

LGB people with cancer share video experiences of care

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Credit: University of Manchester

The unique experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people with

cancer have been shared on a new video hub from The University of Manchester, funded by Macmillan Cancer Support – highlighting differences in their care, and issues around sex, support and bereavement.

The aim of the videos, which were filmed during 2016 by lecturer in nursing Dr Maurice Nagington are designed to help people understand the thoughts and feelings of LGB people with cancer and their own experiences of care.

[The site](#) is designed for NHS staff as a resource to guide their contact with this group.

Dr Nagington said: "LGB people with cancer often experience services which are heteronormative (designed for straight people). For instance this can include advice on [hair loss](#) or makeup which is targeted at making women look particularly feminine when this may not be the way they usually present, whilst not offering any such services to men.

"Some of the people we spoke to told us how advice about the effects of cancer and treatment on sex was designed for heterosexual people and the professionals they spoke with weren't able to address their concerns or were reluctant to go into much detail."

The website includes video testimonies from men and women of a variety of ages. One of these, Lesley who has [ovarian cancer](#), said: "It'd be nice if people wouldn't make assumptions about your husband coming in to visit."

Another, Greg who had prostate [cancer](#), said: "They said you might experience blood in your wee, but they don't tell you about how that affects sex."

There are several sections to the site covering, sex, homophobia and bereavement and also supporting information which health professionals and patients can use.

Despite the issues they'd encountered, most people interviewed didn't think specific LGB support groups were the answer, although they may be helpful. Instead people felt more recognition of their needs as LGB people would be helpful as they went through treatment.

Dr Nagington added: "Our interviewees often approached misunderstandings about their sexuality with humour and were very brave and honest in telling their stories. I think their overall advice would be that professionals should remember that not all patients are straight and sometimes what fits one group isn't appropriate for all.

"I hope to expand the site in the future to give more detail on the sexual challenges that lesbian and bisexual women can face, as well as interviewing trans people about their experiences."

Provided by University of Manchester

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