

# AGEING & INTERSECTIONALITY

## Indigenous Women

For many indigenous tribes, women hold great power and bear much responsibility within their communities. As women age, their responsibility within the tribe shifts as they transition to elders and knowledge keepers.

When a female tribe member becomes an elder, she is "...the keeper of traditions...the keeper of the appropriate use of those laws" (Anderson, 2011, p.128).

"The responsibilities of elderly women in particular correspond to a movement away from the primary function of sustaining communities through physical work and childbearing, and into new authorities and a newfound sense of power. As women aged, they moved gradually from the kind of authority a woman held as a mother to the authority of a 'grandmother'" (Anderson, 2011, p. 129)

## Grandparents Raising Grandkids

Social and cultural implications have led to an increase in grandparents providing care for their grandchildren. "From a global perspective, grandparents have long been identified as serving as key sources of support for their families...by assuming responsibility for their grandchildren, in response to varied macro and micro challenges (Dolbin-Macnab & Yancura, 2017, p. 22)

## Locating Self in the Context of Aging

As a queer woman with European ancestry, my understanding of aging has evolved over time. My early interpretations matched a typical western point of view where aging is linked to poor health, loss of beauty and loss of independence. As I have gotten older, I have come to embrace what aging means and what opportunities it affords.

## Implications for Social Work Practice

"...the profession of social work must promote the dignity of growing old. Practitioners must combat discrimination wherever and whenever it occurs. Most important, social workers must convey the message that sensitivity begins at the personal level. We must lead by example. For this reason, it is imperative that we understand the complexities of ageism and endorse better educational programs in gerontological social work, as well as in clinical and research settings" (Azulai, 2014, p. 11).

For me, this means, questioning my own interpretations of aging, taking a learners stance, connecting clients to culturally appropriate services and advocating for polices that are inclusive.



**WOMEN THROUGH THE AGES HAVE BEEN GIVEN A SHELF-LIFE, AN EXPIRY DATE AS TO WHEN THEIR AGE BECOMES ANOTHER SITE OF COLONIAL SOCIAL INEQUITY THAT IS THRUST UPON THEM.**

**Aging in the LGBTQ2+ Community**  
I spoke with my uncle who is a senior and is part of the LGBTQ2+ community. He spoke of social isolation, lack of culturally appropriate resources, groups or healthcare services that understand his unique issues.

**"...most LGBT older adults remain invisible in aging and health services, policies, and research" (Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2016).**

## References:

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- Azulai, A. (2014). Ageism and Future Cohorts of Elderly: Implications for Social Work. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 11(2), 2-12.
- Dolbin-Macnab, M.L., & Yancura, L.A. (2017). International Perspectives on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Contextual Considerations for Advancing Global Discourse. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 86(1), 3-33.
- Fredriksen-Goldsen K. I. (2016). The Future of LGBT+ Aging: A Blueprint for Action in Services, Policies, and Research. *Generations* (San Francisco, Calif.), 40(2), 6-15.