

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION

- BEING AFFECTED BY BEING LONELY IS UNIVERSAL BUT THERE ARE SOME SPECIFICS FOR THE Older LGBTQI+ COMMUNITY THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED – Fewer networks for support, worry about being outed, reactions of others in care homes etc who have an old fashioned idea of what LGBTQI+ means, avoiding the LGBTQI+ community all together because of being afraid of making things worse by using wrong pronouns, 'un pc ' vocabulary etc
- SAGE PROJECT - TAPS INTO THREE LEVELS; 1. LOCAL (SAGE, FOD, Womens Space, LLCC, events and drop ins, 2. NATIONAL LGBT History month, GAYDIO etc AND 3. INTERNATIONAL connecting through IDOP, other UN days, working on connecting to international groups in cities that Leeds is twinned with
- TO BE EFFECTIVE ON LONELINESS AND ISOLATION THE SAGE PROJECT WORKS IN TWO WAYS 1. WORKING WITHIN – making us better - addressing personal loneliness and isolation, assist in building a community spirit and fostering self help as an ethos, encouraging peer to peer development, addressing our own problems with difference such as disability/race/class, i.e. working in an intersectional way 2. WORKING FROM WITHIN TO INFLUENCE OUTWARDS – combatting stereotypes, networking, awareness raising, advocacy, giving people skills and tools to be more aware/ supportive through development of Tool kit, undergoing formal training with relevant agencies such as care homes, age related NGOs etc, adapting regular events with an LGBTQI twist such as walks visiting Rainbow Flags, or gay spaces and increasing allies. To assist with issues of reach – recently we tried some old school methods (leafletting spaces which older LGBTQI+s /OAPs are often frequenting – such as super markets (Morrisons), doctors surgeries, restaurants with OAP specials such as carveries) while continuing with regular social media
- PROBLEMS – Not enough funds, not enough time, not enough reach, not enough awareness, those who want to push back on gains already won

LONELINESS IN THE OLDER LGBTQI+ COMMUNITY

- Fewer networks for support, we often lack children's support or don't have any children, families may have already lost contact earlier in life, not all neighbours are as friendly as we hope, some professionals don't really understand the nature of our loneliness pointing to the tropes of becoming older
- Exacerbated by the worry of being outed and any negative or violent reaction
- In care homes etc being proactive about ones sexuality is stymied because of potential reactions of others who have an old fashioned idea of what LGBTQI+ means
- Further exacerbated by a lack of programmes altogether - because it is just easier to say we don't have any from the LGBT community in our group, 2. because of being afraid of making things worse by using wrong pronouns, 'un pc ' vocabulary etc, knowing what to say

SAGE PROJECT - TAPS INTO THREE LEVELS;

- 1. PERSONAL/LOCAL CHALLENGES (supported through projects like SAGE, FOD, LGBT Womens Space, Trans Leeds) and through a Leeds LGBTQ+ Community Consortium (LLCC), using events and drop-ins, supporting Leeds City Council initiatives such as Age Proud festivals, Leeds avowed intention to make Leeds the best city to grow old in etc
- 2. NATIONAL EVENTS/CHANNELS: celebrates LGBT History month, Pride festivals, Days highlighting Trans Issues, reaching out to a national audience through radio such as GAYDIO etc, conferences like this one, raising awareness that it is only the older men's cohort where HIV infections are on the rise
- 3. INTERNATIONAL connecting to a wider diaspora through events on International Day Of Older Persons (IDOP), celebrating other UN designated days such as World AIDS DAY. We are now working on connecting to similar groups to ours in cities that Leeds is twinned with and later beyond.

TO EFFECTIVELY COMBAT LONELINESS AND ISOLATION THE SAGE PROJECT WORKS IN TWO WAYS 1. WORKING WITHIN AND 2. WORKING FROM WITHIN TO INFLUENCE OUTWARDS

- 1. WORKING WITHIN – making us better - addressing our own personal loneliness and isolation, assist in building a community spirit and fostering self help as an ethos, encouraging peer to peer development, addressing our own problems with difference such as disability/race/class, i.e. working in an intersectional way
- 2. WORKING FROM WITHIN TO INFLUENCE OUTWARDS – combatting LGBTQI+ stereotypes, networking, awareness raising including telling LGBTQI+ stories of loss, life, love etc, advocacy, giving people/organisations skills and tools to be more aware/ supportive through development of a Tool kit, undergoing formal training with relevant agencies such as care homes, age related NGOs etc, adapting other groups' regular events and giving them an LGBTQI twist such as fun walks visiting Rainbow Plaques, or suggesting the life drawing class use a Drag queen as a model, and more broadly increasing the number of allies we can count on. Finally increasing our reach using any means we can. Recently we tried some old school approaches in new places (leafletting spaces where older LGBTQ+s /OAPs are often seen – such as super markets (Morrisons), doctors surgeries, restaurants with OAP specials such as carveries) while continuing with regular social media outreach

PROBLEMS

- Not enough funds,
- not enough time,
- not enough reach,
- not enough awareness
- not enough allies
- those who want to push back on gains already won.

Thank you all

- For allowing us to get our message out further raising awareness on loneliness and isolation within the LGBTQI+ community
- For not pushing back and helping us to move onwards and upwards
- For allowing those of us in this age and country to stand on the shoulders of those in former times in other countries
- We owe all of you a debt of gratitude

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