

Older persons, family and whānau services meeting the needs of older people

Most Takatāpui and Rainbow elders (57%) do not share their sexuality at community groups and services for older people, because they worry about how they will be treated. More than one in ten Takatāpui and Rainbow elders (11%) do not share their identity with anyone – this is even higher for Māori, Pasifika and ethnic elders (16%) and bisexual elders (30%).

"I never ever felt safe until I attended counselling at [agency], I still find it hard to identify as my true self." Māori gay man, 65-69 years

"I don't really go to community groups and services for older people yet, but I am nervous about a retirement home one day." NZ European/Pākehā straight trans man, 55-59 years

"Many of my lesbian community feel that retirement homes would not be open to lesbians and their partners." Another ethnicity, lesbian woman, 65-69 years

"Ending up in a rest home with transphobic staff who won't recognise me as being a woman." NZ European/Pākehā trans woman, 65-69 years

"I am concerned that I may need to consider a retirement village or eldercare at some stage and am worried that I will be forced back into the closet as a result. I expect that this might come about as a result of attitudes of fellow residents as much as management. It concerns me that I may become dependent on people who could be prejudiced and judge me." NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 75-79 years

"Low level disrespect in one of the homes my partner was in but disturbing all the same." NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual woman, 75-79 years

Don't make assumptions and be explicit about inclusion

Takatāpui and Rainbow older people need to know they will be able to safely share who they are in services and programmes for older people. This requires a shift in the practice of assumptions about sexuality and gender, as many elders are not out. Services need to make it clear they serve Takatāpui and Rainbow people in their websites and promotional material.

Include Takatāpui and Rainbow elders in meaningful ways

Meaningful inclusion moves beyond acknowledging Takatāpui and Rainbow older people exist, to developing relevant services and programmes; protections against discrimination inside services, from staff or other older people; training and upskilling staff and volunteer teams to provide mana enhancing responses that uplift the dignity of Takatāpui and Rainbow people; and reaching out to Takatāpui and Rainbow communities.

Develop the right relationships

Because of the specific needs and contexts of Takatāpui and Rainbow older people, connections with other services that can provide or connect elders to holistic hauora and wellbeing support is important, including Takatāpui, Pasifika and ethnic Rainbow community groups and services. Older persons services need to know how well other services in their communities treat Takatāpui and Rainbow older people. Hauora includes physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellbeing, and promoting connection inside families, whānau and communities.

Provide mana enhancing aged-care services

Aged-care contexts, or any service offering more personal care when people are vulnerable, are particularly feared by Takatāpui and Rainbow elders. Support offered in these contexts must be tailored to the needs of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, offering mana enhancing, dignified, respectful support. At a bare minimum, this requires staff guidance and training in Takatāpui and Rainbow communities and experiences, knowing how to refer to people respectfully, ensuring people may have ongoing connection to loved ones, including partners and chosen family and whānau, and ensuring people have the freedom to express their gender authentically. Aged-care contexts must establish practices that protect Takatāpui and Rainbow elders from discrimination from staff members, related services, and other residents or service users.

"Please think, absolutely every time, you meet an older person that you do not know their sexuality or gender history. You do not." NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 70-74 years

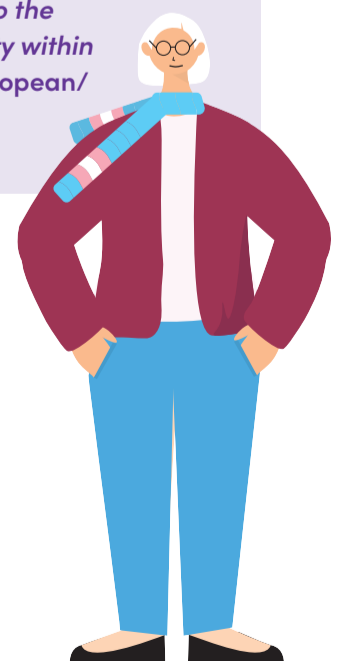
"No one who lives here in my home town knows anything about my life or should I say my personal or private life." Pasifika bisexual woman, 75-79 years

"I have never been in this situation before in my life, because I was married before...After my divorce I became very interested in my own sex but more curious than anything and then I met the woman I fell in love with." Pasifika bisexual woman, 75-79 years

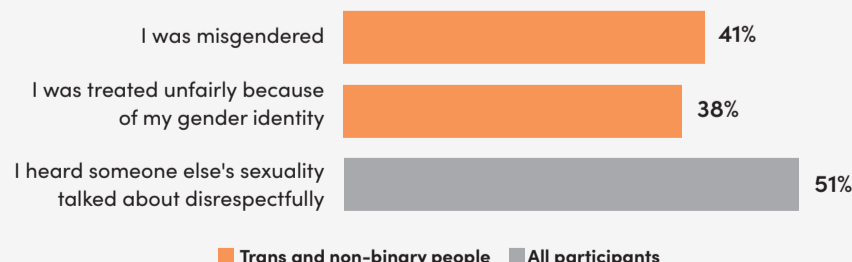
"Disrespectful comments can harm the person that hears them, even if not addressed directly." NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual non-binary person, 80+ years

"Give options for gender identity, including pronouns, ensure toilets facilities are labelled for all genders, not just female/male/women/men." Pasifika lesbian woman, 70-74 years

"Once others know about you it is amazing how many others come forward with links to the Rainbow Community within their family." NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 65-69 years



Negative experiences in community groups and services for older people (n=215)



We heard from 424 Takatāpui and Rainbow elders via a confidential online survey, and we interviewed 11 elders in depth. We also held six focus groups with tangata whenua, Pasifika and ethnic Takatāpui and Rainbow people and service providers. You can read the full report, Uplifting Takatāpui and Rainbow Elder Voices: Tukua kia tū takitahi ngā whetū o te rangi and listen to the 16 interview podcasts at Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura or Rainbow Hub Waikato.

