LGBQ College Student Mental Health

Students who identify as lesbian (L), gay (G), bisexual (B), questioning (Q), or elsewhere on the sexual orientation spectrum often struggle with discrimination and marginalization, which can negatively impact mental health and sense of belonging.

These statistics come from The Healthy Minds Study, a national survey of over 14,000 students on campuses across the U.S.

"I am optimistic about my future."
- 68.5% of heterosexual respondents agreed or strongly agreed
- Only 50.5% of LGBQ respondents agreed or strongly agreed

"People respect me."
- 69.1% of heterosexual respondents agreed or strongly agreed
- Only 51.7% of LGBQ respondents agreed or strongly agreed

Lifetime Diagnosis

Depression:
- LGBQ: 35.0%
- heterosexual: 16.4%

Anxiety:
- LGBQ: 34.0%
- heterosexual: 16.8%

Eating disorders:
- LGBQ: 5.5%
- heterosexual: 2.8%

In the last 4 weeks, I have experienced mental or emotional difficulties that have hurt my academic performance on:

- 3-5 days:
  - LGBQ: 24.4%
  - heterosexual: 16.7%

- 6 or more days:
  - LGBQ: 23.3%
  - heterosexual: 13.3%

In the last year, 23.5% of LGBQ respondents thought about attempting suicide.

Data from The Healthy Minds Study 2013
Courtesy of The Healthy Minds Network
healthymindsnetwork.org
Why haven't you sought treatment for your mental health in the last year?

"I have had a bad experience with medication and/or therapy"
- Heterosexual students: 6.7%
- LGBTQ students: 18.4%

"People providing services aren't sensitive enough to sexual identity"
- Heterosexual students: 0.3%
- LGBTQ students: 11.7%

"I worry someone will notify my parents"
- Heterosexual students: 8.4%
- LGBTQ students: 17.7%

"I fear being hospitalized"
- Heterosexual students: 5.2%
- LGBTQ students: 17.6%

A Few Stories

Statistics are important; but people are more important. Check out some of these stories about coming out at different places on the sexual orientation spectrum.

COMING OUT
- Tegan & Sara – It Got Better
- Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Wanda Sykes, & Dan Bucatinsky – OWN
- Wentworth Miller – HRC
- Ellen Page – HRC

CLAIMING RIGHTS
- David Wilson – StoryCorps
- Michael Levine – StoryCorps
- Zach Walls – Iowa House
- Remembering Stonewall
- Edie Windsor Leaves Court

BEING AN ALLY
- Eagle Pass, TX High School GSA Homecoming Campaign
- Scouts for Equality PSA
- Secret Ally Codes – Slate
Next Steps

The above statistics demonstrate a need for lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, and other individuals who do not identify as heterosexual to have greater access to mental health promotion, suicide prevention, and quality mental health treatment and recovery services. They also demonstrate a need for more competent allies.

As we call for better public health campaigns and mental health care for all, it’s important to do a better job of bringing our LGBTQ friends out of the margins and into the conversation.

ARE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IN THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY IN CRISIS?

Call The Trevor Project Lifeline at 1-866-488-7386
www.thetrevorproject.org

LEARN HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT

UCLA’s LGBT Campus Resource Center
lgbt.ucla.edu

GLAAD’s “Talking About” Series
www.glaad.org

BE AN ALLY

Campus Pride: How to Be an LGBT Ally
www.campuspride.org

Human Rights Campaign: Resources for Campuses
www.hrc.org

UNDERSTAND | AFFIRM | INFORM | ADVOCATE