

COMMUNITIES SERVED

LGBTQ Older Adults
Living in San Francisco

CONTACTS

openhouse-sf.org

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COLLABORATION

Staff work with and alongside
older adult community members:
• Community Ambassadors
• Community Research Group
• HIV Long-Term Survivors
Committee



"If I wasn't engaged with
Openhouse, I would be in
my apartment just slowly,
fading away
and that's something that
I am fighting with a
vengeance!"



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM WITH LGBTQ SENIORS



OVERVIEW

The Openhouse Community Engagement Program (CEP) is a holistic and comprehensive prevention and early intervention program that aims to prevent and reduce social isolation and loneliness, as well as the symptoms related to depression, anxiety, and long-standing trauma for LGBTQ older adults. The CEP seeks to increase social connectedness and engagement, sense of community, and access to aging and LGBTQ-affirming mental health services.

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION AND INCREASE COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

- Component 1: Friendly Visitor Program
- Component 2: Emotional Support Program in a Group Setting
- Component 3: Social Engagement and Recreational Programming

CALIFORNIA REDUCING DISPARITIES PROJECT



GOALS

Friendly Visitor

To reduce the well-documented social isolation (and loneliness) in the LGBTQ older adult community and to promote healthy aging by building greater connection to their community through engagement in activities and behaviors that improve health and well-being.

Emotional Support Program in a Group Setting

To offer LGBTQ older adults an opportunity to build community with peers facing similar challenges, such as grief, aging, hoarding or HIV, in a safe and affirming space where they can be open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Groups serve as a vital touchstone to feeling less isolated and alone.

Social Engagement and Recreational Programming

Group facilitators offer social engagement discussion topics, education, and resources that strengthen and build community across a diverse cross-section of gender and sexual orientation identities. One-to-one checks-ins with the most vulnerable participants offer a bridge to other support services.

EMERGING THEMES: WHAT WE'VE LEARNED SO FAR

COLLABORATION

Engaging diverse stakeholders from "communities within communities" early in the process makes for effective engagement and reinforces organizational values of senior-led and driven programs.

INTENTIONALITY AND INCLUSION

Focus groups and town hall with Openhouse Executive Director specifically for the purposes of centering, listening to, and eliciting feedback from elders of color created safer space for providing input used to guide Openhouse racial equity efforts at community level.

Organizational commitment is essential in identifying and utilizing a racial equity framework to guide processes - from diversifying Board membership to redistributing staff time, money, and resources - that increase access to LGBTQ-affirming programs for people of color and trans communities.

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION FINDINGS

Focus groups with Openhouse program participants suggest positive role in increasing quality of life, positive self-image, and connectedness.