

June 3, 2022



American
Society
on Aging

ASA Chicagoland Roundtable

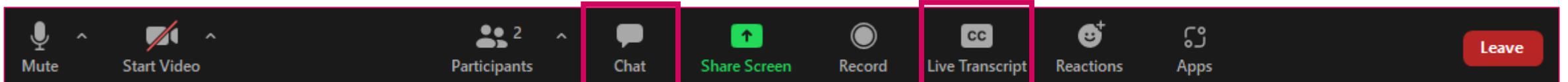
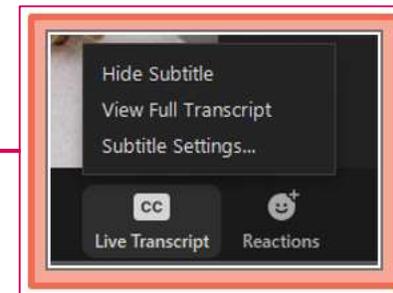
Let's Talk about... Sex, Sexuality, and Aging

Housekeeping

All participants are placed on mute.

Submit your questions through the Q&A or chat box buttons.
We will respond to questions at the end.

Live transcription has been turned on and is available.





Nice to “meet” you



Kelly Rice, MPH (they/them)

Public Health Leader focusing on LGBTQ Health, Aging Services, and End of Life Care

Director of Aging and Disability Services-
Central, Catholic Charities

Today's Agenda

- + Welcome and Introduction: Kelly Rice
- + The Role of Sexuality in Older Adult Wellbeing: Kelly Ducheny
 - + Let's Talk About Sex: Jacqueline Boyd
 - + Sex and Sexuality in Long-term Care: Katie Fasullo
- + The Neglected Topic in Medicine: "Sex and Intimacy as We Age": Michelle Evers
 - + Why Older People Need to be Heard: Elliott Morris
 - + Q&A and Discussion
 - + News and Announcements

Today's Speakers



Kelly Ducheny, PsyD
(she/they), Psychologist and
Senior Advisor, Education
and Clinical Practice,
Howard Brown Health



Jacqueline Boyd
(she/they), Owner,
The Care Plan



Katie Fasullo, DNP, RN
GERO-BC (she/her),
Corporate Director of
Population Health and
Health Equity, CMSS

Today's Speakers



Elliott Morris (he/him),
Community Health Worker,
Howard Brown Health



Michelle Evers, CNP,
AAHIVS (she/her), Lead
NP, Wellbe Senior Care

The Role of Intimacy and Sexuality in Older Adult Well Being

Kelly Ducheny, PsyD, Howard Brown Health

American Society of Aging Chicago Round Table

June 3, 2022

Sexuality

Sexuality is...“...a central aspect of being human throughout life [that] encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction.”

World Health Organization, 2006

Sexuality is a core human drive, like eating, drinking and sleep, that continues through older adulthood.

Sexuality is a vibrant, important part of people's lives. It creates connection and offers significant mental and physical health benefits.

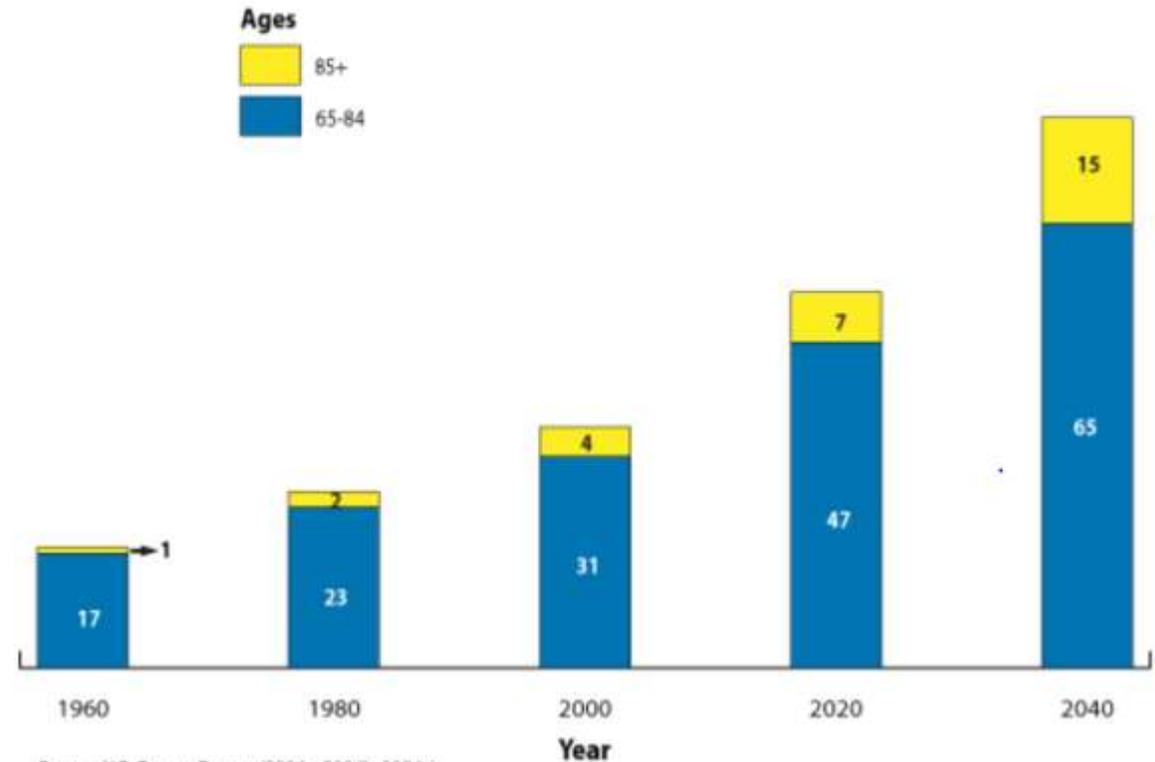


Population Shifts

- The number of people 65 and older will double in the next 20 years, and the number of people 80 and older will quadruple.
- The US population is aging, with 20% of the US population (1 in 5 people) expected to be 65 or older by 2040.
- Life expectancy continues to increase in the US, with some estimating life expectancies of 85-100 in the next 40 years
- More single older adults

(Malta et al, 2020; Oeppen & Vaupel, 2019)

Number of Older Americans, 1960-2040 (in millions)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2004a, 2004b, 2004c).

(Urban Project, 2022)

Research shows strong interest in sexual activity

2018 survey showed

- 67% of older adults are interested in sex
- 40% of people 65-80 have been sexually active in the last year
- 72% of people 65-80 have a partner and 54% of them are sexually active

(National Poll on Health Aging, University of Michigan, 2018)

“Qualitative studies which report the lived experiences of adults aged 60 years and over show they remain sexually engaged, redefining their intimate practices beyond ‘sexual intercourse’ by finding unique ways to stimulate arousal and achieve orgasm.”

(Malta et al, 2020, p. 40)

Sexual activity continues later in life. While sexual response is slower and athleticism decreases, sexual satisfaction and enjoyment remains high. Sexual dysfunction is not a normal part of life and can be treated at any age. (Sewell, 2014)

So.....why aren't we
talking about this a lot
more?

Ageism's Impact

Older adult sexuality is often silenced and shamed by systemic and internalized ageism.

- Ageist assumptions, policies, practices, structures
- Implicit and explicit bias
 - Implicit bias test <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- Internalized by older adults and those who care for them

Older adults are often willing to speak about sexuality but are rarely asked (Malta et al, 2020)



Benefits of Sex and Sexual Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction

Increased intimacy and attraction

Relationship stability

Better physical health (exercise and movement)

Cardiovascular health

Joints and muscle tone

Blood flow

Pelvic floor muscle (reduced incontinence and prolapse)

Better mental health

- Lower depression and anxiety
- Improves mood
- Reduces stress
- Less loneliness and more intimacy

(Emoha, 2022; Flynn & Gow, 2015; Kolodziejczak, 2019; Malta et al, 2020; Sewell, 2014; Sprecher et al., 2004)



Benefits of Sex and Sexual Satisfaction

Higher self esteem

Feel more attractive and connected

Higher quality of life

Lower subjective age

Feel younger

Less likely to see self as 'aging out' of enjoyable activities

Increased sexually active life expectancy

- Staying sexually active increase the likelihood that you will stay sexually active longer

(Emoha, 2022; Flynn & Gow, 2015; Kolodziejczak, 2019; Malta et al, 2020; Sewell, 2014; Sprecher et al., 2004)



Continued Evolution

While level/type of sexual activity while young can often predict sexuality in older adulthood, a person's interest/identity evolves throughout their entire life.

- Changes in sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- Polyamory
- 'Friends with benefits'
- Changes in fantasy, desire, what feels good



Sex Positivity

A belief that sex and sexual activity are a natural and healthy part of people's lives.

The idea that people should be respectfully supported to learn about and experience their sexuality and gender without shame or judgement.

An approach that values communication, explicit consent and education that assists people in making informed choices about their body, sexual behaviors and pleasure.

(Kassel, 2020)

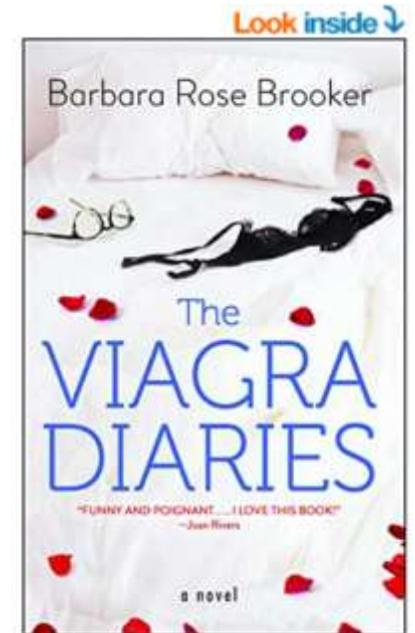
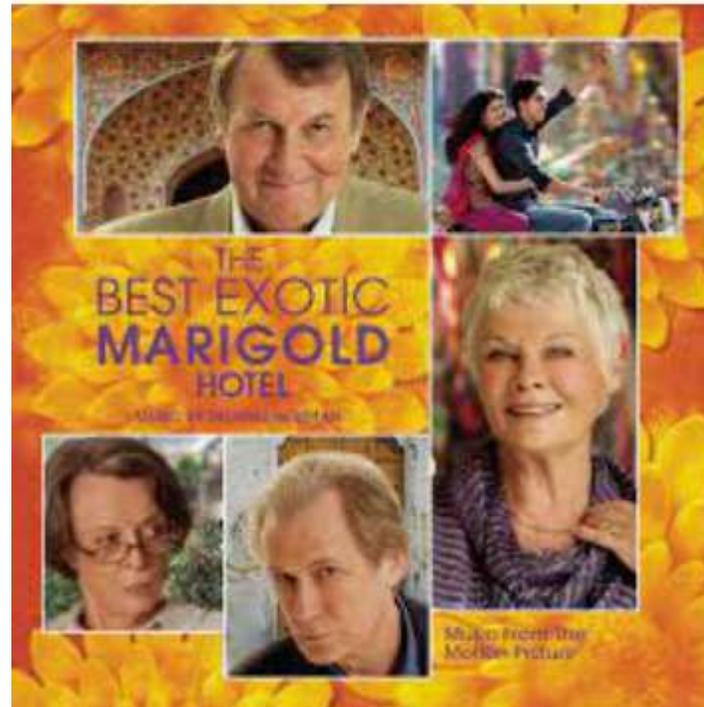


Learn Through Media

70 year-old protagonist,
Sex and the City for
Seniors, 2013



<https://www.esquire.com/lifestyle/s-ex/a46389/best-sex-podcasts/>



Sex Over 50: Our Better
Half, Podcast...modern
sex for classic bodies,
2016

So...why this is such an important topic.

Significant positive impact on emotional and physical health and well being

Already happening but without important sex-positive support

Will be an even more frequent/important topic as older adult population increases and has a longer life expectancy





**THERE ARE MANY
WAYS TO DO IT
THERE IS ONLY ONE
WAY TO DO IT SAFELY**

USE A CONDOM

Be. More. Visible. Sexually Transmitted
Diseases Are Common. Safer Sex. Now.
SaferSex4Simmons.org



Thank you

Kelly Ducheny, PsyD

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THE CARE PLAN
HEALTH & AGING SERVICES ON YOUR TERMS

WELCOME

Let's Talk About Sex

June 3, 2022

ASA Roundtable



THE CARE PLAN
HEALTH & AGING SERVICES ON YOUR TERMS



Jacqueline Boyd

Owner, The Care Plan

Training | Care | LGBTQ+

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What We Know

- Sexuality and intimacy are a normal part of human experiences and needs -> throughout the lifespan
- Older adults have the right to have consensual sexual and intimate encounters
- 40% of people 65-80 are sexually active



Sexual & Intimate Expression

- Hugging
- Kissing
- Hand holding
- Cuddling
- Verbalizing attraction
- Asking for sex
- Self pleasure
- Expressing interest in another person
- Engaging in sexual activities



Real World Examples

- Involuntary reactions to touch
- Entering the dating pool
- Casual arrangements
- Discussing myths around dysfunction
- Established or emerging couples
- Self-pleasure
- New behaviors or expression of desires with dementia or cognitive impairment



If you were to have a problem with your sexual health,
who would you talk to about it? AMONG ADULTS 65-80

62% Health care provider



36% Spouse/partner



17%
No one



10% Family member, friend, or other person



May 2018 Report: Let's Talk About Sex

Starting The Conversation

“As your provider it’s my job to be sure you have accurate information about all aspects of your health. With that in mind I’d like to open up a conversation about sex and intimacy in your life. Let’s talk about that next session”



THE CARE PLAN
HEALTH & AGING SERVICES ON YOUR TERMS



Taking A Sexual Health History

- Give prior notice
- Take your time
- Model consent
- Encourage questions
- Encourage client getting their needs met
- State it is a non-judgemental environment
- Allow time for storytelling or narratives
- Provide practical resources





THE CAR CENTER FOR HEALTH & WELLNESS

Example Process - 5 P's model

- Partners
- Practices
- Pregnancy & Reproduction
- Protection from STI's
- Previous STI's

Resource -

[Arizona Center On Aging](#)



Example Questions

Partners

“How do you choose or find your sexual partners?” “Typically do you have sex with people who identify as women, men, transgender, nonbinary?”

Practices

“On average how often do you have sexual contact?”

“How has sex changed for you over the years?”

“Is there any element of your sexual life that you have questions about?”



Example Questions

Pregnancy & Reproduction

“Do you have any goals around pregnancy or reproduction at this point in your life?”

Prevention

“How do you talk about STI’s with your partners?”

“How often do you get tested for STI’s?”

“I’d like to provide some basic information about how to protect yourself and your partner(s), would that be alright?”



Organizational Best Practices

- Take sexual health histories consistently with all clients
- Implement policies specific to your organization
- Provide training to staff on sexual health
 - Annually
 - Focus on bias and communication
 - Practice scenarios



Things To Consider - Family & Staff

- Does the resident have capacity to consent?
- Is the resident safe and not coerced?
- Is there any sexual health education or resources that should be provided?
- Do they have space and privacy to engage in sex / intimacy with themselves or another partner?
 - If not, how can the LTC facility support creating and protecting this space?
- Is there other communication needed?





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Sex and Sexuality in Long-term Care

Katie Fasullo, DNP, RN, GERO-BC

ASA Roundtable I

6.3.22

Thought experiment

Think of older adults in long-term care. What is the first image that comes to mind?



Thought experiment

What about this...



What we know

- Sex is important to older adults⁹
 - Sexually active:
 - 57-64: 75%
 - 65-74: 50%
 - 75+: 26%
- Long-term care⁹
 - 10% indicate interest in being sexually active

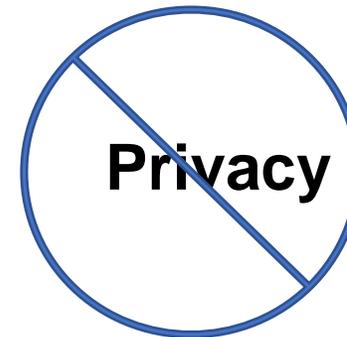
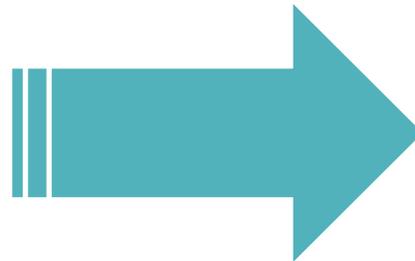
What we know

Older adult residents in long-term care **live** there

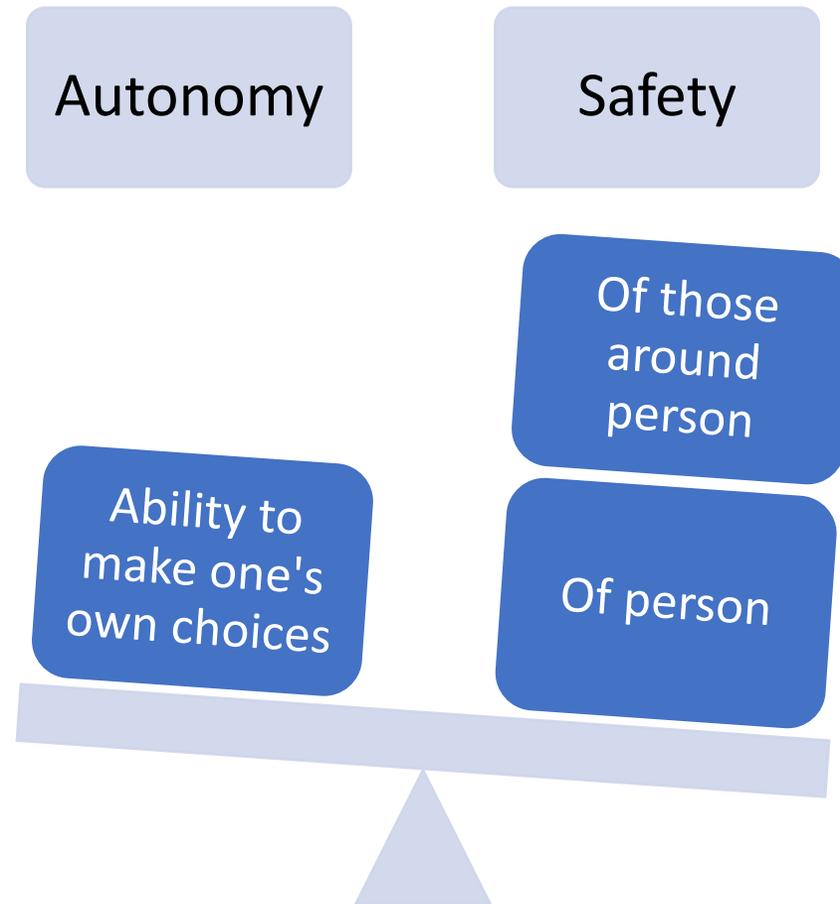
*Anything they do at home, they can do in long-term care

Barriers

- May not have a **private room**
- Lots of **people** around
- No **lock** on door
- Not seen **sexual beings**
- Inconsistent institutional **policies** and procedures
- **Family** attitudes



Balancing Act



Resident Rights

Legal Rights

- All residents have **legal right** to sexual expression⁴
- **Sexual rights** protect all people's rights to fulfill and express their sexuality and enjoy sexual health⁴
- Right to **protection** from unsafe, unwanted, or abusive situations

Illinois Resident Rights⁵

You have the right to...

- Safety and good care
- Participate in your own care
- Privacy
- Money management
- Contract information
- Medicaid and Medicare information
- Stay in your facility

Consent

Consent

- Individuals participating in sexual activity must be able to provide consent
- All sexual contact without consent is a crime
- Cognitive impairment is not an automatic reason to deny a relationship

CASE BY CASE BASIS

Capacity

Assessing Capacity⁹

1. Awareness of the relationship
2. Ability to avoid exploitation
3. Resident is aware of potential risks

Dementia

May not...

- Recall their own marital status
- Recognize their partner
- Realize that sexual activity is inappropriate in certain settings

May cause...

Temporal lobe⁷

- Disinhibition (no filter)
- Hypersexuality (uncontrollable need to have sexual stimulation)

Frontal lobe⁷

- Loss of interest in sex (apathy)

'Inappropriate' Behaviors

What is inappropriate?

Definition: Verbal or physical act of a sexual nature unacceptable within the social context in which it is carried out

- Very subjective
- Differs among individuals, institutions, and cultures³

'Inappropriate' Behaviors

What is inappropriate?³

- Language
- Propositioning care givers when assisting with care

• Sex talk



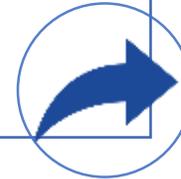
- Touching
- Grabbing
- Masturbation
- Exposing oneself

Sex acts



- Reading/watching pornographic material
- Requesting unnecessary genital care

Implied sex acts



'Inappropriate' Behaviors

Reasons for inappropriate behaviors

- Boredom
- Diagnosis/illness
- Medications
- Mental health issues
- Dementia

'Inappropriate' Behaviors

What are they trying to say?³



Personal Bias

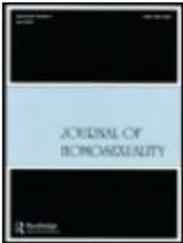
Staff Perceptions

“I did not realize until now, but my reaction to men and women is quite different. When I see an older man with dementia touching an older woman I do tend to get quite angry, whereas towards the older women with dementia I feel quite protective and maternal towards them.”

- Staff person in LTC

Personal Bias

Staff Perceptions



Journal of Homosexuality



ISSN: 0091-8369 (Print) 1540-3602 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wjhm20>

Staff Perceptions of Same-Gender Sexual Contacts in Long-Term Care Facilities

Kate L. M. Hinrichs PhD & Tammi Vacha-Haase PhD

To cite this article: Kate L. M. Hinrichs PhD & Tammi Vacha-Haase PhD (2010) Staff Perceptions of Same-Gender Sexual Contacts in Long-Term Care Facilities, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 57:6, 776-789, DOI: [10.1080/00918369.2010.485877](https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2010.485877)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2010.485877>

LTC staff responded to one of 3 vignettes in which resident sexual contact was observed:

1. Male-Female pairing
2. Male-Male pairing
3. Female-Female pairing

Results:

Staff rated male-male and female-female pairings more negatively than heterosexual intimacy

Strategies

Providers

- Initiate discussion about sexual health
- Always knock before entering rooms
- Stay away from punitive language
- Avoid overreacting
- Respect the dignity of all involved
- Remember person with dementia may not know their behavior is ‘inappropriate’
- Redirection when needed
- Learn residents’ histories
- Incorporate into care plans

Strategies

Facilities

- Provide staff training around older adult sexual expression and signs/symptoms of abuse
- Ensure policies are in place to protect vulnerable residents
- Designate quiet, private space for residents to engage in sexual activity
- Relocate partners to shared room with double bed (instead of two singles)
- Provide “Do Not Disturb” signs or ribbons to signify the room is occupied
- Loop in families into conversations

Resources

If you are in long-term care:

- Know your [rights!](#)
- Call the Senior Help Line: 1-800-252-8966

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Thank you!



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News and Announcements

Please share any announcements in the chat.

View recordings from recent sessions at

<https://aging.rush.edu/policy/asa-chicagoland/>

Please join us for our upcoming Roundtable **Friday 8/5/22, 8:30-10:30am** for a session on cost of living and economic security among older adults

- Registration / details will be shared in July *via ASA listserv*
- *Bonnie will also share registration details in follow-up from today's event*

Sign up for ASA's Chicagoland Roundtable newsletter at

<https://bit.ly/3KPGdhi>

