

Theories

Minority Stress/Social Ties Theories

The MST refers to the belief that mental health is impacted by how environment stigmatizes gender and sexual minorities and the degree to which the minority community member must disguise their nonconforming identity. The STT refers to the idea that mental health is impacted by the strength and frequency of primary and secondary relationships (Samaroo, 2017). In other words, the MST claims that worsened mental health comes along with stigma forming by society and the need for gender and sexual minorities to hide their identity due to the stigma. The STT then emphasizes that strong, positive primary and secondary relationships [i.e. family and friends] may help to lessen the impact of the stigma.

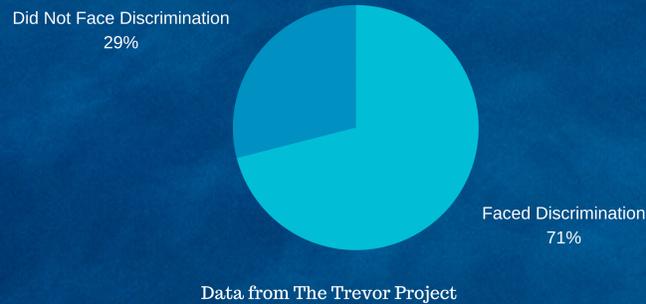
Interpersonal Theory of Suicide

According to the IST, stressful social environments are associated with perceived levels of budernsomeness and thwarted feelings of belonging. Prolonged exposure to these states then results in suicidal thoughts and tendencies (Samaroo, 2017). In other words, the more stressful an environment, the more we feel like a burden. In turn, the longer we feel this way, the more likely we are to develop suicidal thoughts, ideation, and tendencies. To prevent these thoughts and tendencies, then, we need to provide more welcoming and non-judgmental enviroments.

Structuration Theory

The structuration theory holds that structures and systems cause us to carry out certain practices and beliefs that are rooted within the systems (Samaroo, 2017). We see this a lot today in the presence of homophobia and toxic masculinity, as society is structured to favor heterosexual relationships and perceived ideas of masculinity that enforce rigid and harmful gender roles. These innate ideas then provide stress for certain groups, which in turn negatively affects mental health and wellbeing.

LGBTQ+ Youth Who Face Discrimination



TRUTH TO POWER:

Ending the LGBTQ+ Mental Health Stigma

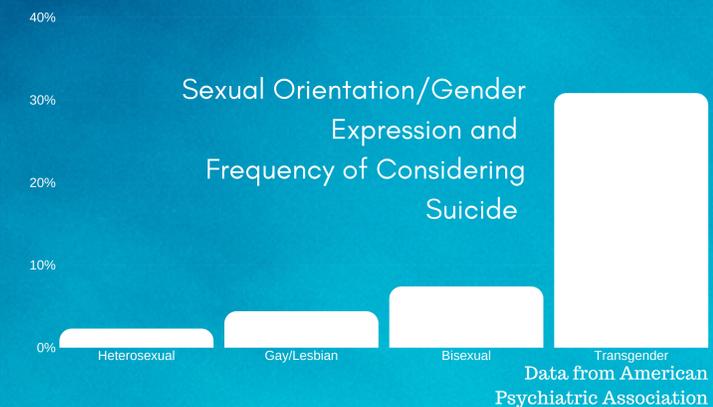
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What Can We Do?

One of the best ways we as a society can speak truth to power and fight the stigma is through the acronym, TEAL. First, talk! Stigma causes us to avoid talking about mental health issues in general. Work to fight the stigma by speaking about your mental health with professionals and others around you. Understand that mental health is a normal part of life that should not be thrown under a rug and never discussed! Additionally, educate! Learn about mental health, what affects it, and how negative mental health can be treated. Use your knowledge to educate others and advocate for better conditions and treatment options! Lastly, write letters to your local government and the federal government! Urge the importance of mental health as a larger issue and encourage your representatives to advocate for mental health funding and research! By taking small and large steps, we can stand together and end the stigma!

Stressors

Stressors that lead to the development of mental disorders may take their shape in many forms. Previous studies have indicated that stressors include: bisexual erasure, stigma, and internalized homophobia (Flanders et.al, 2017; Grant et.al, 2014), Bisexual erasure refers to the exposure of bisexual individuals to practices of others erasing their identities; it is when people claim that bisexuality is not real. As a result, bisexual individuals are forced to engage in activities to prove their identity. Likewise, homophobia is the practice of individuals involving the intolerance for individuals who identify as LGBTQ+. This homophobia, when experienced enough, may be internalized by an individual, resulting in a sense of self-resentment.



Why Is This Important?

Mental health issues are something that should not be taken lightly. Extreme cases of mental illness may lead to attempted suicide, burnout, or social isolation. This doesn't just impact one person, it impacts everyone around them as well. Despite this, the LGBTQ+ community still faces stressors, stigma, and overall negative interactions with others. It is important to bring this topic to light and work towards ending the stigma because everyone deserves the right to live their lives comfortable and without mental health issues.