

Community Engagement Report

Your Organization/Affiliation: LGBTQIA+	Your Name and Email: Betsy Strahin (strahin.betsy@countyofdane.com)
Community Engagement Activity: <input type="checkbox"/> Community Forum or Listening Session – virtual or in person <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Discussions – virtual or in person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal Interviews – by phone or in person <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Live or Social Media Virtual Event <input type="checkbox"/> Paper or Internet Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe): _____	
Date/s of Event or Effort: 7/14/2021	Number of Participants or Respondents: 1
Key Issues Discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From your personal experiences, what the main issues, problems, and challenges adults age 60 and older are facing in Dane County? - How can Dane County Support older adults in remaining independent for as long as possible? - What does your ideal community to age in look like? 	
Key Takeaways/Findings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the LGBTQIA+ community acceptance and reducing stigma around their sexual orientation (gay) is of high importance. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The stigma and lack of acceptance within their own families and among individuals identifying as straight triggers mental health issues – low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, etc. They are told they are not living “right” and that they are “wasting” their lives. It is difficult to be part of church communities as some say being gay is condemned in the Bible. b. They are facing dual discrimination because of their age and sexual orientation c. They may not be close to their families, never had children of their own, and never married. They are living alone with no one but the LGBTQIA+ community for support. However, that support doesn’t always mean friendship and lack of friendship leads to loneliness. d. Need: resources specific to older adults who identify as LGBTQIA+; promotion of mental health providers who relate-to/understand/are allies for the LGBTQIA+; the community to normalize and decrease stigma around being gay; organized (and advertised) support groups for older LGBTQIA+ individuals; getting people to stop judging based on identity 	
Planned Response: Share this form with AAA of Dane County to inform the drafting of their 2022-2024 strategic plan.	