



# Uplifting Takatāpui & Rainbow Elder Voices

Tukua kia tū takitahi ngā  
whetū o te rangi

Hohou Te Rongo  
Kahukura  
Outing Violence



Rainbow Hub  
Waikato

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We would also like to acknowledge our funders Te Puna Aonui, and the considerable support of Office for Seniors inside the Ministry of Social Development, responsible for funding oversight.

We recognise the considerable bravery of everyone who completed our survey, shared their voice via interview, or participated in a focus group. The stories Takatāpui and Rainbow elders have shared with us are precious taonga. May they help the needs of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders be visible inside our communities, and inside every service, policy, strategy and programme for older people in Aotearoa.

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**Trigger warning:** this report includes discussion and quotes from elders of historical and contemporary discrimination and violence.



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# Contents

About us	4
Recommendations	6
Introduction	9
Chapter 1: Discovery – Survey, interviews and focus groups	12
Chapter 2: Who did we hear from?	16
Chapter 3: Listening to our focus groups	20
Chapter 4: Social connections vs isolation	30
Chapter 5: Mistreatment, discrimination and their impacts	39
Chapter 6: Community groups and services for older people	46
Chapter 7: Families and whānau	51
Chapter 8: Safety with partners and caregivers	62
Chapter 9: Ageing – hopes, plans and fears	64
Appendix 1: Legal rights timeline	70
Appendix 2: Discovery phase	72
Appendix 3: Interviewer sheet	73
Appendix 4: Consent form for Elder Voices interviews	74
Appendix 5: Consent form for Elder Voices focus groups	75



# About us

## Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura -

Outing Violence is a charitable trust focused on building Takatāpui and Rainbow communities free of family, partner and sexual violence. We operate with a Te Tiriti structure, are survivor-led and include people with many different sexualities, genders, ethnicities, class and disability belongings, including allies. Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura asks us to cultivate peace through strengthening our connections and invites our communities to respect one another for all that we are. We take a community development and research-based approach to prevent violence and improve responses after people have experienced violence. We offer training, advice and support for violence response agencies and policy makers.



## Rainbow Hub Waikato

is a non-profit organisation that began as Waikato Queer Youth in 2005. By 2021, we restructured to grow the support we provide for rainbow folks of all ages. Today, Rainbow Hub Waikato offer support via referrals, education and community engagement across the Waikato and works to establish and collaborate on new projects and services. Enabled by passionate employees, volunteers and community members, we focus on offering hope to people of all ages. We strive to create empowering spaces for people to celebrate who they are, through positive, identity-affirming community building, fun and friendships.



Together, Rainbow Hub Waikato and Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura run the **Rainbow Wellbeing Network** for community workers interested in violence prevention and wellbeing and **The Big Qs**, an intergenerational programme for adults exploring their gender or sexuality, which is often the first place someone comes out, including adults in their 70s.

Takatāpui and Rainbow are umbrella terms we use to acknowledge tangata whenua and explicitly include diversity above, beyond and over the Rainbow, including cultural diversity. Takatāpui and Rainbow includes people with innate sex characteristics that do not fit normative medical or social ideas for male or female bodies; people whose gender does not match the sex they were assigned at birth; and/or people who are not heterosexual.

**Sandra Dickson** co-ordinated and led the project. Sandra is a Pākehā bogan woman of Scottish and Canadian descent who also identifies as bisexual, autistic and gender non-conforming. She has more than three decades experience working in community development and research in Takatāpui and Rainbow communities and family and sexual violence prevention at local, national and international levels. She came out in 1988, and now, aged 53, she has taken to calling herself elder-adjacent.

**Dr Huhana Hickey** was an elder advisor to the project. Dr Hickey (MNZM, MInstD) is a noted scholar in law, tikanga Māori, and disabilities research with a focus on human rights for marginalised groups. She's actively involved in numerous boards and advisory roles, including the Human Rights Review Tribunal and Odyssey House drug rehabilitation; leads the Pukenga Consultancy, and serves as Māori Women's Welfare League President for Te Hokinga Mai branch for Disabled Māori women. She is proudly Ngāti Tahinga, Takatāpui, and outside her professional life, she's a partner, mother, grandmother, and a passionate singer, writer, poet, and artist.



**Lexie Matheson** was also an elder advisor to the project. Lexie is a 78-year-old transgender activist with extensive governance and leadership experience, particularly in LGBTQ+ and sporting organisations. A double international (karate and archery), Lexie has 25 years academic experience and service across three universities. In 2016, Lexie was awarded an ONZM for services to human rights, education, and the performing arts and was runner up for Senior New Zealander of the Year in 2021. She is wife to Cushla, co-parent of 20-year-old Finn, and proud to be a small part of Elder Voices.

**Kathleen Miller**, a registered social worker with twenty years' experience, provided social work support for Elder Voices and co-facilitated two tangata whenua focus groups. Kath is kaiwhakahaere for a community-based organisation, providing advocacy and support for whānau led by one carer. She affiliates to Waikato-Tainui. Kaitiakitanga, manākitanga, mana and whakaute are integral to Kath's social work and leadership approach.

Our interviewers were **Tim Bennett, Oriana Brown, Dr Cayathri Divakalala** and **Bex Fraser**<sup>1</sup>. Oriana and Cayathri were also focus groups facilitators, with **Kathleen Miller, Hamie Munroe, Maluseu Monise**, and **Maria Cristina Rodriguez**.

He uri tenei no ngā whenua o Ngāti Maru, Te Au pouri, kōtirana (Clan Horn) me Aerani (Clan Murphy). My lens is from a Māori worldview, always looking to understand and decolonise, living by ngā mātāpono o lo, me ngā pono mārika ki te Ao Māori. No reira, Ko **Hamie Munroe** tōku ingoa. Tēnā kōutou, tēnā kōutou, tēnā kōutou katoa.

**Maria Cristina Rodriguez**, better known as **Maki**, is a queer person from Colombia based in Tauranga. Maki has worked with refugee and migrant communities in Hamilton and Tauranga for almost thirteen years, in New Zealand Red Cross, Shama Ethnic Women's Trust and Tauranga City Council. Maki is passionate about supporting vulnerable communities, empowering women, advocating gender equality, and supporting the LGBTQI+ community.

1. See Appendix 3 for the Interviewer sheet, which gives more details about Tim, Oriana, Cayathri and Bex.

**Maluseu Monise** is a hanujuologist (Rotuman storyteller) who is connected to his Rotuman community here in Aotearoa.

**Nathan Bramwell**, Director of Rainbow Hub Waikato, provided valuable community advice. Nathan is a proud trans man born and based in the Waikato whānau. Building on the family tradition of community care of his late mothers Rae Gilmour and Mary Alice (Bramwell), he relishes using his lived experiences in his mahi to support holistic wellbeing through social inclusion, compassion, and changing unjust systems. He serves in many advisory roles related to rainbow and gender diverse wellbeing, accessibility, and community-led research.

**Dr Catherine Cook**, Associate Professor at AUT School of Clinical Sciences, acted as an academic advisor to the project, communicating with international experts in elder abuse and providing considerable support for the qualitative interviewing process.



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# Recommendations

For each recommendation, Te Tiriti o Waitangi affirms the meaningful inclusion of Takatāpui and ensures their uniqueness is recognised. In addition, culturally specific experiences of Pasifika and ethnic Rainbow peoples must be recognised, rather than a one-size-fits all approach. Takatāpui and Rainbow communities require intersectional approaches that keep elders connected and safe inside all our communities of belonging. This includes culturally diverse elders, elders living with HIV, trans and non-binary elders, bisexual elders and disabled Rainbow elders.

## Central and local government, funders, and policy makers

### 1. Include Takatāpui and Rainbow elders in older persons' strategies

Existing older person's strategies do not adequately include Takatāpui and Rainbow older people, or the historical and contemporary discrimination which they have experienced. This means specific needs will fail to be met. Inclusion in older person's strategies must be guided by Takatāpui and Rainbow elders and needs identified in this research.

### 2. Include Takatāpui and Rainbow elders in service planning for older people

The planning and funding of services for older people must move to require meaningful inclusion of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders which recognises historical and contemporary experiences of mistreatment and discrimination. At a basic level, this involves expecting services for older people to engage in training and service development. It also includes funders recognising that many Takatāpui and Rainbow elders will not share their sexuality or gender identity unless they feel safe, which means their needs are often invisible to services. Funders must help services shift to become safe places for Takatāpui and Rainbow people to share who they are.

### 3. Include Takatāpui and Rainbow elders in service planning for elder abuse

The planning and funding of elder abuse responses must be responsive to the specific needs of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, including disconnection from families and whānau; social isolation; and fears or experiences of negative responses when disclosing sexuality or gender identity. Screening tools must address specific risk factors for Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, including neglect and institutional policies or practices which cause harm or disregard their rights in terms of culture, sexuality and gender.

### 4. Include the needs of elders in funding for Takatāpui and Rainbow communities

Older people feel invisible in Takatāpui and Rainbow community groups and activities. A need for intergenerational spaces inside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities that allow connections across age was particularly voiced by Māori, Pasifika and ethnic people. Funders need to recognise and value projects and activities that move beyond work focused only on young people. This includes funding for training for health, mental health and social services providers, who must know how to work with Takatāpui and Rainbow people across the lifespan.

*“Acknowledge there have always been mixed gender/sexuality. I have heard more than once that it wasn't known about in our younger years.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 80+ years*



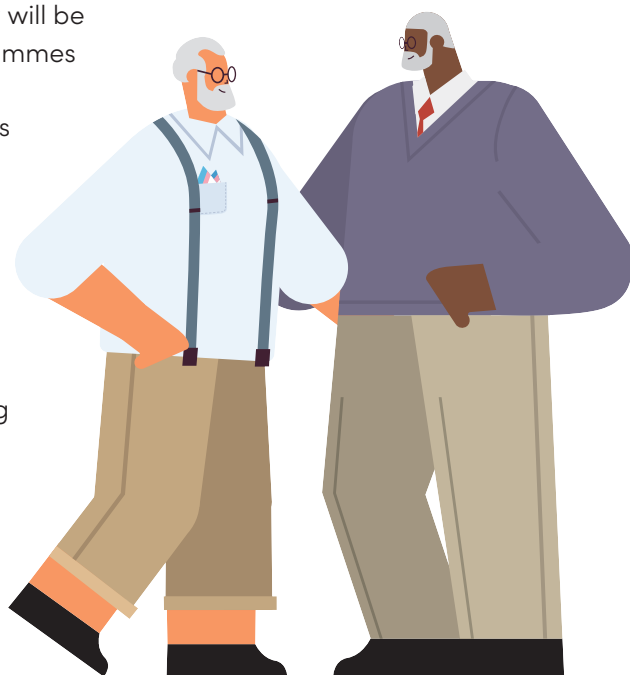
## Older persons, family and whānau services meeting the needs of older people

### 5. Don't make assumptions and be explicit about inclusion

Takatāpui and Rainbow older people need to know they will be able to safely share who they are in services and programmes for older people. This requires a shift in the practice of assumptions about sexuality and gender, as many elders are not out. Services need to make it clear they serve Takatāpui and Rainbow people in their websites and promotional material.

### 6. Include Takatāpui and Rainbow elders in meaningful ways

Meaningful inclusion moves beyond acknowledging Takatāpui and Rainbow older people exist, to developing relevant services and programmes; protections against discrimination inside services, from staff or other older people; training and upskilling staff and volunteer teams to provide mana enhancing responses that uplift the dignity of Takatāpui and Rainbow people; and reaching out to Takatāpui and Rainbow communities.



### 7. Develop the right relationships

Because of the specific needs and contexts of Takatāpui and Rainbow older people, connections with other services that can provide or connect elders to holistic hauora and wellbeing support is important, including Takatāpui, Pasifika and ethnic Rainbow community groups and services. Older persons services need to know how well other services in their communities treat Takatāpui and Rainbow older people. Hauora includes physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellbeing, and promoting connection inside families, whānau and communities.

### 8. Provide mana enhancing aged-care services

Aged-care contexts, or any service offering more personal care when people are vulnerable, are particularly feared by Takatāpui and Rainbow elders. Support offered in these contexts must be tailored to the needs of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, offering mana enhancing, dignified, respectful support. At a bare minimum, this requires staff guidance and training in Takatāpui and Rainbow communities and experiences, knowing how to refer to people respectfully, ensuring people may have ongoing connection to loved ones, including partners and chosen family and whānau, and ensuring people have the freedom to express their gender authentically. Aged-care contexts must establish practices that protect Takatāpui and Rainbow elders from discrimination from staff members, related services, and other residents or service users.

*“Please think, absolutely every time, you meet an older person that you do not know their sexuality or gender history. You do not.”*  
NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 70–74 years



## Takatāpui and Rainbow community groups

### 9. We need to provide opportunities for intergenerational spaces

Takatāpui, Pasifika and ethnic Rainbow people (younger than elders) believe that older people are less valued and respected inside western cultural norms, including white-dominated Rainbow community spaces. Many elders experience ageism or invisibility within Rainbow communities; and many want the opportunity for more intergenerational connection with other Takatāpui and Rainbow people. Elders who answered our survey were significantly more disconnected, and felt less belonging, to Takatāpui and Rainbow communities than to other people their own age.

### 10. We need to know our whakapapa – there is not one (white) story

Many elders do not feel the history of activism and experience of Takatāpui and Rainbow people is well understood by younger people, including the specific histories of Takatāpui, Pasifika and ethnic Rainbow communities. With so many elders in our communities wanting more connection, there are enormous opportunities to correct this, by uplifting diverse elder voices, particularly outside our larger cities. These histories should include storytelling about events that impact today's community dynamics, such as the dominance of white cultural values, Takatāpui, Pasifika and ethnic Rainbow histories, and the specific experiences of people living with HIV, bisexual, trans and intersex people.

### 11. We need specific groups and activities relevant for Takatāpui and Rainbow older people

Elders cannot find community or activities aimed at them – not only from social services, but inside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities. This is likely to reflect who is involved in Takatāpui and Rainbow community groups at voluntary, paid and governance levels, and may require groups to actively seek more engagement with elders. How do you communicate with your community? If it is only online, elders say it does not work for them. What kind of language and promotion do you use? If your community group does not actively invite in Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, you are only likely to be serving the needs of younger people.

*“I opt to help as a volunteer [community group] because I’m needed and appreciated more there than attending LGBT+ support groups. Most in those groups are way younger than me.”*  
Māori bisexual trans woman, 75-79 years

### 12. We need social change and advocacy work that doesn’t end at thirty

Many Takatāpui and Rainbow community groups are actively involved in important social change and advocacy work in their communities, including workforce training and policy development. However, one size does not fit all when it comes to age (or anything else). We need these social change efforts to highlight the needs and experiences of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, as well as young people. This is particularly relevant in terms of training in mental health, healthcare, housing and social services, and will require the guidance and meaningful inclusion of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders. Training also needs to be specific and relevant to local contexts, including iwi and rohe contexts.





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# Introduction

This project's name came from our early conversations with elder advisors. They asked us to draw attention to Elder Voices. Literally. They wanted to hear Takatāpui and Rainbow older people talking and felt the considerable differences in elder experiences were best represented by hearing many voices. The desire to uplift the voices of diverse Takatāpui and Rainbow elders is also reflected in the whakataukī we have chosen:

**Tukua kia tū takitahi ngā whetū o te rangi – let each star stand out clearly and be seen!**<sup>2</sup>

We set out to find out what life is like for Takatāpui and Rainbow elders. Underneath this broad question sat two desires – to advocate for meaningful inclusion of the needs of Takatāpui and Rainbow older people in strategies, policies and services for older people in Aotearoa, and to identify any specific risks of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The vision for New Zealand's Healthy Ageing Strategy is that "older people live well, age well, and have a respectful end of life in age-friendly communities." In the Waikato, the vision for the Hamilton Age Friendly Plan is "A city that ensures older citizens enjoy a quality life." Neither mention Takatāpui and Rainbow people.<sup>3</sup>

Older Takatāpui and Rainbow people have lived through enormous social and legal shifts in the last forty years, including managing grief for those they have lost. Our elders grew up when homosexuality was illegal, HIV/AIDS was a death sentence, there were no protections against discrimination, and access to supports for transitioning were non-existent. Māori, Pasifika and ethnic Rainbow elders have also faced and face significant disruption and violence from colonisation and racism. Takatāpui in Aotearoa experience systemic discrimination from being both Māori and Rainbow, and the specific impacts of multiple marginalisations, including through

faith, have also been clearly identified for Pasifika and South Asian Rainbow peoples in Aotearoa.<sup>4</sup>

Particularly relevant to Rainbow Pasifika and ethnic peoples in Aotearoa is legal context in ancestral lands.<sup>5</sup> More than half the countries which criminalise same-sex intimacy or non-normative gender expression, including Pasifika nations, can trace the source of this law to their relationship with Britain.<sup>6</sup> Even when such laws are not enforced, persecution and discrimination may create a challenging context for Rainbow Pasifika and ethnic peoples, perhaps elders in particular, to be able to safely live authentic lives, expressing all of who they are, in Aotearoa.

But this generational backdrop of discrimination and trauma was also fiercely and continuously resisted by our elders.<sup>7</sup> Legal gains for sex, sexuality and gender diverse people over the last forty years in Aotearoa are largely due to activism to undo the imposition of colonial laws here.<sup>8</sup> These gains have not been granted; they have been seized. In 1966, trans woman Carmen Rupe (Ngāti Hāua, Ngāti Heke-a-Wai and Ngāti

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2. Jessica Niurangi Mary Maclean uses this whakataukī in her piece exploring the impact of colonisation on Māori gender and sexual identities in *Out Here* (2021), An anthology of Takatāpui and LGBTQIA+ writers from Aotearoa.

3. No words connected to sexuality or gender diversity (such as LGBTI+, individual identity terms or Takatāpui or Rainbow) feature in Ministry of Health, (2016), *Healthy Ageing Strategy* or the *Hamilton Age Friendly Plan 2021-24*.

4. See Pihama, L., Green, A., Mika, C., Roskrudge, M., Simmonds, S., Nopera, T., Skipper, H., & Laurence, R. (2020). *Honour Project Aotearoa*, Te Kotahi Research Institute; the *Manalagi Project* at <https://www.manalagi.org/> and Bal, V., and Divakalala, C. (2022). *Community is Where the Knowledge is: the Adhikaar Report*, Adhikaar Aotearoa.

5. Aotearoa New Zealand's ethnic communities are diverse, representing over 200 ethnicities and speaking over 160 languages. The Ministry for Ethnic Communities includes anyone who identifies their ethnicity as African, Asian, Continental European, Latin-American or Middle-Eastern under the umbrella term ethnic.

6. Sixty-six countries currently criminalise same-sex intimacies <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/lgbt-the-law/>

7. See for example <https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/28-02-2022/50-years-of-gay-liberation-in-aotearoa/>; <https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/27-03-2022/a-trans-history-of-gay-liberation-in-new-zealand/>; and *Rainbow Histories of Aotearoa* <https://bit.ly/3HfCKIA>.

8. See also Appendix 1 for a brief legal rights timeline in Aotearoa.



Maniapoto) won the right to wear women's clothing in court. In 1962 the Dorian Society for homosexual men was formed, followed by the first national lesbian organisation SHE (Sisters for Homophile Equality) in 1973. In 1972, denied the opportunity to travel after being categorised a "sexual deviant," lesbian Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku (Te Arawa, Tūhoe) sparked a cry for Gay Liberation at the University of Auckland. The first trans rights group, Hedesthia, also formed in 1972 in Lower Hutt, aligning the acceptance of transvestites, transsexuals and cross-dressers with fights for gay liberation.

Resistance to laws and social practices punishing sexuality and gender diversity began fundamental shifts in Aotearoa in the 1970s and beyond, including in response to the HIV/AIDS crisis. Over the next two decades social events and venues, conferences, media, networks, sports teams and community groups sought safe and joyous places for Takatāpui and Rainbow people to hook up, live, love and safely celebrate who we were.

The 1986 battle for homosexual law reform was supported by this broader community organising. Shortly after in 1989, the Wellington Bisexual Women's Group formed, the first in a network of bisexual groups around the country. But acceptance of bisexual, trans and intersex people was often controversial inside what was usually referred to as "the gay community" at that time. While far from inclusive of the significant diversity existing inside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities – particularly ethnic and cultural diversity, disability and class – many older people participated in one way or another in this cultural explosion in the 1980s and 1990s.

By 1993, fights for inclusion in protections were won for lesbians, gay men and bisexual people against discrimination, despite publicly expressed views that bisexual people "muddied the waters" and should not be explicitly protected. Thirty years later, trans and intersex people are still not adequately protected by the Human Rights Act.

It is this specific generational context – overt, rampant discrimination and exclusion; a more narrow focus than the significant diversity recognised now inside Takatāpui and Rainbow

communities; and fierce resistance, pride and celebration – that we need to better understand in order to recognise the diverse situations and contexts in which Takatāpui and Rainbow elders might be at risk of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Te Aorerekura, the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence, acknowledges the need to address the social conditions, structures and norms that perpetuate harm towards different communities.<sup>9</sup> Elder Voices lives in many intersections in this strategy. Takatāpui and Rainbow elders experience the potential for isolation and loneliness relevant to many older people, exacerbated by experiences of lifetime and current discrimination and internalised stigma relating to Rainbow identities. Racism for Takatāpui, Rainbow Pasifika and ethnic peoples, and discrimination based on disability status are also relevant for many elders.

New Zealand's strategy for elder abuse response services identifies the issues in this way:

***"older people grew up in a society with very different norms where there was discrimination and little acknowledgement of LGBTQIA+, gender, and cultural rights. Some may have experienced various levels of historical trauma from this, impacting their current wellbeing and increasing their risk of abuse."***<sup>10</sup>

Elder abuse in Aotearoa New Zealand is hidden, despite affecting at least one in ten people over the age of sixty-five.<sup>11</sup> But for Takatāpui and Rainbow older people, it's all but completely invisible, with almost no information beyond the anecdotal.<sup>12</sup>

We do have data about experiences of crime more broadly. LGBT+ people are significantly more likely to be victims of crime, more likely to be targeted for interpersonal violence or sexual assault and more likely to be highly victimised

9. Te Aorerekura separately highlights Tangata whenua, Pacific peoples, ethnic communities, disabled people, Rainbow/LGBTQIA+ communities and older people, all of whom are relevant for Elder Voices.

10. Ministry of Social Development, (2020), Elder Abuse in Aotearoa: The proposed future strategy of elder abuse response services.

11. Office for Seniors, (2015), Towards gaining a greater understanding of Elder Abuse and Neglect in New Zealand.

12. The Ministry of Social Development, (2019), Elder Abuse in Aotearoa: The role and current state of MSD's Elder Abuse Response Services.





*Dr Huhana Hickey and Wayne Jackson (Rainbow Wellington) cut the cake to launch Elder Voices, September 2022.*

than other New Zealanders. LGBT+ women are four times as likely as all women to be targeted for sexual violence.<sup>13</sup> Other community research in Aotearoa confirms barriers to reporting or help-seeking based on fear of discrimination, including for partner and sexual violence.<sup>14</sup>

To identify concerns and protective factors which create wellbeing for Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, we developed a confidential online survey

that we distributed nationally. We interviewed a diverse range of eleven elders and held additional focus groups to better explore the needs of Takatāpui, Rainbow Pasifika and ethnic elders. We hope this report and the accompanying Elder Voice podcasts will assist in developing strategies and services to meet the needs of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, including to prevent and respond to elder abuse.

13. The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey: Key Findings Booklet Cycle 5 November 2021 - November 2022. Cycle 5 includes trans people for the first time. LGBT+ includes trans people and those who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or having another sexual identity.

14. See for example Dickson S., (2016), Building Rainbow communities free of partner and sexual violence, Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura and from Veale J, Byrne J, Tan K, Guy S, Yee A, Nopera T & Bentham R (2019) Counting Ourselves: The health and wellbeing of trans and non-binary people in Aotearoa New Zealand.





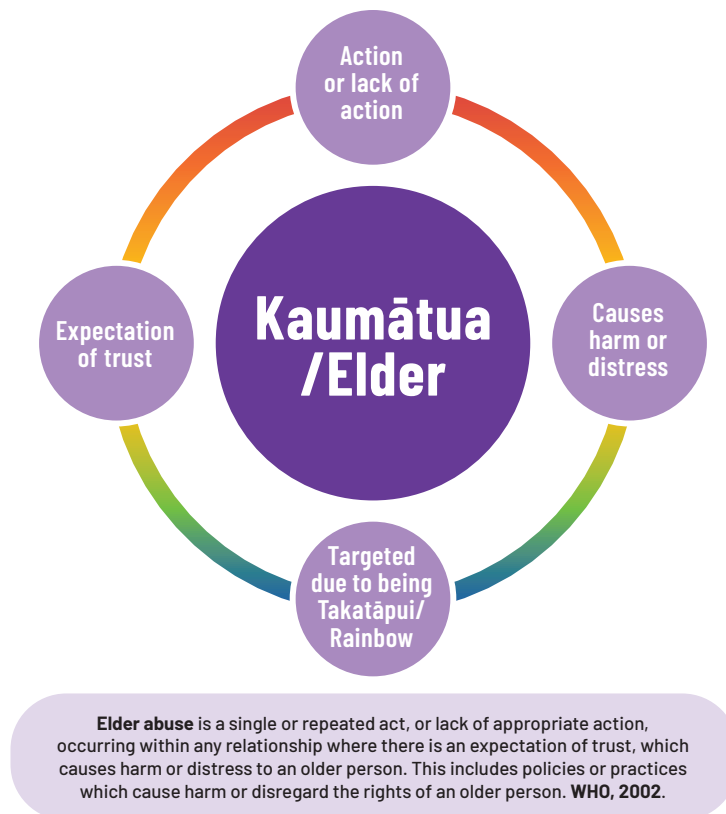


Figure 1: Takatāpui and Rainbow Elder Abuse

This definition allowed us to consider elder abuse as including physical abuse, financial/material abuse, neglect, abandonment, psychological/emotional abuse, sexual abuse or harassment, and, importantly for Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, institutional policies or practices which cause harm or disregard rights of an older person, including through lack of appropriate action. It also helped us structure our survey questions.

A draft survey was reviewed by our elder advisors and research team and feedback incorporated into the final questions. The survey introduction described the purpose of the survey as asking for help to inform plans and services for older people, and to help us understand the challenges and concerns Takatāpui and Rainbow Elders may have about ageing.

The survey introduction page also described who Elder Voices was open to, what kinds of questions would be asked, how long it would take, and how the information would be stored and analysed. We named research team members and described how we intended to report back on the survey, and we provided contact details for the research lead, our social work support, OUTLine and the elder abuse helpline at Whakarongorau Aotearoa. These support contact details were offered again at the end of the survey. Our material about the Elder

Voices survey made it clear it was for all Takatāpui and Rainbow people in Aotearoa New Zealand over the age of 55, whether they were “out” or not.

We used simple, straightforward language, and offered identity terms elder advisors supported, such as ‘transsexual’, which is preferred by some older transgender people. The first survey section asked demographic information, followed by questions about community and services, including sense of safety and belonging, and experiences inside community contexts. The third section focused on relationships in families and whānau, followed by a section asking about safety in intimate relationships with partners and/or caregivers. The final section asked general questions about ageing. There was a mixture of free text and multi-choice questions.

### Survey dissemination

We expected reaching elders would be challenging, particularly those less connected to community, and/or with differing levels of comfort and use of online spaces, including for disability reasons. Our dissemination approach focused on raising awareness, partnerships and encouraging a variety of community groups and spaces to “advertise” the survey for us.

We launched Elder Voices on 15 September 2022 in Kirikiriroa, hosted by Hamilton City Council. Attendees included people from Takatāpui and Rainbow communities and social services providers, many with a focus on older people, mostly based in the Waikato. Attendees also included researchers and others who had travelled from older persons services, NZ Police and Rainbow organisations in Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland.

Hosted by Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura's Maluseu Monise, the event created significant support for Elder Voices and included speeches from Rainbow Hub Waikato's Penny Boyce; Age Concern New Zealand's Hanny Naus; elder advisors Dr Huhana Hickey and Wayne Jackson; Hamilton Mayor Paula Southgate; and research lead Sandra Dickson and social worker Kathleen Miller.

Our poster included a QR code and tear off tabs with the survey link. After the launch, the poster and other material were also sent out to community networks, Takatāpui and Rainbow community groups, older person's networks, healthcare services, libraries and aged-care facilities. The Rainbow Hub Waikato Facebook page posted regular survey reminders promoting sharing and completing the survey. We received considerable support from Age Concern New Zealand, who distributed information about Elder Voices through their channels, including articles for local Age Concern magazines. In addition, the Ministry of Social Development's October 2022 Seniors newsletter featured a link to the Elder Voices survey.

We also ran workshops or met to promote the project regularly during late 2022 and early 2023, including with Elder Abuse Response Services (national providers meeting); Cross Agency Rainbow Network (government network); Auckland City Council Community networks; Auckland Age Concern; Positive Speakers Bureau; Hamilton Rotary Club; Hamilton City Council community meeting for older people; and Ministry of Health Online Pride (online national workshop).

Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura and Rainbow Hub Waikato's tangata whenua members reached out to Takatāpui elders, including participating in

Kaumātua events in the Waikato with Rauawaawa Trust and attending National Hui Takatāpui where Rainbow Hub Waikato's Quincy Ngātai promoted the project. We also approached Pasifika organisations Le Va, K'aute Pasifika and the Manalagi Project, as well as the Rainbow Ethnic Network via the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, the Rainbow Ethnic Alliance, Adhikaar Aotearoa and ethnic community organisations such as Shama and Aotearoa Latin American Community to share our material via community newsletters, social media or direct approach to elders.

The Elder Voices survey was available online from 15 September to 20 December 2022.

## Interviews

We aimed to explore the experiences of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders in more depth via in-person interviews, using Te Whare Tapa Whā to explore wellbeing and connection. The diverse interview team developed an interview guide, consent process, questions, and debrief form, reviewed by the research lead and academic advisor, Dr Cook. A visual guide of Te Whare Tapa Whā was developed for the interview itself. All interviewers attended a one-day training session led by research team member Bex Fraser.

Elders who signalled they were living in the Waikato via the survey were automatically offered an interview. Ten people volunteered via this route, nine of whom were NZ European/Pākehā. We also reached out via our networks to offer interviews to Māori, Pasifika and Rainbow ethnic elders, including people outside the Waikato. Another six people volunteered to be interviewed via this community engagement process.

The selection process, carried out by our social worker and research lead, focused on diversity of voice in terms of ethnicity, identity, age, living situation and disability. The eleven participants we selected for interview all accepted and were interviewed by an interviewer of their choice.<sup>18</sup>

We asked for and received consent from interviewees before the interview in writing. At the interview, we asked for and received consent

18. The interviewer sheet, sent out to all confirmed interviewees, is available in Appendix 3.



in writing to record the interview and produce recordings which could be made publicly available.<sup>19</sup> Our consent process gives our interviewees the power to withdraw consent at any point in the future, which would require us to remove their “snippets.” We also offered the opportunity to connect with our social worker, Kathleen Miller, post-interview. All interviewees were offered koha for their participation.

## Supporting our interviewees

Each interviewee was contacted by a research team member post-interview to check in and nine of the eleven interviewees also had at least one follow-up conversation with our social worker, Kathleen Miller.<sup>20</sup> The social work role met with a positive response, and all offered Ms Miller feedback on the interviewing process, describing it as respectful, and expressing appreciation for the opportunity to talk through experiences. Interviewees were very interested in hearing outcomes of the research project, and Ms Miller answered further questions, and offered information and the chance to be updated as the project continued. Two interviewees described the ability to contact someone, should the need arise, as vital for them. No immediate risks were identified or disclosed during the social worker contacts. Ms Miller made herself available for interviewees to call or text for up to six months after their interview.

## Identifying podcast themes

After each interview, the interviewer identified key themes and the interview recording was reviewed. The interview team, research lead and social worker met to discuss key themes after all interviews were completed. Sixteen interview themes were identified through this process. Each interview theme included “snippets” from up to 11 interviewees.

After the research team had selected our “snippets,” we sent these back to each interviewee to seek consent via email for each “snippet.” At this stage, we removed references our interviewees were uncomfortable with but there were no

19. The consent form is available in Appendix 4.

20. Two interviewees opted out of this process.

substantive changes. All interview podcast themes, after consent had been granted, were also sent to our interviewees, so they could hear how their voices had woven with others.

Feedback from interviewees at all stages was universally positive.

## Focus groups

Older populations in Aotearoa are significantly less ethnically diverse than the entire New Zealand population, partially due to a disparity of over seven years in life expectancy between Māori and non-Māori, and partially due to immigration settings which have discriminated against migrants of colour. We therefore chose to run two focus groups each for Māori, Pasifika and ethnic communities to more deeply explore these specific contexts and lessen the risk of “whitening” the experience of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders with this project.

The diverse focus group facilitator team developed a focus group guide and consent process, including adapting questions specific to their focus group. Each focus group was facilitated by two facilitators who either shared belonging or relationship to invited participants. Most facilitators attended a one-day training and skills sharing session.

We approached Māori, Pasifika, and ethnic people via existing relationships and networks to come to a focus group with either:

- Others who are part of Rainbow communities (but not necessarily elders) or
- Others who work in social support with families and whānau, especially with older people

We asked for and received consent from focus group participants in writing, including consent to record the interview and take notes on summary themes which would not identify individual participants.<sup>21</sup> Focus group participants were offered the chance to review the notes from their session and withdraw information, correct any errors or add more material, and about half of participants took this up and improved our understanding further. All focus group participants were offered koha for their participation.

21. The consent form is available in Appendix 5.

# Chapter 2: Who did we hear from?

## Who did we interview?

Eleven Takatāpui and Rainbow elders were interviewed by our interview team.

3 participants said they **did not have any impairments** or disabilities. The remaining participants described **post-traumatic stress disorder; hearing impairments**, even when using a hearing aid; **difficulties using their hands to hold, grasp or use objects; mental distress experiences; difficulties walking, lifting or bending**; and 1 person is living with **HIV**

No participants identified as **intersex**, or as having **variations in sex characteristics**

5 participants identified as **women**, including 1 **transgender woman**; 3 as **non-binary**, including both **transfeminine and transmasculine** people; and 3 as **men**

4 participants identified as **lesbian**; 4 as **Takatāpui**; 3 as **bisexual**; 2 as **gay**, and 1 as a **Pasifika Rainbow identity**.<sup>22</sup> 3 people identified as **more than 1 sexuality identity**

7 participants were aged between **54 and 64** years. 4 participants were aged between **65 and 79** years

5 participants were **Māori**; 1 participant was **Pasifika**, and the remaining participants were **NZ European/Pākehā**

2 participants were from **major urban areas**; 4 from **large urban areas**; 1 from a **medium urban area**; 2 from **small urban areas** and 2 from **rural areas**

8 participants **lived in their own home**; 2 **lived in rental accommodation**; and 1 lived in **non-permanent accommodation**

## Who came to our focus groups?

Seventeen people attended across the six focus groups, including from a Kaupapa Māori service working with Takatāpui kaumatua and kuia, Takatāpui, Pasifika Rainbow+ community members, Pasifika social services practitioners, ethnic social services practitioners and ethnic Rainbow people. One focus group was in Kirikiriroa in person; the other five were on zoom, partly to accommodate people from around the country and in one case as a precaution against covid. Participants came from all over Aotearoa and were diverse in terms of gender, age, sexuality and social work experiences, with many bringing considerable experience of providing support inside Māori, Pasifika and ethnic communities. The Pasifika focus groups included Tongan

22. The specific identity is not named to protect confidentiality.

and Samoan participants. The ethnic focus groups included Malaysian, Sri Lankan, Indian, Ecuadorian, Filipino and Japanese participants.

## Who answered our survey?

We received 424 survey responses from Takatāpui and Rainbow elders.<sup>23</sup> Participants did not answer every question, so we include numbers of overall responses for each question.

### Age

Survey participants were aged between 55–80+ years. A third of participants were aged 65–69 years. More than half (58%) were aged between 65 and 74 years.

23. An additional 25 responses were removed during data cleaning. These included people outside our target audience, and people who answered to express their negative feelings about Takatāpui and Rainbow people.





	Responses	Percentage
55 - 59 years	50	12%
60 - 64 years	40	10%
65 - 69 years	143	34%
70 - 74 years	99	24%
75 - 79 years	55	13%
80+ years	32	8%

	Responses	Percentage
Wellington	101	24%
Auckland	97	23%
Canterbury	51	12%
Waikato	32	8%
Bay of Plenty	28	7%
Manawatū - Whanganui	24	6%
Northland	21	5%
Otago	17	4%
Hawke's Bay	15	4%
Nelson	10	2%
Taranaki	7	2%
Tasman	6	1%
Southland	5	1%
Marlborough	3	1%
Gisborne	2	0%
West Coast	1	0%

### Living region and area

We heard from Takatāpui and Rainbow elders from every region, though there were small numbers of responses for some more rural regions, particularly in the South Island. Nearly half our participants were living in Wellington and Auckland regions.

Nearly half of our participants (44%) said they were living in a major urban area. Other living areas were nearly equally likely. Rural areas were selected by 14% of participants.

	Responses	Percentage
Major urban area (e.g. Auckland)	184	44%
Small urban area (e.g. Gore)	69	16%
Large urban area (e.g. Invercargill)	68	16%
Rural area	57	14%
Medium urban area (e.g. Te Awamutu)	41	10%

### Living situation

Three quarters (76%) of our participants were living in their own home, including in a retirement village, and nearly one in five (18%) were living in rental accommodation. Very few were living in residential care for older people.

	Responses	Percentage
I live in my own home (including within retirement village)	319	76%
I live in rental accommodation/ someone else's home	75	18%
I live in residential care for older persons	5	1%
I live in temporary accommodation (e.g. respite care, hospital)	1	0%
I live in non-permanent accommodation (e.g. car, caravan)	5	1%
Something else	15	4%

### Ethnicity

Participants could select as many options as they wished to describe their ethnicity, and 419 participants gave 447 responses. We received responses from Māori participants (7%) in line with New Zealand Census statistics for older New Zealanders.<sup>24</sup> Participants were most likely to describe themselves as NZ European/Pākehā (92%), including 7% in combination with other ethnicities. We received small numbers of participants identifying as Pasifika. 'Another ethnicity' includes people identifying themselves Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African and multiple terms, such as indigenous people from other countries. In total, 14% of participants identified with Māori, Pasifika and other non-Pākehā ethnicities. Ethnicity data is summarised to avoid identifying respondents.

	Responses	Percentage
Māori	30	7%
NZ European/Pākehā	387	92%
Pasifika	7	2%
Another ethnicity (Asian, MELAA, other ethnicities)	23	5%

24. Parr-Brownlie, L., Waters, D., Neville, S., Neha, T., Muramatsu, N., (2020), Aging in New Zealand: Ka haere ki te ao pakeketanga, The Gerontologist, Volume 60, Issue 5, August 2020, Pages 812-820.



## Sexuality

The most common sexuality for our participants was gay, selected by 40%, the majority of whom were men.<sup>25</sup> The second most common sexuality was lesbian, selected by 37% of participants, the majority of whom were women.<sup>26</sup> Twelve percent identified their sexuality as bisexual. Nearly one in five bisexual people identified as transgender, and there was an even split in terms of women and men.

Participants who described their sexuality in their own words said they were pansexual, asexual, a male homosexual, neutral, queer or secret. Six people described their specific gender journey in response to this question, rather than sexuality.

The people who selected straight (heterosexual) were either trans, or later responses in the survey described experiences of keeping their sexuality secret or being discriminated against because of their sexuality.

	Responses	Percentage
Lesbian	157	38%
Gay	168	40%
Bisexual	52	12%
Straight (heterosexual)	14	3%
Takatāpui	10	2%
Another sexuality	17	4%

## Gender

Participants were offered seven options to describe their gender, including being able to describe their gender in their own words.<sup>27</sup> Participants were able to select multiple options, allowing people to identify themselves as a Takatāpui man for example, or as a transgender woman or transgender man. Table 7 gives all responses to this question.

Forty-four participants (11%) selected responses other than only woman or man to the question about gender. This included five of the seven

	Responses	Percentage
Woman	188	45%
Man	198	48%
Takatāpui	5	1%
Transgender	23	6%
Transsexual	3	1%
Non-binary	11	3%
Another gender	7	2%

people who selected another gender, who described transition journeys in free text. Transgender woman was the most common response, followed by non-binary.

	Responses
Transgender woman	14
Non-binary	6
Another gender (transition narrative)	5
Transgender	4
Takatāpui	2
Takatāpui man	2
Transgender and non-binary	2
Transgender man	2
Transsexual	2
Non-binary woman	2
Transsexual woman	1
Takatāpui non-binary man	1
Transgender woman man	1

## Intersex status

We asked participants if they were intersex. We were aware the word 'intersex' may not have been familiar to everyone, particularly those with access only to medical terms which they may have been encouraged to keep secret by doctors or their family. Most participants did not think they were intersex; some did not know. No specific concerns were raised about intersex variations or their impact on life experiences in any free text responses to any questions.

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	7	2%
No	374	90%
I don't know	35	8%

25. Some women and non-binary people also selected "gay" as their sexuality.

26. Some Takatāpui and non-binary people also selected "lesbian" as their sexuality.

27. The options offered were *Woman, Man, Takatāpui, Transgender, Transsexual, Non-binary and/or Another gender*.



## Disability

We asked participants if they had any health problems or conditions lasting 6 months or more which caused them any problems. Takatāpui and Rainbow populations report higher rates of disability across age ranges in Aotearoa, and the incidence of disability increases as people age.<sup>28</sup> We do not know if the 42% of participants who reported at least one disability had been disabled by age or disabled for their lifetime. Those who reported a disability reported on average just under two disabilities.

Participants were most likely to report problems with ‘walking, lifting or bending’ followed by ‘seeing, even when wearing glasses or contact lenses,’ ‘communicating, mixing with others or socialising’ and ‘learning, concentrating or remembering.’ Fewer participants reported difficulties with ‘hearing, even when using a hearing aid’ and ‘using hands to hold, grasp or use objects.’

	Responses	Percentage
Seeing, even when wearing glasses or contact lenses	45	11%
Hearing, even when using a hearing aid	38	9%
Walking, lifting or bending	110	27%
Using your hands to hold, grasp or use objects	38	9%
Learning, concentrating or remembering	42	10%
Communicating, mixing with others or socialising	46	11%
No difficulty with any of these	240	58%

We asked a follow up free text question about living with a medical condition such as HIV, Parkinsons or diabetes, and any changes in this condition as participants got older. Eighty-four participants named 25 different health conditions they were managing, and many participants also commented on how the condition was impacting on their lives. Some participants were managing multiple conditions. The most common conditions were heart conditions (14 participants); arthritis (14 participants); people living with HIV (13 participants);<sup>29</sup> diabetes

28. See <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/lgbt-plus-population-of-aotearoa-year-ended-june-2021/>

29. Twenty participants said they were living with HIV at different points in the survey, but only 13 participants discussed HIV for this question.

(13 participants); cancer (12 participants); chronic fatigue conditions (10 participants) and lung conditions (7 participants).

Participants described self-managing conditions through medication, diet and exercise. Many described increasing loneliness and social isolation when health conditions made mobility more difficult or forced changes in daily routines that made it more difficult to see friends.

Several participants described living with HIV for decades, including co-morbidities as well as good health due to effective medication. The longest period named by someone living with HIV was 41 years. Several commented specifically on HIV stigma when trying to access healthcare or other services in the community.

*“There is still stigma around HIV particularly in small urban areas... I feel threatened disclosing my status as just one person leaking the information can sink your status in a small community. I have faith in the medical professionals but am fearful of the receptionists etc. I had a fearful experience at a local Dental practice when I revealed my positive HIV status. The demeanor changed it was like i had the plague. To the extent I refuse to disclose my situation these days when forms to update your particulars are thrust at you by a receptionist upon entry to a practise.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years*

We have analysed survey responses for all participants and explored meaningful differences between groups. This means we have explored differences for Māori participants; Māori, Pasifika and ethnic Rainbow participants as a group; trans and non-binary participants as a group; bisexual participants; disabled participants and differences between cis women and cis men. We have not been able to explore differences for intersex people due to the small numbers of people who identified as intersex. We have also taken the approach of highlighting intersectional identities and experiences via quotes, taking care to anonymise details.

The analysis of survey responses begins in Chapter 4, after the summary of focus group themes in Chapter 3.



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## Chapter 3: Listening to our focus groups

This chapter summarises the key themes from each of the six focus groups individually, reflecting the views of all who participated, and helps frame discussion in subsequent chapters.

Via focus groups with Māori, Pasifika or ethnic Takatāpui and Rainbow people, we sought to find out more about the needs of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders. As several of our (younger than elder) participants said, this is an important issue for younger Takatāpui and Rainbow people too; how we treat elders will one day be relevant for them. In addition, for all Takatāpui and Rainbow focus group members, connections between older and younger generations were vitally important. Participants wanted to honour the histories of Takatāpui and Rainbow communities in Aotearoa and other places culturally important to them.

Via focus groups with social services practitioners, we sought to find out how Māori, Pasifika and ethnic services were meeting the needs of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders from their communities, and what their training and support needs were.

There is a deep sense of relationship between the views of services and community expressed to us. Often, there is a sense of conversation from different unique positions, giving, we believe, a much deeper snapshot of the culturally specific needs for Takatāpui, Rainbow Pasifika and ethnic peoples who are older. We have reflected the words and language used by focus group participants as much as possible to honour the sharing in these groups.



### Takatāpui: Whakapapa and connection brought the term Takatāpui to me

Our Takatāpui focus group named themselves He Raukura and told us that there is a need for taonga tuku iho – caring for and nurturing the treasures handed down from ancestors in the form of knowledge sharing from Takatāpui kaumātua to

younger community members. He Raukura want to sit and learn from our elders, respect their stories, and honour the whakapapa of Takatāpuitanga.

He Raukura want elder whānau to have and maintain ownership over themselves. They were aware that some elders do not need/want a name (e.g. Takatāpui) as some see it as a modern term, while for others there is a connection to and a desire to reclaim the word Takatāpui. He Raukura participants felt that whakapapa and connection brought the term Takatāpui to them.

Takatāpui and Takatāpui kaumātua need more opportunities for coming together like Hui Takatāpui, and Manioro in Hastings, a social/collective initiative for Takatāpui. He Raukura members were aware of Takatāpui emergency housing in Auckland, run by Kāhui Tu Kaha Ngāti Whātua, for people in need of accommodation, but wanted more spaces to meet these kinds of needs, especially for Takatāpui kaumātua who were not safe.

Understanding the impacts of colonisation on whānau, hapū and iwi is important for Takatāpui. Colonisation has separated and disconnected whānau, hapū and iwi, disrupted tikanga and tried to render Takatāpuitanga invisible, all of which impacts Takatāpui kaumātua in whānau. The effects of colonisation on whānau have also changed the mindset in terms of caring for our elders in negative ways.

Whānau need safe spaces to learn about Takatāpuitanga so that they can apply it to their own home and uphold tikanga and kawa. Wānanga about the whakapapa of Takatāpuitanga, the whakapapa of Kahukura will make these words and concepts more accessible to whānau.

Whānau also need access to safe spaces to learn how to care for their loved ones, create trust and uphold their mana. The best solution is where



whānau and services work together, and more carers visit whānau for care and support. Services and care for Takatāpui kaumātua and kuia should be mana enhancing and maintain dignity in every space through the values of aroha, manākitanga and whakawhānaungatanga. However, many whānau are traumatised from racism when dealing with organisations and may need support and advocacy to be able to stand in their mana in these spaces.

There are layers of acceptance for Takatāpui in Te Ao Māori – in marae contexts, iwi and hapū. All are important, and there may be differences in acceptance between them. There are cultural expectations and responsibilities for kaumātua and kuia, their roles are amplified, and they take on senior roles on marae, within whānau, hapū and iwi.

Takatāpui worry about being able to shoulder kaumātua responsibilities. They are tired. When non-Māori get older, they wind down and retire, but for Māori the mahi increases, including cultural responsibilities and roles such as whaikōrero on a marae, even when elders may still be in the process of reclaiming their reo. There are also worries for gender diverse elders – if you identify as wahine are you able to karanga and do your hapū support you? If you are assigned female at birth and now identify as male are you able to sit with the men and/or whaikōrero?

He Raukura raised concerns about the wellbeing of Takatāpui elders, especially around isolation, loneliness and acceptance within the whānau. Takatāpui kaumātua must be acknowledged for who they are, so they don't have to hide. They also see this as a growing issue, as the population demographics have much higher numbers of Māori in younger age brackets.

When you are Takatāpui, Māori and elderly, you are triply marginalised – by racism, lack of acceptance of Takatāpui identities, and ageism.

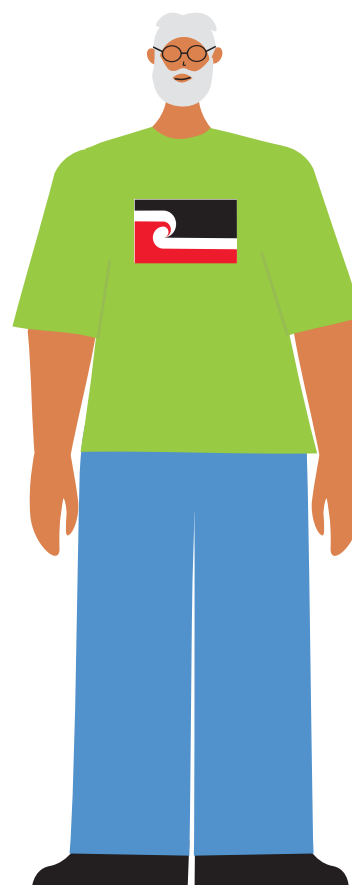
Te Tiriti o Waitangi needs to be affirmed in gender affirming care/residential care and all other social services spaces including those which support older whānau, before Takatāpui and Takatāpuitanga can be affirmed. This includes diversity and inclusion practices as well as Māori

working in these organisations in leadership and decision-making roles.

He Raukura also have concerns about how rest homes, aged-care facilities and institutional places more widely will be educated to care for and preserve the dignity of Takatāpui elders. They want whānau to be received in their Takatāpui-ness, not fit under a title of Rainbow that misses their uniqueness. This means acknowledging colonisation and racism, as well as ignorance about sexuality or gender. When there is ignorance, a culturally appropriate response will not be provided, and this will impact on care and support. It also provides opportunities for elder abuse of Takatāpui whānau.

This means community services and carers need education to hold a fully safe space for Takatāpui elders, including using the right language, respecting people's life and tailoring care rather than a blanket approach. Services and care should be mana enhancing.

He Raukura also raised concern over access to gender affirming care for kaumātua and kuia.



The waiting list for surgery in New Zealand has hundreds of people, and it's not clear if it is accessible to elders. In addition, they worry that wāhine are often positioned as a problem when they advocate for themselves and believe tāne will be looked after better. They also worry that Takatāpui elders who are childless may not have anyone to look after them.



## **Kaupapa Māori provider: Re-indigenise and start with the whānau**

Our Māori social services provider focus group was with a Kaupapa Māori provider who offers a range of social services for Māori, including working with kaumātua and kuia, and working specifically with Takatāpui kaumātua and kuia. The service had consulted with Takatāpui kaumātua connected to the service before the focus group, to guide their responses.

For Māori, having a role within whānau allows the opportunity to live authentically as themselves for Takatāpui, and Kaupapa Māori services see changes in this over time, with kaumātua not being whakamā about sharing now, in ways they might have been 20 years ago. At a kaumātua level, wāhine were probably more accepted within spaces than tāne.

This Kaupapa Māori provider sees basic and immediate needs of Takatāpui kaumātua and kuia such as locating suitable housing, including fixing the damp and substandard housing many whānau are living in. There are also transport needs (especially in rural areas), the cost of petrol, and access to good mobility and home care support, especially for disabled whānau. Increasingly, the impact of cyclones and other weather events is felt by kaumātua and kuia and whānau. Getting to support services means travelling substantial distances. Basic needs like how to get to an appointment become very immediate needs.

Because immediate, daily needs are often not met, the more entrenched needs are difficult for Takatāpui elders to focus on, though they are

increasingly visible. These include legal issues and long-term care, as well as their positioning as to who they are within their whānau units. Marae, those with roles in whānau as carers, Kaupapa Māori providers and kaimahi are under pressure to the point of exhaustion in trying to meet these needs for whānau.

Within a marae space, those aged 60-70+ are now viewed as kaumātua. The sense from them is that within the marae space they have gained the respect and status of a kaumātua. Cultural rights, such as speaking on paepae, have been denied for some Takatāpui kaumātua, causing pain and intergenerational trauma. Takatāpui kaumātua do not expect this within their own hapū and iwi. Takatāpui kaumātua have also been denied the right to visit partners in hospital, but they believe these things are changing over time, including the ability to speak on their marae.

Other kaumātua have commented to Kaupapa Māori services that they have always felt supported around being Takatāpui and their role in the whānau is just Aunty or Uncle, now kaumātua. However, collective living is less common now, and Kaupapa Māori services see imposter tikānga seeping into whānau, where kaumātua may feel they are a burden, or that they have a responsibility of having to contribute to the household expenses or provide childcare.

To support ngā kaumātua, including Takatāpui kaumātua, Kaupapa Māori services 'start with the whānau' by supporting whānau Māori with any needs they have. There is a need for a collective approach from services framed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi to address inequity and racism. In aged-care support, there is much less funding allocated to Māori kaumātua than non-Māori. When services work closely together, we can ensure the right questions are asked, and collaborate to promote indigenous partnerships for equitable resource allocation and development. These efforts bridge resource gaps for kaumātua and staff.

Kaupapa Māori services believe supporting Takatāpui elders needs to take an iwi and rohe specific approach, so whakaaro is embedded at an iwi level, for example Tainuitanga or





Kingitanga. This means it will be more relevant to kaumātua, and embedded into who they are, providing connections to promote safety.

There are assumptions that Māori whānau will provide all care for kaumātua as opposed to accessing care facilities, which is not necessarily an expectation of non-Māori by services. This may not even be on the radar of the immediate family, and Kaupapa Māori services will provide advocacy to ensure whānau have access to all the supports they are entitled to.

Kaupapa Māori services want dedicated research about the needs of Takatāpui kaumātua, so they can respond appropriately, and ensure they are reducing inequities for Takatāpui and Rainbow elders. They want safe environments for Takatāpui elders to share their experiences, so that whānau can re-indigenise and be involved in supporting Takatāpui. Whānau know best and should be in positions of leadership as opposed to being service driven and led.



## **Pasifika Rainbow: Pasifika Rainbow+ elders always go with what creates harmony**

The Pasifika Rainbow focus group named themselves the Kokonuttyz. In Pasifika cultures, honouring the wisdom and expertise of elders or matua is key. Elders have specific roles to show the right ways and teach younger Pasifika people in church communities. The concept of tautua or service is highly valued and modelled by elders to younger community members. Focus group members shared that often older Pasifika Rainbow+ people provide the pinnacle of this service.

The Kokonuttyz believe that Pasifika Rainbow+ elders deserve love and respect, in families, communities, and from Pasifika Rainbow+ youth. Younger Rainbow whānau do not know the rich history of Pasifika Rainbow. The Kokonuttyz believe that elders crawled so they can walk and run and fly, and acknowledge the joy, love and pain in these histories.

Sharing and learning from the rich narratives, stories and skills of elders is important, and Pasifika Rainbow+ people need more opportunities to explore deeply, value and learn and share. Knowledge is passed down through family and friends, so unless you know a Pasifika Rainbow+ elder, you will not have access to that knowledge. Education and history in secondary schools and tertiary institutions, where it includes Pasifika, does not include Pasifika Rainbow+. It is our organisations that are making sure voices and stories are heard, like the role of Māori and Pasifika trans women. The Kokonuttyz want Pasifika Rainbow+ elders to get the same respect as Pasifika elders, which is different from palangi queer/Rainbow values because Pasifika respect our elders.

‘Āiga, defined by focus group members as the collective someone is part of, family, culture and spirituality, plays a pivotal role for Pasifika as does language. The Kokonuttyz mentioned culturally important terms like fa’afāfine, fa’atama, fakaleiti, fa’afāfine, mähū, palopa, vakasalewalewa, akava’ine and fakafafine, but also being able to claim identities like non-binary and rainbow as important for them.

The stories of Pasifika Rainbow+ elders from when the AIDS epidemic was unleashed are not known. Many people just disappeared after contracting HIV and went back to the islands to die but didn’t tell anyone. The silence and pain, the terrible way especially fa’afāfine and gay men were treated, has not been unpacked, and is not visible or understood by younger generations.

The Kokonuttyz want older Māori and Pasifika to be acknowledged as the people that looked after them when they were younger. Open urban marae spaces, like The Evergreen in Wellington, kept many alive. Those spaces were safe for sex workers, trans people, the Rainbow community, when lots of places – including gay bars – would not let us in. There is a need to move beyond only white people’s stories – our gay might not be their gay! When these histories are shared, this is enriching and positive for younger Pasifika Rainbow+ people.

Pasifika Rainbow+ people have felt for a long time that ‘Rainbow’ spaces are not set up for them, so

for elders, the concerns are increased, and have not been talked about a great deal yet. Even the bringing together of the three words – Pasifika, Rainbow+, elder – is new and deserves time and space to think about.

The growth of more Pasifika Rainbow+ spaces like Moana Vā, F'INE and the Manalagi Project make space for Pasifika Rainbow+ identities, centre these identities, in important and sustaining ways. These spaces have been a long time coming for Pasifika Rainbow+ communities.

Pasifika Rainbow+ communities have had to fight for everything they have needed, but this takes confidence and does not work for those without support. There are no services for Pasifika Rainbow+ elders, but there is wonderful work going on in Pasifika Rainbow+ groups, offering intergenerational bridges between young and older community members.

The Kokonuttyz also see a need to talk about resources and racism. They are always viewed as brown first, before the other complexities that come with sexuality or gender identity, especially in the whiter cities or towns in Aotearoa. There is hurt in Pasifika Rainbow+ spaces about resources not being shared, especially by better funded organisations who only provide programmes that work for white people. This exclusion from resourcing is held as trauma by many in Pasifika Rainbow+ communities, alongside other experiences of racism.

Elders come from a very different time and age where the spaces and the contexts that they lived in weren't as welcoming and accommodating of their gender identity, expression, sexual orientation. These concerns, traumas, memories, worries, images of these times affect Pasifika Rainbow+ elders now.

The Kokonuttyz expressed concern for the health and financial well-being of Pasifika Rainbow+ elders. Trans feminine elders, aunties, have served communities, supported parents, children, nieces, nephews and other family members and now they are left having to rely on superannuation that isn't lava (enough), for them. They also had concerns about neglect, abuse, and grieving. Pasifika people thrive on

service, connection and being relational, but as we age our peers and others we hold dear may be lost from the physical realm, or we may be disconnected from others we hold dear and be more isolated than we want to be.

The Kokonuttyz shared stories about elders who had given service to their families, communities and churches, but who need support as they age, and there is nothing there for them. They also knew of elders who were active in the community and fa'afāfine groups but did not share who they were in their families because of fear and shame on their family. Sometimes, isolation resulted in suicide, because of the stigmas of having to navigate gender, sexual orientation, alongside our cultural identity. Others have chosen to forego their cultural identity and live mostly in palangi worlds, especially if they are in relationships with palangi.

Pasifika Rainbow+ elders need all elder spaces to be safe and appropriate for Pasifika, and safe and appropriate for Rainbow+ people. The Kokonuttyz expressed concern about fitting in and feeling welcome, especially in very gendered spaces, where it might be hard to work out which space – man's or woman's – was for them. Pasifika Rainbow+ elders want to respect the collective, and the harmony of the collective, so in many cases would go without rather than move into spaces that do not feel like they are for them. Humility and honouring collective harmony above the individual may not be understood fully by those who are not Pasifika. Pasifika Rainbow+ elders will honour the vā, and if a space and vā is clearly not for them, they will not participate.



### **Pasifika service providers: If your material doesn't advertise that you support rainbow community, they will not come through your door**

The Pasifika social service providers group named themselves Langa fonua 'afafine Pasifika. They affirmed that Pasifika elders are highly esteemed and elevated, more likely to be cared for by





families as they age, which they see as very different from western values. The value of elders stems from hierarchies which position males as the head of the house and so the status of older people flows from that line down.

In Samoan to talk about elders the term matua is used, in Tongan matu'a. These words mean wisdom keepers, the ones who give direction in the whānau, who hold the whānau together. The age you reach matua/matu'a status is difficult to define, and different for different contexts.

Pasifika communities have whānau and church commitments that are culturally important and maybe unique. Churches rely on Pasifika elders, for ministry and to provide financially. Families who live in New Zealand send money to their families back home so they can survive. Everyone knows how others contribute. The most important thing for Tongan elders is giving as much as they can to the church, worldly things are not important, so sometimes their wellbeing suffers, they do not have enough for themselves and services step in to support.

Because of the church, Pasifika Rainbow+ members are not always able to speak freely about who they are. This is especially true for older people. Participants were aware that families may shun Rainbow+ family members and not acknowledge their journey or relationships, which leaves Pasifika Rainbow+ people isolated. They have seen more openness about talking about the Rainbow community, and big increases in what is available, but it is mostly aimed at youth, so Langa fonua 'afafine Pacifika were uncertain whether these shifts have made a difference for older generations. They questioned whether Rainbow+ matua/matu'a can open up to services, or if they worry about how other older people will treat them. There are more layers for Pasifika Rainbow+ elders.

Langa fonua 'afafine Pacifika recognise the need to address this by creating spaces for Rainbow elders to gather, connect, and invite their whānau. Fiafia nights, housie and bingo, fun spaces for our Pasifika Rainbow+ elders to just be, so they are not something our people fear, they are just a community who needs support as well as any other community.

Participants would like to see support from churches and ministers. Churches have a unique role in showing what love is, inside Pasifika communities. Bible teachings like love your neighbour as you love yourself are powerful and allow opportunities to embrace Pasifika Rainbow+ peoples and show compassion. Ministers have important reach because they are highly respected, so can educate people, reduce discrimination, show non-judgmental attitudes, and model acceptance, especially for Pasifika Rainbow+ elders.

In Pasifika societies that are hierarchical, men are usually at the top of the hierarchy in churches and families. Langa fonua 'afafine Pacifika saw a patriarchal flow of this into Pasifika Rainbow+ contexts too. Queer men are much more visible, and able to be feminine, but queer women are not visible in the same way in Samoa for example. Participants also felt there was also a stronger presence of queer men in Tongan culture. The term fakaleiti and the Tongan Leiti association was familiar, but queer women are less visible, even in family roles. Fakaleiti can also refer to men transitioning to women, and in Samoan, fa'afāfine is the equivalent term, for queer men and for men transitioning to be women. Participants did not know any words, in either language, for women transitioning to men, and felt when other identities are not acknowledged, there can be misinformation about transitioning and identities not covered by leiti or fa'afāfine.

Participants were aware of Rainbow nephews who had roles in their families but did not think nieces would have the same opportunities to be open about their identity. They wanted more Pasifika research about the Pasifika Rainbow+ community.



In Pasifika cultures, disability, mental health, and same-sex marriage are very stigmatised. This is changing now for younger generations brought up in New Zealand who have gone back and taken education back and set up support services. But participants believed that for women to say they are in a same-sex relationship breaks tradition of who produces family, who produces children, who carries on the family name, so it is shunned.

Pasifika peoples will not always feel comfortable in social services environments without a Pasifika focus, even if there are Pasifika staff. In Pasifika focused social services, this is different, and they see many Pasifika people, including older Pasifika people. But Langa fonua 'afafine Pasifika said in both environments, Pasifika Rainbow+ elders are not very visible. There is also a question of how to provide safe opportunities for Pasifika Rainbow+ elders to share who they are. Langa fonua 'afafine Pasifika want to create welcoming and safe spaces for Pasifika Rainbow+ communities, including elders.

Participants talked about needing to be intentional to include Pasifika Rainbow+ elders, because they believed people would not reach out without being welcomed in. This included websites and pamphlets making it clear that an organisation offers support to the Rainbow community. If your material doesn't advertise that you support the Rainbow community, participants believed they will not come through your door.

Langa fonua 'afafine Pasifika also reflected on the service being offered, sharing wonderings about whether assessment forms were too binary, and how to know about pronouns. They wanted training to work with Pasifika Rainbow+ elders, from a Pacific lens, not a western point of view. Talanoa that are transparent and ask the questions that are needed, like what about females who are in a relationship, are they acknowledged by the Pasifika community or not? They wanted space to ask Pasifika Rainbow+ elders "Is this ok?" or "what do you guys think of this?" They also want referral options, so they can help Pasifika Rainbow+ elders who reach out.

Participants named Tongan cultural values for supporting Pasifika Rainbow+ elders including sharing, fevahevahe'aki, talanoa, the connection.

Connecting with the Tongan language, the four golden pillars that underpin Tongan society are important and offer the opportunity to treat everybody equally.<sup>30</sup>

Respect is central. When practitioners meet with Pasifika Rainbow+ elders, they felt they were going to serve, not the other way round. They said the way they come in is important, they come to honour this family, they come with the gift of food, the gift of love, mea alofa. They come to honour their time together, share the space with one another, talanoa and make connections around whakapapa, kōrero, those traditional values.

Practitioners said coming in with humility, to serve and to honour, acknowledges that Pasifika Rainbow+ elders are the ones with the wisdom, who know what they need. They saw this as very different to the western way, which they described as "we're coming in to show you a programme so you can be a part of our programme."

Langa fonua 'afafine Pasifika recognise that resourcing for groups and activities for Pasifika older people includes co-ordinator roles and being able to offer transport so people can be picked up and attend exercise groups or social events. Transport, mobility and health issues are all barriers for Pasifika older people, and poverty is also a barrier for many in New Zealand, where everything is far away so it's harder for people to access support and activities. They believe Pasifika Rainbow+ elders need similar kinds of resourcing to provide empowering social services spaces and links into already existing community groups.

Pasifika social services practitioners valued Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura and Rainbow Hub Waikato, as well as Kāhui Tu Kaha for their work supporting Rainbow communities, including Pasifika Rainbow+ communities. The housing and services offered by Kāhui Tu Kaha help Pasifika social services support older people and learn formally and informally about Rainbow inclusion. One example was referring to people in more neutral terms,

30. In Pasifika Proud, (2012), Fofola e fala kae talanoa e kāinga: A Tongan Conceptual Framework for the prevention of and intervention in family violence in New Zealand, these values are listed as Faka'apa'apa (acknowledging and returning respect); Anga fakatokilalo/loto tō (humility, open to learning); Tauhi vaha'a/vā (keeping the relationship ongoing, alive and well); and Mamahi'i me'a (loyalty and passion in application of self).



like tangata, to leave space for people to identify themselves. But there is a need for more services, and more information about what is available for Pasifika Rainbow+ elders.



## Ethnic Rainbow: We all need community and representation as human beings

The ethnic rainbow focus group want to see the wisdom of rainbow elders cherished, especially that of ethnic rainbow elders. The sharing of cultural values and generational knowledge from ethnic rainbow elders helps ethnic rainbow young people understand where they are from, their histories and their sense of self as ethnic rainbow people through specific cultural lenses. They acknowledge that those who came before them paved the way, and that ethnic rainbow elders need their support.

Ethnic rainbow focus group members see a need to normalise queer identities, especially elder ethnic queer identities, through decolonisation. Identities like Hijra, Nachchi and Takatāpui existed long before colonisation. Making these stories more visible helps counter queerphobic attitudes ingrained into ethnic cultures about queerness being a “new Pākehā thing.”

Wider social norms punish those who are different. This stigma and discrimination by society towards queer and rainbow identities worsens as we age, since older age already has negative connotations and expendability attached to it.

Despite the flaws and progress yet to be made, living in a Western socially progressive country has allowed focus group members to feel safe in publicly expressing their identities, even with the social stigma and racism that exists around being queer and ethnic. Participants felt that in comparison to older ethnic rainbow people, younger generations of ethnic queer people had more mainstream representation, access to online communities and state protections.

Many in ethnic migrant communities are not open about their gender diversity or sexuality. The

needs of ethnic rainbow people cannot be met if people do not feel safe enough to come out, but participants believe ethnic rainbow elders are exposed to increased vulnerabilities when they try to reach out to the community. They face racism, homophobia, and xenophobia, and often financial precariousness as well as challenges with disabilities and lack of support.

Migrants do not always have access to resources or information in the right language for them. Ethnic elders may have less or no support from the government or other free support services, which makes thinking of the future frightening for many. Migrant rainbow elders often moved here for safety and freedom, especially if families back home do not accept them.

Focus group participants highlighted that many in migrant communities do not have extended families in their lives. Often, they see their parents age without many friends or relatives around them. This is more difficult for ethnic rainbow elders, because many live alone or with partners and are often isolated from even the families they have here due to a lack of understanding or support. This makes social isolation a serious concern for ethnic rainbow elders, as well as concerns over mobility, especially for disabled ethnic rainbow elders.



Many ethnic rainbow elders were queer at a time when it was criminalised in many countries, and even punishable by death (and may still be). It may not have even been possible to think about coming out, even to close friends and family, and there was very little representation to show you that it was okay. Participants want to learn from this time, and for support services and programmes to develop from this cultural knowledge.

Focus group participants felt that white queer communities are structured and represented as gay white youth culture, associated with desirability, social agency, sex, and dreams of the nuclear family. In the media, young, white queer stories dominate, and queer culture is centred around clubs, bars, and primarily youth-focused spaces. There are gaps between young and older rainbow people and a lack of elder queer space available.

When queer elders are visible, it is only through being seen as part of 'history' such as their role in legalising homosexuality or the AIDS epidemic or sexualising them (especially in Western gay culture). Ageism in the queer community is partly a reflection of broader ageism in society, which commodifies and sexualises youth, and makes ethnic rainbow elders expendable from both the community and society at large. Ethnic rainbow elders are largely invisible within the queer community and society in Aotearoa New Zealand.

There may be different needs and vulnerabilities for ethnic rainbow elders that are out and those that are not out depending on their circumstances, family situation, location and individual perspective. Not being out might mean people prefer to have the support of their cultural community rather than risk being ostracised but may leave them vulnerable to being targeted for elder abuse. Those who are out unapologetically may have more freedom to live their lives but face the painful reality of choosing to cut off people who do not respect who they are, which will have consequences for future support needs.

Focus group participants want greater visibility of ethnic rainbow elders in the media and from within the queer community, so there is more general recognition that they exist. They could not identify one piece of media focused on queer ethnic elders.

Creating resources about elder ethnic queer identities and learning ways to challenge cultural and religious dogma that invalidates ethnic queer identity are also important to raise awareness, especially for families, so they can better understand and support their rainbow elders. Over time, focus group participants hope to see ethnic families and communities challenge their biases around queer identity, culture, and older age, and meaningfully support elders' needs.

Families should be able to reach out to safe, free places to get support for their rainbow elders. They need to know that they will be taken care of without having to worry about cost. Aged-care services must be rainbow elder and ethnic rainbow elder sensitive and friendly, which means understanding the needs of ethnic rainbow elders inside specific cultural contexts.

We all need community and representation as human beings, and ethnic rainbow elders need more places to find community. Focus group participants were not aware of any elder ethnic queer groups or services in New Zealand, and they believed there was a need for more rainbow support services that are community-led and rainbow-centred. For most ethnic rainbow elders, when their partners leave them or die the whole world collapses.

Focus group participants see discrimination and homophobia in many services including healthcare and mental health and shared many stories about services not working for rainbow elders. One rainbow elder went to a grief support service which was focused on young people and did not offer relevant support. It was also hostile to the elder sharing their identity. Another lesbian elder went to a support service, where she was told that she could attend, but she shouldn't "cruise" the other women at the service. Focus group participants worried that when Pākehā rainbow elders are treated without respect in these ways, ethnic rainbow elders are likely to be treated even more poorly in these and other service contexts. Ethnic rainbow elders also face racism more generally, as well as sexualization based on racialised, cultural stereotypes.





## Ethnic service providers: It is sensitive for us

The ethnic service providers focus group highlighted that ethnic community services serve many, many different communities. This includes clients from places where culture and religion are very strong, so the needs of ethnic Rainbow people of all ages can be sensitive and difficult to meet. Focus group participants felt there was professional acceptance of community services being there to offer support to everyone from ethnic communities. However, they were aware that some in ethnic communities do not find it easy to accept people from Rainbow communities and may not recognise the many ethnic rainbow identities that exist. This impacts of the ability of ethnic social services to respond to ethnic rainbow people with respect and dignity.

Practitioners saw a need for ethnic communities as well social services to better understand Rainbow communities. This included needing connections with community groups who can offer our families knowledge and resources and support them to understand ethnic Rainbow identities, and workshops for families, so they can understand Rainbow family members. Sometimes there is a lack of understanding about choice, and whether people choose to be gay or transgender. Our families need education to be understanding, and they need to see this information in “official” places.

Ethnic older people do not accept differences very easily, which means there can be a lot of discrimination against ethnic rainbow people who are open about who they are. They are often socially isolated, and usually do not have children to care for them and may find it hard to ask for what they need. Mental health services are not always supportive of ethnic rainbow elders.

Ethnic Rainbow elders may not come out until after they have been married with children, even grandchildren. This can be very hard for them. They receive judgment from family, isolation from the culture, and sacrifice themselves for others.

Focus group participants shared that ethnic Rainbow people go to community services, but

they often have not shared their identity with their family, or they feel pressure to hide. This leads to challenges, worries and mental health difficulties for them. It also makes it difficult for the Rainbow community to ask for services that can help, including for transgender people who may not be accepted for themselves.

Ethnic communities do not understand the rainbow, the cultural and the medical differences. When focus group participants need to support someone, they reach out to trusted ethnic rainbow people, or sometimes they connect to Rainbow community groups they know about, but these are not for elder abuse or violence, they are social groups. As well, solutions such as protection orders in unsafe families do not always work inside ethnic communities, especially for ethnic Rainbow people.

Ethnic social services practitioners want all practitioners to better understand the needs of ethnic rainbow communities and elders to prevent discrimination. For example, there is an assumption that HIV only affects gay or rainbow people, but participants were aware that's not always true, and did not think social workers in ethnic communities know anything about HIV. They also felt there was a lack of awareness, outside of personal relationships with ethnic Rainbow people, of support options, and of how to support different groups in Rainbow communities in ways that are safe for everyone.



# Chapter 4: Social connections vs isolation



This chapter explores the social connections of people who answered our survey, including to other older people, others in Takatāpui and Rainbow communities, and other communities in which they feel belonging. Where there are differences between different groups, these are explored. Many themes reinforce and complement focus group discussions from Chapter 3.

## Social connections with other people from their generation

We asked participants how they socialised with other people from their generation and offered several options and the opportunity to comment further in free text. Socialising in person was by far the most popular option, selected by 85% of participants, followed by socialising online (45%); at work/voluntary role (35%) and in activity groups (30%).

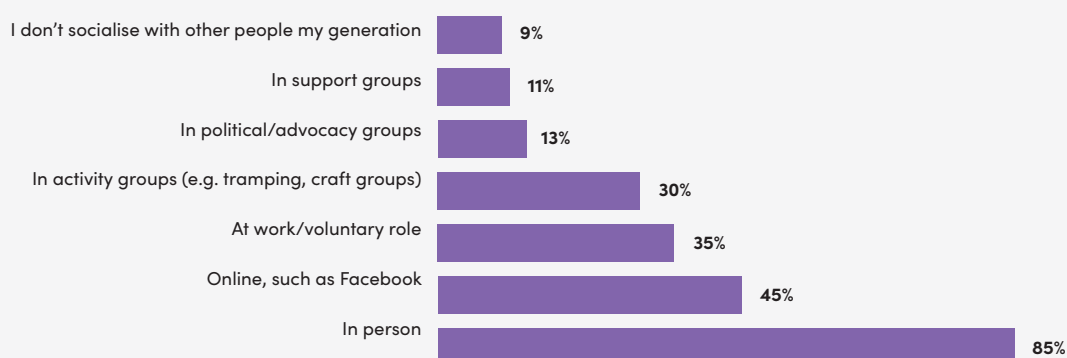
Just under one in ten of all participants (9%) said they did not socialise with other people in their generation. This figure was higher for trans and non-binary participants (20%) and Māori, Pasifika

and ethnic participants (17%). One hundred and fifteen participants offered more information via free text, discussed in the following themes.

### More connections

Participants were most likely to raise wanting more connections. Some participants were more isolated than they wanted due to health conditions which made covid more dangerous for them or their partners, or because they struggled to keep up with technological changes. Several participants talked about increased isolation after moving, and not being able to find Takatāpui and Rainbow friendly networks in new living situations.

Figure 2: How do you socialise with other people in your generation? (n=418)



*“I recently returned from [overseas], during COVID, where I had a moderately active social life including mixing in the queer community. Since returning I have become very isolated and apart from apps which are ineffective for older people I have no direct contact with the queer community in [city]. I feel very disassociated from them.”* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65–69 years

### **Dominant generational values that do not respect diversity, including the impact of HIV/AIDS**

The devastating impact of grief and loss due to inadequate health responses to HIV was described by some participants.

*“Between 1986 and 1998 I lost 44 NZ age peer friends – incl my partner of 22 years – and 38 died of HIV-AIDS related illnesses.”* Another ethnicity, gay man, 75–79 years

Others described connecting with their own generation as more difficult because of dominant values about sexuality and gender diversity.

*“Have always been distrustful of people from my generation as they were part of the cause of stigma and abuse when younger.”* Māori gay man, 65–69 years

*“As a queer nonbinary person I find many younger people easier to talk with. People my age seem to have different views of the world.”* NZ European/Pākehā bisexual non-binary person, 60–64 years

*“As a generation we grew up in a time when it was generally disapproved of/unlawful and this has had a profound impact on main in the elder generation.”* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65–69 years

### **Positive connections with others in their generation**

However, many participants kept in touch with others in their generation via phone. Many also talked about specific activity groups – though not specific to Rainbow older people – including sports, Rotary, University of the Third Age, kapa haka, church groups, arts classes, and neighbourhood groups.

*“I am a member of Rotary and [women’s group].”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian trans woman, 65–69 years

*“Kāpāhaka is great, and yoga, and walking group.”* Māori lesbian woman, 75–79 years

Some participants answered this question by describing seeking out and enjoying mixed age socialising, including in volunteering contexts.

*“Māori, iwi, hapū, whānau, and art world networks – including with people of different generations, including people who may be younger, older and my own age.”* Māori gay man, 64–69 years

### **Social connections with others in Takatāpui and Rainbow communities**

We asked participants how they socialised with others like them in Takatāpui and Rainbow communities. Socialising in person was again the most popular option, selected by 66% of participants, followed by socialising online (36%). However, for every potential option, participants were less likely to socialise with Takatāpui and Rainbow communities than they were people of their generation.

One in four participants said they did not socialise with other people in Takatāpui and Rainbow communities. This figure was higher for bisexual participants (38%) and Māori, Pasifika and ethnic participants (31%).

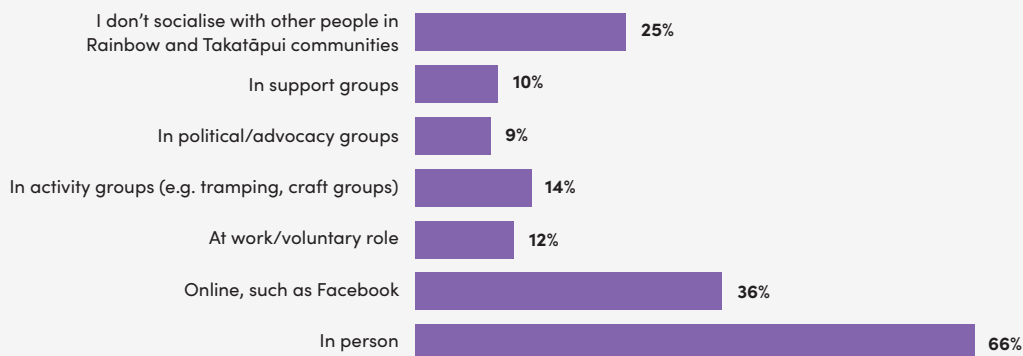
Our analysis of free text responses from 107 participants identified several themes, discussed below, which suggested both struggles to find others, being fearful of being visible, and tensions inside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities.

#### **I can’t find others**

Most participants who did not socialise in Takatāpui and Rainbow communities said they could not find community where they were – it was invisible. Often this was connected to a move.

*“The Rainbow community, particularly for my generation, isn’t visible. I moved here from another big city so haven’t built up a community either.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65–69 years

**Figure 3: How do you socialise with other people like you who are part of Takatāpui and Rainbow communities? (n=416)**



*“I moved away from the lesbian community a long time ago then moved cities and don’t know how to reconnect.” Māori lesbian woman, 70-74 years*

*“It is very difficult to become accepted into existing gay social groups where one has come out late in life and also shifted cities.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years*

Others reflected on the size of community where they were living; those living rurally or in smaller urban areas felt there was less visibility.

*“Really difficult to get started in a rural area. But so necessary! Often hard to get someone to take on a leadership role to get a group set up and to continue.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65-69 years*

### Fear of being visible

Many participants were scared about being open about their identity, for a variety of reasons.

*“I find it difficult to join in with groups due to anxiety. Most of my life was religiously based and it is hard to discuss things with others as I have not had the exposure to other rainbow groups as I only came out a few years ago.” Māori gay man, 65-69 years*

*“I know few people like me. Those I do are so “out there” my own privacy seems at risk, or is not respected. I would really like it when we get to the point in society where our sexual orientation etc is not so central.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65-69 years*

### Dynamics inside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities

Barriers to connections inside communities were also commented upon by many participants. These included many bisexual women describing uncomfortable or difficult experiences.

*“As I came to realise that I am bisexual socialising in the rainbow community became very uncomfortable.” NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 65-69 years*

*“I don’t feel I fit in and am continually told I don’t ‘look’ gay. When I go to a Rainbow event (which I would love to) I like to just be ‘me’ and not feel I have to prove anything.” NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 65-69 years*

Others wanted sober spaces but could only find community events where alcohol was central. Hook up apps, for some men, did not allow anything other than sexual connection, though for others, sex-on-site venues, online apps and saunas were important.

*“Only through Grindr and NZ dating. No-one wants to socialise on them as “an extra.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65-69 years*

*“The sauna is important as a way to socialise with other gay men.” Other ethnicity gay man, 65-69 years*

Four lesbian participants said they felt unwelcome in wider Takatāpui and Rainbow spaces because there was growing acceptance of trans people.<sup>31</sup>

31. We believe discussion of tensions inside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities are important in terms of developing safe and accessible services and community groups. However, quotes that describe anyone in disrespectful or demeaning ways will not be shared in this report.





## Age, ageism and socialising

Some participants also commented on the only local Rainbow events they knew about being for younger people.

*“I opt to help as a volunteer [community group] because I’m needed and appreciated more there than attending LGBT+ support groups. Most in those groups are way younger than me.”* Māori bisexual trans woman, 75-79 years

Many participants did not feel welcome at Rainbow community events explicitly because of their age, and several described being ignored when they tried to be involved.

*“As I get older i find younger rainbow forget all the hard work already done on behalf of the LGBTQI+ community. It’s like reinventing the wheel and older lesbians in particular aren’t interesting enough. I tend to socialise with lots of different groups and feel ignored if at a rainbow event.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65-69 years

*“I live in a part of the country where there are very few opportunities to socialise with other gay people, then it becomes a matter of age... if you’re not in their age group, they really can’t be bothered.”* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 75-79 years

## Loneliness and isolation

Many participants expressed being lonely or wanting more contact with other Takatāpui and Rainbow people.

*“I most definitely want to meet rainbow people of all ages.”* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65-69 years

*“I yearn to meet with people like me but don’t know where to find them.”* NZ European/Pākehā non-binary person, 65-69 years

*“I used to do more socialisation when I was younger; going out to gay night clubs. But as I’m now over 65 my only contact with the Takatāpui community is with gay friends.”* Māori lesbian woman, 65-69 years

Declining health or disability as a cause for less socialising was also described by several participants – either their own health, or that of their partner.

*“I spent many years building trans community support, am forcibly retired due to an injury, find I just need friends rather than specific trans friends, also, those I have known are starting to die off.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian trans woman, 65-69 years

*“I have only recently started living alone. My partner of 31 years has gone into care after an 11 year battle with [health condition].”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65-69 years

## Positive socialising experiences

Many participants described volunteering with community groups, sports teams, lesbian libraries, queer choirs, pink drinks, Vinegar Hill camping and kapa haka. Other participants connected with support groups for people living with HIV, or for those with substance misuse issues. These groups were described as intergenerational by many participants.

## Sense of belonging

We asked participants about their sense of belonging in four different areas on a scale of 1 = not belonging to 5 = very connected. On average, participants felt most connected to people their generation and least connected to Takatāpui and Rainbow communities.

Exploring differences between groups, bisexual participants, disabled participants, Māori,

Figure 4: Sense of belonging (n=416)



Pasifika, and other ethnic participants and trans and non-binary participants all reported lower overall sense of belonging across all the areas we asked about, shown in Figure 5. Trans and non-binary participants reported higher average belonging to Rainbow and Takatāpui communities, but lower belongings to their generation and their neighbourhood. Bisexual people reported much lower senses of belonging to Rainbow and Takatāpui communities, and the lowest overall sense of belonging across all the areas we measured, followed by disabled people and Māori, Pasifika and other ethnicities.

### The sharing of sexuality or gender with others – safety in coming out

One of the important issues elder advisors identified was when and if people came out. A frequent and inaccurate assumption is that elders will have come out or even worked out they were different in some way as young people, which does not reflect how fluid sexuality and gender are for many people, or specific cultural or generational contexts. In addition, in the Waikato where both Rainbow Hub Waikato and Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura are based, those living in rural communities often come out much later in life, sometimes without community.

We asked participants where they felt safe to come out, offering a range of situations, not all of which will have been relevant for every participant. Being able to be authentic with others is important for relationships of all kinds, but also to ask for specific needs you may have in relation to, for example, personal care. It is also very

difficult to talk about experiences of harm such as elder abuse if you are unable to tell those around you about your relationship, sexuality or gender history. Feeling unable to be open about sexuality or gender due to lack of safety make people more likely to be targeted for other kinds of harm.

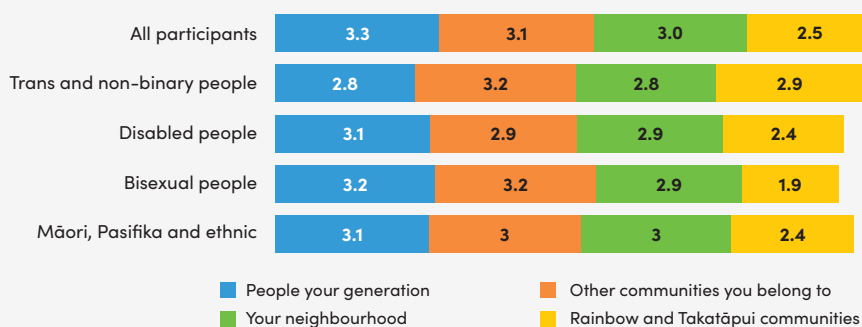
Takatāpui and Rainbow elders were far more likely to feel safe coming out to their doctor than anyone else (61%). However, this was still less than two-thirds of all participants.

Concerningly, situations in which older people are likely to be more vulnerable – residential aged-care (3%), with caregivers (4%) and with home care or support services in their own homes (5%) – were all selected as safe to come out for only a tiny handful of participants. While this will partly reflect the fact that most of our participants were not living in residential aged-care, based on responses about fears and planning for ageing, we believe these low responses also reflect anxieties about these kinds of personal services.

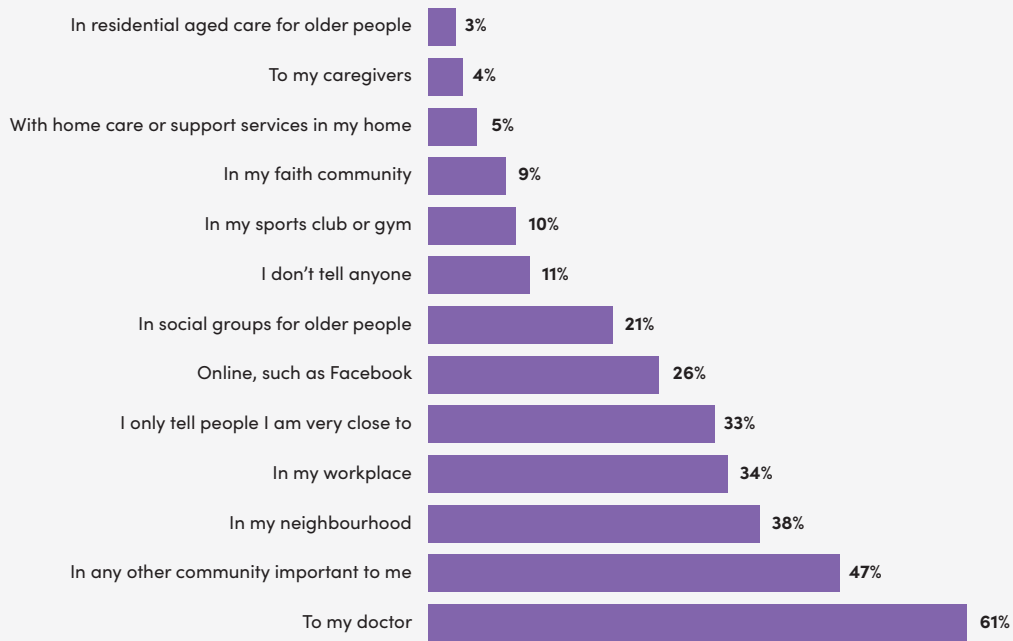
One in three participants said they only tell people they are very close to about their sexuality or gender, and just over one in three felt safe coming out in their neighbourhoods. Just over one in ten participants said they did not tell anyone about their sexuality or gender, meaning that many Takatāpui and Rainbow elders are living without being recognised by those around them, with all the potential for isolation that carries.

Exploring differences between participants, just under one in three bisexual people (30%) did not tell anyone about their identity. Bisexual people face specific challenges in coming out, related to

Figure 5: Sense of belonging for different participant groups



**Figure 6: Where do you feel safe to “come out” (n=402)**



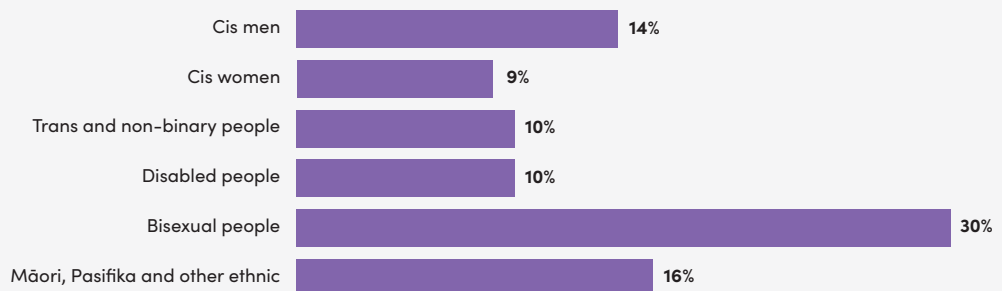
biphobia and bisexual erasure. Both rely on the idea that bisexuality is not an authentic identity and mean that bisexual people coming out may have their sexuality denied; may be assumed to be confused or going through a phase; and/or may be seen as too scared to “come out properly” as lesbian or gay.<sup>32</sup> Māori, Pasifika, and other ethnic participants and cis men were also more likely to not tell anyone about their sexuality or gender than other participants.

Coming out is a western concept, springing from specific contexts, carried around the world including to Aotearoa through colonisation, in which people are assumed to be straight/

heterosexual and cisgender (comfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth). Alongside these assumptions are dehumanising ideas and practices that people who are not straight/heterosexual and cisgender are lesser, and so may be treated more poorly. In cultures in which sexuality and gender diversity is accepted – even ordinary – coming out would not be necessary at all. Those from Takatāpui, Pasifika and non-western traditions have also pointed out that coming out often has a very individual focus, failing to recognise all the ways in which Takatāpui and Rainbow people exist inside family, whānau and other communal contexts. Dr Elizabeth Kerekere writes about Takatāpui being part of the whānau, and the concept of “letting in” has also explored as

32. Ross, N. and Dickson, S., (2017), Enhancing the UN Free & Equal Campaign by Targeting the Wellbeing of Bisexual People.

**Figure 7: Participants who did not tell anyone about their sexuality or gender**



an alternative to coming out by ethnic queer people in Aotearoa and elsewhere.<sup>33</sup>

These tensions around the concept of coming out, including whether it is necessary, were woven in responses from the 157 participants who offered further thoughts about coming out via free text. Several themes were identified.

### **I'm out everywhere**

The second highest number of responses were grouped under a theme which celebrated being out, everywhere. Many participants said they had been out for many decades.

*"I have been 'out' and open in my sexuality to family, friends and workplace since I was 20yo [1968]" NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years*

*"I have been out for 50 years." NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 80+ years*

*"I 'came out' as a male homosexual age 27 in 1974 in NZ. It's simply no longer considered in those communities with which I engage and those few who are not aware can ask and get a quick answer from me." Another ethnicity, gay man, 75-79 years*

*"I have been out as queer since 19xx and as trans since [2xxx]." NZ European/Pākehā gay trans man, 70-74 years*

Many participants explicitly discussed being out as a deliberate decision to make the world safer for themselves and others, including younger generations.

*"I feel safe to declare my sexuality wherever I go." Māori gay man, 65-69 years*

*"I've been 'out' publicly for about 30 years - I no longer feel unsafe anywhere." NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 75-79 years*

*"I don't 'come out.' I have been 'out' for 45 years and do not think about 'safe'. Part of my lesbian being is not to hide from anyone and leave other people to deal with their own prejudicial problems." NZ European/Pākehā gay woman, 60-64 years*

33. See for example Kerekere, E., (2017), Part of the Whānau: The Emergence of Takatāpui Identity – He Whāriki Takatāpui, PhD Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington and Nakhid, C., Fu, M. & Yachinta, C. (2020). Letting In – Closing Out: Perspectives and experiences of 'coming out' for queer/rainbow ethnic young people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

*"I am out everywhere. I feel a responsibility to be as publicly 'out' as I can be to make things easier for the next generation." NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian trans woman, 65-69 years*

### **I've never been 'in'**

A significant number of participants did not feel like they hid their sexuality or gender, but also did not necessarily feel like they had to come out.

*"I've never been 'in'." Māori lesbian woman, 65-69 years*

*"Don't conceal being lesbian. Ended a long-term relationship about 5 years ago and I think people assume I'm 'past it'" NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 80+ years*

*"I don't feel a need to come out. I live with my darling and after 25 years we are just us." NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 70-74 years*

These responses were often context dependent in terms of safety, and many participants felt others around them knew they were different and saw that as positive.

*"I don't feel I need to come out to the community .. if they know they know and if they don't I don't feel the need to tell them but I do not feel threatened in this community." Māori lesbian woman, 65-69 years*

*"I don't really 'come out', but just be myself; the extent of that depends on where I am." NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 70-74 years*

*"I have never found the necessity to even though it's probably obvious. I am who I am, take it or leave it." NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 80+ years*

*"I don't feel the need unless someone else says they are gay then I will come out at that point. I'm not out with some of my family. If people ask me I'm honest. I was out at my past work. So I pick and choose depending on how safe I feel and if they aren't connected to my family." NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual woman, 65-69 years*

### **I don't advertise it**

Another group of participants discussed coming out with more focus on their own privacy. Several



participants said they did not advertise their sexuality or gender.

***“I don’t advertise the fact I am gay.”*** NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65–69 years

***“I don’t bandy it about as if it’s important to anyone other than myself and my partner.”*** Pasifika gay man, 55–59 years

### **It’s easier now**

Several participants commented on changing times, and how much easier it was to come out now than earlier in their lives.

***“As an older lesbian, in the 21st century I feel very assured about coming out. This was not the case in the 1950s, 60s or 1970s.”*** Pasifika lesbian woman, 70–74 years

***“Today’s world is so much safer for lesbians than being bashed and threatened in the 1970’s.”*** NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 80+ years

***“I don’t have an issue being Takatāpui, and I have not had any negative experiences for decades!!!”*** Māori lesbian Takatāpui person, 65–69 years

Several participants also celebrated recent social changes such as marriage equality with joy.

***“Young people are making such a difference here – and to hear younger women talking openly about their wives is a pleasure.”*** NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 65–69 years

### **Protection from being judged**

Many participants talked about making strategic decisions to hide their identity, due to concerns about judgments from others. Most comments under this theme were from participants with identities other than lesbian or gay.

***“Being asexual is almost more weird for some people to accept than being a lesbian, so it is easier to keep quiet.”*** NZ European/Pākehā asexual non-binary person, 65–69 years

***“It’s not about safety. It’s that people don’t understand. I basically live as a woman even though I don’t really feel like one. I feel like if I tried to really be myself I would not have any friends.”*** NZ European/Pākehā non-binary person, 55–59 years

Bisexual people talked about the isolating impacts of biphobia inside Rainbow communities, both historically and in present-day.

***“I am in a relationship with a man and so people tend to assume I am straight. This means coming out is always a decision and often an effort. I am still affected by biphobia and by memories of anti-bi rhetoric from lesbians in the 1980s. I stay closeted rather than face the possibility of being alienated. When I do come out it is generally when my previous relationship comes up incidentally in conversation and I use her pronouns.”*** NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 55–59 years

Participants in this theme acknowledged that choosing not to come out when faced with hearing negative comments about sexuality and gender diversity was difficult – either being excluded for who you are, or not being able to share who you are.

***“This is difficult when you go somewhere new as you often hear negative comments yet want to be part of a group and not be excluded by standing up to those comments.”*** NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65–69 years

### **It is not safe to come out**

Distressingly, the highest number of responses to this question about safety and coming out were from participants talking about experiences of rejection, discrimination and violence as a direct result of sharing their sexuality or gender. Many negative experiences were recent, in places of work, families and communities.

***“I used to be very active in [religious charity], but was, very politely, kicked out when I confided with management.”*** NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 80+ years

***“I’ve been forced out of [club] and [club] for being trans.”*** Māori bisexual trans person, 75–79 years

***“I recently came out to a colleague/close friend after 12 years. She hasn’t spoken to me since. This only replicates why I am reluctant to be openly out. My past has taught me it’s not safe to be gay : (“*** NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 55–59 years





*"i do not feel safe telling people what i was put thru all tho i mention it to [people] about 3 months ago in one ear and out the other i would not bring it up again."* NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual man, 65-69 years

#### Trigger warning: violence and sexual violence

Other participants talked about traumatic historical experiences, including extreme violence and being targeted for sexual violence because of their identity.

*"Discrimination and hatred very much alive and kicking everywhere, thanks to colonial and religious progressive bullshit palava."* Māori, Takatāpui person, 60-64 years

*"I was violently beaten and raped by a white homophobic male new zealander in 1981. It takes a lot for me to 'come out'. People can see I don't play into some 'feminine' system so they make up their own minds."* NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual woman, 65-69 years

*"I find a lot of men of my generation have a negative reaction to lesbians so tend not to tell them."* Other ethnicity, lesbian woman, 65-69 years

*"Although the situation is much better than it was when I realised my sexuality (when my life was threatened), I still think people in NZ in general are very homophobic especially in smaller towns."* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years

Small town New Zealand was mentioned specifically by many participants as less safe to be out.

*"When I was young I came out to some family and friends, but after moving to a smaller city the subject, if it was raised at all, was discussed very negatively."* NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 65-69 years

*"In my community, few gay people I know are 'out' because of the attitude built into the people around me who think it's 'something you don't talk about' & if they associate with gay people, they'll become gay also or in the very least stigmatised because of who they associate with."* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 75-79 years

*"Homophobia amongst people in my age group in the city I live in is prevalent."* NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 65-69 years

Many participants also talked about negative impacts on safety of faith beliefs.

*"I live in the Bible Belt and it is not safe to come out."* NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 65-69 years

*"My family are mainly fundamentalists and very anti Gay, Lesbian and Bi people etc."* NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 75-79 years

Finally, many participants simply said they did not feel safe in the world.

*"Not feeling safe is a daily occurrence."* NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 65-69 years

*"I never ever felt safe until I attended counselling at [agency], I still find it hard to identify as my true self."* Māori gay man, 65-69 years

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- Belonging, acceptance and surviving discrimination
- Community hopes and dreams
- Emotional wellbeing
- Gaps and tensions in communities
- Healthcare
- Isolation
- Joys of building communities
- Looking to our histories
- Sex
- Wairua and spirituality
- When can I be my authentic self?



Interview themes can be listened to via [Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura](#) or [Rainbow Hub Waikato](#).



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# Chapter 5: Mistreatment, discrimination and their impacts

Trigger warning: this chapter explores experiences of mistreatment and discrimination based on many aspects of identity and reinforces and complements our focus group findings, discussed in Chapter 3. We also explore avoidance of situations in which Takatāpui and Rainbow elders were concerned about being treated badly because of who they are.

Takatāpui and Rainbow people of all ages are more likely to experience discrimination in Aotearoa. Lesbians and gay men (34%), bisexual people (39%) and trans and non-binary people (44%) are all significantly more likely than heterosexual people to report being discriminated against in the past year (16%).<sup>34</sup>

We asked participants if they had been treated badly because of who they were, across many aspects of identity. Every participant that answered this question indicated they had been treated badly due to at least one aspect of their identity. Our participants were most likely to have been treated badly due to their sexuality, reported by nearly three quarters of participants (74%). More than one in three of all participants (39%) had been treated badly due to their age.

Other forms of bad treatment were more relevant to specific groups. Forty-two percent of cis women had been treated badly because of their gender, and two thirds of trans and non-binary participants (67%) had been treated badly for their gender identity or being transgender. Nearly half of Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic older people (47%) had been treated badly because of their race/ethnicity. More than four out of five older people living with HIV (83%) had been treated badly because of their HIV status.

One hundred and thirty-four participants commented further in free text, many saying bad treatment was a thing of the past for them, including a small handful of participants who commented with pride on their generation having been part of reducing discrimination.<sup>35</sup>

34. Figures for lesbians, gay men, bisexual people and heterosexual people are from the 2018 General Social Survey (GSS). The figure for trans and non-binary people is from Veale J, Byrne J, Tan K, Guy S, Yee A, Nopera T & Bentham R (2019) Counting Ourselves: The health and wellbeing of trans and non-binary people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

35. Participants could answer the free text questions without answering the preceding multi-choice question.

*“I was lucky to be born in the generation that allowed rainbow identity to emerge and be celebrated.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years*

*“I’m at a stage where I’m comfortable w/ being out / and people who don’t like it can lump it.” Māori gay man, 70-74 years*

*“Some are ignorant and pre judge. Now i have a very tough skin!” Māori, Takatāpui trans woman, 65-69 years*

However, most participants discussed experiences of bad treatment in a variety of contexts, both recent and historical.

## Discrimination from the state

Being treated badly was often discussed in the context of institutions, entwined with assumptions about both sexuality and gender. Participants mentioned being treated badly by NZ Police, including recently.

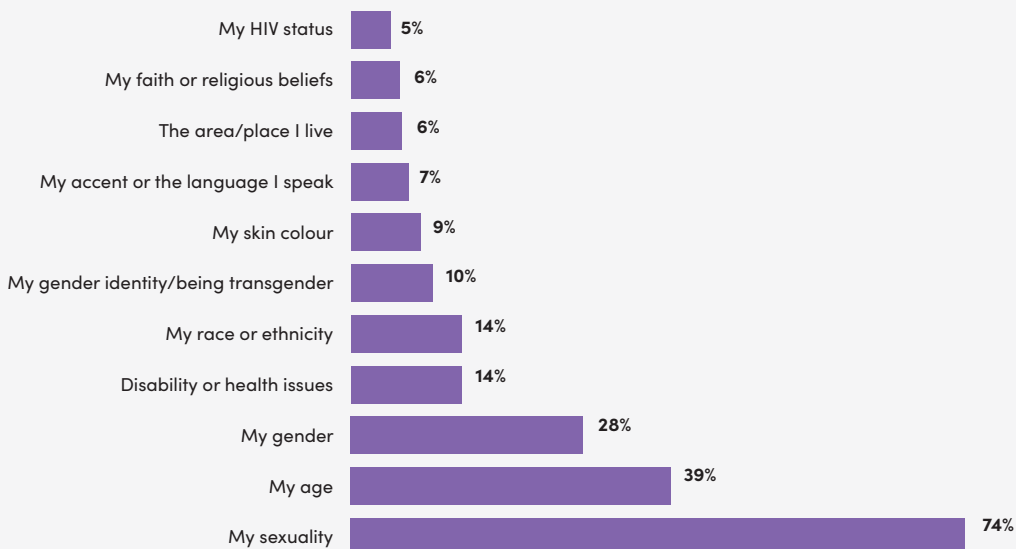
*“Police not very supportive. I get harassed.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65-69 years*

*“There’s not a lot help or protection for the Lgbt persons and police personnel can be non accepting or helpful.” NZ European/Pākehā bisexual trans woman, 55-59 years*

Participants also gave examples of their children having been removed from their care because of their sexuality, and of being forced into psychiatric care because of their sexuality.



Figure 8: Have you ever been treated badly for any of the following reasons? (n=301)



*“I lost custody of my children in [19xx] but was awarded custody again after a custody appeal to the High Court.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 70-74 years*

*“My mother sent me to a psychiatrist for having a lesbian relationship.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 75-79 years*

**Voluntary and paid workplace discrimination and bullying**

A significant number of participants talked about bullying in workplaces, often resulting in feeling like they needed to hide their identity.

*“I am a masculine guy who doesn’t show my gay side. I’m a caring and loving person. During my working career, I’ve been humiliated by fellow workers. I have reacted because I have hidden my gay side since little. I don’t know for sure if they were picking on me for being gay or for being caring. I am still very aware of showing my true colours to anyone.” NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 70-74 years*

*“Former work colleagues using disparaging comments about gay people. Some suspected my sexuality and would deliberately make unwelcome comments.” NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 60-64 years*

These workplace experiences led to participants losing paid and voluntary work opportunities.

*“I was volunteering in a rest home visiting [person]. After about 6 visits she asked if I was married. I told her I live with a woman. She asked me not to come back.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 60-64 years*

*“I was looked at very suspiciously when I was teaching in primary school. The pressure of Peter Ellis case was one cause for me to retire early.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 75-79 years<sup>36</sup>*

**Assumptions and exclusion**

Many participants also talked about the pressure of assumptions about who they were, or judgments, unwelcome curiosity, or attention when they did not fit into social norms.

*“Assumptions constantly eg are you twins? Or are you sisters? My wife and myself 2 gray/white haired women who look older and are having fun together.” NZ European/Pākehā, queer woman, 70-74 years*

36. Peter Ellis was a gay creche worker, convicted of 16 charges of sexual offending against children in 1993. His convictions were overturned after his death by the Supreme Court in 2022, who described the case as a substantial miscarriage of justice.





*“In our retirement village, a buddy system was set up where each house ‘buddied’ with a partner house for support. My partner and I are the only same-sex couple in the Village and no-one buddied with us. That hurt. It feels as if people are polite to our face but don’t really want to associate with us.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 70-74 years

Several participants talked about being excluded or bullied across their lifespan in bars, sports clubs and social clubs because of their ethnicity, sexuality, gender expression or disability.

*“Have experienced anti-Māori racism, bullying at school, being labelled a sissy when I was young, including after I was bumped up a year and consequently younger than other boys in my class at high school.”* Māori gay man, 65-69 years

Others tried very hard to “fit in” so they would not be left out of social groups around them.

*“People stare at me. I can see they are trying to work out if I am a man or a woman. Most of the people I come across seem to have no idea about gender diversity. Since moving to this area I have had to tone down my appearance to fit in. I don’t feel comfortable going to the local pub by myself, but the cafes are okay and there is even a rainbow looking staff member but they are much younger than me.”* NZ European/Pākehā non-binary person, 55-59 years

### **Ageism and invisibility**

Ageism and being treated as “past it” were also reported in social settings and from service people. Several participants described ageism as rife, and felt that ageism rendered them invisible, often in combination with sexism, racism and homophobia.

*“As an older gay man I feel I am invisible.”* NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 65-69 years

*“It’s tough being Māori, female, and ‘mature.’”* Māori lesbian woman, 65-69 years

*“Too many trades people rip us off because we are two women. We are sick of men treating us as dumb... yet we are well educated and make sure we know about things as much as possible.”* Māori bisexual woman, 70-74 years

*“I have become invisible to servers since my hair turned grey.”* NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual woman, 65-69 years

### **Tensions inside Rainbow communities**

In the context of discrimination in wider communities, tensions inside Rainbow communities become more important because they may stop Takatāpui and Rainbow older people being able to seek refuge from mistreatment. While most poor treatment was from outside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities, some participants talked about tensions inside communities, including not feeling like their contributions as older community members were respected by younger Takatāpui and Rainbow people.

A small handful of lesbian participants were uncomfortable with recent community shifts to include trans people more explicitly. This tension, between those who accept trans people and those who do not, was also commented upon by some trans participants, who did not feel respected and described being targeted for verbal and online abuse.

*“Reception in “rainbow” community has sometimes been worse than in straight community. Verbal abuse for being bi by lesbians and gay men within last ten years. Verbal and online abuse for not being cisgender in last five years.”* NZ European/Pākehā bisexual non-binary person, 60-64 years

There was also explicit commentary about the impact of biphobia by several participants, both interpersonally from others in Rainbow communities, and in services provided by Rainbow community groups.

*“I rang up [Rainbow group] and wanted to talk about being Bisexual and they said to me “Don’t ever come out as Bi to a gay person because they will reject you.””* NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 65-69 years

### **Violence, harassment and sexual harm**

Many participants described being verbally abused, shouted at, and threatened in public spaces because of perceptions of their sexuality or gender. Some experiences were historical.



*“I lived with queer bashing as a youngster and put up with a lot of verbal abuse as a younger adult.” Pasifika gay man, 55–59 years*

*“Years ago my partner and I were holding hands walking down the street in a busy suburban shopping area. Two young men were walking behind us and calling us “dirty lesbians.”” Māori, lesbian Takatāpui person, 65–69 years*

However, some experiences were more recent.

*“People screaming at us from cars going past – not often but scary.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 70–74 years*

*“I have been derogatively called a ‘Dyke’ like it is something dirty.” NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 65–69 years*

*“I live in [social housing] and where I live there is a man who is a bigot. He has said nasty things to me and I told the [housing provider] and they said that if it happens again he is out of here.” NZ European/Pākehā trans woman, 70–74 years*

Many participants also shared experiences of sexual harm as children and young people which impacted them in ongoing ways. This included being targeted for child sexual abuse in families; being sexually harmed in school environments as

part of bullying about gender or sexuality; and being sexually harmed inside healthcare contexts by medical professionals. Most who shared these experiences, of all genders, believed they were targeted or punished for being different.

### Mistreatment in community contexts due to sexuality or gender identity

We asked participants if they had been mistreated for their sexuality or gender identity in a range of situations in the last two years. They could select no, not relevant for me, verbal abuse or physical abuse.

Percentages in Figure 9 are the participants for whom these situations are relevant who selected physical or verbal abuse. The majority of mistreatment reported was verbal abuse, for every situation. Mistreatment was reported in every social situation we asked about. Takatāpui and Rainbow elders were most likely to be mistreated on the street or in a public place (19%); online (17%) or by NZ Police (10%).

Exploring differences between groups inside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities, we found higher rates of mistreatment across most situations for bisexual participants, disabled participants, Māori, Pasifika and ethnic participants but especially trans and non-binary participants.

**Figure 9: Mistreatment for sexuality or gender identity in the last 2 years (n=383)**

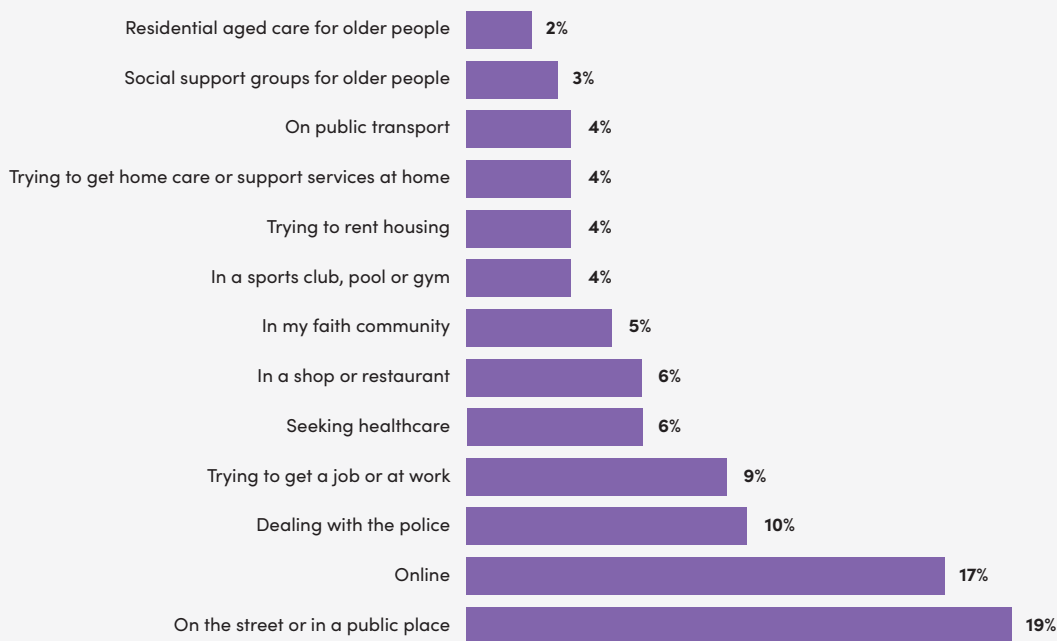
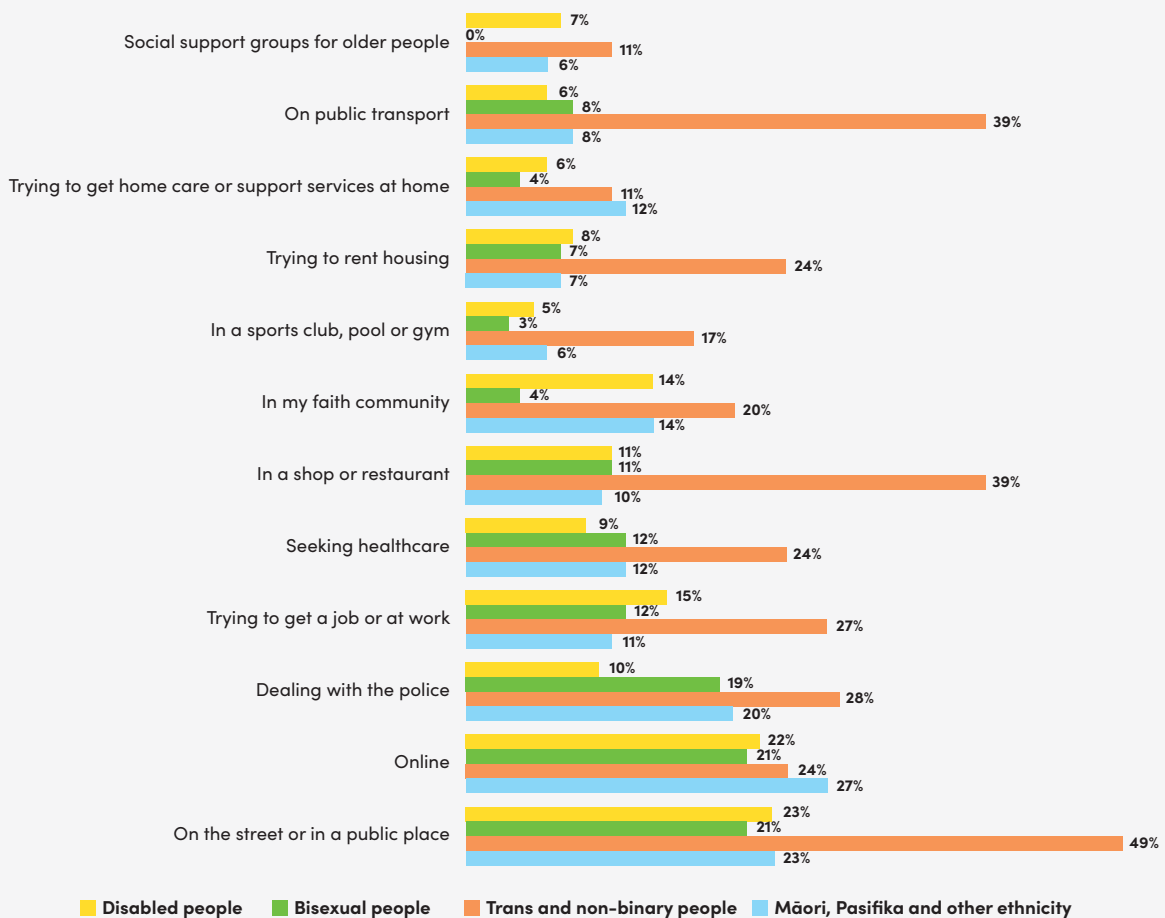


Figure 10: Highest rates of mistreatment in the last two years by participant group



Māori, Pasifika and ethnic people (27%) reported the highest rate of mistreatment online. Trans and non-binary people reported the highest rates of mistreatment for every situation except online, and often they were reporting rates of mistreatment many times higher than other participants. Half of trans and non-binary people had experienced mistreatment on the street or in a public place and 39% on public transport or in a shop or restaurant. Figure 10 demonstrates the impact of cumulative marginalisation for bisexual, disabled, Māori, Pasifika and ethnic and especially trans and non-binary elders.

### Avoiding social situations due to fear of mistreatment

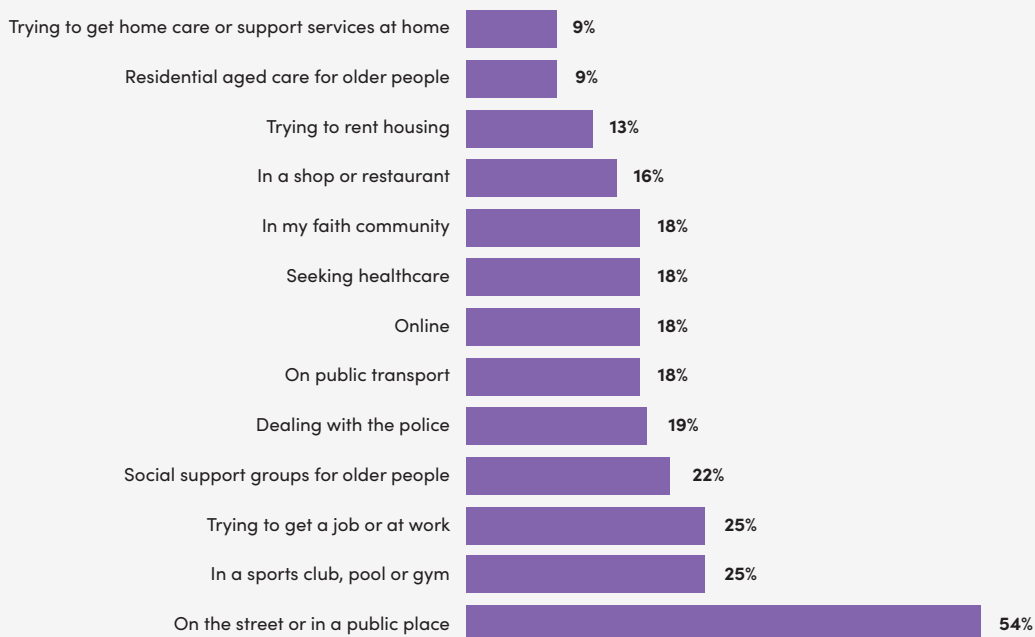
We asked participants if they had ever avoided situations because they were afraid they would be mistreated due to their sexuality or gender. Fear of mistreatment might come from historical

experiences; from hearing others like you have been mistreated in similar situations; or from recent experiences of mistreatment.

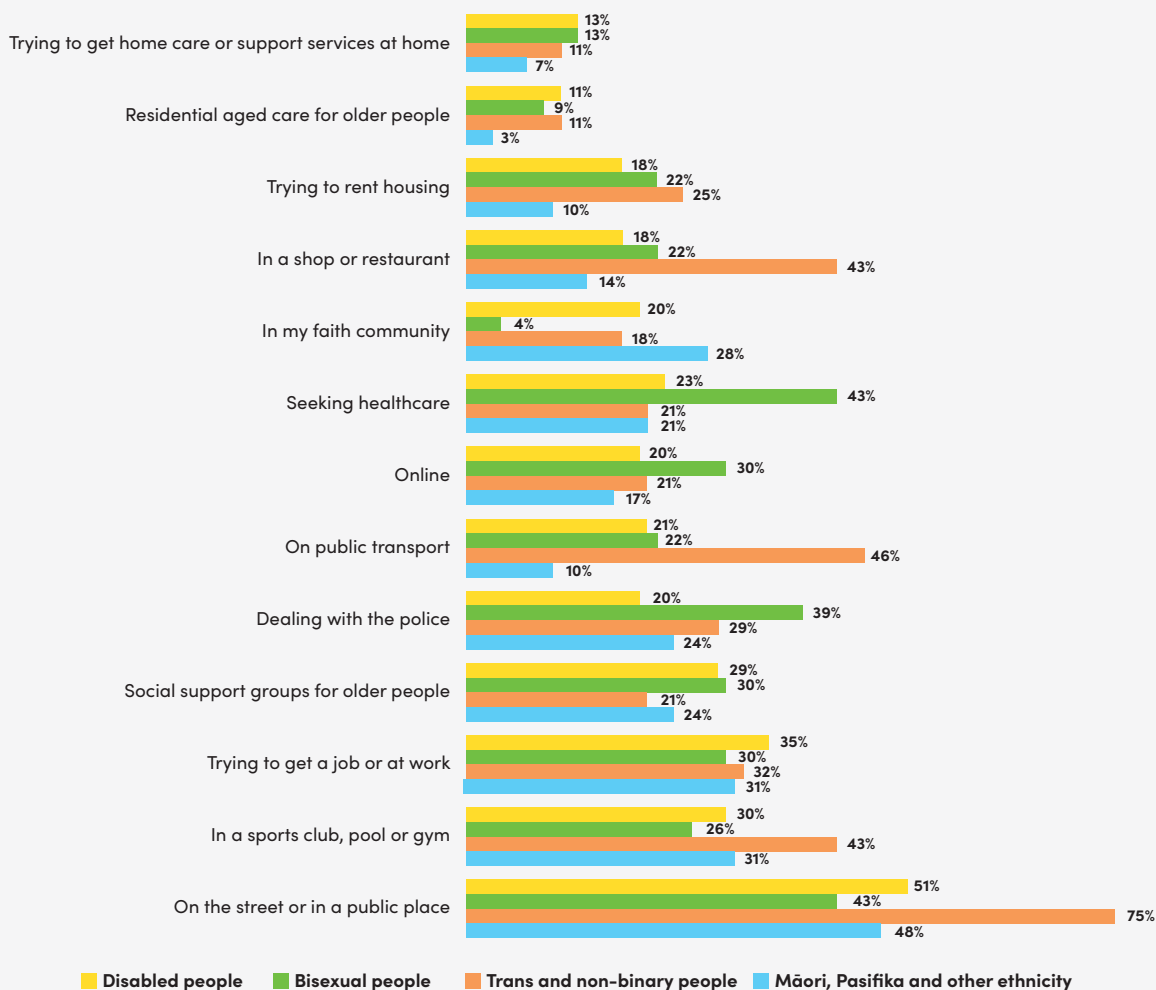
Our participants reported high rates of avoiding social situations, demonstrating clearly the impact of mistreatment and discrimination, and significantly elevating the risk of social isolation and neglect, including self-neglect. More than half had avoided being on the street or in a public place (54%); a quarter had avoided sports clubs, pools or the gym, or trying to get a job or at work (25%) and just under one quarter had avoided social support groups for older people (22%) due to fear of mistreatment for their sexuality or gender identity.

Dealing with the police (19%) and seeking healthcare (18%) were also both avoided by just under one in five older Takatāpui and Rainbow people. These are not optional extras, but basic services people access because they need them.

**Figure 11: Have you ever avoided any of these places because you were afraid you would be mistreated for your sexuality or gender identity? (n=180)**



**Figure 12: Highest rates of avoidance because of mistreatment by participant group**



Exploring differences between different groups, and mirroring actual experiences of mistreatment, Māori, Pasifika and ethnic participants, disabled participants, bisexual participants, and trans and non-binary participants were all more likely to avoid more social situations due to fear of mistreatment.

Trans and non-binary people reported the highest rates of avoidance of being on the street or in a public place (75%); sports clubs, pools or gyms (43%); public transport (46%); shops or restaurants (43%); trying to rent housing (25%)

and residential aged-care (11%). Bisexual people reported the highest rates of avoidance of social support groups for older people (30%); dealing with the police (39%); being online (30%); seeking healthcare (43%) and trying to get home care or support services at home (13%). Disabled people reported the highest rates of avoidance of trying to get a job or at work (35%); residential aged-care (11%) and trying to get home care or support services at home (13%). Māori, Pasifika and ethnic participants reported the highest rates of avoidance for faith communities (28%).



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- Looking to our histories
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- Wairua and spirituality
- When can I be my authentic self?



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## Chapter 6: Community groups and services for older people

The community sector includes a wide array of groups and services set up to meet the social and support needs of older people. In our scoping, elder advisors were unsure how many older Takatāpui and Rainbow people were accessing these kinds of support, and this was echoed in our focus group discussions and elder interviews.

During scoping we did however hear of significant concerns about aged-care facilities, a subset of this sector. Anecdotes of exclusion of elders living with HIV; being forced back into the closet by other residents, family members or staff attitudes and behaviour; failure to recognise partners; and trans and non-binary people not being permitted to express their gender authentically were all shared with us.<sup>37</sup> Similar issues were raised during our elder interviews.

### Negative experiences in community groups and services

We asked participants about whether they had any negative experiences when going to community groups and services for older people. This question was only answered by about half of participants, a lower rate than all other questions, perhaps indicating Takatāpui and Rainbow older people are not accessing these services in high numbers. Of those who answered, half (51%) had heard someone else's sexuality talked about in disrespectful ways, and one in three (33%) had heard someone else's gender identity talked about in disrespectful ways.

This context makes it unsurprising that more than half of Takatāpui and Rainbow older people (57%) did not disclose their sexuality at community groups and services for older people, because they were worried about how they would be treated. Additionally, one in four trans and non-binary people (24%) did not disclose their gender identity due to worries about their treatment.

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37. Similar concerns have been raised in New Zealand based research, see Henrickson, M., Cook, C., and Schouten, V., (2021), Culture clash: responses to sexual diversity in residential aged care, Culture, Health & Sexuality.

Privacy is another potential concern for those worried about how their sexuality or gender identity will be respected. One in five Takatāpui and Rainbow people (21%) had experienced their private information being shared without their consent in community groups.

In terms of direct discrimination, 13% had been treated unfairly because of their sexuality and 38% of trans and non-binary people had been treated unfairly because of their gender identity. Partners or others considered family had not been treated well for 12% of participants. Forty-one percent of trans and non-binary people had been misgendered and 28% had been called an old name they did not want to be called at community groups and services for older people.

We asked participants for their ideas to help community groups and services for older people feel safer, and 91 participants shared their thoughts. The majority had advice for community groups.

### Don't make assumptions

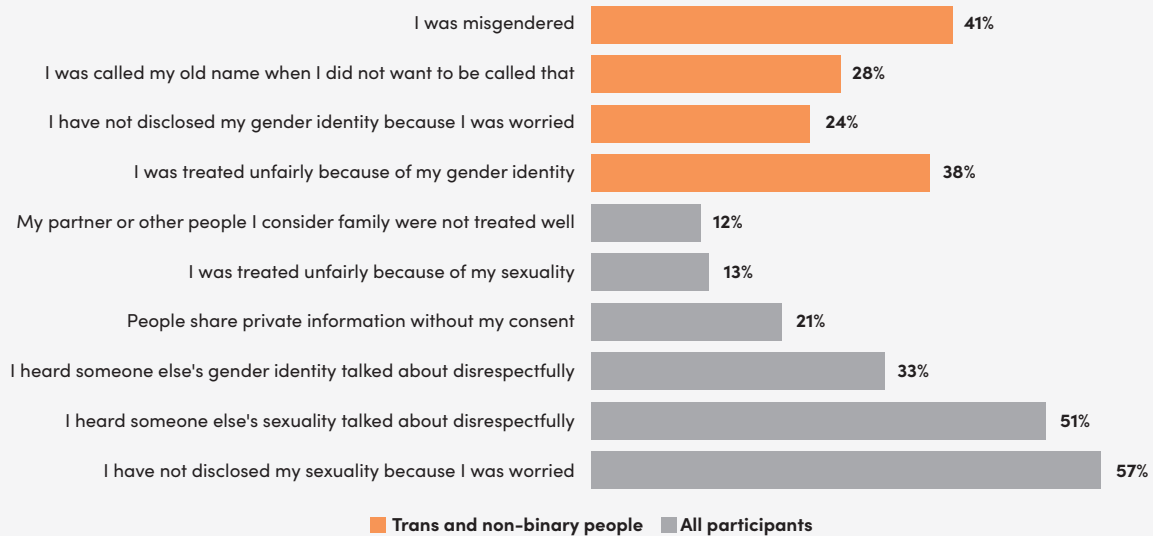
Many Takatāpui and Rainbow older people wanted community groups to stop making assumptions about who they were, so it would be easier for them to be themselves.

***"Please think, absolutely every time, you meet an older person that you do not know their sexuality or gender history. You do not."** NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 70-74 years*

***"Don't make assumptions re marriage, parenthood, having a partner...the list goes on. Just be friendly to all. Its embarrassing when the conversation stops dead because I don't have children to talk about. I'm so tired of rescuing conversations."** NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 65-69 years*



Figure 13: Negative experiences in community groups and services for older people (n=215)



Many participants felt there was an education need for older persons services, to help them shift their culture to more respectful practices.

***“Acknowledge there have always been mixed gender/sexuality. I have heard more than once that it wasn’t known about in our younger years.”***  
**NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 80+ years**

***“Feeling safer is only possible if others respect, listen and share aroha in all situations.”***  
**NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 75-79 years**

Comments about culture extended to how sexuality and gender diversity is talked about, whether Takatāpui and Rainbow people are known to be present or not. Many participants shared hearing disrespectful comments, not always directed at them.

***“Disrespectful comments can harm the person that hears them, even if not addressed directly.”***  
**NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual non-binary person, 80+ years**

***“It’s not me as I can “pass” easily but if I go out with butch or transgender friends they are often a target of verbal abuse.”***  
**NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 75-79 years**

Participants felt that these kinds of changes were achievable, especially in the context of significant shifts in acceptance in their lifetimes.

***“Unfortunately some people still exhibit biases toward Takatāpui people. It is up to us, society and the communities we work and live in to support change to happen.”***  
**Māori lesbian Takatāpui person, 65-69 years**

### Pronouns and gender diversity

Many participants, both trans and non-binary and not, highlighted the need for inclusive forms, modes of address and facilities for older trans people.

***“Give options for gender identity, including pronouns, ensure toilets facilities are labelled for all genders, not just female/ male/ women/ men.”***  
**Pasifika lesbian woman, 70-74 years**

***“Pronoun inclusion and appropriate form design help. No visible cues in spaces like posters or rainbow flags doesn’t help.”***  
**NZ European/Pākehā non-binary bisexual person, 60-64 years**

Several trans people talked about being misgendered and deadnamed, or referred to by a name they know longer use. Most saw this as a training need for those working in community groups.

***“Being dead-named or mis-gendered is the only real issue I have faced regarding my gender or sexuality. I wouldn’t say this has ever been deliberate.”***  
**NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian trans woman**



### Discrimination as a barrier

Many participants said explicitly that being treated without respect in community groups and services stopped them attending such groups.

*“Hence why I no longer go to group meeting, join clubs etc, people around my own age and older whom are straight are the worst.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65–69 years

*“I am [office holder] of a [club]. I have placed a permanent apology to attend meetings because of the attitude and behavior of some senior members.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian trans woman, 65–69 years

*“I was very active in the [faith setting], but after the homophobic treatment by [name], realised the deficiency of the [faith setting] in so many areas that I walked away from it.”* NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 80+ years

Others reflected that they believed they were excluded because of who they were.

*“I sometimes feel I am not included in various social groups because of my sexuality.”* NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 75–79 years

And others had chosen not to come out in groups to avoid discrimination.

*“I have gone on several group travel trips and not felt comfortable to disclose (even if some guess).”* Māori lesbian woman, 75–79 years

### Residential aged-care facilities and end-of-life care

Finally, many participants explicitly talked about their fears of lack of understanding the needs of Takatāpui and Rainbow older people in residential aged-care facilities and end-of-life care. This was often informed by the experiences of others, including partners, who had been treated poorly.

*“Low level disrespect in one of the homes my partner was in but disturbing all the same.”* NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual woman, 75–79 years

*“I am seeking a better living situation for this phase of my life. I have heard from a gay aged-care male nurse that single gay men are discriminated against in residential care homes by staff. That is disquietening info.”* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70–74 years

*“I don’t really go to community groups and services for older people yet, but I am nervous about a retirement home one day.”* NZ European/Pākehā straight trans man, 55–59 years

*“Many of my lesbian community feel that retirement homes would not be open to lesbians and their partners.”* Another ethnicity, lesbian woman, 65–69 years

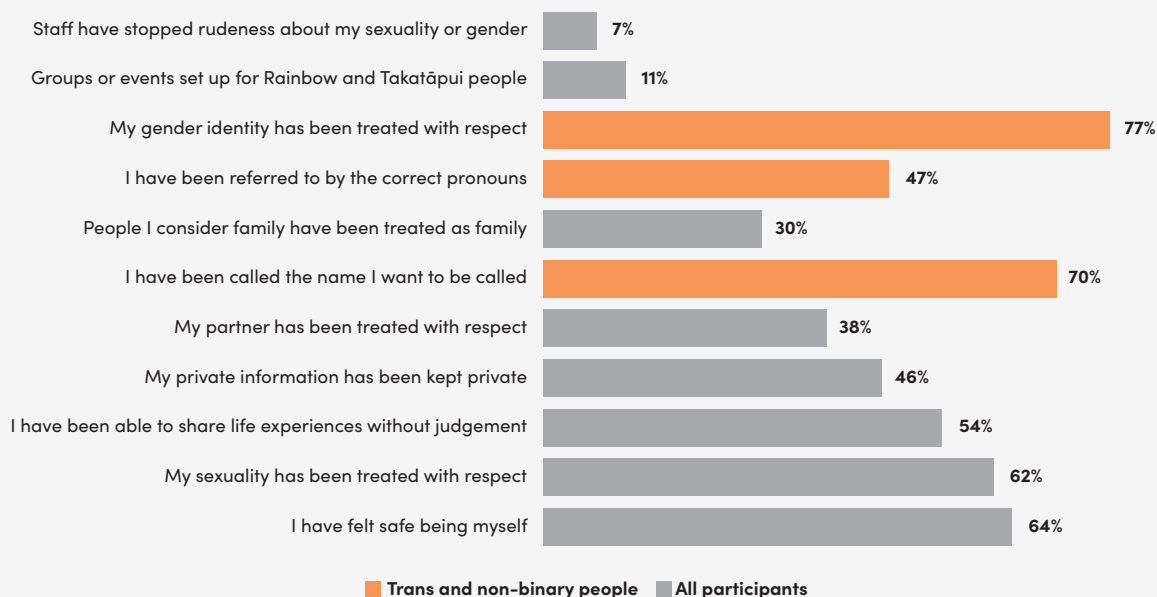
### Positive experiences in community groups and services

We also asked about positive experiences when going to community groups and services for older people, and many were shared, demonstrating there is much that can be done to provide inclusive and welcoming spaces for older Takatāpui and Rainbow people.

Just under two-thirds of participants (64%) said they had felt safe being themselves, or their sexuality had been treated with respect (62%). More than three quarters of trans and non-binary people (77%) had an experience of their gender identity being treated with respect, and 70% had been called the name they wanted to be called. Just under half of trans and non-binary people had an experience of being referred to by the correct pronouns (47%). Half of all participants



**Figure 14: Positive experiences in community groups and services for older people (n=245)**



(54%) had been able to share life experiences without judgment and 46% had experienced their private information being kept private.

About one in three participants said their partners had been treated with respect (38%) or people they considered family were treated as family (30%) by community services for older people.

Protective positive practices to influence the culture of community groups were reported by fewer participants. Just 7% said staff members had stopped rudeness or ignorance about their sexuality or gender and 11% said there had been specific groups or events set up for Takatāpui and Rainbow people inside older persons services.

We asked participants if they had positive examples they would like to share, and 91 participants offered more information. Most simply said they did not have anything to share, and a handful of participants offered positive examples. One person commented that, rather than having positive experiences, there had been an absence of negative experiences.

***“Nothing specific it is rather not having experienced anything negative or hurtful/harmful.” NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 70-74 years***

Another participant commented that being open about his sexuality allowed others to talk more openly about their lives, including having family members inside Rainbow communities.

***“Once others know about you it is amazing how many others come forward with links to the Rainbow Community within their family.” NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 65-69 years***

Being supported by staff members in older persons services was appreciated by many participants, whether they were accessing services or volunteering.

***“Yes where I volunteer they often refer me to visitors in a positive way.” NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 80+ years***

***“The small number of staff from [home care service] I’ve had face to face contact with have been very good and have always been friendly and respectful towards me.” NZ European/Pākehā, trans woman, 65-69 years***

One trans man commented that by staff setting an inclusive culture, other older people using his gym were also respectful of his identity.

*“I was the only queer person at [gym] and when I returned after injury with a new name and authentic gender I was welcomed, including in the Men’s Change room. The average of members is 75 and they tried really hard with my he/him pronouns. Some asked sensitive questions to educate themselves.” NZ European/Pākehā, gay trans man, 70-74 years*

**To explore what our interviewees said about social connections vs isolation, listen to:**

- Ageing – freedom, changes and ageism
- Belonging, acceptance and surviving discrimination
- Community hopes and dreams
- Emotional wellbeing
- Gaps and tensions in communities
- Healthcare
- Isolation
- Joys of building communities
- Looking to our histories
- Sex
- Wairua and spirituality
- When can I be my authentic self?



Interview themes can be listened to via [Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura](#) or [Rainbow Hub Waikato](#).





# Chapter 7: Families and whānau

The lack of acceptance and/or rejection based on identity inside families and whānau makes Takatāpui and Rainbow people of all ages more vulnerable.

Just over one in four New Zealanders report they would be uncomfortable with a lesbian, gay or bisexual family member, and nearly half would be uncomfortable with a trans family member.<sup>38</sup>

This was a concern in our scoping with elder advisors and was raised in specific ways in our focus groups for Māori, Pasifika and ethnic communities, discussed in Chapter 3. In addition to impacts on wellbeing, disconnection from parents, older generations, nieces, nephews, grandchildren and adult children also means fewer options for support and connection for Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, which in turn means more reliance on community and institutional supports. We asked questions about families and whānau – both families they grew up in, and families and whānau they created for themselves.

## Coming out in the family you grew up in

We asked participants if they had come out in the family they grew up in, defined as parents, siblings, children and extended family. More than two thirds of all participants (68%) said everyone in their family knew about their identity, and one in five (21%) said the people important to them knew.

38. Kalafatis, E. and Wood, A., (2021), Gender Attitudes Survey, Research NZ and the National Council of Women of New Zealand.

Just under one in ten participants (9%) said no one in their family knew. The remaining participants had told some but not all family members.

Exploring differences between groups inside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities, rates of coming out inside families did not differ across ethnicities, and disabled participants came out at very similar rates to all participants. However, there were differences for bisexual elders, trans and non-binary elders, and between cis women and cis men.

Bisexual elders were half as likely as all participants to be out to everyone in their family (34%), and more than twice as likely to have not told anyone (23%). Trans and non-binary elders were less likely than all participants to be out to everyone (52%) but very unlikely to have told no-one.

Cis women reported the highest rates of telling everyone in their family (77%) and were less likely than everyone except trans and non-binary people to have told no one (4%). Cis men were slightly more likely than all participants to have told no one (14%) and slightly less likely to have told everyone (63%).

One hundred and three participants offered more information via free text about coming out inside their families, illustrating that for most it was a process taking place over time, with complex impacts depending on family structure, cultural

Figure 15: Have you "come out" to the family you grew up in? Mark all that apply. (n=401)

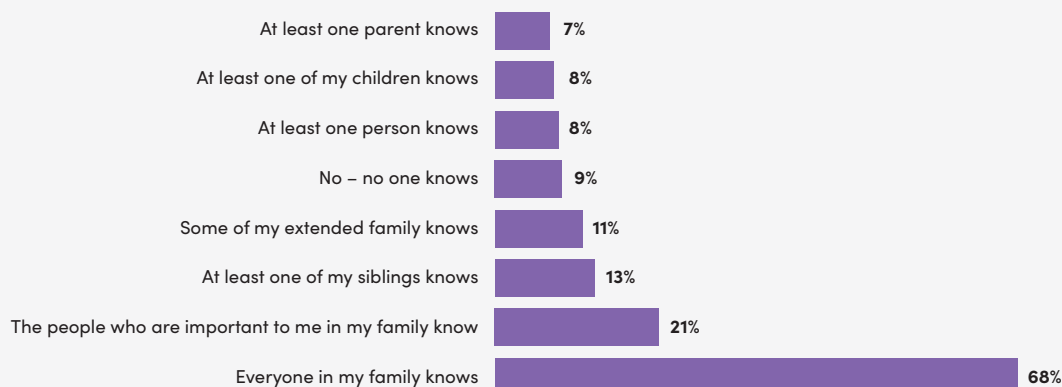
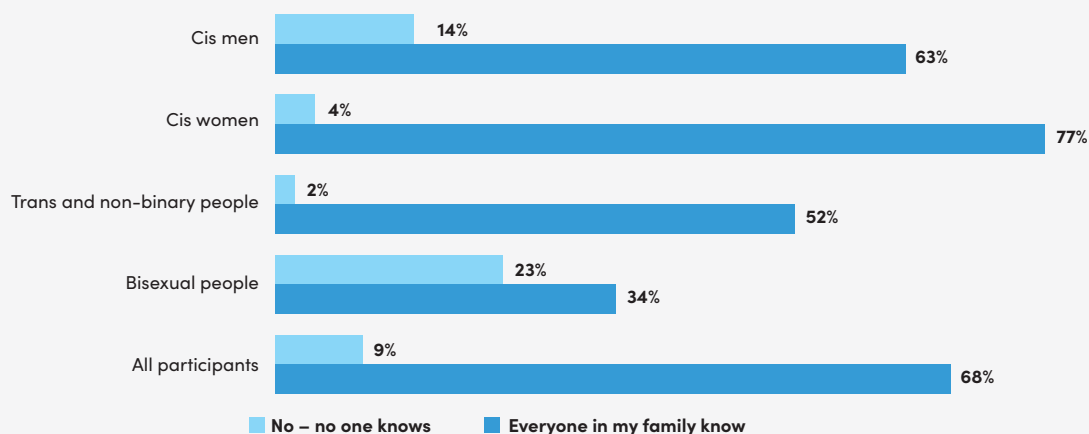


Figure 16: Coming out to everyone vs coming out to no one in my family



beliefs, relationship status, stage of sexuality and gender journeys, and generational differences.

### Positive impacts – feeling loved and supported

Many participants described the importance of being able to be open about who they were and feeling loved and supported by their families after coming out, including grandparents, parents and children.

*“They have always suspected and eventually knew. They have lovingly accepted my partner who is [ethnicity] and [xx] years my junior.”* NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 70–74 years

*“I’ve been blessed to have whānaunga who have accepted me unconditionally.”* Māori lesbian woman, 65–69 years

*“I have been well supported by an older sibling and his family and my three children.”* NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 75–79 years

Other participants described themselves as initially terrified about coming out but experiencing benefits in their family relationships from being open over time.

*“It was v v v difficult coming out to my parents. V conservative [religious] family. Word gradually spread through my extended family. Now not really an issue, even the most rightwing conservative ones don’t make it an issue, at worst it’s ignored I guess. I no longer have a partner which may mean it’s less in their face.”* NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 65–69 years

*“Coming out to my brothers was the scariest thing I have ever done. After that it was easy coming out to everyone else.”* NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian trans woman, 65–69 years

Several participants mentioned they had come out a long time ago, and family members had become more accepting over time.

*“I came out to my mother at 17, my father shortly thereafter and gradually to everyone else of consequence to me soon after.”* Māori gay man, 55–59 years

*“People who love you get over homophobia slowly because they love you. I have been “out” for 40+ years. A couple of my [siblings] still have issues but we can be polite in family situations.”* NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian woman, 65–69 years

*“When I first came out to my parents (I was 21), my Mum was worried about telling family and friends and what their reactions may be, so I gave her time to feel comfortable with “the news” before coming out to our extended family.”* Another ethnicity, lesbian woman, 55–59 years

*“My parents had difficulty at first, but soon supported my relationships. My mother was a witness at my Civil Partnership ceremony. My father said he wouldn’t have missed it for the world.”* NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 75–79 years

Others were considering coming out later in life, after realising their sexuality or gender identity was different than they had earlier imagined.



*"I have never been in this situation before in my life, because I was married before...After my divorce I became very interested in my own sex but more curious than anything and then I met the woman I fell in love with."* Pasifika bisexual woman, 75-79 years

Finally, many participants discussed positive experiences with younger family members, often leading to choosing to come out to only some of their family.

*"My kids are both very rainbow. I also have a much older auntie who is non-binary. However none of them live in NZ. My father is here (and I am here to care for him) but he has no idea about gender and is quite homophobic."* NZ European/Pākehā, non-binary person, 55-59 years

*"My Mother always became very angry when gay people came on TV or were spoken about. She hated the thought of anyone being gay let alone trans. She would have disowned me if she knew. I told my two boys when they were about 8 & 18 and they just said they didn't care as I was still their Mum."* NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual woman, 65-69 years

### **Conditional acceptance in families – don't ask, don't tell**

A larger group of participants discussed their identity as unspoken, assumed or accepted inside family contexts. Some had not come out at all.

*"No one has asked but assumptions are made due to the way I speak or act."* Māori gay man, 65-69 years

*"My family made their views clear regarding LGBT+ issues, so I was never comfortable to come out to them even though I dropped many hints."* NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 60-64 years

*"We leave it up to others to decide we don't confirm or deny. Though some younger gay couples we have known have been very angry with us for 'letting the side down'."* Māori straight woman, 70-74 years

*"Actually I think they all know but i don't talk about it to all of them."* Māori lesbian woman, 75-79 years

One participant had been prompted to talk more explicitly with his parents due to his HIV status.

*"Though I didn't exactly hide my sexuality, it was an unspoken topic until it seemed wise to inform my parents that I was HIV+."* NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 65-69 years

Other participants, despite coming out, felt silenced by reactions from family members, including having their identity hidden inside the family as well as negative comments. Many did not feel able to talk about their identity or relationships in ongoing ways.

*"Family know but some hide my bisexuality from the grandkids."* NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual woman, 65-69 years

*"Altho they know I still feel like the weird one. There will be jokes etc which make me feel odd one out. Also my mother never understood my relationship with women."* NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual woman, 65-69 years

### **Conflict inside families – fracturing of relationships after coming out**

Many participants described shifting relationships in their families after coming out, sometimes because some family members were supportive while others were not – including threats of violence, being disinherited, and being cut-off from other family members.

*"I have 2 children. My daughter accepts me my son doesn't."* NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 70-74 years

*"My Mother is very supportive of me. The rest of my siblings don't want to know me bar my youngest brother. My children do not speak to me anymore, nor do my grandchildren."* NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian trans woman, 65-69 years

*"My mother shamed me and treated me with disgust, later forbidding me from contact with my family of origin. I have personally told my children and some of my grandchildren, leaving my children to tell those grandchildren I haven't reached out to in person."* NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual trans woman, 80+ years

*"My mother disinherited me."* Another ethnicity, lesbian woman, 65-69 years



*“My eldest brother threatened my life but my sister was a great support.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 80+ years*

Many participants talked with some grief about losing relationships with children and grandchildren, often due to the actions of ex-partners or extended family members.

*“My ex-wife was so vindictive, that she prevented any relationship with my children till she died just over a year ago- Things are working out fine now.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 80+ years*

Several participants expressed regret for coming out to family members, as the ongoing response from family members had hurt them.

*“Wished I hadn’t told my siblings.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 60-64 years*

*“It took decades before it felt safe to come out, and even then they have never fully supported it - snide remarks, put downs, stereotyping.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years*

*“Family can be amongst the cruelest of people.” Māori gay man, 65-69 years*

### I didn’t come out

Finally, many participants had chosen not to come out, mostly due to fear of the reaction.

*“I never came out to my older family of origin. They would never have coped!” NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual woman, 75-79 years*

*“I tried to talk to one of my sisters about it 30 yrs ago but her negative reaction put me off ever discussing it again.” NZ European/Pākehā, bisexual woman, 65-69 years*

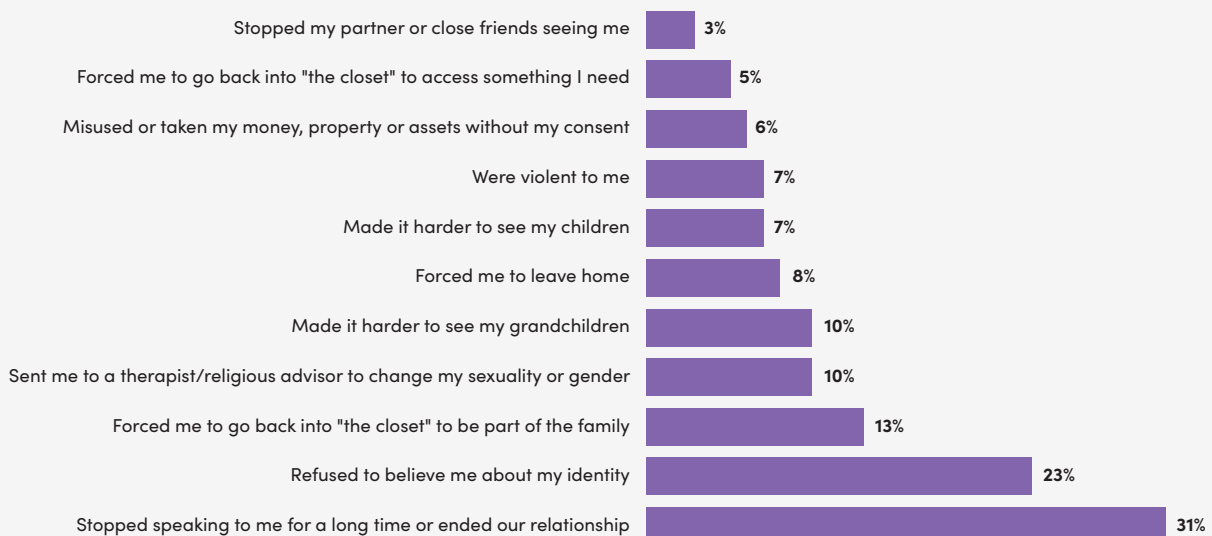
*“It would only bring hurt, shame and condemnation.” Another ethnicity, gay man, 65-69 years*

### Negative experiences in families

We asked participants if they had experienced negative behaviours from some, all or no members of their family because of their sexuality or gender. Figure 17 shows how many participants had experienced these behaviours from some or all of their family.

Every negative behaviour we asked about was experienced, and many participants reported several negative behaviours, demonstrating difficult relationships inside families. Takatāpui and Rainbow elders were most likely to say they had at least some family members stop speaking to them for a long time or end their relationship, reported by nearly one in three participants (31%). About one in four (23%) said family members had refused to believe them about their identity, and

Figure 17: Have the family you grew up with done any of these things to you because of your sexuality or gender? (n=348)



**Table 11: Negative behaviours in families due to sexuality or gender identity<sup>39</sup>**

	Māori, Pasifika and ethnic	Trans and non-binary people	Bisexual people
Stopped speaking to me for a long time or ended our relationship	41%	62%	37%
Refused to believe me about my identity	30%	47%	33%
Forced me to go back into “the closet” to be part of the family	19%	16%	24%
Sent me to a therapist/religious advisor to change my sexuality or gender	16%	3%	3%
Made it harder to see my grandchildren	19%	28%	11%
Forced me to leave home	19%	22%	8%
Made it harder to see my children	10%	23%	16%
Were violent to me	14%	16%	8%
Misused or taken my money, property or assets without my consent	13%	17%	9%
Forced me to go back into “the closet” to access something I need	12%	10%	3%
Stopped my partner or close friends seeing me	9%	0%	3%

13% had been forced back into “the closet” to be part of the family.

This context makes many Takatāpui and Rainbow elders are isolated, less resourced and more vulnerable to potential elder abuse – both inside families, and because they are more reliant on other social support systems, which may not always be safe and welcoming as discussed earlier.

There were differences between different groups of Takatāpui and Rainbow older people. Māori, Pasifika and other ethnicities, bisexual people and trans and non-binary people reported higher rates for most negative behaviours inside their families, highlighted in Table 11.

Families are important sites of belonging for most people, but for Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic elders, families, whānau and wider communities are also protection against racism and white dominated systems in Aotearoa New Zealand. Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic participants reported higher rates than all participants for every negative behaviour, including 41% who had family members stop speaking to them or end their relationship, and nearly one third (30%) who had not been believed about their identity inside their family. The combination of racism and these high rates of disconnection from family and/or whānau exacerbate risks of isolation and minimise access to support and help that families can provide when needed.

As with other indicators of discrimination and

39. Highlighted figures in this table are higher than the figure for all participants.

exclusion, trans and non-binary older people reported the highest rates of all participants for most negative behaviours in families. Nearly two thirds of trans and non-binary elders (62%) reported having family members stop speaking to them or end their relationship, and nearly half (47%) had not been believed about their identity inside their family. As discussed earlier, bisexual people face specific challenges in coming out in families and more generally. It is therefore not surprising that bisexual elders (24%) reported the highest rates of all groups of being forced back into “the closet” to be part of the family.

### Positive experiences in families

We asked participants if they had experienced supportive behaviours from all, some or none of their family because of their sexuality or gender, and most participants reported supportive behaviours from at least some family members. Participants were most likely to say they had been treated as well as anyone else in the family by at least one family member (92%) or had experienced their partner/s being welcomed by at least one family member (87%). Participants were least likely to say family members had done research to learn how to support them (39%).

There were mixed differences in supportive experiences in families between different groups of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders. Māori participants were more likely to have been told by at least one family member that they were respected (91%), but less likely to have a family member research how to support them (23%). Bisexual participants reported



less support for every behaviour we measured, especially having a family member stand up for them with whānau, family, friends or others (61%); being treated as well as everyone else in the family by at least one family member (82%) and having partner/s welcomed into the family (74%).

Most trans and non-binary people had at least one family member using their correct name (91%) and correct pronouns (82%), and they were more likely to say that at least one family member had done research to learn how to support them (47%). They were less likely to say their partner/s had been welcomed into their family (76%), or that they were treated as well as everyone else in their family (84%).

There were no significant differences from all participants for disabled participants or Pasifika and ethnic participants. Cis women were more likely to have partner/s welcomed by at least one family member (95%) and cis men less likely (83%). Cis women were less likely than all participants to have had family members researching how to support them (30%) and cis men were more likely (45%).

Ninety-one participants offered further commentary in free text on relationships with their families and whānau. These comments were about equally divided between Takatāpui and Rainbow elders describing supportive families; families which were mixed between family members or across generations; and families which were highly rejecting.

## Supportive families

Participants who talked about being well-supported by their families often enthusiastically mentioned love and care from multiple generations in their family and whānau.

*“What can I say? My siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles love and support me.” Māori lesbian woman, 65-69 years*

*“My whānau and extended whānau love me...we just support each other.” Māori lesbian woman, 65-69 years*

*“Feel I’m soooooo lucky to have siblings and children who accept me.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 75-79 years*

*“The family who accept us of being us regardless of labels just act normally. My sons are fine and their wives and have no trouble with having 2 Nanans.” Māori bisexual woman, 70-74 years*

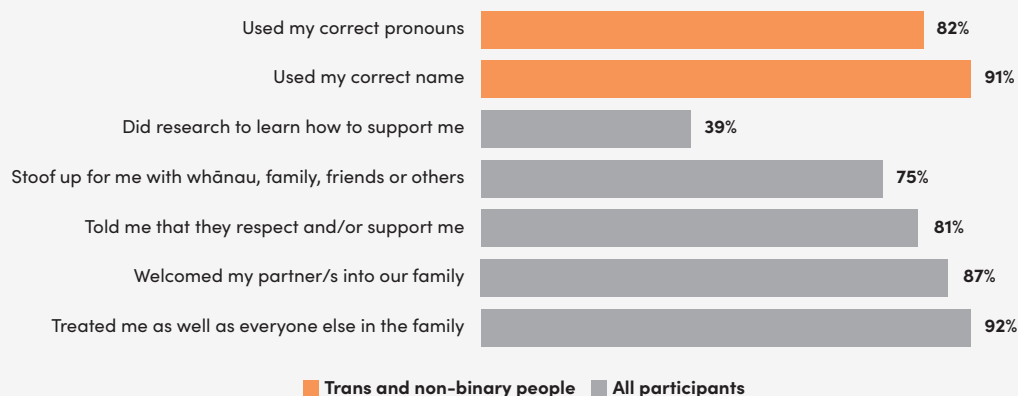
Some participants reflected that acceptance had been part of their family for a long time.

*“I am well accepted in my family and have been for forty years.” Another ethnicity, bisexual woman, 60-64 years*

*“My family are generally supportive after the first initial coming out experience.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65-69 years*

*“We are very close, so anyone who had issues would have been dealt with by another family member.” NZ European/Pākehā trans man, 55-59 years*

Figure 18: Have any of the family you grew up done any of these things to support you? (n=352)



### **Families with mixed ability to be supportive**

Many participants talked about younger generations being more supportive than older generations, including parents and sometimes siblings.

*“It is the “boomer” generation that seem to struggle most. They accept me but are nervous around me. One of children and his partner is like this too, accepting but it is a struggle for them. My other children, my wife and all my nephews and nieces have been unreservedly supportive.”* NZ European/Pākehā, lesbian trans woman, 65–69 years

*“I made sure my family of origin didn’t know. One of my children is lesbian so lots of support there and general acceptance from my other children too.”* NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 75–79 years

*“My brothers treat me with contempt. My sister has always treated me as her much loved sister. My adult children are very much a part of my life.”* NZ European/Pākehā trans woman, 65–69 years

Other participants reflected that acceptance had come over time, both from parents and from siblings, children and other family members.

*“I have children and grandchildren, they have adjusted over time to my coming out 15 years ago.”* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70–74 years

*“When I moved back to the city of my birth, I was very careful to manage my life. I certainly wasn’t closet but I was very protective and respectful of my parents and their world view. My sexuality was unspoken really, and they accepted and like my partner’s, who I would bring home for them to meet and ‘special friends’. May sound weird but it worked for us all, most of the time!”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65–69 years

Finally, some participants had very good relationships with one family member, even when others were not supportive. But this meant some lost contact with families when the supportive family member moved away or died.

*“[Family member] were supportive but moved overseas decades ago but remain in contact – I have had no contact with all other members of my family for decades.”* Pasifika lesbian woman, 70–74 years

### **Rejecting and unsafe families**

The last group of comments concerned families that explicitly rejected participants because of their sexuality or gender identity. Many of these participants talked about conservative religious values inside their families, including conversion environments.

*“My sister said we can get help for you she is deeply religious.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65–69 years

Other participants had been sent to mental health institutions after coming out.

*“I was an only child and ran away from home after parents sent me for shock treatment. Circa 19[xx].”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 80+ years

*“My mother sent me to psychiatrists but that was in the early 1970’s. She came to accept but was never happy about it.”* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 75–79 years

Other participants talked about other forms of shaming or abuse from family members.

*“My parents and sister took some time to accept me having my partner. My mother still has not told all her friends about me– after 28 years! My brother thinks I killed my father from stress.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65–69 years

*“Eldest brother was violent emotionally for period.”* NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 70–74 years

Many participants believe their sexuality or gender identity is a source of shame for other family members.

*“My mother always struggled and was ashamed to tell her friends.”* Māori gay man, 70–74 years

*“It was hard coming out as my family, particularly my mum, had this vision of me being married, producing grandchildren etc. Society back in the seventies was still “in the closet” generally when it came to people who identified as anything else but “straight!!””* Māori lesbian Takatāpui person, 65–69 years



Others had hidden their sexuality due to fears of losing access to their children through homophobic family law.

*“I was divorced with a young son. At the time, family courts would often transfer custody of a child to the father if the mother was in a gay relationship. This meant my new relationship had to be secret. It was a horrible burden.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 70–74 years

Finally, some participants had simply chosen not to tell their families, believing they were safer if they did not come out. For them, the balance between isolation and safety was heavy.

*“Have not disclosed as it would have caused a lot of disappointment, hurt and anger. Comments made by family and friends when growing up and throughout career about others and situations related to being gay left no doubt this would be the case so for everyone’s sake safer and easier to keep it secret. I wish it was not the case as I feel at times a major part of my life ‘unlived’.”* NZ European/Pākehā, gay man, 65–69 years

*“I remain alone since 1996. Saved my life.”* Māori Takatāpui trans woman, 65–69 years

## “Chosen family”

“Chosen family” has specific importance inside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities, due to historical discrimination, including in failing to recognise partners as “family” in legal, healthcare and other settings. It means a group of people who deliberately choose one another to play significant roles in each other’s lives; people “like family” even though you are not biologically

or legally related. Chosen families are often intentionally created because many Takatāpui and Rainbow people cannot rely on biological families in ways others might be able to.

We asked participants if they had people in their life “like family,” even though they were not related, and gave examples of friends, ex-partners, neighbours or others. Overall, 90% of participants said they did have people “like family” in their lives, and two-thirds (65%) said these people were as important to them as the family they grew up in.

The differences between different groups for each component of this question were small, but suggestive when viewed collectively, as can be seen in Figure 20. Overall, cis men were more likely to report having chosen family that supported them in several different ways, speaking to the strong gay men’s 1970s and 1980s community networks, including in response to the HIV/AIDS crisis. This included more than two thirds of cis men (69%) saying they had people as important to them as the family they grew up in.

However, Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic people and bisexual people were less likely than all participants to report having chosen family that supported them. Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic people reported the equal lowest rates of people they could rely on in a crisis (51%) and people they saw regularly for social support (25%). Bisexual people reported the lowest rates of having chosen family as important to them as the family they grew up in (48%) and of people they could rely on in a crisis (51%).

Figure 19: Do you have people in your life “like family”? (n=396)

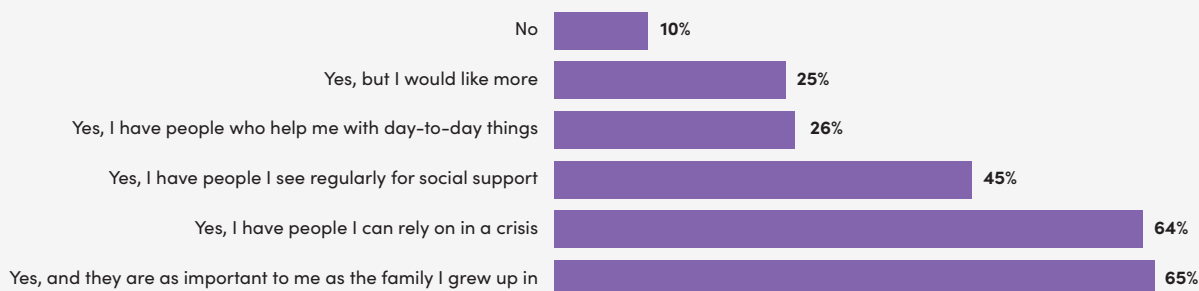
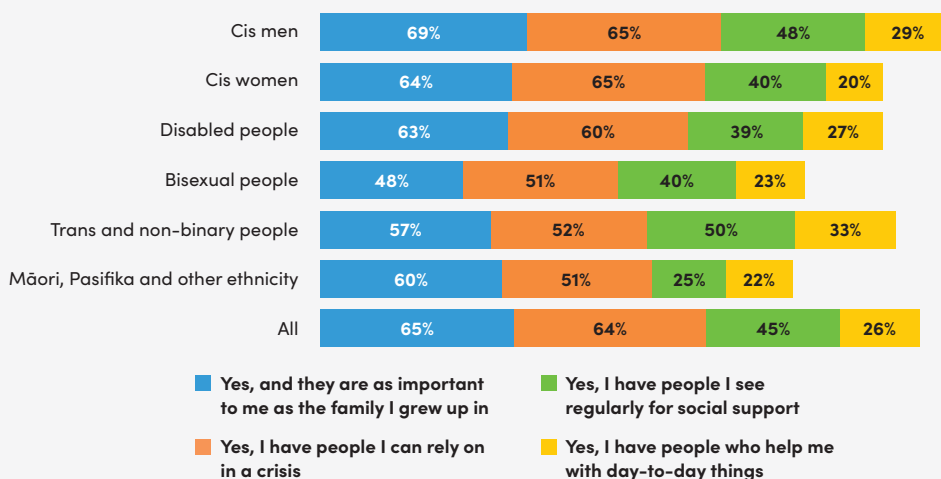


Figure 20: Different groups and supportive “chosen family”



Cis women, followed by cis men, were least likely to say they would like more chosen family, or that they did not have anyone “like family,” as shown in Figure 21. Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic people were more likely to say they did not have chosen family, and that they wanted more connections. Bisexual participants and disabled participants were also more likely than all participants to not have chosen family and want more connections. Trans and non-binary people reported higher rates of no chosen family than all participants.<sup>40</sup>

Sixty-seven participants commented further in free text about the importance of chosen family, challenges in making friends, and loneliness.

40. “No” in this figure means people said they did not have people in their life “like family.”

### Chosen family is important to me

Chosen family was confirmed as important to wellbeing by most participants who answered this question.

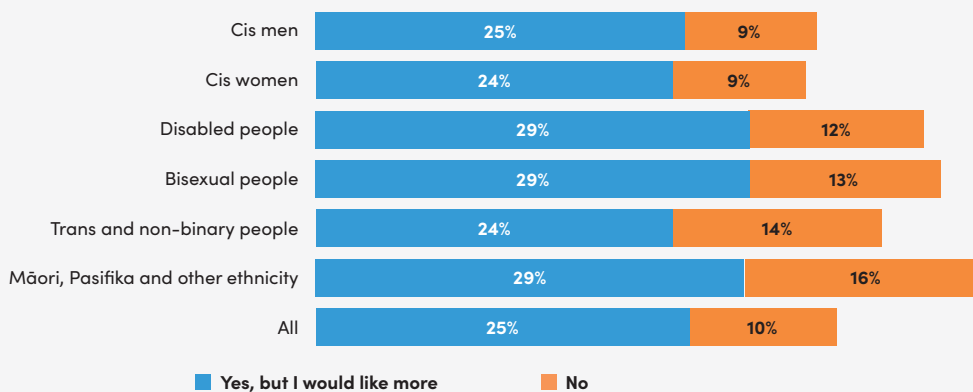
*“You have your Blood Family and your Gay Family.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65-69 years*

*“Yes, and they are more important to me as the family I grew up in.” Another ethnicity gay woman, 60-64 years*

*“My trans and lesbian friends are like family, especially my trans friends.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian trans woman, 65-69 years*

Some commented on communities that had been built-up over decades.

Figure 21: Different groups and wanting more “chosen family”<sup>40</sup>



*"I am part of a tangible lesbian community that we created in the 1980s and that still persists."* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 70-74 years

Others found local networks, both Rainbow and other, supportive at times of need.

*"The small local lesbian community have been very supportive since my partner became ill."* NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 75-79 years

*"The [faith leader] calls by once a month, I have an excellent next door neighbour and my [child] lives with me. My very good [home care] support worker visits 3 times a week."* NZ European/Pākehā trans woman, 65-69 years

### Harder to make friends now

Several participants reflected that it was harder to make friends as they got older, sometimes due to health and mobility changing.

*"Covid and my hip problems have restricted my social life, but once the new hip is done, I expect life as used to be will resume"* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 80+ years

*"It seems as I get older, eighty this month, fewer people come to visit, or make contact."* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 75-79 years

*"It's harder to find queer community as i age."* NZ European/Pākehā non-binary person, 60-64 years

Others reflected that not being physically close to friends made it harder to stay connected to Rainbow community, or that online was the main way they connected to others now.

*"I'm new to NZ and it's been hard to make friends."* Another ethnicity lesbian woman, 60-64 years

*"I am concerned that physical distance from my "like family" queer community has meant I socialise with them less, and they are less likely to be there for me if I need them. I haven't been there for them."* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 60-64 years

Finally, several participants talked about losing important friendships and connections because people had died.

*"Lost over 50 of my friends - no one left."* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 60-64 years

*"All my really close friends and loved ones have died. I make friends with people I think I can trust."* NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 65-69 years

### Isolation and loneliness

A handful of participants said they were most comfortable isolating themselves.

*"Best to keep to yourself and survive best you can."* Māori Takatāpui man, 60-64 years

Others said they did not share who they were with people around them, often because of fear of how they would be received.

*"No one who lives here in my home town knows anything about my life or should I say my personal or private life."* Pasifika bisexual woman, 75-79 years

*"None of my whānau and friends know about my living conditions."* Māori lesbian woman, 65-69 years

Many more talked about being lonely or having less social connection/chosen family, including partner relationships, than they wanted.

*"I have several acquaintances through working, the gym and on line. I don't have any friends, people who I can share things with. I live alone, I do get lonely and would love to have a partner or close friends. So in sharing this, I would really like company."* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years

*"I think that the loneliness I have experienced (after the breakup of a relationship of 10 years) is a natural part of being a single gay man without one's own home at my age (70's). I see that being gay is an aspect of that, but it is mainly a generalised condition."* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years

*"I'd like to have a living companion or living-apart-together companion, a special person to be with, but it wouldn't have to be sexual. Our (Pākehā) culture doesn't really allow for that."* NZ European/Pākehā gay non-binary person, 55-59 years



**To explore what our interviewees said that was relevant to families, including chosen families, listen to:**

- Ageing – freedom, changes and ageism
- Belonging, acceptance and surviving discrimination
- Community hopes and dreams
- Emotional wellbeing
- Family – sources of joy
- Family – sources of pain
- Healthcare
- Isolation
- Looking to our histories
- Physical and mental wellbeing
- Preparing for and avoiding aged-care facilities
- Wairua and spirituality
- When can I be my authentic self?



Interview themes can be listened to via [Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura](#) or [Rainbow Hub Waikato](#).





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## Chapter 8: Safety with partners and caregivers

Because intimate partners may provide significant support to people in Takatāpui and Rainbow communities, especially when there is less access to support from families and whānau and in the context of wider discrimination, it can be very difficult for Takatāpui and Rainbow people to ask for help when abusive or coercive behaviours are taking place from an intimate partner. Indeed, someone using violence in relationships can even pressure their partner not to tell anyone because they will be “letting the side down” when our relationships and identities are often not respected or considered as valid as heterosexual relationships and non-trans identities.

We therefore wanted to explore safety in intimate partner relationships and with caregivers.<sup>41</sup> To do this, we asked participants whether they had any concerns about how they were treated by a partner or caregiver and signalled that if they said they had concerns, we would be asking more questions about safety and wellbeing.

Half of the participants who answered this question said they felt supported and safe with their partner and/or caregiver. Nearly half (48%) said they did not have a partner or caregiver. Two percent – seven people – said they had concerns about their partner and/or their caregiver.<sup>42</sup>

The seven participants who indicated concerns over how they were being treated by partners and/or caregivers were all NZ European/Pākehā, with an age range of 55 to 79 years, from six different regions. Two were gay; two lesbian and three bisexual. Three were men, and four were women, two of whom were trans women. One participant also identified as non-binary and four participants were disabled.

These seven participants were asked a series of questions about specific coercive and controlling behaviours, associated with elder abuse and/or intimate partner violence. No participants reported any concerns about financial abuse.

Behaviours which were experienced by at least one participant are listed in Table 12.

Psychological and verbal abuse were the most likely to be experienced by our participants, particularly having a partner or caregiver who had acted angry towards them in a way that made them afraid and being called names, insulted or talked down to. Six of the seven participants reported some form of psychological and verbal abuse.

Isolating behaviours were reported by three participants; neglect behaviours by two participants and physical and sexual harm by two participants.

Participants were also offered the chance to say more about their safety and wellbeing if they wished. Four participants offered further information, all describing intimate partner relationships with same-gender partners, including partners with mental health, post-traumatic stress disorder and early trauma experiences, and Alzheimer's. One person indicated they were in the process of leaving their relationship. All commented on excellent support from mental health and other care teams, including one participant explicitly commenting on a lack of homophobia from the mental health service supporting them. No participants said they had approached a specialist agency responding to elder abuse or family or sexual violence.

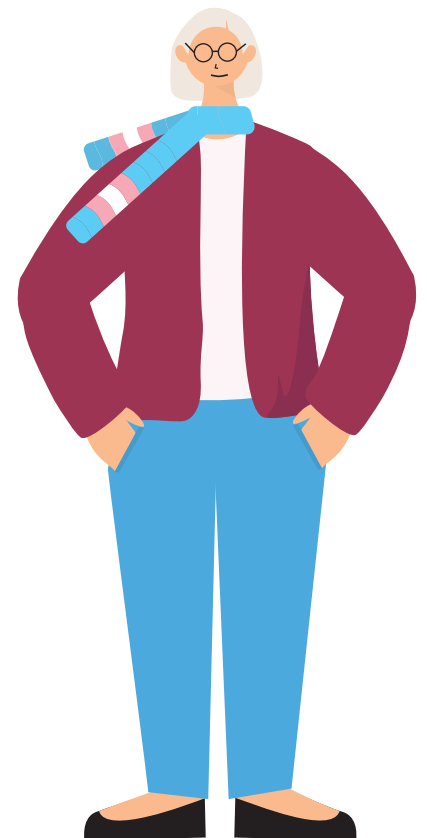
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41. Caregiver was defined as “people who are paid to support you, or people who support you as volunteers, including family members or friends. Support could include helping you with transportation or getting around, meals, taking medication, paying bills and banking, shopping, personal care or dressing, bathing or showering or helping you with other things you cannot do for yourself.”

42. This question was answered by 406 participants.



Table 12: Abusive behaviours from caregivers or partners (n=7)	
Has your partner or caregiver done any of these things to you?	Number
Acted angry towards me in a way that made me afraid	5
Called me names, insulted or talked down to me	3
Ridiculed my body or the way I look	1
Criticised, questioned or tried to shame me about my gender	1
<b>Has your partner or caregiver isolated you in any of these ways?</b>	
Tried to keep me from seeing my family or friends	1
Stopped me from going out without them	1
Stopped me from having contact with the outside world (telephone, internet)	2
Stopped me from being "out" to other people when I want to be	2
Controlled who I can see or spend time with	2
<b>Has your partner or caregiver neglected you in any of these ways?</b>	
Left me or made threats to leave me alone	1
Refused to help me when I needed their help	1
Stopped talking to me for a long time	2
<b>Has your partner or caregiver physically hurt you in any of these ways?</b>	
Made threats to physically harm me	1
Hit, pushed, slapped, punched or kicked me	1
Threatened me with a weapon	1
Touched me in ways I do not want	1



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## Chapter 9: Ageing – hopes, plans and fears

In the final section of the survey, we asked three free text questions about ageing. They were answered by 406 participants, reflecting significant engagement with the survey.

### Hopes: What are the things you look forward to about ageing?

We asked participants what they were looking forward to about ageing, and answers varied considerably in length. About one in five participants said they had nothing to look forward to, usually with one word like ‘nothing.’ A handful of those saying there was nothing to look forward to provided more information, discussing health concerns, fear of isolation, death of partners and poverty. Ten participants were looking forward to their death.

Four out of five participants described things they were looking forward to, many in detail.

#### Freedom to be who you are

One in five participants felt freedom and liberty came with ageing – to express themselves, have new experiences and break social rules.

*“Being cantankerous and curmudgeonly (lol) ... being tolerated for idiosyncrasies due to my age.” Pasifika gay man, 55-59 years*

*“Old age gives you the freedom to be who you are, dress how you like and maybe shock everyone.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 75-79 years*

*“Being able to speak out without it being used to sack me, deny me funding or a voice – well hopefully as a kuia I will be respected. But there is a definite ridiculing and minimisation of wisdom and expertise spreading.” Māori Takatāpui woman, 60-64 years*

*“Freedom, more trips away usually sexually based like gay venues etc, usually don’t do anything in town I live in or socialise in gay ways there.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years*

Many participants explicitly talked about wanting to have more adventures.

*“Getting older is an adventure and despite my health issues I like my life and I want to see what the future brings.” NZ European/Pākehā trans woman, 65-69 years*

#### More time for myself

About one in six participants were looking forward to having more time to themselves to explore interests and hobbies, sometimes including travel, time with others and voluntary work, as well as just slowing down the pace of life.

#### Retirement and leaving paid work

The next largest groups of responses were from participants who simply reflected they were very happy to have reached or be approaching retirement and able to spend less time in paid work. Many felt more financially secure at this life stage, because of superannuation.

*“Love being retired after supporting myself completely since i was 14 years old.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65-69 years*

#### Peace and happiness

About one in ten participants were looking forward to a peaceful, slower pace of life which they expected would bring them happiness. Many responses in this theme talked about enjoying day to day experiences like walking in sunshine and resting when they needed to.

*“Helping in the community & continue having a healthy & beautiful bisexual life.” NZ European/Pākehā bisexual man, 75-79 years*

#### Family, whānau and other loved ones

About one in ten participants were looking forward to more time with families including children and grandchildren, partners, and close friends.

*“Spending quality time with my partner, being able to keep fit, being able to volunteer in the community, have time to just be.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65-69 years*



*“Enjoying life to the fullest. Spending time with our mokopuna.” Māori lesbian Takatāpui person, 65–69 years*

*“Just enjoying being with my partner and seeing grandchildren grow up.” Pasifika lesbian woman, 75–79 years*

*“Becoming freer, growing more and sharing all the good things from my life with others, particularly grandchildren.” NZ European/Pākehā bisexual trans woman, 80+ years*

## Wisdom

Finally, a small number of participants hoped ageing would bring them more wisdom, and a deepening understanding of themselves and the world.

*“More wisdom, not taking so much rubbish, being able to challenge, willing to fight for my rights and against those rights being taken away. Seeing the wealth of my experience and how it has made me who I am:)” Another ethnicity gay woman, 60–64 years*

*“Perhaps a deepening of insight or wisdom about the meaning of this life, and how to leave it peacefully.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70–74 years*

## Plans: What kinds of plans have you made about ageing?

We asked participants what plans they had made about ageing. About one in five participants had made no plans, and many said this was because they were too poor.

*“I have no plans as yet. I have given thought about this and probably I have pushed it one side for the time being. I know I should save for a funeral plan. My children are unable to support me when it comes time to stop working, so I don’t know what will happen to me. (Like an ostrich with his head in the ground).” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70–74 years*

The remaining participants described plans which overlapped across the following themes.

### Financial security

More participants had planned for their financial security than anything else. About one in three

participants mentioned superannuation, Kiwisaver, other forms of savings, paying off their mortgage and continuing paid work for as long as possible. Seeking financial security also overlapped considerably with other themes, in particular housing and maintaining in(ter)dependence.

*“Financial security. Partner to grow old with (hopefully) and who I have asked for them to not put me in a home. I want to stay living at home and have private care in-house if necessary. I have promised the same in return.” Māori Takatāpui woman, 60–64 years*

### Housing – downsizing, modifications and retirement home options

About one in five participants had planned for ageing by moving into a smaller home, making accessibility modifications such as widening doorways, installing ramps and shower rails, or researching and signing up for retirement home options.

*“Writing up a will. Re-structuring house features that can become dangerous ie. Ramps instead of steps. Death insurance.” Māori gay man, 65–69 years*

*“I have my name down for a rental unit at [retirement village] but advised this will be years this will be the first time I have home, always flatted or lived in boarding houses.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65–69 years*

*“We hope to be able to live in our current home for as long as we are able to upkeep it. Then we will most likely “downsize” our home and share a property with one of our daughters.” Māori lesbian Takatāpui person, 65–69 years*

### Advanced care, power of attorney and legal plans

About one in five participants had made wills, established enduring power of attorney, discussed funeral plans and set up advanced care plans with partners, family members or chosen family.

*“I have my own home, mortgage free, some savings, and a friend who will take up Enduring Power of Attorney if necessary.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65–69 years*

*“Making sure my will is relevant and my EpoAs are those I trust to make my voice heard.” Māori trans bisexual person, 75–79 years*



*“I’ve made my will and sorted trustees. I’m already in palliative care.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 70-74 years*

### **Maintaining in(ter)dependence**

About one in ten participants were seeking to maintain their independence as long as possible, often explicitly to stay out of aged-care facilities. ‘Independence,’ for many, included the interdependence of agreements with children, partners or other friends to support one another as they aged.

*“Whānau are important to me, so having them supporting me as I age is crucial to my wellbeing.” Māori Takatāpui woman, 55-59 years*

*“To foster positive relationships with other Lesbians in my community and to talk about some of the issues we all face as we age. And to reiterate that I am available to help or support people if they are struggling with daily life.” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65-69 years*

*“Am building a holiday home on whānau land, and plan to have a consultancy that I can work on part time when I retire from full-time work.” Māori gay man, 65-69 years*

*“I live within my community as an ageing woman among people of a range of ages. My communities of support include friends who share the same activist/political interests, my neighbourhood community, my longterm whānau of ex-partners & close friends (both straight and lesbian/gay).” NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 70-74 years*

*“I believe I have enough savings. I have an agreement with a friend I live with to look after each other as we grow old.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 75-79 years*

*“Keeping in touch with family and friends, helping others when I can.” Pasifika lesbian woman, 70-74 years*

### **Staying healthy**

About one in ten participants made attempts to stay healthy, often through eating well and

trying to exercise regularly. Again, this overlapped considerably with maintaining independence, and managing their own care. Participants were also concerned about potential healthcare costs.

*“Am trying to keep healthy, by exercising, as I age.” Māori gay man, 65-69 years*

### **Having fun, learning, travelling**

Finally, some participants hoped to find new pleasures as they aged, by learning new skills, continuing with activities they enjoyed, meeting new people, or travelling.

*“To keep working creatively till I die, and if incapacitated, to make every relationship, even passing ones, into a contact which offers human value.” NZ European/Pākehā bisexual non-binary person, 75-79 years*

### **Fears: What are the things you worry about, about ageing?**

Finally, we asked participants about their worries about ageing. About one in twenty participants said they had no worries, or they didn’t believe there was much point in worrying. Most participants did have worries, often overlapping, and many of these worries were specific to concerns about discrimination and systems for older people not being set up for the needs of Takatāpui and Rainbow older people.

### **Health and wellbeing**

About half of our participants worried about maintaining their physical and mental health and wellbeing. People specifically mentioned fear of becoming disabled or more disabled, including losing mobility; pain; losing mental acuity; memory loss as well as several specific health conditions such as dementia, Alzheimer’s, arthritis, strokes, heart problems and cancer.

*“Right to die whenever. Loss of mobility. Alzheimers. Loneliness. Being totally independent. Going into a rest home” Māori gay man, 65-69 years*

*“Getting ill or not being able to get around and do suffer a fair bit from anxiety in general about the world and those I care about as well as myself.” NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years*





***“Dementia, Alzheimers, being pushed into suicide (‘voluntary’ euthanasia), loss of fitness; and injuries.”*** Māori Takatāpui woman, 60–64 years

Many also mentioned concerns about discrimination inside healthcare systems.

***“Increasing reliance on others for support. Increasing health related concerns both physical and mental. Loss of memory and recall. The increasing and obvious ageist discrimination by health professionals. Lack of money to be financially stable. Reliant on others for support outside of my family.”*** NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 70–74 years

***“Healthcare and access to gender specific medication.”*** NZ European/Pākehā lesbian trans woman, 65–69 years

***“If I need care, for example a residential home, how will that go for me as a lesbian? General societal sexism still means women health issues are secondary to those of men, from research being male-centred and only generalised to women to women’s health matters being taken less seriously.”*** NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65–69 years

Others worried about the costs of wellbeing, including heating their homes, eating healthy food and healthcare itself.

***“Health people want everyone to eat better but when veges like tomatoes in [supermarket] costing over \$10 for 6 – fucken kidding me!”*** Māori Takatāpui non-binary person, 60–64 years

Several participants talked, some with sadness, about their sexual lives declining as they aged.

***“Don’t worry at this age of 76, not sure what the future may bring? I will accept not being able to perform in a sexual way in the years ahead. Perhaps 80 may be a lovely cut off time & walk the dog when I think about sexual partners.”*** NZ European/Pākehā bisexual man, 75–79 years

### **Loss of independence**

Health concerns overlapped significantly with fears of loss of independence, mentioned by about one in ten participants. Participants talked about being

worried about who would look after them when they could no longer look after themselves.

***“Dying alone, driving, going out. I find as I get older my anxiety levels are rising whereas I have always been very independent, worked better under stress, never anxious. Afraid of losing my independence and having to be taken care of by people who don’t care about me as a person.”*** NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 65–69 years

***“I am concerned about how I will be treated if I cannot look after myself. I do not trust my family at all. I do not want to rely on my friends as I don’t consider that I should be a burden on them.”*** NZ European/Pākehā lesbian trans woman, 65–69 years

### **Loneliness and isolation**

About one in six participants were worried about loneliness and isolation.

***“Social isolation, becoming ill or dependent.”*** Māori lesbian woman, 75–79 years

***“Being invisible and not finding other gay men. I am not wanting a sexual encounter but more time with gay people of all ages to share meals, outings and holidays.”*** NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65–69 years

***“I am lonely.”*** Another ethnicity, lesbian woman, 60–64 years

Many participants discussed disconnection from others leading to loneliness.

***“Not having much support. Son has disowned me and daughter too busy as works and has family to give me support which is okay while I’m well and active.”*** NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 75–79 years

Many participants also talked about feeling like they were invisible or had been discarded inside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities, making them more isolated than they wanted to be. Most participants who felt discarded said they did not think younger people in Takatāpui and Rainbow communities respected their experiences or even knew their contributions to activism.



*“I spent a great deal of my time from my 30s until about 5 years or so ago contributing a lot of my time to the gay community until I realised that very few of the young gay community realised or cared about what I or many of my friends had been through for them to have the freedom and health that they have now. I have decided that the gay community is no longer of any interest to me and, apart from long term close friends in the gay community I have no further contact.”* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 80+ years

For a handful of older lesbians, feeling discarded or invisible was due to how they felt they were treated, including inside lesbian social spaces as well as wider Rainbow spaces, because of their discomfort with increased acceptance of trans women.

### **Housing, retirement homes and aged-care facilities**

About one in six participants were worried about their housing situation, including accessible housing, having no control over housing costs when renting, and worrying about wanting to downsize to a smaller property in a difficult housing market.



*“As a renter, the availability of reasonably priced accommodation and a healthy safe environment to live the rest of my life in.”* Pasifika gay man, 65–69 years

More than half of those concerned about housing had the specific focus of retirement homes and aged-care facilities. Everyone who expressed concern over retirement homes and aged-care facilities was worried about how they would be treated because of their sexuality or gender.

*“My partner is [xx] years older than me, so I worry about retirement care not understanding or being open.”* NZ European/Pākehā straight trans man, 55–59 years

*“I worry that female only spaces like hospital wards and rest homes will not be made available for women like me who find mixed sex care environments untenable because of PTSD.”* Māori lesbian woman, 60–64 years

*“Finding a queer retirement village where they don’t assume and box us into heteronormative box with rigid gender roles.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian non-binary person, 55–59 years

*“My health deteriorating and needing long term care that supports my sexuality. Eg doctors. Rest home. Retirement village. Acceptance and care as an older lesbian woman.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65–69 years

Many participants felt vulnerable that rest homes and aged-care facilities that were not accepting of their identities would force them to go back into the closet.

*“Ending up in a rest home with transphobic staff who won’t recognise me as being a woman.”* NZ European/Pākehā trans woman, 65–69 years

*“I am concerned that I may need to consider a retirement village or eldercare at some stage and am worried that I will be forced back into the closet as a result. I expect that this might come about as a result of attitudes of fellow residents as much as management. It concerns me that I may become dependent on people who could be prejudiced and judge me.”* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 75–79 years



## Poverty and financial issues

About one in ten participants were worried about poverty, or not having enough money to meet their housing, healthcare and other needs, especially when reliant on one income.

*“The cost of living on a fixed income - the pension isn’t enough to live on when there is only one of you left.”* Another ethnicity, lesbian woman, 65-69 years

*“Being alone, not having enough money for accommodation, food even!”* NZ European/Pākehā bisexual woman, 75-79 years

*“Not being able to cook for myself/keep myself clean/pay my @#\$\$^&\*() digital bills - almost impossible at present with the younger generation/ that Social Welfare will stop my pension.”* Another ethnicity, lesbian woman, 80+ years

*“Housing how I will live and what pension income I will have as an aged pensioner.”* NZ European/Pākehā bisexual trans woman, 55-59 years

*“Finances. The NZS is only about 2 thirds of the minimum wage!... money is always a stress! It means I have to find work at odd jobs to get by.”* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years

Some participants also worried about being exploited financially, by family members or others.

*“Being invisible to younger people. Being taken advantage of financially or sexually.”* NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 70-74 years

*“Not enough money to pay bills, taken advantage of by those who think I do have money while trying to make ends meet.”* NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 55-59 years

## All the interview themes are relevant to the hopes, plans and fears Takatāpui and Rainbow elders have about ageing:

- Ageing – freedom, changes and ageism
- Belonging, acceptance and surviving discrimination
- Community hopes and dreams
- Emotional wellbeing
- Family – sources of joy
- Family – sources of pain
- Gaps and tensions in communities
- Healthcare
- Isolation
- Joys of building communities
- Looking to our histories
- Physical and mental wellbeing
- Preparing for and avoiding aged-care facilities
- Sex
- Wairua and spirituality
- When can I be my authentic self?



Interview themes can be listened to via [Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura](#) or [Rainbow Hub Waikato](#).

# Appendix 1: Legal rights timeline

This timeline briefly summarises significant legislation that has restricted or extended rights to Takatāpui and Rainbow people in Aotearoa.

The **English Laws Act 1858** declared that relevant laws of England passed before 14 January 1840 were to become law in New Zealand. Anal intercourse between men or ‘buggery’ became illegal, punishable with the death penalty. Sex between women was not criminalised. In 1861 England replaced the death penalty for buggery with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. New Zealand enacted similar legislation six years later in **Offences against the Person Act 1867**.

Non-penetrative sexual acts between men of any age became unlawful in England in 1885. New Zealand’s **Criminal Code Act 1893** explicitly removed the defence of consent to any sexual act between men and added flogging and whipping to potential punishments.

The **Crimes Act 1961** removed the potential term of life imprisonment for sodomy but retained all legal sanctions against sex between men. Sex between women was acknowledged for the first time as it became an offence for woman over 21 to engage in sexual activity with a girl under 16.

In 1966, Justice McCarthy noted in a decision regarding charges of ‘behaving in an offensive manner in a public place’ that he had been “quite unable to find anything in our law which says that it is unlawful for a male to attire himself in female clothing.” Well known trans woman Carmen Rupe therefore had her charges for wearing women’s clothing dismissed.<sup>43</sup> Despite the relative invisibility of trans and non-binary people and sex between women in legislation at this time, those who transgressed accepted codes of behaviour and gender were socially sanctioned and/or punished, including via institutionalisation into psychiatric hospitals.<sup>44</sup>

In 1967, sex between men over 21 was decriminalised in England. Although there were earlier attempts, similar legislation in New Zealand was not passed until the **Homosexual Law Reform Act 1986**, amidst significant and vitriolic public debate. The Act decriminalised sexual relations between men aged 16 and over, ensuring consensual sex would not result in prosecution and imprisonment and equalising the age of consent with other New Zealanders.

Māori academic Ngahua Te Awekotuku was refused a United States entry visa in 1972 on the grounds she was a homosexual.<sup>45</sup>

The **Property Relationships Amendment Act 2001** gave de facto couples, whether different or same-sex, the same property rights on the break-up of a relationship, and the **Family Protection Amendment Act 2001** provided de facto partners, whether different or same-sex, with rights and legal standing to make a claim against a deceased partner’s estate.

The **Civil Union Act 2004** allowed same-sex couples to enter a legally recognised union providing much the same entitlements as marriage, but without the right to adopt children as a couple. Public opposition to this legislation was less vitriolic than debates over Homosexual Law reform in the 1980s, but still showed considerable public discomfort with sexuality diversity.

The **Relationships (Statutory References) Act 2005** updated the language of a range of Acts to ensure that the same legal rights and responsibilities apply to married, de facto (whether different or same-sex), and civil union relationships.

The **Crimes (Provocation Repeal) Amendment Act 2009** revoked the partial defence of provocation of the Crimes Act 1961. In practice, some male defendants had relied on provocation to excuse killing a man who allegedly made them the subject of unwanted sexual advances. This so-called “homosexual panic” allowed convictions for killing to a lesser charge of manslaughter.<sup>46</sup>

43. <https://www.pridenz.com/timeline/all.html> and <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/6r6/rupe-carmen-tione>

44. Laurie, A., (2018), ‘Lesbian lives’, Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, [www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/lesbian-lives](http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/lesbian-lives) and <https://www.archives.govt.nz/discover-our-stories/homosexual-law-reform-through-the-archives>

45. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/homosexual-law-reform/birth-of-the-gay-movement>

46. New Zealand Law Commission, (2007), The partial defence of provocation NZLC R98



The **Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013** allowed any two people, regardless of their sex, sexuality or gender identity, to marry. This included same-sex couples and couples in which one or both partners had transitioned or were intersex. Opposition to sexuality diversity continued to decline, and opinion polls suggested that most New Zealanders, especially younger people, were in favour of “marriage equality.”<sup>47</sup>

The **Criminal Records (Expungement of Convictions for Historical Homosexual Offences) Act 2018** expunged the criminal records of men convicted for historical homosexual offences pre 1986-law reform.

The **Family Violence Act 2018** continued and expanded protections to victims of domestic violence as outlined in the Domestic Violence Act 1995. As with the earlier act, these protections included from same-sex partners.

The **Births, Deaths, Marriages and Relationships Registration Act 2021** introduced a self-identification process to amend the sex recorded on birth certificates for adults over 18. The new process involves a statutory declaration of gender identity, removing the need for trans, non-binary and intersex people to go to the Family Court or have medical treatment to physically conform with the sex they want listed on their birth certificate.<sup>48</sup> The bill attracted considerable anti-trans rhetoric about whether these changes would damage women’s rights.

The **Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Act 2022** banned practices intended to change or suppress someone’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, making it unlawful to perform a conversion practice, or arrange for a conversion practice to be performed.

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47. Cook, M., (2017), Marriage and partnering - Loosening rules, expanding choices: partnering from the late 1960s, Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/marriage-and-partnering/page-4>

48. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/127239124/parliament-unanimously-passes-sex-selfidentification-law-simplifying-changes-to-birth-certificates>

## Appendix 2: Discovery phase

Dr Cook discussed Elder Voices with the following international experts:

- Pauline Cramer, Co-ordinator at Val's LGBTI Ageing & Aged Care Rainbow Health Australia
- Gary Ferguson, the Education Coordinator Seniors Rights Victoria
- Franca Butera-Prinzi Team Leader – Practice and Service Development The Bouverie Centre, La Trobe University VIC Australia
- Marie Beaulieu, representative of the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse at the United Nations. In this capacity, she most notably participates in work concerning the rights of older persons, underpinning a global reflection on the possibility of developing and adopting an international convention on this issue
- Marie-Ève Bédard, Ph.D. Chercheure principale Bureau de la recherche et de l'innovation Saint Albert, Quebec.

Dr Cook identified the following publications as particularly useful for Elder Voices:

Bloemen, E. M., Rosen, T., LoFaso, V. M., Lasky, A., Church, S., Hall, P., Weber, T., & Clark, S. (2019). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender older adults' experiences with elder abuse and neglect. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 67(11), 2338–2345. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.16101>

Gallione, C., Dal Molin, A., Cristina, F. V., Ferns, H., Mattioli, M., & Suardi, B. (2017). Screening tools for identification of elder abuse: a systematic review. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 26(15–16), 2154–2176. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.13721>

Robson, C., Gutman, G., Marchbank, J., & Blair, K. (2018). Raising awareness and addressing elder abuse in the LGBT community: An intergenerational arts project. *Language and Literacy*, 20(3), 46–66. <https://doi.org/10.20360/langandlit29408>

Van Royen, K., Van Royen, P., De Donder, L., & Gobbens, R. (2020). Elder abuse assessment tools and interventions for use in the home environment: a scoping review. *Clinical Interventions in Aging*. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33061330/>

Westwood, S. (2019). Abuse and older lesbian, gay bisexual, and trans (LGBT) people: a commentary and research agenda. *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 31(2), 97–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08946566.2018.1543624>

Westwood, S. (2022). "People with faith-based objections might display homophobic behaviour or transphobic behaviour": older LGBTQ people's fears about religious organisations and staff providing long-term care. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15528030.2022.2070820>.

Dr Cook identified the following screening tools as relevant to Elder Voices:

- CAREGIVER ABUSE SCREEN (CASE) Canadian Association of Gerontology
- Australian Elder Abuse Screening Instrument (AUSI) National Ageing Research Institute
- ELDER ABUSE SUSPICION INDEX (EASI) Mark J. Yaffe, MD McGill University, Montreal, Canada; Maxine Lithwick, MSW CSSS Cavendish, Montreal, Canada; Christina Wolfson, PhD McGill University, Montreal, Canada
- HWALEK-SENGSTOCK ELDER ABUSE SCREENING TEST (H-S/EAST) Neale, A. V., Hwalek, M. A., Scott, R. O., & Stahl, C. (1991). Validation of the Hwalek-Sengstock elder abuse screening test. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 10(4), 406–415.



# Appendix 3: Interviewer sheet

## Takatāpui and Rainbow Elder Voices

🌈 HAVE YOUR SAY 🌈



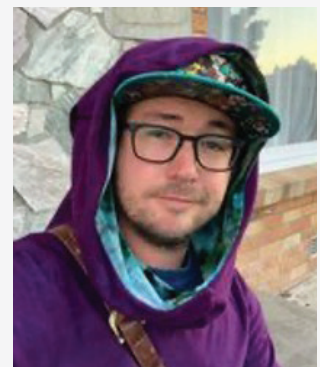
*Oriana Brown*



*Bex Fraser*



*Cayathri*



*Tim Bennett*

Thank you for volunteering to be interviewed by one of our Elder Voices research team. We would like to offer you the chance to choose your own interviewer from our team below. If you don't mind who interviews you, that's fine too.

**Oriana Brown** identifies as bisexual and uses the pronouns she/her. She cares about the rainbow community and people living their 'best' lives. It is really important to her to help people have a voice and a say in matters that affect them, which is one of the reasons Oriana is an interviewer for the Elder Voices project.

**Bex Fraser** is a non-binary trans person, Pākehā and bisexual. They have worked as a facilitator, manager and volunteer in community organisations for 18 years and have a huge passion for rainbow communities in the Waikato. Their work has included violence prevention and community building with former refugee and migrants, single parents and queer groups, and they facilitate The Big Qs, a group for adults who are newly exploring their sexuality or gender.

**Cayathri or Caya** is a queer person of colour from the mountains, waters, lands, flora, and fauna of Lanka (Sri Lanka). She first identified as queer in the early 2000s, and has over 20 years of research experience, activism and collective action in social justice. Caya has lived, travelled and worked in countries where queer identities are criminalised, and is grounded by her own experiences of marginalisation due to ethnic, language, gender and sexual identities. Caya is the co-founder of Adhikaar Aotearoa, a charity that supports people of colour LGBT+ in Aotearoa New Zealand, specifically focusing on those with South Asian ancestry.

**Tim Bennett** is a gay cis male, based in the Waikato. He has worked in the education sector for 15 years and the health and support sector for 5 years. Tim is passionate about social justice and equity, with a particular interest in supporting people living with HIV. Alongside his busy work life, he is a facilitator for The Big Qs and runs a social support group for Body Positive.





# Appendix 4: Consent form for Elder Voices interviews

## Consent form

I ..... agree to take part in an interview as part of the Elder Voices project.

Location:

Time:

Interviewer:

Interviewee phone number:

Interviewee email:

### I consent to this interview being recorded for the purposes of:

Making detailed notes Yes/No

Sharing with the lead researcher (Sandra Dickson) Yes/No

Making snippets of what I say for my review Yes/No

### Elder Voices snippets

We are hoping to release short snippets of this recording (30 seconds – 5 minutes) so that people can hear you describe things about your life that might be helpful for others to think about. For this, we are focussed on things that you find hopeful, positive or uplifting about being a Takataapui or Rainbow Elder. We might also consider snippets of information that are useful for others to consider.

- All snippets will be sent to you for your agreement following the interview
- We will ask for your consent individually for each snippet
- Consent may be withdrawn at any point in your life and we will stop making the snippet available.

### Follow up

I consent to being contacted by Kathleen Miller on the above phone number to check in about my wellbeing, a week after my interview. Yes / No

### Confidentiality

- All information will be stored safely and only available to the research team
- My personal information will only be shared with the lead researcher (Sandra Dickson), Bex Fraser (for organising interviews), Kathleen Miller (if consented above) and my interviewer.
- The interviewer will not share anything about the interview outside of the research team
- If I meet the interviewer at a social event or another community function, they will not mention the interview and will let me choose whether or not I greet them.

### Koha

I have received a \$50 koha from my interviewer in appreciation of my time Yes / No

Signed (Interviewee).....

Signed (Interviewer).....

Date.....



# Appendix 5: Consent form for Elder Voices focus groups

## Elder Voices Focus Group Consent form

I ..... agree to take part in a focus group as part of the Elder Voices project.

Location:

Date:

Focus group facilitators:

Mobile:

Email:

Address if needed for sending koha:

**I consent to focus group summary notes on themes being taken by facilitators for the purposes of inclusion in the Elder Voices report**

Yes/No

**I consent to this focus group being recorded, to help the facilitators get their notes right. The recording will only be listened to by the facilitators**

Yes/No

**I would like to review the focus group notes**

Yes/No

(If yes, the focus group facilitators will send you the notes and give you two days to review and give feedback. We are happy to include additional thoughts at this stage).

### Elder Voices project

Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura and Rainbow Hub Waikato have been running the Elder Voices project to find out what life is like for Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, including:

- A survey of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, answered by 424 people
- Interviews with 11 Takatāpui and Rainbow elders in person

Now we are running six focus groups with Tangata Whenua (2), Pasifika (2) and ethnic (2) community groups to uplift aspirations and highlight needs for Takatāpui and Rainbow elders in each of these communities. Focus group learnings will be included alongside the survey results and interview themes in the Elder Voices report, which we hope to release in October 2023.

### Confidentiality

- The focus group summary notes will not refer to any participants by name
- My personal information will only be shared with the lead researcher (Sandra Dickson) and the two people running the focus group I attend
- The focus group facilitators will not share anything about the focus group outside of the research team except for the summary notes, which will cover the themes raised in the focus group
- If I meet one of my facilitators at a social event or another community function, they will not mention the focus group and will let me choose whether I greet them.

### Koha

I have received a \$50 koha from my focus group facilitator in appreciation of my time Yes / No

I prefer an e-voucher (we will send this out after the focus group) Yes

Signed (Interviewee).....

Signed (Facilitator).....

Date .....



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Material from this document may be used in other publications but should be referenced as follows.

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Uplifting Takatāpui and Rainbow Elder Voices:  
Tukua kia tū takitahi ngā whetū o te rangi.

[kahukura.co.nz](http://kahukura.co.nz)



[rainbowhubwaikato.org.nz](http://rainbowhubwaikato.org.nz)

