

> SAGE GLOBAL
REPORT 2018

Public Attitudes Toward Aging Sexual and Gender Minorities Around the World

sage

Advocacy &
Services for
LGBT Elders

We refuse to be invisible

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This report is based on data generated from the 2017 ILGA-RIWI Global Attitudes Survey on Sexual, Gender and Sex Minorities, conducted by Aengus Carroll and George Robotham, and carried out in partnership with SAGE, Viacom and Logo.

It compiles and frames further analysis of the survey's age-comparative data, compiled by Aengus Carroll and George Robotham for SAGE. This document was authored by Sterling Cruz-Herr, SAGE's Chief Engagement Officer.

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Country-level data can be found at ilga.org.

01 Introduction

Public Attitudes Toward Aging Sexual and Gender Minorities Around the World

In 2017, RIWI and the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Intersex Association (ILGA) invited SAGE to become a partner, alongside Logo and Viacom, in the *ILGA-RIWI Global Attitudes Survey on Sexual, Gender and Sex Minorities* in order to shine a much-needed spotlight on the experiences of LGBT older people across the globe. First launched in 2016, this annual survey gathers and assesses credible global data on public attitudes related to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.

The 2017 survey reached roughly 116,000 unique respondents in 75 countries (plus Hong Kong and Taiwan). Each country saw a minimum of 1,000 respondents, although in some countries this figure reached over 3,000. RIWI collection methods gather data from a wide swath of internet users across the globe. As a result, this survey data provides a veritable breadth of quantifiable evidence of public attitudes. Many respondents live in environments that are hostile to sexual orientation (SO) or gender identity (GI) minorities.¹ SAGE's participation in this year's survey brings a generational lens to the data for the first time.

As the world's oldest and largest organization focused specifically on addressing the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) older adults, SAGE and others have compiled significant research on this population in the U.S. That research is augmented by SAGE's decades of

¹ Although the language that was evolved largely in Western cultures to address non-heteronormative sexuality (lesbian, gay and bisexual—LGB), is frequently used by international NGOs and multi-state institutions like the UN, such language is not so well understood in some cultures. Regarding transgender (the T in the LGBT acronym), the concept of "crossing" pre-determined gender lines may not be conceptually shared by some ancient and traditional "third sex" communities, like Hijra or Kothi. The acronym LGBT or LGBTI (including intersex) does not necessarily translate well or receive universal comprehension. As such, in this survey and report we use the formulation of "romantic or sexual attraction" to capture sexual orientation, and "dress, act or identify as another sex than that which you were born" to capture gender identity and expression.

> The ILGA Survey reached 116,000 respondents in 75 countries, with a minimum of 1,000 respondents in each country. As a result, the data provides a veritable breadth of quantifiable evidence of public attitudes.

> The data consistently shows that older sexual orientation and gender identity minorities face discrimination, social stigma and invisibility. There is a compelling need for much more information and attention to their experiences across the globe.

experience working with tens of thousands of older SO and GI minorities as well as aging service providers. In recent years, related research also has emerged in Australia, Bolivia, Costa Rica and other countries. While much of this research is in its early stages, across countries it consistently shows that older SO and GI minorities face discrimination, social stigma, and invisibility. There is a compelling need for much more information about, and attention to, their experiences across the globe.

To help address this need, SAGE partnered with RIWI and ILGA to shine a spotlight on the social attitudes that impact the oft-forgotten population of older SO and GI minorities, and to inform the efforts of advocates and practitioners working with them globally.

"Invisibility and isolation among older sexual orientation and gender identity minorities across the globe leads to neglect and abuse," said Michael Adams, CEO of SAGE. "This survey produces critically important data to understand the social attitudes that reinforce this discrimination and isolation, an invaluable first step toward breaking the invisibility and focusing attention on the needs of these highly vulnerable elders," added Adams.

Aengus Carroll and George Robotham, authors of the overarching report on the *ILGA-RIWI Global Attitudes Survey on Sexual, Gender and Sex Minorities*, volunteered to analyze this year's global dataset for SAGE through the lens of older age, teasing out public attitudes toward older SO and GI minorities.

This lens is critically important, since the attitudes of age peers powerfully impact the social experiences of older SO and GI minorities. Age peers shape much of the day-to-day social life of older people as they navigate the aging process. Older people tend to socialize with other older people. Moreover, in countries where professionalized elder services and care are available, older adults share spaces in service settings and in residential communities for elders. The perspectives of the larger population of older adults give shape to the challenges confronting older people who are SO and/or GO minorities, defined in this survey as those who are "romantically or sexually attracted to someone of the same sex," as well as to those who "dress, act or identify as another sex than which they were born."

What is considered "older" can change according to context (e.g. national and cohort life expectancy) and individual perception. In light of the data available from this survey, we have divided respondents into two age

cohorts ("younger" being 18–54 years old; "older" being 55+ years old). Where specified, we dig deeper and note significant differences that appear within the older group (the 55+ category) by further subdividing to 55–64, and 65+.²

The analysis provides global insights, as well as a more specific focus on South and Central America, and the United States (to complement prior research in these regions). In the high-level findings that follow, we indicate where the framing of age suggests differences across select categories, as well as where significant statistical variation from the regional norm can be seen in specific countries.

Highlights include:

- > Globally for the group that is 55+, far less than half (41%) report they know someone from a SO minority while slightly less than one third (32%) know someone who is a GI minority.
- > Less than 40% of any age are comfortable socializing with SO and GI minorities but those 65+ are most likely to experience discomfort with the idea.
- > 23% percent of people 55+ who agree with the statement that "equal rights should be applied to everyone" inclusive of SO know someone from an SO minority. Of those 55+ who don't agree, only 6% know someone.

Aengus Carroll points to how much of "the survey data confirms wisdom long-found in country-level activism: [that] when people know older sexual and gender identity minorities there is a direct correlation to more positive and inclusive attitudes, particularly in relation to public policy."

Since lack of familiarity occurs at higher rates among older respondents in the survey, it suggests that older SO and GI minorities face particularly significant challenges when it comes to social acceptance by their peers, in turn making a powerful case for heightened advocacy on their behalf across the globe.

> "When people know older sexual orientation and gender identity minorities, there is a direct correlation to more positive and inclusive attitudes, particularly in relation to public policy."

— AENGUS CARROLL

² We recognize and regularly advocate for recognition that people over the age of 55 comprise multiple generations with varying perspectives and norms. However, sample sizes for the older cohort were often too small to further break down this group.

02 Knowing Someone

> SEXUAL ORIENTATION (SO)

“Do you know someone who is romantically or sexually attracted to people of the same sex?”

> GENDER IDENTITY (GI)

“Do you know someone who dresses, acts, or identifies as one sex although they were born as another?”



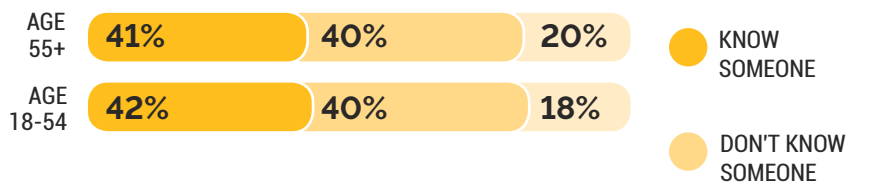
GLOBAL

Generally speaking, and consistently found across this survey, social comfort and acceptance increases markedly among respondents who know someone belonging to SO and GI minorities. That's why it makes sense to start an exploration of this data by considering the rate at which people, regardless of age, know, don't know, or are unsure if they know, a SO or GI minority.

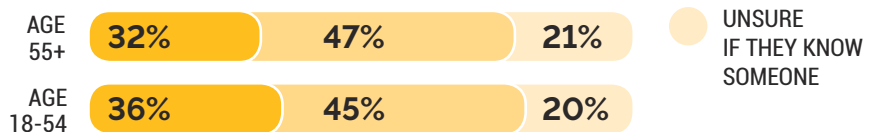
At the highest level, the global data indicates that these rates are almost identical across age cohorts when it comes to knowing SO minorities.

Similarities are also seen across age cohorts in terms of the rate at which people know GI minorities.

KNOWING SEXUAL ORIENTATION (SO) MINORITIES...



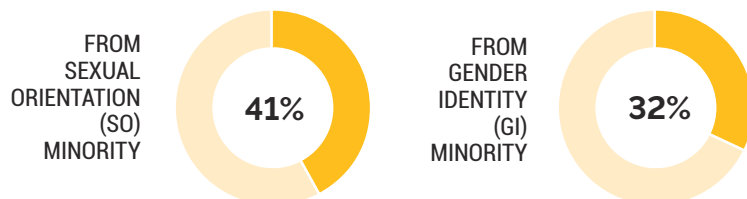
KNOWING GENDER IDENTITY (GI) MINORITIES...



However, a wide array of differences emerge based on age, once we look more deeply into the data across geographies. This includes the potential for greater social isolation of older GI minorities, given that people in every age category are significantly less likely to report that they know them.

Globally for the group that is 55+, 41% report they know someone from a SO minority while only 32% say the same about a GI minority.

AGE 55+ KNOWING SOMEONE...

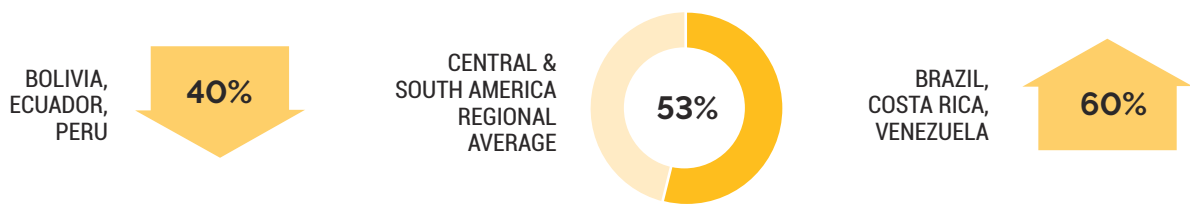




SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Older respondents (55+) in South and Central America in general are 5–10% less likely than their younger counterparts to know SO minorities, but this varies significantly across countries. In Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, approximately 40% of the 55+ cohort know somebody who is a SO minority. In Brazil, Costa Rica and Venezuela, that number increases to approximately 60%.

AGE 55+ KNOWING SOMEONE IN SO MINORITIES, FROM...



For the most part, this region presents higher than the global average figure of 35% of people knowing GI minorities. In the 55+ age group, the majority are in the 40% range. Although the Central and South America figures are amongst the highest in the world, they still speak loudly to the reality of isolation for GI individuals.



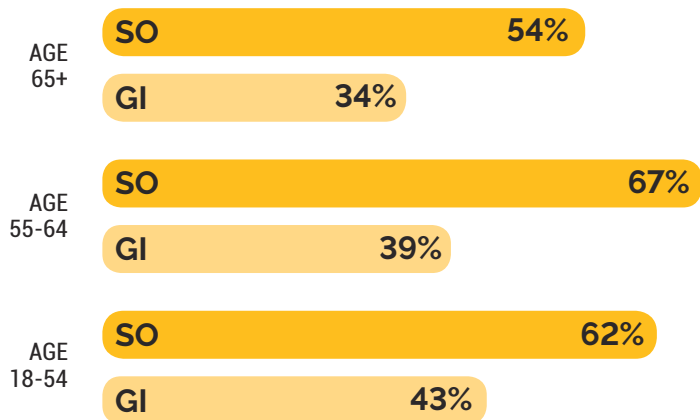
UNITED STATES

The oldest cohort of adults (65+) is the least likely of all age groups to know someone who is a member of either SO or GI minorities.

The 55-64 group is most likely to know SO minorities, something that could portend well for the near future.

Significantly fewer of those in any cohort (of US respondents) know someone who is a member of GI minority, and the gap in this category widens based on age.

KNOWING SOMEONE...



We then wanted to see how knowing someone affected older and younger peers' attitudes toward personal and policy issues. We look at two here: comfort levels socializing and equal rights. >>

03 Socializing

> SEXUAL ORIENTATION (SO)

“How comfortable are you socializing with people who are openly romantically or sexually attracted to people of the same sex?”

> GENDER IDENTITY (GI)

“How comfortable are you socializing with people who dress, act or identify as one sex though born as another?”



GLOBAL

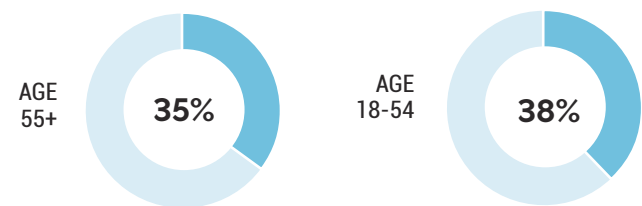
Respondents who are 55+ are most likely to experience discomfort at the idea of socializing with SO and GI minorities. Even among people who know SO and GI minorities, comfort socializing varies widely by age. However, a note of interest: throughout the survey there were high numbers of people who answered ‘neither comfortable nor uncomfortable’ to this question.

Comfort socializing with people who are openly romantically or sexually attracted to people of the same sex is at 35% for respondents aged 55+, and 38% for the 18-54 age group.

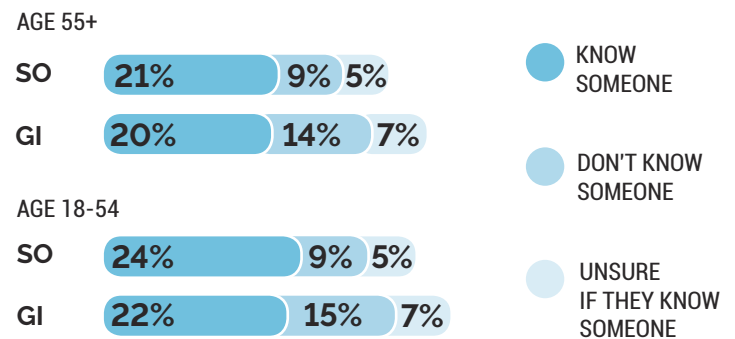
Comfort socializing with people who dress, act or identify as one sex though born as another stands at 41% for 55+ age group, and 44% for 18-54 cohort, but in different percentile dispersions.

Those 55+ are 27% more likely to know someone who is romantically or sexually attracted to a person of the same sex than someone who dresses acts or identifies as another sex than which they were born. As a result, far fewer of the older cohort feel comfortable with GI minorities when socializing.

KNOWING & COMFORTABLE SOCIALIZING WITH SO MINORITIES...



KNOWING & COMFORTABLE SOCIALIZING WITH SO & GI MINORITIES...

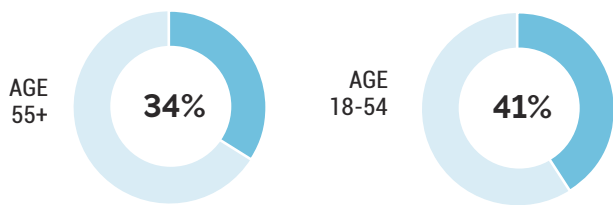




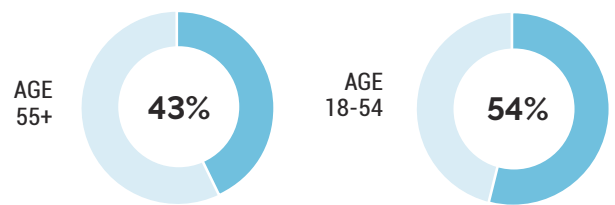
SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

In this region, only 34% of the 55+ age group would be comfortable socializing with SO and GI minorities, while around 41% of the 18-54 age group, expressed comfort. Regarding GI, this trend of younger people being more comfortable socializing also holds true: of those aged 55+, 43% express comfort, while that figure increases to 54% of the 18-54 age group.

KNOWING & COMFORTABLE SOCIALIZING WITH... SO MINORITIES...



AND GI MINORITIES...



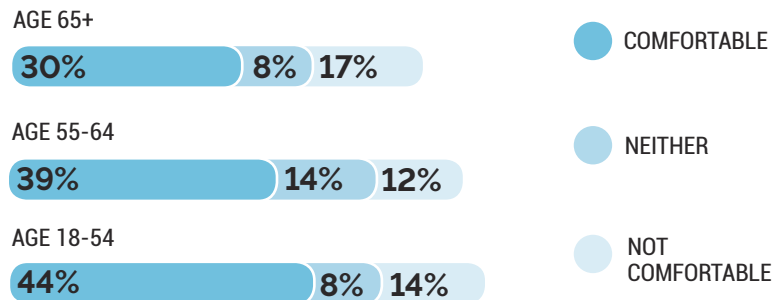
Notably, in this region people are more likely to know GI minorities than SO minorities across all age groups.



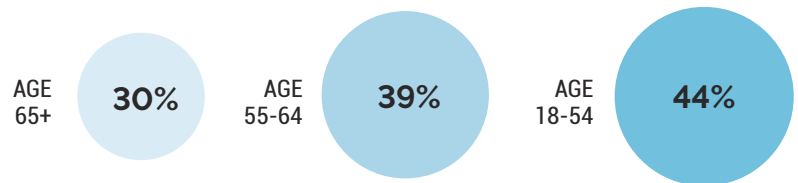
UNITED STATES

For those who know SO minorities in the US, we see an even greater gap between age cohorts when it comes to socializing.

KNOWING & COMFORTABLE SOCIALIZING WITH SO MINORITIES...



Comfort socializing with SO minorities by those who know an SO minority is 30% for 65+, 39% for 55-64 and 44% for 18-54.



04 Equal Rights

- > **SEXUAL ORIENTATION (SO)**
"Should equal rights be applied to everyone, including people who are romantically or sexually attracted to other people of the same sex?"
- > **GENDER IDENTITY (GI)**
"Should Equal rights be applied to everyone, including people who dress, act or identify as one sex although they were born as another?"

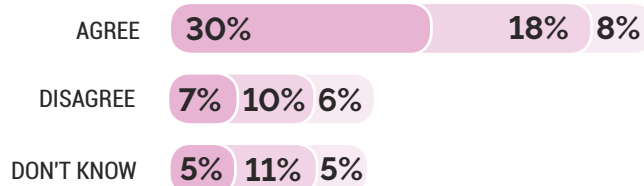


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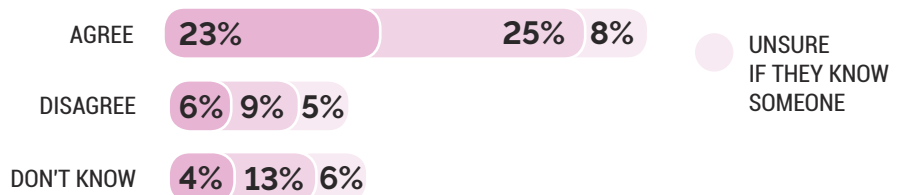
Across the globe, both the older and younger age cohorts have a similar level of belief (56% in favor) that equal rights should be extended to SO minorities.

However, knowing someone from a SO or GI minority positively affects attitudes toward equal citizenship.

AGE 55+ KNOWING SO MINORITIES & AGREEING WITH EQUAL RIGHTS...

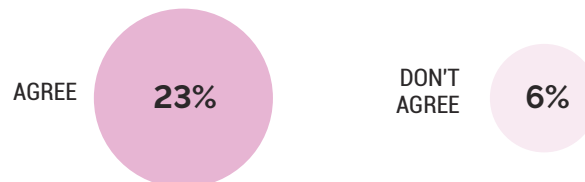


AGE 55+ KNOWING GI MINORITIES & AGREEING WITH EQUAL RIGHTS...



23% of people 55+ who agree with the statement concerning SO know someone who is a SO minority. Of those 55+ who don't agree, only 6% know someone.

AGE 55+ KNOWING SO MINORITIES & BELIEF IN EQUAL RIGHTS...





SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Although slightly lower than the younger cohort, those surveyed who were aged 55+ in 11 countries of South and Central America responded positively to the idea of equal rights and protections that are inclusive of sexual orientation.

Of these countries, 59% was the lowest registered (Peru and Ecuador) and the highest was 70% in Colombia.

AGE 55+ RANGE OF POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE IDEA EQUAL RIGHTS...



UNITED STATES

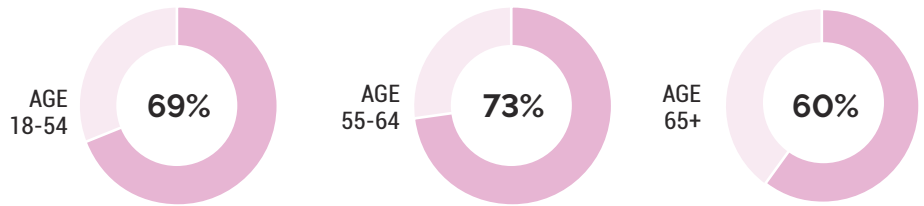
For those that know SO minorities, the percentages of those that agree with equal rights are 60% or above across all age groups.

Of the 65+ cohort, 60% agree with the proposition of equal rights as it relates to SO, 26% do not, and 14% do not know.

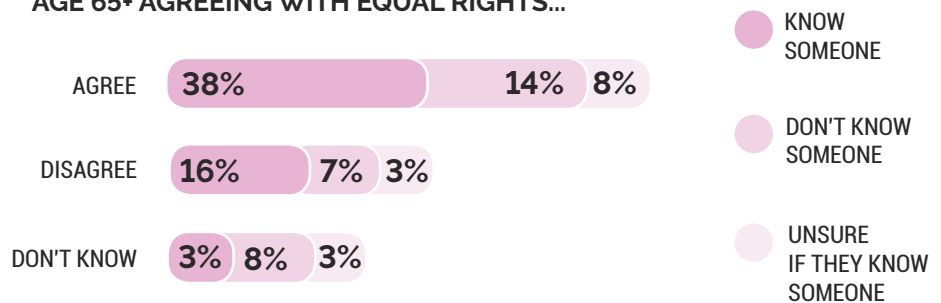
A significant majority of those 65+ who support equal rights based on sexual orientation know an SO minority person.

By contrast, only 16% of those who disagree with equal rights based on sexual orientation say they know someone.

KNOWING SO MINORITIES & AGREEING WITH EQUAL RIGHTS...



AGE 65+ AGREEING WITH EQUAL RIGHTS...



05 Implications for Practice

CARE, SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

In many countries, a significant portion of services and care for older adults are provided in group settings due to the need for efficiency, the benefits of socialization to combat social isolation, and the need for residential care to address acute frailty and certain medical needs (though aging in community to the greatest degree possible is widely embraced as preferable to residential care).

Previous research in the United States, Central and South America and elsewhere has documented widespread discrimination and marginalization of older adults who are members of SO and GI minorities. The *ILGA-RIWI Global Attitudes Survey* illuminates this prior research.

At the same time, the new data presents a conundrum for practitioners. On the one hand, older adults who are members of sexual orientation and gender identity minorities are more likely to be embraced as deserving of equal rights by people who personally know someone who is a member of SO and/or GI minorities.

This highlights a benefit of socialization and congregate settings that include people who openly identify as SO and GI minorities. On the other hand, large percentages of respondents to the *ILGA-RIWI Survey* reported that they are not comfortable socializing with SO and GI minorities, and this discomfort grows with age. This highlights challenges for SO and GI minorities—including risk of social ostracism and mistreatment—in social settings where older adults have a strong presence.

Keeping this in mind, the ILGA-RIWI Survey points to a number of implications for practice:

1. It cannot be assumed that elder service and care environments, or communities at large, will be socially welcoming for members of SO and GI minorities; to the contrary, data from the most recent ILGA-RIWI Survey suggests the likelihood of strong barriers to inclusive socialization in these settings. Therefore, providers and communities should take an intentional and thoughtful approach to creating welcoming environments.
2. Providers and communities should undertake training and other forms of capacity-building in order to be equipped to create welcoming environments. This training must include a focus on how to address anti-social behaviors of older adults who share spaces with members of SO and GI minorities and are not comfortable with inclusive socialization.
3. Providers and communities should offer opportunities for older adults to learn about issues related to SO and GI minorities, including talking with members of these minorities in settings that have been intentionally designed to be welcoming.
4. At the same time, providers and communities must respect the decisions of members of SO and GI minorities about the degree to which they wish to be open about their sexual and gender identities. Because these decisions carry

consequences, as indicated in the ILGA-RIWI Survey, they are highly personal.

5. Providers and communities should be on the lookout for social isolation and ostracism of sexual orientation and gender identity minorities and should adopt strategies to prevent this isolation and to support individuals at risk for isolation.
6. Providers and communities should encourage the creation of discussion and support groups for members of SO and GI minorities and their allies, thereby creating opportunities for mutual support and socialization in welcoming and safe environments.
7. Providers and communities should offer and support activities (e.g. affirming movies and cultural activities, Pride celebrations, presentations by sexual orientation and gender minority advocates, etc.) that affirm SO and GI minorities and give them the opportunity to self-identify and meet each other.

> The survey highlights challenges for SO and GI minorities—including risk of social ostracism and mistreatment—in social settings where older adults have a strong presence.

8. After training staff and putting into place non-discrimination language and other programmatic protections for SO and GI minorities, providers and communities should create a welcoming physical environment and encourage social acceptance by displaying affirming pictures (e.g. pictures of same-sex couples), offering inclusive literature (e.g. books, magazines and newspapers geared toward sexual orientation and gender identity minorities), and disseminating inclusive materials (e.g. intake applications that allow members of SO and GI minorities to so identify if they choose).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVOCACY AND RESEARCH

The data from the *ILGA-RIWI Survey* indicates growing, albeit uneven, support across the globe for the concept of equal rights for SO and GI minorities. It also suggests the need for policies that guarantee those rights and protect SO and GI minorities from the harms caused by discrimination, social marginalization and ostracism. These survey implications point to important advocacy opportunities and needs, including the need to:

1. Enact legislation and regulations that guarantee equal rights for SO and GI minorities and protect said minorities from discrimination. This includes legislation specifically designed for the protection of elders, and specifically focused on anti-discrimination protections and guaranteed rights in elder service and care settings.
2. Enact legislation and regulations that mandate training for elder providers and their staffs, including training in how to counteract anti-social behavior targeted at SO and GI minorities.
3. Enact legislation and regulations that require relevant governmental agencies as well as elder service and care providers to identify and address the specific needs of older adults who are members of SO and GI minorities.
4. Advocate for allocation of funding and other resources for programs and initiatives that specifically address the needs of older adults who are members of SO and GI minorities.
5. Advocate for community education programs aimed at older audiences that encourage social acceptance of SO and GI minorities, including

elders. Education campaigns should be crafted in recognition of differing social attitudes across age cohorts.

In addition, the *ILGA-RIWI Survey* data suggests a number of areas where more research is needed, including:

1. Research to better understand the genesis of differing social attitudes about SO and GI minorities across age cohorts.
2. Country-based and sub-population research to better understand differing social attitudes about SO and GI minorities based on geography and culture.
3. Research to better understand varying levels of comfort in socializing with members of SO and GI minorities, across age cohorts and geographies.

> While the data indicates growing support for the concept of equal rights, it also suggests the need for policies that guarantee those rights and protect sexual orientation and gender identity minorities from discrimination, social marginalization and ostracism.

4. Research to confirm data in the *ILGA-RIWI Survey* that large numbers of people express neither comfort nor discomfort with this socializing, and to understand the reasons for this result.
5. Research to better understand the dynamics that contribute to relatively higher levels of support for equal rights for SO and GI minorities but relatively lower levels of comfort socializing with SO and GI minorities.

RESOURCES

An Intersectional Approach to Services and Care for LGBT Older Adults, Adams M., Journal of the American Society on Aging, 2016. lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=818

A Practical Guide to Collecting Data on Sexual Orientation Gender Identity, SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, revised 2016. lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=601

Conociendo Las Necesidades y Vivencias: De las Personas Adultas Mayores de Diversa Orientación Sexual e Identidad de Género en El Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia. Organización Mano Diversa, 2014. Bolivia. [scribd.com/document/262523567/Guia-de-Atencion-para-Personas-Adultas-Mayores-LGBT](https://www.scribd.com/document/262523567/Guia-de-Atencion-para-Personas-Adultas-Mayores-LGBT)

Create Your Care Plan: An LGBT Person's Guide to Preparing for Medical Procedures, SAGE, 2017. lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=879
Also available in Spanish: lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=893

Crossing the Rainbow Bridge: A Resource Supporting End-of-Life Planning and Care Needs of LGBTQI2s Older Adults in Ontario. Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2017. Canada. egale.ca/crossing-rainbow-bridge/

Fact Sheet: When LGBT Older Adults Come Out, SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, 2017. lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=840

Inclusive Services for LGBT Older Adults: A Practical Guide to Creating Welcoming Agencies, SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, 2012. lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=487. Also available in Spanish: lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=665

LGBT Aging: A Review of Research Findings, Needs, and Policy Implications, Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law, 2016. lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=825

LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Resources website. Australian Government Department of Health—Ageing and Aged Care, 2018. Australia. agedcare.health.gov.au/support-services/my-aged-care/lgbti-ageing-and-aged-care-resources

LGBT Programming for Older Adults: A Practical Step-by-Step Guide, SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, 2015. lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=705

Prepare to Care, AARP and SAGE, 2017. lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=887

Situación de población adulta mayor LGBT en Costa Rica, El Salvador y Panamá. San Pedro: CIPAC, 2015. Costa Rica. cipacdh.org/pdf/Informe_final_REGIONAL.pdf

10 Tips on Finding LGBT-Affirming Services, SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, 2017. lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=4. Also available in Spanish: lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=863

The Pink Passkey, the certificate for enhancing the social acceptance of lesbian women, gay men, bisexuals and transgenders in professional care. COC Netherlands, 2017. The Netherlands. roze50plus.nl/assets/uploads/docs/knowledgebase/340.2d9a6dd520a64a723cd74fc727679a02.pdf

Top 10 Ways to Begin Creating LGBT Safety and Inclusivity for Aging Services, SAGE and the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, 2012. lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=527

Understanding Issues Facing LGBT Older Adults, MAP and SAGE USA, 2017. lgbtmap.org/policy-and-issue-analysis/understanding-issues-facing-lgbt-older-adults

ABOUT SAGE

SAGE is the world's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) older adults. Founded in 1978, SAGE works to achieve a high quality of life for LGBT older adults, supports and advocates for their rights, fosters a greater understanding of aging in all communities, and promotes positive images of LGBT life in later years. sageusa.org

ABOUT ILGA

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) is a worldwide federation of organizations committed to equal human rights for LGBTI people. Founded in 1978, it enjoys consultative status at the United Nations, where it speaks and lobbies on behalf of more than 1,200 member organizations from 132 countries. ilga.org

ABOUT RIWI CORP.

RIWI is a global survey technology and sentiment analysis firm that gathers citizen opinion data and accelerates engagement initiatives in every country in the world using its patented Random Domain Intercept Technology™ (RDIT™). RIWI provides clients with access to otherwise unobtainable citizen and consumer opinion from new, broad audiences, fragile contexts, and in multiple regions congruently. RIWI is used by governments and organizations such as United States Department of State, World Bank, UN World Food Program, Omidyar Network, Inter-American Development Bank, UNICEF, and others seeking better opinion data and more effective ways for directly engaging citizens. riwi.com

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