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Understanding the abuse and mistreatment of LGBTIQA+ older people

Insights from new research

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Australian Institute of Family Studies

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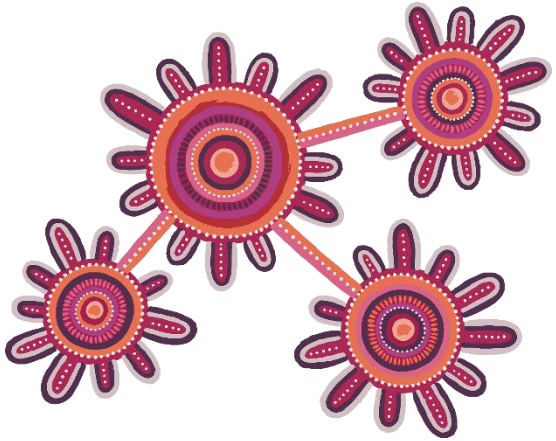
Acknowledgement of Country



The Australian Institute of Family Studies acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands and waters. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past and present.

Introduction to the research

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Aim of the research:

To address gap in understanding of the forms of abuse and mistreatment experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and/or asexual (LGBTIQA+ older people improving understanding of:

- the types of abuse and mistreatment
- the drivers and context for this abuse and mistreatment
- who experiences this abuse and mistreatment and its effects
- who is abusing or mistreating LGBTIQA+ older people
- help seeking and protective behaviours
- experiences of service responses

Methodology

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- **Two concurrent national surveys** (*n* = 335)
  - Younger LGBTIQA+ people (aged 18-64 years and 18-49 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+ people)
  - Older LGBTIQA+ people (aged 65 years+ and 50 years + for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+ people) and analyses at 55+ for abuse types
- **Focus groups** with LGBTIQA+ older people (*n* = 32) and **interviews** with LGBTIQA+ older people (*n* = 10)
- **Desktop review** of relevant research literature

NOTE:

- The data captured includes the **5 types** of abuse types in the NEAPS + discrimination.
- Due to differences in design and methodology, findings from the current study and NEAPS are not directly comparable but consideration against NEAPS place the findings in the context of the experiences of the wider Australian population.

Forms of abuse and mistreatment

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LGBTIQA+ older people reported higher rates of abuse and mistreatment than older people aged 65+ in the NEAPS when focusing on the 5 NEAPS abuse types

Forms of abuse and mistreatment

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More than one-in-three (36%) LGBTIQA+ older people reported experiencing at least 1 of the 6 identified types of abuse and mistreatment in the 12 months preceding the survey. The most common forms were:

- **Psychological/emotional abuse: 23%**
- **Discrimination: 17%**
- **Financial abuse (9%)**

LGBTIQA+ older people commonly **experience multiple forms** of abuse and mistreatment to a substantially higher degree than participants in NEAPS.

Some participants also identified **systemic abuse** including unequal access to services, heteronormative interactions with services, and services that do not accommodate the health and medical needs of transgender and gender-diverse older people.

Societal and community factors

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Participants identified a range of societal and community factors in the drivers and context of abuse and mistreatment of LGBTIQA+ older people.

People using abuse/mistreatment

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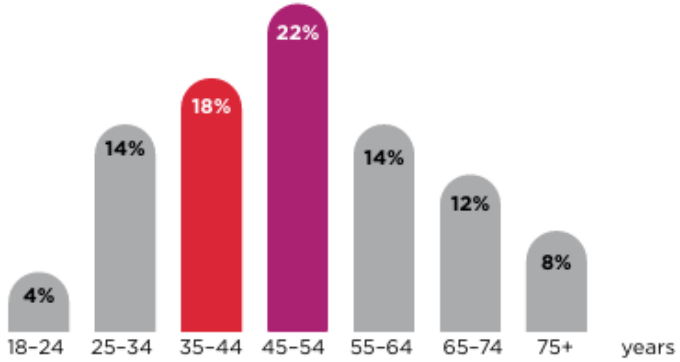
- Survey participants identified both **men and women equally** (43%) as engaging in abuse and mistreatment of LGBTIQA+ older people.
- Men were more likely to be identified as engaging in **financial and emotional abuse** and women were more likely to be identified as engaging in discrimination.
- Most people engaging in abuse or mistreatment were identified as heterosexual and people and aged **35-44 and 45-54 years.**



People using abuse/mistreatment

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Just over half (51%) of LGBTIQA+ survey participants who reported experiencing abuse or mistreatment indicated that the person abusing them had one or more personal issue.

People experiencing abuse and mistreatment

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- Highest rate was among people aged 71 years or older (44%) particularly for financial abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.
- There was no statististically significant difference between men and women but transgender and/or gender diverse people were more likely to report experiences

TRANSGENDER/GENDER DIVERSE

people were more likely to report experiencing abuse/mistreatment

People experiencing abuse and mistreatment

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Living with a disability and relationship status were associated with the experience of abuse and mistreatment.

Effects of abuse and mistreatment

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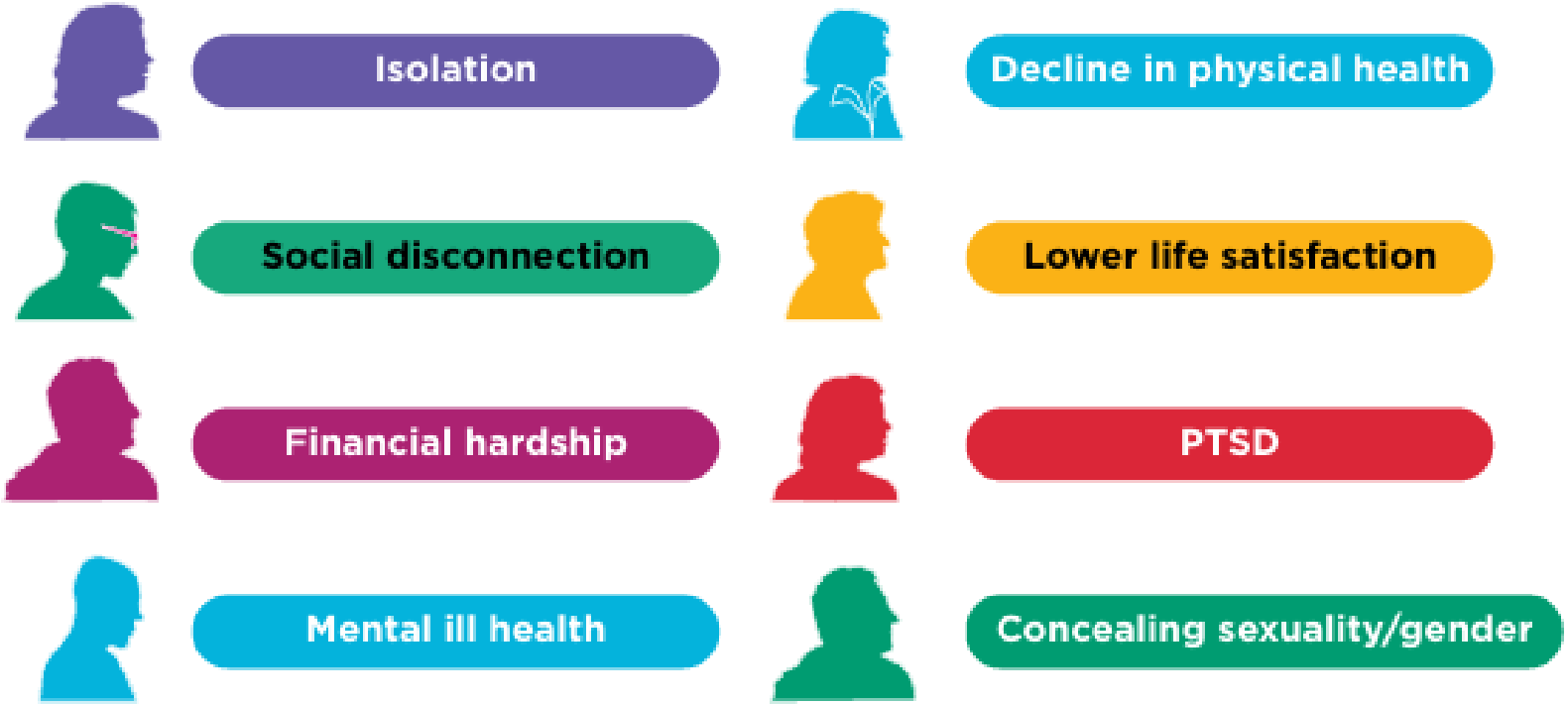

Seeking help and barriers

- Most (90%) of those aged 65 years or older reported confidence in identifying the sighs of abuse and mistreatment, however, just under half sought help.
- Even where LGBTIQA+ older people did not seek help, more than three-quarters did take some action to stop the abuse or mistreatment.

What would improved awareness and service responses for LBGTIQA+ older people look like?

- Specialist elder abuse services
- Collaboration between services
- Community visitor schemes
- Support programs
- Mentoring programs

Acknowledgements

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