

Public Abstract

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Department:Social Work

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Title:A STUDY OF INTERGROUP CONTACT THEORY: USING STORYTELLING TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF LESBIAN AND GAY OLDER ADULTS IN LONG-TERM CARE SETTINGS

The population of older adults is growing rapidly. Among the aging population are large numbers that identify as lesbian or gay (LG). LG older adults are less likely to have partners, spouses or children and experience disparities in health that suggest that may need long-term care (LTC) services at rates higher than the general population. Even though LG older adults are at high risk for neglect or being underserved, they prolong assessing LTC in fear of discrimination. The need for programs that increase the awareness of LG older adults among LTC staff has been identified as a needed first step to address this issue. This study used intergroup contact theory as a guide to develop storytelling as a training modality to increase awareness of LG older among LTC staff. Results show that storytelling had a positive influence on LTC staff member's attitudes toward LG older adults. More work is needed to measure the effects of storytelling at different intervals to see if the effects are maintained over time and to measure LTC staff member's behaviors toward LG older adults.