Substance Abuse and Sexual Orientation: The Key to Helping LGBTQ+ Students in Higher Education

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Welcome!

• Associate Professor
• Focus on Human Sexuality and Gender Issues
• Completed a practicum with a renowned gender reassignment surgeon to better understand the medical, physical, emotional, and spiritual support needs for trans-identified persons and their support systems
• Why is this topic important?
Brief Summary:

• LGBTQ+ students not only face many of the same risks as heterosexual students, but also deal with population specific risks when dealing with substance abuse.

• This Webinar addresses substance abuse statistics, risk factors on a college campus affecting substance abuse, and the social/administrative support needed to better serve this population.
Learning Objectives

• To become familiar with appropriate terms for the LGBTQ+ community
• To identify major factors affecting substance abuse in the LGBTQ+ community
• To discuss changes needed on a college campus to better serve the LGBTQ+ community
Know What You Are Talking About

- Sexual Orientation
- Biological Sex
- Gender Expression
- Gender Assigned at Birth
- Gender Identity
Shocking Stats

• 20-30% of the GLBTQ+ population abuses substances vs. 9% of the general population \(^3,\ 6\)

• 25% of GLBTQ+ abuse alcohol compared to 5-10% of general population \(^3\)

• The LGBTQ+ population is more than 2x as likely to have experienced any kind of mental illness in the past year. \(^7\)
Substance Abuse in Lesbians

Studies suggest that Lesbians are significantly more likely to drink in a heavy manner vs. heterosexual women. ¹¹

Lesbian and bisexual women are more likely to drink more often, binge drink, and experience negative consequences from alcohol use. ¹¹

They are also more likely to seek professional help for these problems. ¹¹
Substance Abuse in Bisexual Men and Women

• Bisexual adults exhibit higher rates of binge drinking (22.6%) than their counterparts (14.3%) \(^\text{11}\)

• Rates for binge drinking in bisexual women can be as high as (23.7%) \(^\text{11}\)
Substance Use in Gay Men

- Gay men use substances at a higher rate than the general population \(^3, 11\)
- 3.5\% more likely to use marijuana and other illicit drugs and become dependent. \(^3\)
- 12.2\% more likely to use amphetamines \(^3\)
- 9.5\% more likely to use heroin \(^3\)
Substance Use in Transgender/Gender Queer Populations

• More likely to use marijuana, crack, and alcohol along with using meth and other injectable drugs. \(^3, 11\)

• 200% more likely to smoke tobacco \(^3\)
Why Turn to Substance Abuse?

- Stress
- Cultural competency
- Lack of Family Support
- Invisibility
- Financial issues
- Lack of effective advising
- Bullying and ostracizing
- Sexual Assault
- Socialize, Cope, and Conform
Emotions

- Turmoil
- Fear
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
- Hope
- Disenfranchised Grieving
- Hiding

1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11
The Experience

Higher Ed. Attendance
- 1 million LGBTQ+ Students
- 160,000 faculty
- Most people struggle with identity issues in their 20's

Micro-Aggressions
- Heterosexist/Phobic terminology
- Endorsing Heteronormative culture
- Discomfort with LGBTQ issues/experiences
- Assumptions of Abnormality
- Denial of Privacy

Making A Mistake?
- Admit
- Apologize
- Learn/Grow/Change

2, 3, 4, 5, 11
I am Sam: A Personal Experience

• I am Sam

• *Disclaimer some violence and disturbing actions

• Stop at 1:39
Barriers to Seeking Support

- Stigma
- Overt/Covert Discrimination
- Intolerance
- Lack of Education
- Lack of cultural sensitivity on and off campus
- Multiple Support Systems
Changes that Need to be Made

- Create a Welcoming Environment
- Professional Training
- Standards for Culturally Responsible Services
- INCLUSIVITY!
- Facilitate Programs
- Safe Campuses
- Link the University and the Community
- Effective Advising
- Counseling
- Be Aware of Language
- Increase Visibility
- Promote Understanding
- Tailored Services
- Curricula includes LGBTQ+
- LGBTQ+ Alumni
- Campus Pride Ranking

1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11
References


References


Contact Information

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Thank You!