

Five tips for providing services to older transgender people



1. Avoid making assumptions

- ★ Don't assume that you know which pronouns and titles people use – ask what they prefer.
- ★ Don't assume that all gender specific clothes and accessories can be disposed of after a partner has died – not all items may belong to the deceased. Ask what items are to be cleared out and which are to be kept.
- ★ Don't assume that all transgender people have medically transitioned, that they are “out” as transgender, or that you will be able to “tell” if someone is transgender.

2. Involve older trans people in developing services and support

- ★ Older trans people will be able to highlight some key concerns that services may not think of. Work with them to raise your awareness of specific issues and come up with strategies to deal with them.
- ★ Be open; listen to individuals' needs and concerns.

3. Maintain respect and privacy

- ★ Discuss with each individual what information they would like shared with staff and relatives, and what information they would like to keep private. Maintaining confidentiality and privacy is vitally important.
- ★ Discuss with people what information you would like to share with colleagues and why. Respect their choices about whether they want that information shared. Don't pressure people into sharing information that they do not want to share.
- ★ Respect people's choices about what clothes they would like to wear. It is not acceptable to force people to wear clothing that they do not wish to, except to protect people from the cold.
- ★ Always challenge transphobia if you see or hear it occurring, whether from staff or other people using the service or space.

4. Provide specific training, information and support for staff

- ★ Ensure that staff receive transgender specific awareness training
- ★ Ensure that staff are aware of which services and support groups are available to signpost people to.
- ★ Ensure that staff are supported to uphold privacy and respect, and to challenge prejudice.

5. Support people to understand and access their rights

- ★ Support older transgender people to understand their options and rights. Not all people know how much the law has changed in recent years.
- ★ Support people to access Power of Attorney and living wills
- ★ Include transgender equality in your safe space commitment and code of conduct

More resources are available for free at
www.lgbthealth.org.uk/services-support/lgbt-age/professional-resources/