



Health Considerations for the LGBTQ Community

Out On Britton Plaza, October 2020

Dickinson College Wellness Center

Dickinson

LGBTQ Health

- ▶ One of the goals of Healthy People 2020 is to improve the health, safety, and well-being of LGBTQ individuals.
- ▶ The LGBTQ community faces health disparities linked to societal stigma, discrimination, and denial of their civil and human rights.
- ▶ **DID YOU KNOW?**
 - ▶ Most state and national surveys lack questions about sexual identify and gender.
 - ▶ This creates challenges for estimating the number of LGBTQ individuals and understanding their healthcare needs!

Statistics

- LGBT youth are 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide.
- LGBT youth are more likely to be homeless.
- Lesbians are less likely to get preventive services for cancer.
- Gay men are at higher risk of HIV and other STDs, especially among communities of color.
- Lesbians and bisexual females are more likely to be overweight or obese.
- Transgender individuals have a high prevalence of HIV/STDs, victimization, mental health issues, and suicide and are less likely to have health insurance than heterosexual or LGB individuals.
- LGBT populations have the highest rates of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use.

Barriers to Quality Healthcare in the LGBTQ Population

- Social stigma
 - Delaying or foregoing care due to concerns about how they will be treated.
 - LGBTQ people are subjected to harassment and discrimination from young ages, leading to negative mental health outcomes and high rates of risk-taking that can negatively affect health and wellness.
- Lack of cultural competency in the healthcare system
 - Providers with awareness of LGBTQ health issues can be lacking, specifically in rural areas.
- Discrimination by insurers and healthcare providers
 - June 2020 revisions to Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act narrowed certain non-discrimination regulations by:
 - Eliminating the general prohibition on discrimination based on gender identity and sex-stereotyping and specific health insurance coverage protections for transgender individuals;
 - Eliminating the provision preventing health insurers from varying benefits in ways that discriminate against certain groups, such as people with HIV or LGBTQ people;
 - Eliminating provisions affirming the right of private individuals to challenge alleged violations of Section 1557 in court and obtain money damages (leaving the right to sue for courts to decide) and requirements for non-discrimination notices and grievance procedures;
 - Eliminating prohibitions against discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation in ten other federal health care regulations outside Section 1557.

Breaking Down the Barriers



Barrier #1: Social Stigma

- ▶ Find your social support!
 - ▶ Studies show that LGBTQ individuals who have good social support—from family, friends, professionals, and the wider gay community—have:
 - ▶ Higher self-esteem
 - ▶ More positive group identity
 - ▶ Better mental health
 - ▶ <https://itgetsbetter.org/>
 - ▶ [The Trevor Project](#): Offers a 24/7 lifeline ([1-866-488-7386](tel:1-866-488-7386)) and other mental health resources for LGBTQ youth.
 - ▶ Validation Station: Sends affirming daily texts to trans and non-binary youth. [Sign up here](#) and [more info here](#).
 - ▶ LGBT National Help Center: <https://www.glbthotline.org/>
 - ▶ LGBT National Hotline - [888-843-4564](tel:888-843-4564)

Barrier #2: Cultural Competency in Healthcare

- ▶ Find a LGBTQ friendly health care center near you:
 - ▶ <https://www.hrc.org/resources/hei-map>
- ▶ Come out to your healthcare provider
 - ▶ This is necessary to receive the best care possible.
 - ▶ If the provider doesn't seem comfortable, find a new one!
 - ▶ <http://www.glma.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageId=939&grandparentID=534&parentID=938&nodeID=1>

Healthcare Barriers

The Top Issues to Discuss with Your Provider

- ▶ HIV/STD Prevention and Safe Sex
 - ▶ Cisgender men who have sex with men are at an increased risk for HIV infection.
 - ▶ Although cisgender women who have sex with women have lower rates of HIV, if you have sex with a gay or bi man (who have increased rates) it is important to understand their HIV status and how to protect yourself.
 - ▶ In 2018, there were approximately 36,400 new HIV infections in the United States
 - ▶ 67% (24,400) were among gay and bisexual men
 - ▶ 39% (9,400) of new HIV infections were among Black gay and bisexual men
 - ▶ 33% (8,000) among Latino gay and bisexual men
 - ▶ 23% (5,700) among white gay and bisexual men
 - ▶ 68% (16,600) among gay and bisexual men under the age of 35.
 - ▶ Safe sex is proven to reduce the risk of receiving or transmitting HIV.
 - ▶ **Ask about Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis!**

PrEP: Prevent HIV *before exposure*

- **Pre-exposure prophylaxis* (PrEP)** is an HIV prevention option that works by taking one pill every day. When taken daily it can greatly reduce your risk of getting HIV. You can protect yourself even more if you use condoms and other prevention tools.
- People at **very high risk** for HIV take HIV medicines daily as **PrEP** to lower their chances of getting infected. **PrEP** can stop HIV from taking hold and spreading throughout your body.
- It is highly effective for preventing HIV if used as prescribed, but it is much less effective when not taken consistently. And remember, **PrEP** protects you against HIV but not against other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- Your risk of getting HIV from sex can be even lower if you combine **PrEP** with condoms, limiting sexual partners, and other prevention methods.

*Prophylaxis = Prevention



With PrEP, you protect yourself from HIV every day

Because **PrEP** is for protecting people who are HIV-negative, you'll have to take an HIV test before starting **PrEP** – and you may have to take other tests to make sure it's safe for you to use **PrEP**. While you are on **PrEP**, you will need to see a health care provider for regular checkups and HIV tests every three months.

Healthcare Barriers

The Top Issues to Discuss with Your Provider (cont.)

▶ Cancer Screening

- ▶ Prostate, testicular, and colon for men who have sex with men
- ▶ Breast and gynecologic cancer for women
- ▶ HPV screening for all (linked to genital warts as well as cancers of the cervix and anus)

▶ Hepatitis Immunization and Screening

- ▶ If you have sex with multiple partners (of any gender) you are at an increased risk of sexually transmitted infection with the viruses that cause the serious condition of the liver known as hepatitis.
- ▶ These infections can be potentially fatal and can lead to very serious long-term issues such as liver failure and liver cancer.

Healthcare Barriers

The Top Issues to Discuss with Your Provider (cont.)

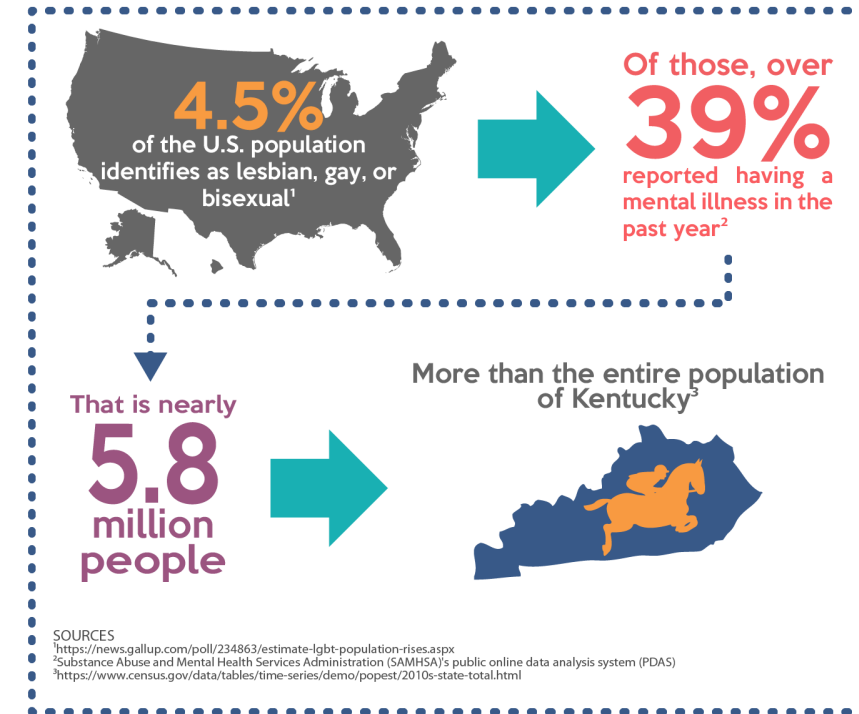
- ▶ Heart Health (exercise and diet)
 - ▶ Problems with body image are more common in the LGBTQ population
 - ▶ This can lead to issues with obesity, as well as eating disorders, such as bulimia or anorexia nervosa, leading to health problems including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and breast cancer.
- ▶ Substance/Alcohol Use
 - ▶ Research suggests that substance use patterns reported by sexual minority adults are higher compared to those reported by heterosexual adults.
 - ▶ If substance use is interfering with work, school or relationships, your healthcare provider can connect you to help.
- ▶ Tobacco Use
 - ▶ Data shows increased tobacco usage among sexual minorities, which can be associated with higher rates of cancers, heart disease, and emphysema.
 - ▶ Healthcare providers should offer screening, prevention, and cessation programs for tobacco use.

Healthcare Barriers

The Top Issues to Discuss with Your Provider (cont.)

▶ Depression/Anxiety

- ▶ LGBTQ are at particular risk for experiencing shame, fear, discrimination, and adverse and traumatic events, which can lead to mental illness.
- ▶ These problems may be more severe for those men who remain in the closet or who do not have adequate social supports.
- ▶ When people do openly express this part of themselves, they face the potential of rejection from peers, colleagues, and friends can exacerbate feelings of loneliness.
- ▶ Don't suffer in silence-ask your healthcare provider for help if you are struggling!



Barrier #3: Discrimination

- ▶ **Knowledge is power but without action is useless!**
- ▶ Educate yourself and know where your elected officials stand on LGBTQ issues.
 - ▶ <https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/files/assets/resources/114thCongressionalScorecard.pdf?mtime=20200713131521&focal=none>
- ▶ Click the link below to become a community co-sponsor of the Equality Act, which would provide consistent and explicit non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people across key areas of life.
 - ▶ https://act.hrc.org/page/37230/data/1?ea_tracking.id=or_gnr_hrc_homepage_actionctr&_ga=2.15550902.1488907455.1601316379-819111979.1599746855
- ▶ Sign-up for mobile alerts today to get the latest news on how to push LGBTQ equality forward and pass critical legislation.
 - ▶ https://act.hrc.org/page/18408/data/1?ea_tracking.id=or_gnr_hrc_JoinMAN&_ga=2.15158710.1488907455.1601316379-819111979.1599746855



LGBTQ Health Services at Dickinson

- Did you know??
 - The Wellness Center provides integrated care and is open to you for any health-related questions or concerns!
 - While we are unable to provide telehealth services for students out of state, we are available for phone consultations.
 - We offer **free STD and HIV testing** and can prescribe PrEP for students on campus!
- To learn more, contact the Wellness Center or click the link below:
 - https://www.dickinson.edu/homepage/138/wellness_center

Effective Ways To Be An LGBTQ Ally

Use

Use preferred pronouns/names/terms appropriately.

Be

Be an advocate by taking action against sexual minority discrimination.

- Speak up on the behalf of your LGBTQ friends, attend pro-LGBTQ rallies, or advocate for law or policy changes.

Connect

Connect your LGBTQ friends with resources if they are struggling so they can get the support they need.

Listen

Listen with an open mind.

- Being empathetic and nonjudgmental helps to create a safe space where your LGBTQ friends can feel comfortable opening up without fear of being rejected for who they are.

Additional
resources to
enhance your
knowledge of
LGBTQ health
issues:

EduMed (Creating LGBTQIA+ Friendly
Communities in Healthcare &
Education): <https://www.edumed.org/resources/lgbtqia-healthcare-and-education/>

CDC Resources for LGBT
Health: <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/health-services.htm>

Gender
Spectrum: <https://genderspectrum.org/articles/blog-covid-resources>

Alder Health Services:
<https://www.alderhealth.org/>

References

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- ▶ GLMA. (2020). *Top 10 Issues to Discuss With Your Healthcare Provider*.
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<https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/the-trump-administrations-final-rule-on-section-1557-non-discrimination-regulations-under-the-aca-and-current-status/>
- ▶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (September 2020). *Healthy People 2020: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health*. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-health/objectives>