

# LGBT CAREGIVER CONCERNS

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IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS  
FOR LGBT CAREGIVERS



# LGBT CAREGIVER CONSIDERATIONS

As a caregiver for someone with Alzheimer's disease, you will face various challenges. Some are common among all caregivers, while others may be unique to those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). The Alzheimer's Association® offers support to all individuals who are facing the disease and provides assistance in finding helpful community resources.

## Planning for the future

Making long-term care and end-of-life care decisions can be emotional and difficult. Openly discussing these situations with the person with dementia while he or she is still able to do so can help ensure you understand his or her wishes and prevent stress or disagreements with family later on.

Due to the cognitive decline that occurs as a result of dementia, at some point, the individual will no longer be able to make medical and care decisions. Advance directives are legal documents that specify preferences regarding these decisions, including end-of-life care. Regardless of marital status, it is important for all couples to create advance directives to ensure that their wishes are followed. In the absence of advance directives, treatment and care decisions will be the responsibility of the person's spouse, or if the person is not married, a blood relative, usually a parent or sibling.

The two primary types of advance directives are:

- » **Durable power of attorney for health care:** Allows a person with dementia to name a health care agent to make health care decisions on his or her behalf when he or she is incapable of doing so.
- » **Living will:** A document that expresses how a person would like to be treated in certain medical situations, including the person's wishes for artificial life support.

Many legal forms can be completed without professional help. However, if you have questions or concerns that your situation may be complex,

it's a good idea to seek professional legal advice. It's also important to know your local laws, as laws determining who can make care and medical decisions vary from state to state.

### Accessing quality health care

It's important for you and the person with Alzheimer's to seek supportive health care providers who make you feel comfortable. Check for referrals to health care providers from the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA.org) or an LGBT community center in your area.

### Finding support

For some LGBT individuals, a family of origin is not present in their lives and cannot be relied on during difficult times. If this is true of your situation, it's important to find other sources of support as you face the demands of caregiving. Information and support are available all day, every day through the Alzheimer's Association **24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900)**. All calls are confidential.

### Disclosing your sexuality

To whom and when you disclose your sexual orientation and/or gender identity is a very personal choice. You may worry that service providers will respond negatively to your LGBT identity. Remember to trust yourself and make sure you're comfortable with what you share.

Visit [alz.org/care](https://www.alz.org/care) to find helpful caregiving information and resources.





**alz.org/care**

The Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiver Center provides reliable information and easy access to resources, including:

- » Alzheimer's Navigator® – Assess your needs and create customized action plans of information and support.
- » Community Resource Finder – Find local resources.
- » ALZConnected® – Connect with other caregivers who can relate to your situation.



**alz.org/findus**

We're in communities across the country.



**800.272.3900**

24/7 Helpline – Available all day, every day.  
(TTY: 866.403.3073)

**alzheimer's  association®**

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

**Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's disease®.**

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