

# LGBT CAREGIVER CONCERNS

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IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS  
FOR LGBT CAREGIVERS



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As a caregiver for someone living with Alzheimer's, 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 and end-of-life care decisions can be emotional and difficult. Openly discussing these situations with the person living with dementia while they are still able to do so can help ensure you understand their wishes and prevent stress or disagreements.

Eventually, cognitive decline will prevent the individual from being able to make medical and care decisions. Regardless of marital status, it's important for all couples to create advance directives — legal documents that specify preferences, including end-of-life care — 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 relative, usually a parent or sibling.

The two primary types of advance directives are:

- » **Durable power of attorney for health care:** A document naming an agent to make health care decisions on behalf of another person who is incapable of doing so.
- » **Living will:** A document expressing a person's wishes for medical treatment in certain situations, including the use of artificial life support.

Many legal forms can be completed without professional help. However, if you have questions, it's a good idea to seek 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 living with Alzheimer's to seek supportive health care providers who make you feel comfortable. Check for referrals to health care providers from the GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality (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. The Association's free **24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900)** is available all day, every day. All calls are confidential.

## Disclosing sexuality

Disclosing sexual orientation and/or gender identity is a personal decision. Some may worry that disclosing their LGBT identity will affect the quality of care they receive. Trust your instincts and be sure you and your partner are comfortable with what you share and with whom.

**Visit [alz.org/care](https://alz.org/care) for helpful information and resources.**





[alz.org/care](https://alz.org/care)

Reliable information and easy access to resources, such as:

- » 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/CRF](https://alz.org/CRF)

We're in communities nationwide.



**800.272.3900**

24/7 Helpline – Available all day, every day.

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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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