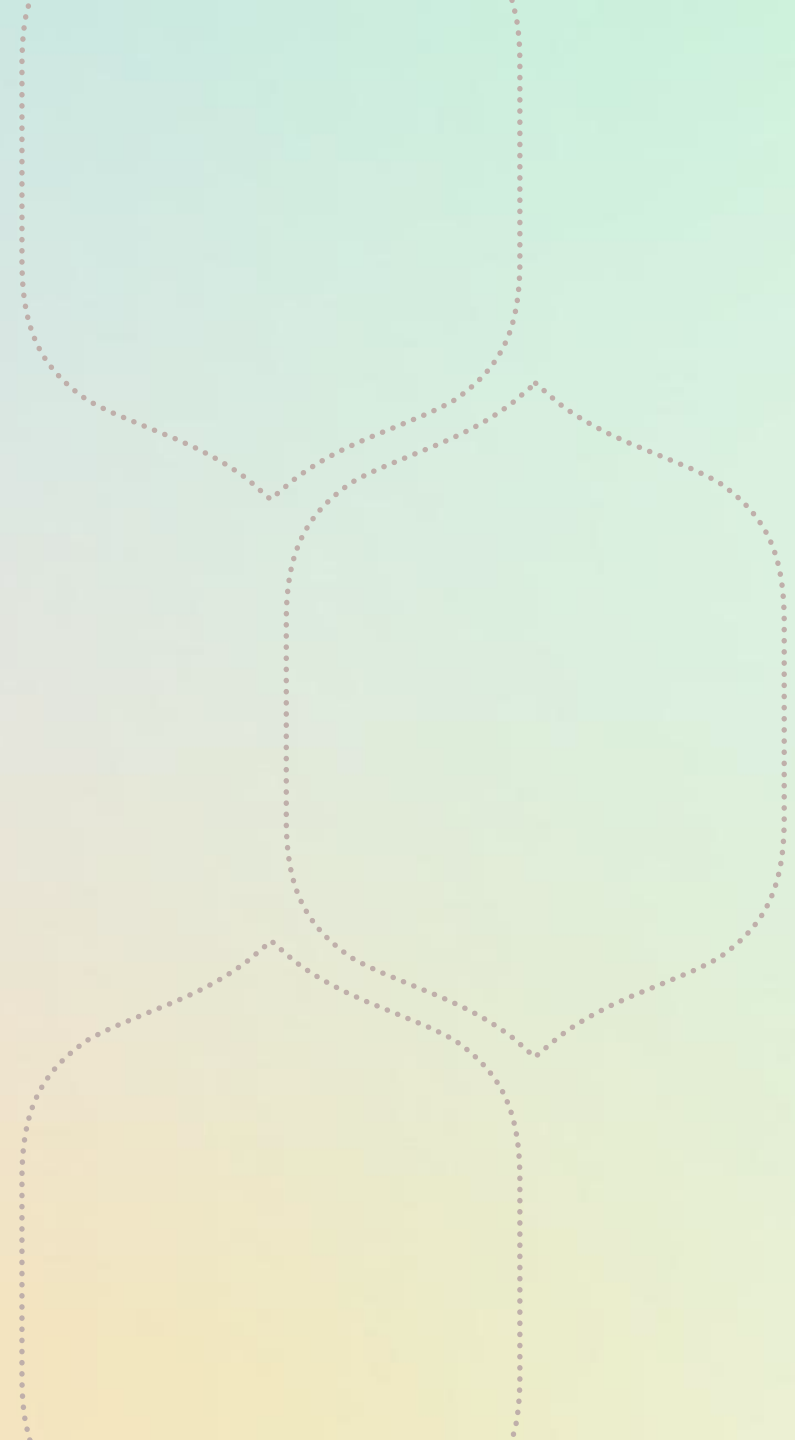




# Stigma/Homophobia/Transphobia

Impacts of discrimination have built up over a lifetime for older adults:

- 1 in 3 LGBT older adults lives at or below the federal poverty line
- LGBT elders are less likely to have informal support through family/children due to family rejection
- Friends and chosen family do not have legal recognition to aid in medical or legal decision making
- Chosen family is often close in age and may not have the ability to offer needed support in aging as they have similar needs



# Hope and Resilience

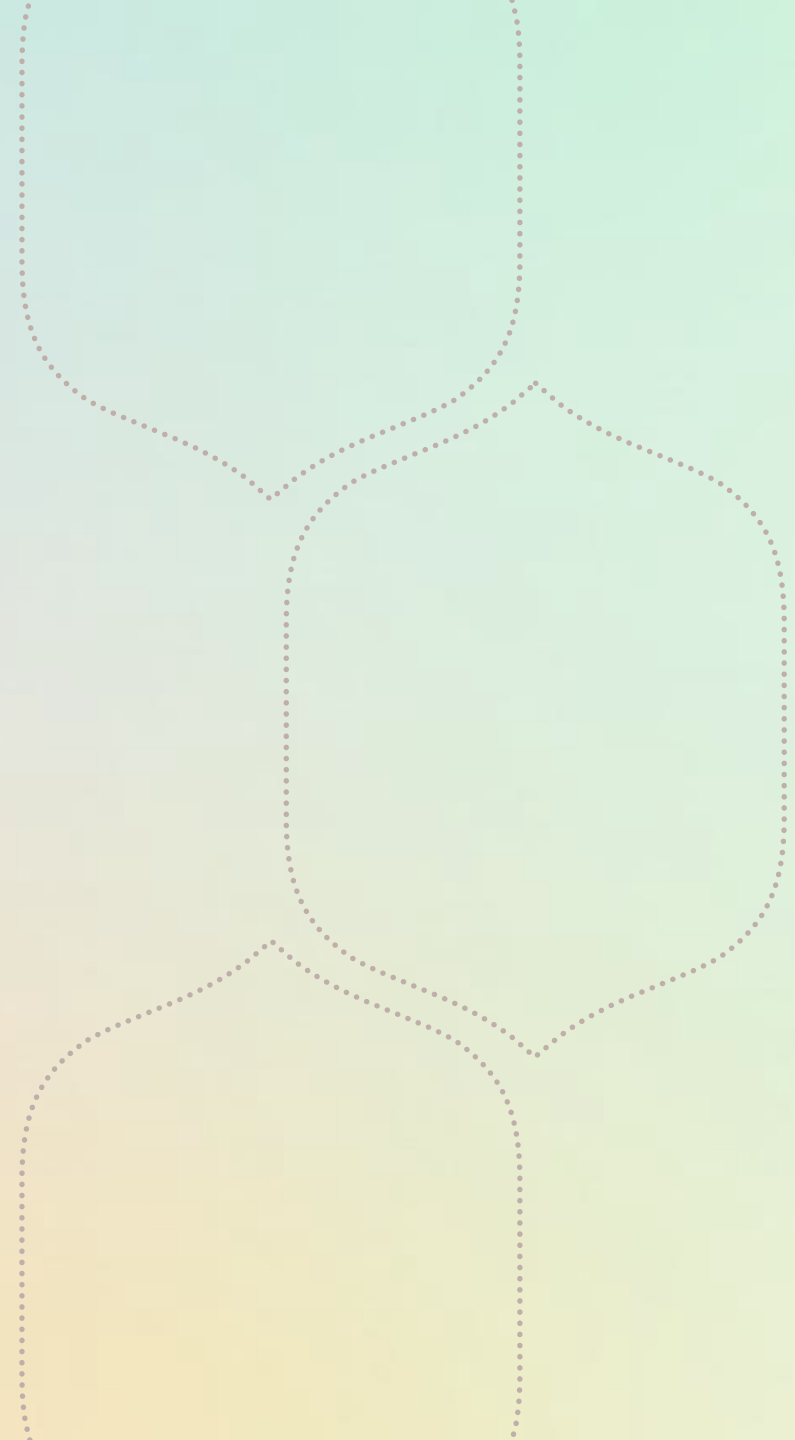
- Older LGBT adults are significantly less likely to characterize themselves as “not too happy” compared to those under age 50
- Older LGBT adults are more likely to say that there is more “social acceptance of gay, lesbian, and transgender people today”
- Older LGBT adults are more likely to say that society has been changing
- The presence of acceptance and support can be a protective factor and promote well-being



# Effective Apologies, Relationship Repairs, and Building Safety

We all make mistakes sometimes, and how you address them can make or break the relationship. The two most important aspects of an apology are acknowledgement and improvement. We can also be visible in allyship to signal being a safe person to the LGBTQ+ community.

- ♦ Acknowledge that you made a mistake
  - “I’m sorry,” then correct what you said
  - “Thank you for...”
    - “...sharing that”
    - “...correcting me”
    - “...your patience”
- ♦ Take steps to reduce future mistakes by...
  - Learning more about the topic
  - Practicing
  - Being conscious of your words and actions
- ♦ Demonstrate allyship by...
  - Asking people what they would like to be called and respecting names and pronouns
  - Considering and advocating for ways to meet unique needs and barriers of LGBTQ+ people in your work
  - Be open about showing support for the LGBTQ+ community



# Oklahoma Resources

- Red Rock Expressions
- Q-Space - social support groups for LGBTQIA+ individuals ages 13-17, 18-25, and parents
- Free Mom Hugs OKC
- Freedom Oklahoma - teacher, student, and parent support groups
- Diversity Family Health - primary care for LGBTQ+ community
- Diversity Center of Oklahoma - free binders and other services
- College Resources
- Oklahomans for Equality
- Planned Parenthood - transgender medical care
- SISU - youth shelter
- Cedar Ridge THE NEST - inpatient option for LGBTQ+ teens
- LGBTQ+ Affirming Churches
  - Evolve Church (formerly Expressions Community Fellowship)
  - Cathedral of Hope
  - Mayflower Congregational Church
  - Church of the Open Arms
  - Others listed on [LGBTQ Resources | Oklahoma State University \(okstate.edu\)](#)

# Resources to Continue Your Learning

- ♦ Books, articles, organizations, etc.
  - (*This Book is Gay* and *What's the T?* by Juno Dawson are a great starting place)
- ♦ Free Mom Hugs OKC
- ♦ Mama Bears - national group offering support and education
  - [realmamabears.org](http://realmamabears.org)
- ♦ PFLAG
- ♦ Trevor Project
- ♦ Sage USA National Resource Center on LGBTQ+ Aging ([sageusa.org](http://sageusa.org))
  - <https://www.sageusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/sageusa-understanding-issues-facing-lgbt-older-adults.pdf>
  - <https://www.sageusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/sageusa-welcoming-agency-guide-inclusive-services-for-lgbt-older-adults.pdf>

# Resources for Clients and Caregivers

- ♦ Sage USA National Resource Center on LGBTQ+ Aging
  - [sageusa.org](http://sageusa.org)
- ♦ Human Rights Campaign
  - Parent Resources
    - ♦ <https://www.hrc.org/resources/parenting>
  - Faith Resources
    - ♦ <https://www.hrc.org/resources/faith-resources>
  - General Resource Hub
    - ♦ <https://www.hrc.org/resources>
- ♦ SAMHSA Practitioner's Resource Guide - Helping Families Support Their LGBT Children
  - <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/A-Practitioner-s-Resource-Guide-Helping-Families-to-Support-Their-LGBT-Children/PEP14-LGBTKIDS>
- ♦ Family Acceptance Project
  - [LGBTQ Family Acceptance | Evidence-Based Resources](#)



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