

## Igbt caregiver concerns

Many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people have experienced difficult and alienating relationships with family, friends, employers and service providers. Some have felt the need to move away from their families of origin, to stay in the closet or to distance themselves from discriminating and prejudiced situations. Yet, LGBT people are more likely to become caregivers for a partner, friend or biological family member. While caregiving can be rewarding, it can also be isolating. This brochure will help you navigate community resources and options for support.



The Alzheimer's Association welcomes, and is supportive of, all persons regardless of age, race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, physical ability or religion.

While LGBT-specific services may not be available everywhere, the Alzheimer's Association is here to help you find the right care and support options.

## caregiver stress daily checkup

**How many signs have I experienced today?**

- Denial
- Anger
- Social withdrawal
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Exhaustion
- Sleeplessness
- Irritability
- Lack of concentration
- Health problems

**Whenever stress is a concern, consult your doctor, and contact the Alzheimer's Association for information and support.**

alzheimer's  association®

The Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

**Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's®.**

For information and support,  
contact the Alzheimer's Association:

**800.272.3900**  
**alz.org**

© 2012 Alzheimer's Association®. All rights reserved.

*This is an official publication of the Alzheimer's Association but may be distributed by unaffiliated organizations and individuals. Such distribution does not constitute an endorsement of these parties or their activities by the Alzheimer's Association.*

alzheimer's  association®

## Igbt caregiver concerns

**Assisting a person  
with dementia in  
planning for the future**



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer®

## Igbt caregiver concerns

As a caregiver for someone with Alzheimer's disease, you will face challenges during your journey. These challenges may be common among caregivers or they may be singular to you and your situation. As an LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) caregiver, you may also have additional considerations or concerns.

### Learn more about Alzheimer's disease

Signs of Alzheimer's disease may appear gradually. It can be easy to explain away changing or unusual behavior as signs of aging when a person seems physically healthy. However, it's imperative to consult a doctor or health professional when you see changes in memory, mood or behavior. Learn more about the signs of Alzheimer's disease, at [alz.org/10signs](http://alz.org/10signs).

### Access quality health care

LGBT individuals may access routine health care less often than other individuals for fear of inadequate treatment or discrimination. It is important to seek supportive health care that will make you and the individual with Alzheimer's feel comfortable. You may want to seek a medical provider that is sensitive to the LGBT community. Contact the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association ([glma.org](http://glma.org)) or an LGBT community center in your area for referrals.

### Connect to community resources

The Alzheimer's Association provides information and resources to caregivers through our website, [alz.org](http://alz.org), and programs and services through our local chapters across the country. Find the chapter nearest you at [alz.org/findus](http://alz.org/findus). Also, our **Community Resource Finder** ([communityresourcefinder.org](http://communityresourcefinder.org)) is a great online tool for locating local resources such as in-home assistance, adult day programs, visiting nurses and meal delivery. It may be helpful to inquire if these resources are LGBT-friendly.

Visit Alzheimer's Association Alzheimer's Navigator™ at [alzheimersnavigator.org](http://alzheimersnavigator.org) to create a customized action plan of information, support and resources.

### Take good care of yourself

Stress can cause physical problems (blurred vision, stomach irritation, high blood pressure) and changes in behavior (irritability, lack of concentration, change in appetite). Note your symptoms and use relaxation techniques such as yoga or meditation to alleviate them. Watch your diet, exercise and get plenty of rest. Staying healthy will help you to be a better caregiver. To get a tailored list of helpful resources, take the **Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Stress Check** at [alz.org/stresscheck](http://alz.org/stresscheck).

### Plan for the future

It is important for the individual with Alzheimer's to have legal and financial documents in place to establish his or her wishes for care as the disease progresses. Medical and financial powers of attorney and hospital visitation authorizations are best filed in advance while the person is still able to make decisions. In addition, as a caregiver, you should complete legal documents to ensure the individual with Alzheimer's will be cared for should something happen to you. To learn more, contact the Alzheimer's Association or visit [elearning.alz.org](http://elearning.alz.org) to take the free Alzheimer's Association e-learning course: **Legal and Financial Planning for Alzheimer's Disease**.

### Balance dual caregiving roles

It is common for LGBT caregivers to care for their partner and for another friend or family member. It can be difficult to attend to your own physical, emotional and social well-being while providing care to multiple individuals. The Alzheimer's Association can assist you with information and referrals to community resources that can provide support and care for you and your loved ones.

### Disclosing your sexuality

You may worry that service providers will respond negatively to your LGBT identity. Perhaps you don't feel it necessary to disclose your sexual orientation or identity. Remember to trust yourself and make sure you are comfortable with what you share.

### Making decisions about long-term and end-of-life care

Long-term care encompasses many types of care situations, ranging from independent living to a variety of assisted living options. The decision to move a person into an assisted living facility can be emotional and difficult. Call **800.272.3900** or visit [communityresourcefinder.org](http://communityresourcefinder.org) for assistance finding facilities and care options.

When facing a fatal disease such as Alzheimer's, it is essential for LGBT individuals to have advance directives in place. With advance planning, you can ensure that the individual with Alzheimer's will have optimum care and that you will have the level of access and authority desired by you both.

When a person with late-stage dementia nears the end of life, consider seeking hospice care to ensure the comfort of the individual with Alzheimer's and to gain emotional support. Call your local hospice agency to request information on grief counseling or groups in your community.

### Seek help

Caring for an individual with Alzheimer's can be isolating and lonely. Don't be afraid to seek help from family, friends and neighbors — and tell them exactly how they can help. The Alzheimer's Association is also here for you. Our **Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiver Center** ([alz.org/care](http://alz.org/care)) includes important information and easy access to helpful Alzheimer's Association resources, including:

- **Alzheimer's Navigator™** — create customized action plans.
- **Community Resource Finder** — find the local resources you need.
- **ALZConnected™** — connect with other caregivers who can relate to your situation.
- **Care Team Calendar** — invite friends, family members and neighbors to sign up for caregiving responsibilities.

For 24/7, 365 support, information and referrals, call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at **800.272.3900** and speak with an experienced care consultant.