In this talk I examine the interaction of race and sexual orientation as it relates to dimensions of social histories, social support and experiences with health for African-American LGBT elders. While past studies of aging in White gay populations imply that homophobia often results in geographically distant relationships between gay people and their families of origin, I have found that many African-American sexual minority elders live in close proximity to family members and sustain close kin relationships. However, they also maintain a particular type of silence around their sexual orientation, and limit the information they share with family members about their lives. They provide substantial instrumental support to kin but may not receive sufficient emotional support to mitigate experiences of social isolation that increase with age. I will also share the beginnings of new analyses of how the social histories of this population and their "coming of age stories" from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s relate to current life circumstances as they approach retirement age.

Mignon R. Moore’s award-winning first book, Invisible Families: Gay Identities, Relationships and Motherhood among Black Women (2011), examines how African-American same-sex couples form and raise families and experience a gay sexuality while retaining connections to racial/ethnic communities. Professor Moore has received honors and financial support from the Ford Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and the Human Rights Campaign. Her current work on racialized sexual minority elders is funded by the National Institutes of Health.

The Intimacy Lectures is a series of talks from January 2015-January 2016 attending to intimacy as the site of profound global social transformations shaping lived experience. For more information, see http://www.faculty.virginia.edu/IntimacyLectures

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