LGBTI Older People and Elder Abuse: What's Different?

Australian Elder Abuse Conference, 27 July 2026

SILVER RAINBOW
LGBTI AGEING & AGED CARE

Silver Pride
Advocacy Network

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia, their diversity, histories and knowledge and their continuing connections to land and community. We pay our respects to all Australian Indigenous Peoples and their cultures, and to Elders of past and present.

Artwork ‘Silver Pride Sharing Bundy (Bun Jee)’ by Paul Constable Calcott (Wiradjuri Nation), © the artist”

Context and Conversation

LGBTI History

- Discrimination
- LGBTI's people lives are shaped by experiences of invisibility and exclusion
- Criminalisation, discrimination
- A history of trauma

1982 NSW was the first state to pass anti-discrimination laws against gay people. However, for another two years male acts of homosexuality were still illegal. The federal government was the last jurisdiction in Australia to introduce LGBTI anti-discrimination protections three decades later in 2013.

1990 The World Health Organization declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder from its classification (ICD).

1997 Tasmania was the last state in Australia to decriminalise homosexuality, 22 years after the first state, South Australia.

1999 Start of an annual Bi Visibility Day to highlight biphobia and to help people find the bisexual community.

2009 Same-sex couples have their de facto relationships legally recognised and are now entitled to the same benefits as opposite-sex couples.

2013 The Australian Senate reports on an inquiry into involuntary or coerced sterilisation, including for intersex people. This world-first parliamentary inquiry on intersex health and rights included 15 recommendations. None of the recommendations have been implemented.

2013 The Australian Government introduces guidelines on the recognition of sex and gender. People are now able to choose to identify as a gender other than the sex they were assigned at birth or may identify as not exclusively male or female. Gender can be changed in official records.

2017 Same-sex marriage is legalised Australia-wide after 22 unsuccessful attempts in the Federal Parliament since 2004. Although this was seen as a positive step for LGBTI rights, research has since shown this was a traumatising time for many LGBTI communities because of negative media messages and hatred.

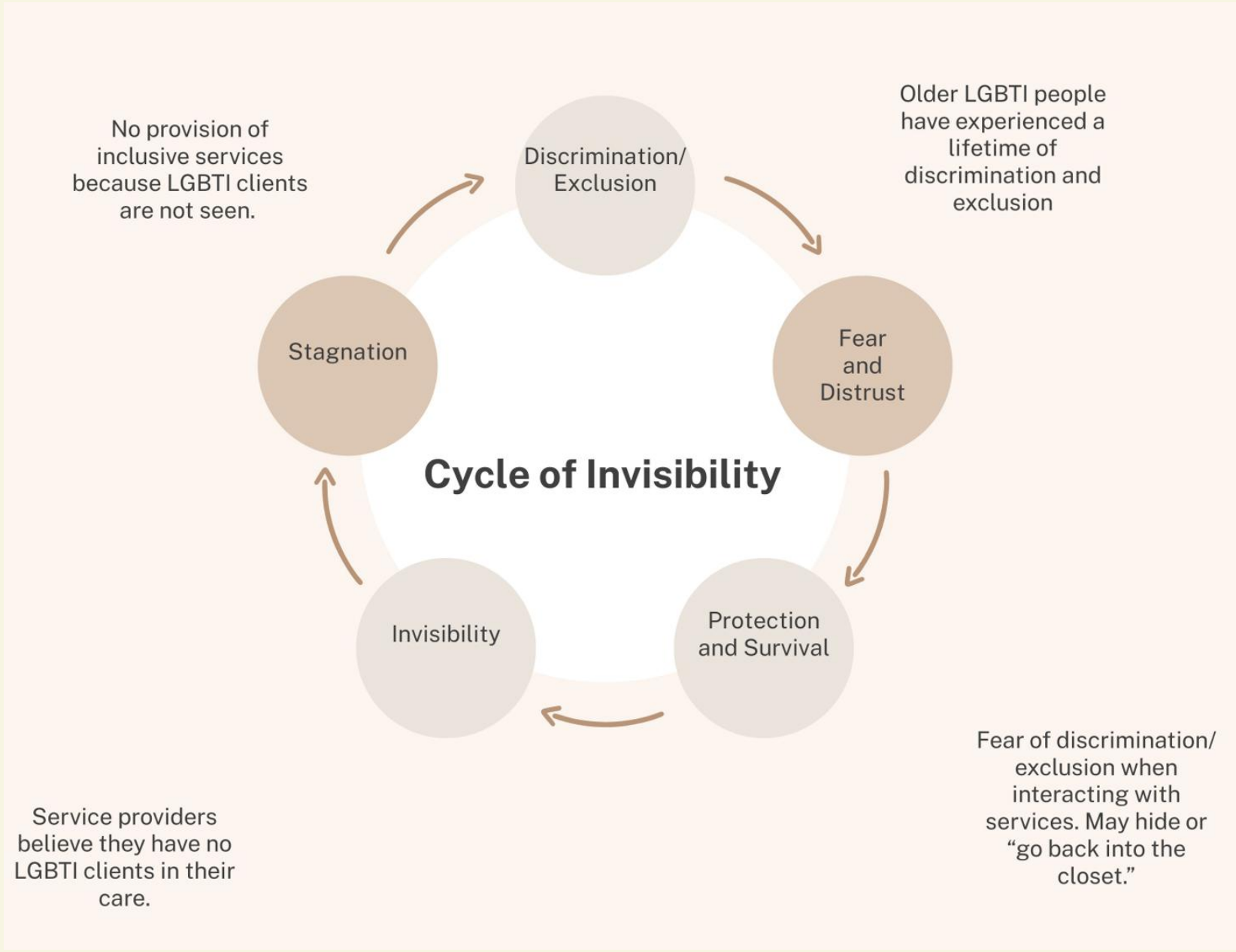
2019 Being transgender is no longer classified as a mental health disorder by the World Health Organization.

2020 South Australia was the last state in Australia to scrap the so-called 'gay panic defence'. This was an argument used in court to downgrade murder charges to manslaughter by claiming that the defendant was provoked into violence by a sexual advance from the victim.

2021 The Australian Human Rights Commission releases a report recommending significant reform to protect the human rights of people born with variations in sex characteristics, particularly around decision-making on medical interventions.

Fear, Disclosure and Safety

- Many LGBTI older people do not disclose who they are to service providers
- They may go back into the closet



Understanding What is Different for LGBTI Older People

- Stories?
- Solutions?
- Final Thoughts

Questions?

Contact

Lisa Liber

Silver Rainbow Manager

silverrainbow@lgbtiqhealth.org.au

silverrainbow.lgbtiqhealth.org.au

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