

Statistics

Lesbian and gay seniors are much more likely to be childless, single and living alone than their heterosexual counterparts.

- Of those older than 65, one in four gay men and one in five lesbians in San Francisco live alone, compared to just three percent of heterosexual men and eight percent of heterosexual women.
- Three-quarters of gay men aged 65–74 in San Francisco do not have a life partner, compared to 20 percent of heterosexual men.
- Less than one-third of gay men and lesbians older than 50 in San Francisco have children, compared with 90 percent of heterosexual seniors.

The consequences of isolation are increased vulnerability and risk.

- Since spouses and children are the primary caretakers of seniors, it is no surprise that gay and lesbian seniors could not identify someone to care for them in old age. Almost 15 percent of gay and lesbian seniors in San Francisco could not even identify someone to contact in case of emergency.
- Without live-in care, such as a partner or child, lesbian and gay seniors are less likely to take advantage of high-quality care and related services.
- Elders who live alone are much more likely to fall into poverty than are partnered people. Because so many gay and lesbian seniors live alone, the risk of poverty is that much higher for them, which, in turn, makes affording health-related services more difficult.
- The **openhouse** study found that disabling or chronic health problems such as asthma or diabetes among lesbians and gay men were reported at rates usually seen in people a full decade older.