General Background

- The Graying of America: the population at the age of 65 and over is approximately 40 million, which takes up 13% of the total population in America
- LGBT Population Is Aging: 3.5% of adults in the United States identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.
- Approximately 1.76 million LGBT adults are ages 65 and over

Main Issues

Older LGBT Adults Face in General

Same as their heterosexual counterparts, older LGBT adults face:
- Economic Hardship
- Loss of Friends and Families
- Policy Change in Healthcare and Medicare

They also face LGBT specific issues:
- Legal Issues
- Health/Mental Health
- Aging Care Services
- Social Network and Support

Rationale

- Invisibility of LGBT Elders
  - Previous research reveals the bi-directionality between the exclusion of older LGBT adults from queer and gerontological theories and the resulting silence of LGBT older adults and their experiences.
  - Problems and needs that LGBT elders have are not fully recognized and paid attention to by scholars and the general public.
- Region-Specific on the State of Pennsylvania
  - Issues and concerns encountered by older LGBT adults in the country or in other places might not be equally emphasized or reflected in the state of Pennsylvania.

Research Design

- Research Instruments
  - An LGBT aging needs assessment survey adopted from a 2012 Minnesota instrument will be used.
  - Both electronic version and paper copies of the survey will be distributed.
  - The survey is expected to examine LGBT elders’ needs in terms of their aging experiences and factors that would potentially affect their aging experiences such as wellbeing, services, family, friends and caregiving.
- Participant Recruitment
  - Elders over 60 who are self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender and are currently living in the state of Pennsylvania will be considered as potential participants for this survey.
  - Pennsylvanian LGBT organizations will be contacted via either phone calls or emails for their permission and assistance to distribute the survey to potential participants.

Progress Now and Future Plans

- We are currently going through IRB(Institutional Review Board) Review for involving human subjects.
- We are still in the process of contacting local LGBT organizations in the state of Pennsylvania and waiting for their responses.
- Electronic version of the survey is still under construction on Qualtrics
- Survey distribution is expected to be initiated no later than the end of this semester depending when IRB approval will be back and collection of responses will be through the rest of this semester and summer.

Expectations

- Needs and concerns of older LGBT Pennsylvanians could be revealed from this research.
- Inter-Pennsylvanian differences on the focus of needs and concerns
- Factors contributed to such differences

Applications

- Reveal needs and issues of Pennsylvania LGBT elders
- Raise awareness of organizations, governments, and public aging services.
- Further comparisons could be made between the needs and concerns of older LGBT adults in Pennsylvania and that of the country or of the other states.
- Further used as a prerequisite for further explorations on life qualities of older LGBT adults in the state of Pennsylvania.

References

Please contact me or Dean Kelly for reference list or paper copies of the survey.

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