



Issues Effecting LGBTQ Individuals Through the Lifespan

It is important to note that health care professionals often lack cultural competency with respect to LGBTQ individuals. This coupled with societal discrimination can result in, or exacerbate, mental health, physical health and substance use issues.

Increased risk of:

- Substance use & abuse
- Tobacco use
- Suicide
- Mental health issues; mood disorders, anxiety disorders, adjustment disorders
- Societal discrimination and denial of constitutional rights such as marriage
- Harassment/bullying/victims of crime due to expression or perceived homosexuality
- Lack of family support; may be kicked out of house
- Can be fired from job. Currently there are no laws protecting individuals from being fired due to sexual orientation or gender identity expression.

Developmental:

- Can have delayed development, especially in adolescence; failure to master a stage due to inability to go through stages “normally”. For example, if you can’t date someone of the same gender openly, you cannot experience this rite of passage in a supportive environment.
- Repressed or suppressed sexuality
- Internalized homophobia
- School, especially high school can be a critical time for LGBT adolescents. Increased risk of being bullied, harassed or victims of crime. Focus becomes survival in the hallways rather than learning in a safe environment.

Healthcare:

- Denied partner medical insurance benefits
- Denied partner rights in medical/death situations
- Health providers may lack cultural competency and knowledge of treating LGBT individuals; may deny care or criticize/insult the patient.
- Many LGBT individuals do not access health care as needed.
- Health care forms do not include options other than M/F, Husband/Wife and Mother/Father.

Legal Protection:

- Denied the right to; marry, file joint taxes, inheritance rights; spousal rights; power of attorney; rights to children born or adopted into the relationship.
- May experience discrimination with residence; buying or renting

Relationships:

- May experience lack of support from family/friends with intimate relationships/partners
- Society often does not recognize LGBT relationships or legitimize them
- Consequently, LGBT individuals may be closeted, fail to disclose primary relationships or refer to their primary relationship using societally approved gender pronouns.
- If you can't talk about your relationships you can't recognize them or get help with them when needed.

These conditions and situations can translate to a stressful and unhealthy existence for many LGBT persons.