



**Catalyst Café**  
**Wednesday, May 13, 2026**  
**2:30 - 4:30 p.m.**  
**Queermunity, 3036 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55408**

## AGENDA

### 2:30 - Registration and Refreshments

*Enjoy some food and beverages, check-out the space, grab a bite to eat and connect with fellow aging sector leaders and other community members.*

**3:00 - We Age Because We Survive: How Are Black Trans Women Aging in Minnesota** featuring **TYSEN TYSON**, Research Consultant at the MN Leadership Council on Aging with special guest **RAQUELLE LENOIR**, Member Exchange Manager at the Aliveness Project.

### 4:30 - Adjourn



**Tysen Tyson** is a second-year PhD student in Social Work in the School of Social Work, within the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, where their scholarship examines aging equity, violence across the life course, and the health and well-being of marginalized communities, including Black transgender and gender-diverse communities.

Rooted in Black intellectual, activist, and community-engaged research traditions, and informed by their experiences as a Black, queer, nonbinary scholar and clinician, their work explores how personal, structural, and cultural violence shape experiences of survival, intimacy, and belonging, and how intimate partner violence functions as a strategic leverage point for systems change. Tysen is a Graduate Research Assistant, Common Ground Consortium Scholar, and Research Consultant with the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging through the Robert L. Kane Endowed Chair in Long-Term Care & Aging Internship Program at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. They are an award-winning AASECT Certified Sexuality Educator, Board Certified Diplomate in Clinical Social Work, Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker, and founder of Philadelphia Empowerment Clinic PLLC. They have over 15 years of interdisciplinary experience spanning research, education, clinical practice, and leadership. Tysen earned their Master of Social Work from the University of Pennsylvania and their Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies from James Madison University.



**Raquelle Lenoir** has been a community advocate since she began her journey as a person in recovery. Part of her story is to give away what she was freely given to her: love, patience, and acceptance. She has been blessed to receive many opportunities to excel in her life and serves as the Member Experience Manager at The Aliveness Project, which allows her to connect with her community regularly. She has been a mother in the ballroom culture scene and is a community auntie.

She has been crowned not once but twice as your Miss Trans Minnesota and is also known as Mak3va in the drag scene! In her spare time, she loves to play SIMS 4, go camping, hiking and spending time with chosen family and friends.



# Breakout Group Discussion

## WE AGE BECAUSE WE SURVIVE

### CASE SCENARIO: MONIQUE REVLON

Monique is a 54-year-old Black transgender woman living in North Minneapolis. She is active in local drag, HIV advocacy, and LGBTQ+ community spaces and is known for supporting younger queer and trans people.

Behind the scenes, Monique is experiencing escalating **intimate partner violence**—including threats, isolation, financial control, and physical abuse from her long-time partner. She no longer feels safe at home.

She is **living with HIV** and has recently struggled to attend medical appointments and maintain her care due to stress, fear, depression, and instability. Past experiences of misgendering, dismissive treatment, and discrimination have contributed to a **deep distrust of healthcare** and **aging-service systems**.

Although Monique remains connected to **chosen family** and LGBTQ+ community networks, she has not disclosed the abuse because she fears retaliation and further violence.

Recently, a community member noticed Monique **withdrawing socially** and appearing increasingly distressed.



# 1

### VIOLENCE ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE

How do personal, structural, and cultural violence interact in Monique's experience?



# 2

### AGING EQUITY & SYSTEMS CHANGE

What could healthcare systems, organizations, or aging-service providers do differently to better support Black trans women aging in Minnesota?



*"We age because we survive."*



## COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (CPBAR) PRINCIPLES

*Adapted for community engagement from: SoLaHmo and the Program in Health Disparities Research Community Academic Board. Community-Based Participatory Action Research Partnership Protocol, 2017. <https://z.umn.edu/PartnershipProtocol>*

1. Recognize that members of a community may have a shared identity that requires ethical protections.
2. Answer questions that are important *to the community*, and that create solutions built on existing community strengths and resources.
3. Create pathways for the collaborative, equitable involvement of all partners in all phases of the work.
4. Create a balance between gaining knowledge and creating action for the benefit of all partners.
5. Empower partners to actively learn from each other and to pay attention to social inequalities.
6. Address how both social and environmental contexts affect health.
7. Share findings and knowledge gained with all partners and with communities, in a way that can be used to improve community health.
8. Involve long-term commitment by all partners.

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## WE AGE BECAUSE WE SURVIVE: REFERENCES AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

*Compiled by Tysen Tyson, LICSW, BCD, CSE May 13, 2026*

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