
Preface

As editors of this text, Pamela and I have over 40 years of combined experience in service delivery; education; and research in aging, human rights, disability, and social services. Beginning in 2013, we collaborated on a chapter, *Aging and Mistreatment: Victimization of Older Adults in the United States*, and as part of that chapter, we wrote about LGBT elders. Afterward, we discussed the lack of focus and collaboration across disciplines in addressing LGBT elders. Although discipline-specific books have been published about LGBT populations, aging, health care, and human and social service, we decided that the time had come for a comprehensive text that addressed the challenges faced by LGBT elders. Our goal for this book is to discuss both LGBT elders who are from groups for which research was conducted often and groups rarely included in mainstream research (e.g., racial and ethnic groups, persons living in rural and remote areas, veterans, [ex]-offender populations, immigrants, and persons with disabilities). In addition, we decided to cover issues that impact LGBT persons individually and collectively. Our 36 chapters cover the following topics pertaining to LGBT elders: theories and constructs, the nexus of sexual minority status and aging, family relationships, deconstruction of “isms,” African American and Blacks, American Indians, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Europeans, Hispanics, veterans, [ex]-offenders, immigrants, transgendered persons, bisexual persons, mistreatment and victimization, bullying, healthcare reform and healthcare practices, residents of long-term care facilities, end-of-life issues, mental health, substance abuse, the impending US Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage, ethics and ethical standards, law enforcement and public safety, religious and faith communities, workplace issues, counseling, socialization and recreation, advocacy, disability, and trends and future directions. Our comprehensive handbook recognizes the intersection of identities because individuals do not exist or live their lives in separate compartments.

At the writing of this text (March 2015), we are awaiting the outcome of the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage. The ruling has significant implications for LGBT elders in many areas of their lives, including housing, health insurance and benefits, medical decisions, and the definition of family and spouse. The timing of the ruling may shed a different perspective on the information presented in some of the chapters.

Our text provides an interdisciplinary perspective on LGBT elders. A unique feature is that the authors of the individual chapters represent an array of diverse backgrounds and expertise. Among the disciplinary perspectives represented are social work, public health, medicine, rehabilitation counseling, law, public policy, counseling, diversity consultation, gerontology, psychiatry, and education. The broad assemblage of disciplines is important in adequately addressing challenges, resiliency, and strengths of LGBT elders *vis a vis* an interdisciplinary perspective. Many of the chapters also include international perspectives about LGBT elders, populations, and cultures.

We do not present this text as inclusive of all aspects that impact LGBT elders, but rather, we hope that it will be an important contribution to the existing literature as well as a response to identified gaps in policy, practice, and research. Although texts on services and programs assisting older adults are readily available, they focus primarily on the general population and rarely if ever take into account the unique circumstances facing current and future LGBT elders. Our desire is for the text to serve as a useful and reliable resource for those studying and teaching for those involved in health care, human and social services programs, as well as in courses on diversity and gender and women's studies. Similarly, practitioners, policy and decision makers, advocates, community leaders, families, and LGBT elders themselves may benefit from this text.

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Handbook of LGBT Elders

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Principles, Practices,
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