

Department of psychology and social work

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Older transgender adults in social work – knowledge and experiences

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ACADEMIC THESIS

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Abstract

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This thesis has a dual purpose; firstly it examines the existing knowledge about older transgender adults in the available research and within the social work profession, and secondly, it examines older transgender people's life experiences of contact with society's welfare institutions and determines the group's expectations concerning similar future meetings. Using a qualitative design, three sub-studies were carried out. The first sub-study was a mapping systematic literature review that was performed using thematic analysis. The second sub-study was based on semi-structured interviews with 16 social workers, and the empirical material was analysed using qualitative content analysis. The third sub-study was based on teller-focused interviews with eight transgender people over 65 years of age, and the empirical material was analysed using narrative analysis. The thesis has a critical social constructivist approach and the theoretical framework applied includes theoretical concepts such as gender, age, life course and room for manoeuvre/discretion. The results suggest that there is limited knowledge about the experiences and needs of older transgender adults, both in social work as a research field and as a profession. The results also show that the older transgender adults' experiences of encounters with welfare institutions affect their attitude towards seeking support in the future. When the results are combined, and the perspectives from social workers and older transgender adults are integrated, *insecurity* emerges as an experience shared by both groups. If the social worker as well as the older transgender adults experience insecurity as suggested in the thesis, the right type of support might not get discovered nor granted due to questions not being asked and answers being withheld.

Keywords

gender identity, gender expression, life experiences, social work, social services, transgender people, older adults