



San Francisco AIDS Foundation Aging Services May 22 2023

Vince Crisostomo & Dusty Araujo
Presentation to SF HIV Planning Counsel

Reducing social isolation among HIV long-term survivors by building friendships and ties to the community

Authors: Vince Crisostomo, Dusty Araujo, Julie Lifshay | San Francisco AIDS Foundation

Background: People with HIV are living longer and the proportion of HIV-positive people in San Francisco and in the U.S. over age 50 continues to grow. Many of these individuals are confronting unique social and emotional challenges in addition to health care systems ill-equipped to respond. Long-term survivors experience depression, loneliness, anxiety and report that their emotional support needs are not fully met. People living with HIV who are struggling with depression or other mental health concerns are less likely to remain adherent to antiretrovirals (ARVs).

Description: To address unmet social needs of HIV-positive seniors, San Francisco AIDS Foundation (SFAF) established a social support network serving men who have sex with men over age 50 in 2013. The Elizabeth Taylor 50-Plus Network offers weekly social and wellness activities. In addition to the generosity provided by the Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation, the program receives funding from corporate grants including Gilead and Janssen.

Meeting the Needs of People Aging with HIV

With input from geriatricians, HIV providers and clients, in recent years, activities were adapted to meet the needs of people aging with HIV.

For clients who may be on limited incomes, we:

- Provide balanced and nutritious meals at events with take-home containers
- Buy tickets and entry fees for special events and group activities
- Organize a variety of get-togethers at free community events
- Pay for coffee at Saturday get-togethers at a local coffee house

For clients with accessibility needs, we:

- Host activities in venues with elevators and ADA access
- Share venue accessibility information on event invitations
- Prepare materials with large font sizes
- Encourage activity participation at the right level for each individual
- Allow clients to bring emotional support animals to events hosted at SFAF

For clients with complicated care needs, we:

- Provide information and education about chronic disease & aging with HIV
- Link people to local services and resources for people aging with HIV
- Provide support for mental health concerns including loneliness, depression and anxiety
- Overcome social isolation by actively engaging group members with weekly activities
- Provide tips and guidance on how to cope with demands of illness management (i.e. keeping medical appointments, adhering to treatment and navigating complex systems of care)

Conclusions & Lessons Learned

- Many long-term survivors in San Francisco stay engaged in this social & support group
- Two full-time staff members engage 500 members annually
- Programs by and for long-term survivors reduce social isolation for people who have lost friends and loved ones to HIV
- Group members create lasting friendships, find community, feel “belonging” and heal from past trauma and pain.
- Consideration for special needs related to accessibility, health concerns, nutrition, psychosocial services and income limitations should not be overlooked.

Ongoing Needs

- Affordable mental health & psychosocial services for long-term survivors
- Client advocacy services, care navigation, volunteer peer support matches, and services for clients’ emotional support animals

Our Response During COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place

The shelter-in-place order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic created challenges for our program which relies on in-person events to build community connection. We found an increased need for peer support, support for substance use concerns and meals.

We provided:

- Virtual check-ins weekly
- Virtual Saturday morning “coffee chats”
- Virtual dinner party social events

We will look for opportunities to provide more virtual social interactions in the future.



Our Programming & Events

Strut Art Openings: Group attends a free monthly community art show.

Get Out Thursdays: Group explores San Francisco Bay Area neighborhoods, historical sites and attractions and enjoys a restaurant lunch together.

Dinner & Discussion Group: Free weekly nutritious group dinner with time to socialize, relax and discuss current events, health, and research.

Coffee Chat: Weekly social gathering at a local coffee shop.

Game Night: Organized by a 50-Plus member, a monthly evening social gathering with games, documentary films, and food.

Meetup: Monthly intergenerational social event in collaboration with Bridgemen.

Salsa Sunday: Salsa dancing and food at a local queer-owned bar (bi-annual).

Weekend Gatherings: Retreats for long-term survivors.

Bridgemen Urban Hikes: Casual walks through San Francisco neighborhoods (frequency varies).

Holiday Traditions: Get-togethers with food on holidays for members without other plans.

Bridgemen & Making a Difference: Volunteering for local charities, twice a month.

HIV Advocacy Network (HAN): Advocating for HIV-related causes.

Contact Us:

50-Plus Network:

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THE ELIZABETH TAYLOR
50-PLUS NETWORK



Elizabeth Taylor 50-Plus Network, established in 2014, promotes the physical, mental and emotional well-being and self-efficacy of gay, bisexual and trans (GBT) men over the age of 50, regardless of HIV status, by providing resource navigation, social support, educational groups, and volunteer opportunities.

Bridgemen is for gay, bi and trans men who want to give back to our community. We organize fun and relevant social events and community-service projects that provide leadership opportunities and create friendships. Our goal is to make San Francisco a safe and happy place for everyone—by building bridges between our many social networks.

sfaf.org/50-plus

50-Plus Network: Dusty Araujo; daraujo@sfaf.org

- Reconvene Community Advisory Board
- Convene Focus Groups to Refresh Engagement
- Expand Collaborations
- Work Toward Coordination Amongst Providers
- Connect Members to Areas on Aging Services

TGNC Programs: Jam Chen; jchen@sfaf.org

- Implement Next Steps Identified in Year 1
 - Trans-Masculine Programing 40 Plus
 - Creative Arts Programing
 - Legacy Papers
 - Death Duelas
- Expand Collaborations

Summary Report: A Needs Assessment of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Community Members Age 50+ in San Francisco

AUTHORS & RESEARCH
San Francisco AIDS Foundation: Jam Chen, Vince Cristostomo
Gender Health SF: Jenna Raposo, Karan Aguilera
San Francisco Community Health Center: Nicky Calma

Read the full report 

BACKGROUND

Trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people over age 50 may face ageism and transphobia, resulting in isolation and impacts to mental and physical health.

Service organizations in San Francisco that serve TGNC people over age 50 must know the challenges faced by this population, in order to deliver relevant services to people at different stages of transition, aging, and more.

WHAT WE DID



Collected information from 43 TGNC people over age 50 in a written survey



Completed three community conversations, two in English (6 participants each), and one in Spanish (8 participants)



Coded data from surveys & community conversations to identify themes and findings

KEY TAKE-AWAYS



Culturally competent care providers are needed to address the complex aging and health care needs of TGNC people age 50 and older in San Francisco.



Housing solutions should not neglect the needs of different genders, ages and disabilities as well as proximity to community.



Inclusive and supportive community spaces are vital to counteract the isolation that many TGNC 50+ people experience, and community members desire collaboration and coordination from service providers.

- Expand Collaborations within San Francisco Bay Area
- Establish Community Advisory Board



- Strengthen Community Advisory Board
- Create Opportunities for Long Term Survivor Engagement

LTS Community Liaison: Paul Aguilar; paguilar@sfaf.org

- Expand Collaboration
- Create Opportunities for Long Term Survivor Engagement with Cure Research
- Recruit 2-4 Liaisons by December 2023
- LTS Anthology



Case Management Services

- Aging Services No Longer Offers Case Management
- Vince is point person for former clients
- Refer to AHP, San Francisco Community Health Center, Shanti & LGBTQ Case Management
- What We Do:
 - Linkage & Referral
 - Gift Cards
 - Rides to Appointments
 - Uber Health
 - Silver Rides

Policy & Education

- Recruitment Innovation Center CAB (NIH) Vanderbilt University
- Equity in Aging – Work Group Advises Governor on Master Plan on Aging
- State HIV & Aging Sub-Committee of CA HIV Planning Group
- Ending the Epidemics (Jam & Paul)
- SF Mayor's Long Term Care Coordinating Council
- Dignity Fund Oversight & Advisory Committee
- SF Human Rights Commission LGBTQI Advisory Committee
- HIV/AIDS Provider Network
- Getting to Zero: HIV & Aging Sub-Committee

California Statewide
HIV & AGING
Educational
Initiative

A stylized, red-colored illustration of the Golden Gate Bridge is centered in the background against a solid black background. The bridge's two main towers and suspension cables are clearly visible.

The San Francisco Principles

2020

Launched September 18 2020...what it is...

A Call to Action To Mobilize

- Providers, Community & Government Officials
- To Remember Our History
- To Fight to for Health, Racial & Social Justice
- To See that the needs of ALL LTS are being addressed
- Nothing About Us Without Us...
- To Get Right what we haven't in the 40 years of the HIV/AIDS Pandemic
- SF Supervisors passed a Resolution to Support May 17 2022

Recommendations & Next Steps

- **Convene Partners**
 - Identify those Partners; Areas on Aging/California 4 Aging
 - What are the opportunities to collaborate
- **Conduct a comprehensive planning process that results in a model of care for people over 50 who are living with HIV then Implement model through collaboration across multiple organizations**
- **Support Policy & Funding Initiatives at Federal, State, & Local Levels**
 - SB 258 –Older Americans June 2021
 - AB 218 –Trans Health June 2021
 - \$3 Million - 4 Demonstration Projects –just announced May 2022
- **Improve Cultural Inclusiveness/ Competency**
 - Capacity building & training
 - Training HIV care providers in geriatric care principles
 - Training/Sensitizing aging providers to meet HIV 7 Aging needs
- **Develop Case Management Programs for Older People Living with HIV with Partners**
- **Increase Availability and Access to Mental Health And Psychosocial Services**

Dedicate our work to all those who are not with us and those who will follow....



The Team

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Thank You!!!!