

So, I am Megan Snedden, I am the Campaigns, Policy and Research and Officer for Stonewall Scotland. We are a charity that campaigns for equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bi and trans people living in Scotland.

Our workshop at the bereavement education conference today is going to give delegates the opportunity to identify the key issues affecting LGBT people in relation to death, dying and bereavement and give them an opportunity to develop a bit of an understanding about how best to support LGBT people at this point in their life.

So, we know that many LGBT people experience discrimination across their life, including when accessing public services. So, we know also that many will expect to face discrimination, especially when accessing health and social care, particularly older people as well. So, we know that two in five trans people actually avoid accessing healthcare for fear of discrimination. We know that two in five LGBT people would expect to be discriminated against if they were a resident in a residential home. And three quarters of LGBT people wouldn't be confident that they would receive sensitive end of life care for their needs.

So, considering this, many LGBT people have fears about reaching the end of their life, including how they will be treated in care homes and hospitals, how their relationships and identities will be respected, how they will be recognised after death, and how their loved ones will be supported throughout bereavement.

Interactions with healthcare professionals can really shape bereavement experiences. We know that three in five health and social care professionals don't think that sexual orientation and gender identity is important in relation to a person's health needs. However, at this particular point of life, family is really central to end of life and sexual orientation and gender identity is an integral part of those family relationship dynamics. So, if incorrect assumptions are made by staff, this can lead to same sex partners for example, being excluded from discussions and decision making, being prevented from seeing the body after death or being able to have an opportunity to say goodbye, and not being able to access that bereavement support after death.

Similar circumstances can lead to trans people being misgendered, or deadnamed or misremembered after death, even unintentionally.

So, today's session is to make staff aware of these key issues affecting LGBT people and give them a bit of an awareness of how they can support, moving forward.

I don't think many people would recognise the specific experiences of LGBT people in the specific context of end of life and bereavement, so being able to give staff that introduction to this subject area, so they have a better understanding moving forward will hopefully enable them to better support patients when they go back into their contexts.

So, I hope that LGBT people who are nearing end of life or who are affected by bereavement will be able to access better end of life care, so that they can have a better death and so that they are more supported through the bereavement process.

The film was produced in March 2020 and can be found at www.sad.scot.nhs.uk or <https://vimeo.com/392433679>

For more information visit www.sad.scot.nhs.uk or contact supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk

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