

CONNECT WITH LGBT+ OLDER PEOPLE AND AFFIRM GENDER AND/OR SEXUALITY

Connecting with people living with dementia can be fun, creative and rewarding and meaningful.

Some things to try

- › Sharing food and drink.
- › Sharing stories about one another's lives. Start by telling stories about yourself
- › Looking at old photos or photo albums
- › Dancing together



Watching LGBT+ shows or movies or engaging with other content such as books, poetry or photographs.

Engaging with clothes or accessories that affirm identity such as painting nails, dressing up or doing make up. If the person lives in their own home, you could suggest a wardrobe tour. Talking about items of clothing and accessories is a great way to prompt memory and stories of where and when items were worn.



💡 Reassuring or nurturing touch.
As dementia progresses, sometimes holding hands or providing a gentle hand or foot massage can be a powerful way to connect.

⚠️ However remember, not all older people or people with dementia are comfortable with touch, so ask permission from the person first and use your intuition.



› Bringing small gifts (hand-picked flowers, a shell or some biscuits).

⚠️ Check first regarding any food you bring in as the person may have specific dietary restrictions.

› Going on outings to local shops, cafes or pubs. These might have an LGBT+ community focus, if the person you visit is interested.

› Looking at magazines and books together (photography or picture books are especially good). If the person no longer uses speech to communicate or does not read, you can read to them. Your calming voice will still be registered by someone, even if they do not respond.

› Bringing in a pet. Of course, check the person likes animals and check that pets are allowed where they live and that the pet is safe with strangers.

› Listening to or playing music

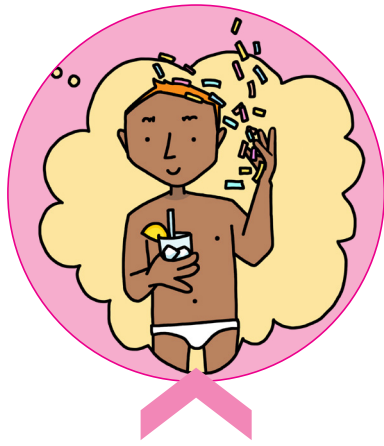
💡 Going for a walk outside, sitting in nature.



ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

› The digital story '[Edie: a day in the life of a lesbian with younger onset dementia](#)' is a beautiful meaningful, portrait. There are lots of multisensory elements to what Edie does to connect with others.

› ABC's Ageless Friendships: Series 1 Episode 2 Out and About <https://www.facebook.com/ABCTV/videos/369350130650884>



“Bob doesn’t have a lot to chat about because he stays at home. So I’ll start the conversation with a lot of things that I’ve been doing with the [in LGBTIQ+ groups] then that will probably trigger him to talk about back in London in the eighties, you know, ‘I remember going to an underwear party, and you know all this sort of stuff.’”

Paul

NOTES

Explaining LGBT+ Acronym

In these resources we use the acronym LGBT+ to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. We acknowledge that gender and/or sexuality diversity encompasses a greater range of forms and expressions of diversity than can be captured in the LGBT+ acronym.

We nonetheless have chosen to use this acronym in this resource because there is no published peer-reviewed research currently available on the experiences of intersex or asexual people living with dementia.

While these resources may be useful for broader communities, they have only been informed by our own research and that of others documenting the experiences of people living with dementia who identify as LGBT+. We also do not use the word 'queer', because it remains a complex and potentially hurtful term for many older LGBT+ people, because of its historic use as a demeaning slur.

Co-design process

The development of this resource was led by Dr. Louisa Smith at Deakin University. This resource was co-designed with six people who had visited LGBT+ people living with dementia over an extended period of time.

A Reference Group was also consulted at each step of the co-design process, providing input into the resources.

The Reference Group included LGBT+ people living with dementia and their carers and representatives from LGBTQIA+ organisations and dementia care organisations.

We are incredibly grateful for the generosity and time of all those involved in this process.



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