Mental Health In the LGBTQ+ Community: How Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals Are

Fairing and Possible Reasons As To Why

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Abstract

The purpose of this literature review is to examine how the mental health of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual individuals can be detrimental if affected in a negative manner by discrimination and dehumanization. The focus was on searching for social and medical literature to provide evidence that is harmful to anyone that is in this situation. This topic was examined using EBSCOhost, textbook course material required by CSUB's psychology courses, and PsycINFO. After selecting sources, and covered keywords "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual," "discrimination," "mental health," "abandoned," depression," "anxiety," and "mindset," I limited the search to full-text peer reviewed articles published in the last ten years (2010-2023). The results showed roughly 120, of which 40 were found to have the most impact on the topic. The reviews show that the mental health (a) affected their physical and mental health in a tremendous way, (b) caused an up-tick in things like depression, anxiety, and eating disorders, and (c) and highly affected things like relationships in the familial, school, and church settings.

Keywords: Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual, discrimination, mental health, abandoned, depression, anxiety, mindset…

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Possible Reasons as to Why?

[Individuals who identify as] ~~People who are a~~ part of the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) community are often faced with more discrimination and stigma than those who are heterosexual when it comes to [situations such as] things such as family, school, and health care. Lesbians are women who like women, Gay individuals are men who like men, and Bisexual individuals like both men and women, while Heterosexual individuals are men or women who like the opposite gender as themselves. According to Kassing et. al. (2021), LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to experience violent actions and disproportionate health issues compared to heterosexual individuals. [The contents of this paper will focus on the **medical, social, and environmental** issues faced by individuals in the LGB community.] In this paper, the focus will be on the **medical**, **social, and environmental** issues involved in the LGB community. [For **medical**, the paper will focus on the most common types of mental health disorders LGB individuals report/suffer from, **social** will focus on societal views and reactions to the common issues, and **environmental** will focus on how individuals and the environment can and will impact these factors.] For **medical,** this paper will discuss the most common types of mental health disorders suffered by LGB individuals, **social** will discuss how society views and reacts to these issues, and **environmentally** will discuss how the people and environment can impact these factors. According to Horner and Kar (2022), severe bodily harm, verbal abuse, and bullying impact the mental stability of LGB individuals. Several mental health and social issues are presented in this paper.

The Ways Eating Disorders, Body Dysmorphia, and

Self Esteem Issues Affect Lesbians, Gay, and Bisexual Individuals.

[Individuals in the LGB community face an increased risk of mental and physical health challenges alongside discrimination, stigmatization, and isolation. These individuals are at a higher risk of developing an eating disorder, suffering from body dysmorphic disorder, and having low self-esteem than their heterosexual counterparts. Simpson et al. (20211), explain that eating disorders are characterized as abnormal eating habits that inhibit an individual's daily activities and th

LGB individuals face an increased risk of mental and physical health challenges, along with discrimination, stigmatization, and isolation. LBG individuals are at higher risk of developing an eating disorder, suffering from body dysmorphic disorder and low self-esteem than heterosexual individuals. According to Simpson et al. (2021), eating disorders are characterized as abnormal eating habits that inhibit an individual's daily activities or control weight control behaviors and over concern with one's weight or body shape. Body dysmorphia is a mental illness involving an obsessive focus in finding flaws in one's appearance. According to Lane (2020), suicide rates for individuals with body dysmorphic disorder is high with around half encountering suicidal ideation, and a forth attempting suicide. Low self esteem can be affected by isolation, discrimination, victimization, and internalized homophobia. Stonewall (2013), found that there was a seven percent rise in anxiety and depression related disorders compared to cisgendered people. This paper will discuss the medical, social, and environmental aspects of eating disorders, body dysmorphia, and self-esteem in the following paragraphs.

Eating Disorders: Manifesting Body Types, Pursing Treatments, and Maintaining Remission

In today's culture, a lot of weight is put on looking a certain way and acting a certain way. According to Feldman and Meyer (2007), these sociocultural standards and norms of the ideal body image are unobtainable by many which can influence an individuals self-esteem and attitudes towards food and eating. If one develops an unhealthy relationship with food it can lead to an eating disorder, which is characterized as abnormal eating habits that inhibit one's daily activities.   According to Jones and Malson (2013), there is little research being done among lesbians and eating disorders, however it can be estimated that 2-3% of lesbians experience disordered eating. Feldman and Meyer (2007), state that out of all the men who suffer from eating disorders a disproportionate number are gay or bisexual.

The main eating disorders the paper is covering are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa . According to Feldman and Meyer (2007), anorexia is a fear of gaining weight or becoming fat and it involves a disturbance in how one perceives their body; bulimia is binging on food and then compensatory behavior such as causing oneself to throw up.   Even if an individual does not appear underweight a serious eating disorder can still be present. Often, if one begins to restrict their caloric intake or causes themselves to throw up after every meal they are trying to obtain a specific body weight or look. One of the most common treatments for eating disorders is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). It can be difficult to treat an eating disorder because the individual will need to want help before being able to really accept the help. This is one of the reasons that eating disorders can become life-threatening.   However, once an individual accepts treatment they can make strides toward remission.

One of the biggest things in recovering from an eating disorder is learning that the sociocultural perspectives placed on us by society are unobtainable. One does not have to have to weigh a certain amount in order to be worth it. According to Simpson et al. (2021), cognitive

behavior therapy (CBT) is one of the main ways to treat bulimia with remission in just about 45% of cases, while there is no efficient treatment for anorexia cognitive behavioral therapy is also used. Anorexia in general is harder to recover from so it tends to have higher dropout rates. Simpson et. al. (2021), also states that up to 69% of those with an eating disorder also have a personality disorder which can make them paranoid, obsessive-compulsive, avoidant, and dependent in regards to their eating. Because an eating disorder is causing someone to want to reach an often unattainable weight it is common with body dysmorphic disorder, discussed next.

Body Dysmorphia: The Need For A Perfect Body, Self-Identification, and Treatment

According to Lane (2020), body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) is a psychiatric illness that has a serious burden on morbidity and mortality, and is characterized by overwhelming preoccupations with a perceived defect in an individual's appearance. Body dysmorphia affects the LGB community at a substantially larger rate than it does the heterosexual community, and it can be comorbid with eating disorders, anxiety, and depression. Typically an individual suffering from body dysmorphia does not like what they see in the mirror and is distressed by their appearance which can lead to over exercise, over and under eating, and destruction such as self-harm and self-sabotage. According to Lane (2020), body dysmorphia is typically associated with constant checking in the mirror, and one covering up with makeup and clothing as well as half of people affected experiencing suicidal ideation, and a quarter attempting at some point. The people who suffer from body dysmorphic disorder have the sociocultural desire for the perfect body that is unobtainable in mind.

Schulte et. al. (2020) has discovered that body dysmorphic disorder is a severe condition however, only a small percentage of those who have the condition are properly diagnosed and

receiving treatment. Due to the feeling that the individual needs to fit into the sociocultural standard for the perfect body, they often do not seek help because they don't see a problem with how they are going about their business. They do not see how they are slowly destroying their bodies. Lane (2020) suggests that it could be worthwhile to look into non-surgical cosmetic procedures while further looking into the efficiency of psychological and psychological treatments; this would allow individuals to make small changes to their body to better without making huge commitments with extensive recovery times. Plus the United States has pricy therapy costs with it costing up to $300 per session without insurance.

One of the main ways to treat eating disorders is to attend therapy but it can be hard to find a therapist that is LGBTQIA+ inclusive. According to Leone (2005), the social and psychological effects of having body dysmorphic disorders often go unnoticed and therefore untreated. Lesbain or bisexual women may not want to appear as feminine so they use binders or ace bandages to achieve a more masculine look, as well as dressing more masculine. Gay, or bissexual, men can also suffer from body dysmorphic disorder because they see themselves as to masculine or too feminine. Society will also stigmatize the way individuals dress, and will discriminate against the way the community looks. Body dysmorphic disorder can lead to low self esteem.

Self-Esteem Issues: Bullying, Self-Evaluation, and Family Affect Identified Self-Worth

Low self-esteem can often be associated with internalized homophobia, discrimination, isolation, and stigmatization. According to Ingoglia et. al., (2019), internalized homophobia is often linked to self-stigmatizing attitudes with a host of psychological issues, such as low self-esteem and depression. Families will remove individuals from their homes, discriminate

against them, force them into conversion therapy and the individuals can also suffer from

bullying leading to self-evaluation and mental health disorders. According to Pitman et. al.

(2021), facing stigmatization, discrimination, and isolation through internalized homophobia can

have a large increase on self-esteem and can worsen mental health problems. You cannot tell

who has high or low self-esteem just by looking at them. Individuals who have unaccepting

family members are more likely to be removed from their homes, and discriminated against in

their close communities such as church and school.

The LGB community often faces bullying and harassment for their sexuality which can

lead to negative self-evaluation. Horner and Kar (2022) state that internalized homophobia can

lead to an individual concealing behaviors and having increased sexual compulsive behaviors

due to the fear of being rejected which can lead to psychopathology. The rise of social media

poses a challenge as cyber-bullying is an issue primarily among middle and high schoolers, and

it is a felony in most states. Negative self-evaluation can lead to several mental health problems

including low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. The way an individual views themselves can

lead them to have a high or low self-esteem which in turn can lead them to have a more positive

or negative outlook on life. Otis and Skinner (1996), stated that LGBT individuals who have not

experienced violent stressors reported higher self-esteem.

Kassing et. al. (2021) has shown that LGBTQ individuals face a higher risk of physical

and sexual assault, harrassment, bullying, and hate-crime related victimization during their

lifetime compared to heterosexual individuals. These actions can lead individuals self-esteem to

decrease and thus for them to lower their self-worth. Our self-worth is tied into our self-esteem

so closely. According to **Blankenship and Stewert (2020)** sexual minorities are expected to

avoid putting their self-worth in things that are outside of their control such as acceptance from

other people, and they instead learn to put more self-worth on things that are achievement based. Wong et. al., (2017) said those who hid their sexual identity struggled to build their self-acceptance and self-worth from others because it created a barrier to empathetic and psychological support. Due to this lack of support individuals self-esteem and self-worth decrease and their susceptibility to mental health issues increases. Supporting these individuals who are facing dire situations is crucial. Bridge et. al., (2022) states that higher self-esteem in general might diminish the impact of stigma-related stress on an individual's mental health outcomes.

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Depression, Anxiety, and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Individuals

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Depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder are found at disproportionately high rates in the LGB community.   This is in part due to the discrimination and violence that the community faces. Wong et. al. (2017) states that domestic violence between partners is found more commonly among lesbian, gay, and bisexual couples than it is in heterosexual couples. Depression is classified as a mood disorder where an individual feels hopeless, sadness, and loss of interest in daily activities. Anxiety is a constant worrying or apprehensive expectations that last for 6 months or longer and that happen for several events or activities according to the DSM-5.   Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) triggers an individual's flight, fight, fawn, or freeze mechanism in response to memories of a traumatic event, and is often accompanied with intense emotional or physical reactions. According to Kassing et. al. (2021), the LGBTQ community faces discriminatory violence based on their sexual orientation and / or their gender identity. This violence can lead to the onset of depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder which can be comorbid with each other and suicidal ideation and attempts. The LGB

community are the most likely to suffer from these conditions which will be discussed in the next several paragraphs.

Depression: Developing Depression, Avoiding Suicidal Ideation, and Seeking Treatment

The LGB community faces an increase of discrimination, stigmatization, and isolation from outside the community. According to Pitman et. al., (2021), this perceived discrimination is directly correlated with a more negative well-being, while facing lifetime discrimination is associated with more depression later in life. An individual can develop depression at any given time, and it is associated with feelings of hopelessness, sadness, and a loss of interest in daily activities. Individuals who have depression will stop cleaning, caring for themselves, and will isolate themselves, worsening their symptoms. Depression can also lead an individual to think negatively about themselves, and be comorbid with low self-esteem, body dysmorphic disorder. According to Fienstein (2012), negative thoughts about oneself and the future can lead to increased symptoms of social anxiety and depression. This in turn can lead to a self destructive cycle that the individual becomes trapped in.

According to Ehlke (2020), LGB individuals are more susceptible to sexual minority stress which has been correlated with mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Suicidal ideation is one of the biggest that needs to be watched for in an individual struggling with depression, as it can be a silent killer. According to King et. al. (2008), LGB individuals are at higher risk for suicidal behavior, substance misuse and abuse, and mental health disorders than heterosexual individuals. This can be for a number of reasons and one is that they face minority stress, along with increased violence. Scheer et. al. (2020), also reported that shame is often found in LGBTQ individuals who face interpersonal violence

because shame comes with a feeling of powerlessness and inferiority that is connected with the social ostracism of their social status.

Therapy, physical activity and a sense of community and connection are all great ways to help mitigate feelings of depression and suicidal ideation. Therapy such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and talk therapy can be effective ways to help treat depression as well as taking antidepressants. According to Koh and Ross (2008), lesbians are more likely to seek therapy for depression than bisexual and heterosexual individuals. In regards to physical activity Pharr et. al. (2021), found that exercising and meeting goals for physical activity decreased poor mental health days in LGB individuals in the United States.   And Kaniuka et. al., (2019), suggests that being connected to the LGBTQ community may help shield individuals from feelings of depression, anxiety and subsequently suicidal ideation. If these three factors are combined in an individual's life then it could significantly improve the quality of life that someone suffering from depression is facing.

Anxiety: Facing Discrimination, Evolving Worry, and Treatments Both Self & Professional

Anxiety is characterized by constant worrying, fear, dread, and uneasiness. It can be a normal reaction to stress, however, when it persists in any situation for longer than six months then it becomes a mental health condition per the DSM-5. According to Pharr et. al. (2021), researchers have found that LGB individuals have worse mental health including mental distress, anxiety, depression, and low well-being. LGB individuals face discrimination and polyvictimization at higher rates due to their sexual and gender identity, and can also face discrimination due to their mental health conditions. Scheer et. al. (2020) points out the associations between interpersonal trauma related to being a marginalized sexual minority and the associated mental health risks.

The constant worry that comes with anxiety can perpetuate more worry and fear which can turn into a vicious cycle. Kaniuka et. al. (2019), states that the LGBTQ community is exposed to more rejection, discrimination, and has more of a chance to perceive trauma than others. This makes living in fear and worry for one's safety hard to avoid. According to King et. al. (2008), anxiety was at least one and a half times more common in LGB individuals than it was in heterosexual individuals. If an individual lives in an area that is not protected by non-discrimination laws for sexual minorities then they are put at even higher risk for events like hate crimes to happen. According to Scheer et. al. (2020), policies that are enacted aimed at nondiscrimination and the protection of LGBTQ individuals could reduce stigma and would more than likely have positive mental and physical health effects for the individuals in the community.

An individual who has anxiety can seek both professional and peer support. Worrell et. al. (2022), states that connectedness with peers and affiliations with the LGBTQ community has been seen as beneficial to those who are trying to cope with stressors. The impact that peers who understand what you are facing can be an important step in recovery. Pachankis et. al. (2022) says that there is a relative lack of evidence-based mental health treatments that are created specifically for the LGBTQ clients, and that without these treatments mental health clinicians lack affirmative concrete professional directives. Finding a place to seek help where an individual can feel accepted is vital to receiving help. This is one of the reasons that seeking support from friends who are also in the LGBTQ community is important because they will understand the stressors that have been placed upon an individual by society.

PTSD: Escalated Violence, Homophobia, and Lack of Support Lead to Mental Health Disparities

Post-traumatic stress disorder is common among LGB individuals because of the violence that is thrown at their community. According to Kassing et. al. (2021), roughly two-thirds of the population in the United States will experience a traumatic event during their lifetime, and many will experience more than one. Post-traumatic stress disorder develops after an individual experienced a traumatic life event that was scary or dangerous. Post-traumatic stress disorder events are often triggered by memories and activate an individual's flight, fight, fawn, or freeze response. According to Scheer et. al. (2020), LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to experience traumatic events in their lifetimes such as sexual abuse that can lead to mental health problems such as depression and post-tramatic stress disorder.   Feinstein et. al. (2012), states that LGB individuals are at an increased risk for substance problems, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidality.

Internalized homophobia is something that leads into mental health related issues including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety. Ingoglia et. al. (2019) states that internalized homophobia can be a risk factor for the psychophysical health of people belonging to a sexual minority. If individuals are subjected to the idea that their beliefs and lifestyles is bad, and they are unsupported, and then go through a substantial life trauma that will negatively impact their mental health.   According to Kaniuka et. al. (2019), minority specific stressors such as homophobia will lead individuals within the community to anticipate rejection and perceive stigma within society. This will cause them to lead a life with negative cognitions and a greater risk for developing mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal ideation and / or behavior. Whitfield (2018) states that hate crimes are on the rise in the United States along with the number of hate groups and supporters of the groups.

In society there is a lack of support for LGBTQ incluse mental health help. The community has to largely rely on other members of the community to understand what they are facing. Pachankis et. al. (2022) states that there are no mental health treatments created specifically for LGBTQ clients, however there is accumulating evidence suggesting that there are treatments that can improve LGBTQ individual's mental health if they have been developed with the community in mind. Horner and Kar (2022) suggest that cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), interpersonal therapy, and acceptance and commitment therapy can all be used to aid understanding into treating significant minority stress.

The Social Psychological Impact of Discrimination
in Familial Settings, Schools, and Churches

The LGB community faces internalized homophobia, discrimination, isolation, and stigmatization from family members, school staff and peers, and church leaders on a regular basis. Miller et. al. (2016) states that blatant expressions of biases have a significant negative impact on the well-being of minorities. Families who have prejudices against the LGBTQ community can abuse their children, put them in conversion therapy, or remove them from the home, leaving them homeless and vulnerable. Schools can 'out' students' gender identities to their parents or force them into counseling. Churchs can excommunicate members of the church, publicly shame them, or go so far as to perform exorcisms on them to rid them of the demons they believe are causing the individual to be lesbian or gay. According to McGraw et. al. (2021), LGBTQ individuals are considered to be at higher risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors during young teens into adulthood. In the next several sections familial, school, and church impacts on the LGBTQ community will be discussed.

Family: Homophobia & Shame leads to Abandonment, Conversion Therapy, and Mental

Health

Individuals can have internalized homophobia and prejudiced attitudes towards the LGB community, and will put forth this attitude if a family member comes out to them.   According to McGraw et. al. (2021), LGBTQ individuals report higher family disputes and less parental bonds that were tied to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. Caregivers have a large influence on an individual's affect, cognition, and behavior.   According to Sadowski et. al. (2009), LGBTQ youth will often face rejection from close and extended family members due to not conforming familial, societal, and sometimes religious norms of gender and sexuality. When an individual comes out they may identify a way that does not conform with their families religious ideas, or they may dress a way that does not coincide with their family's ideas of how the individual should look and act. According to Sadowski et. al. (2009), relational connections to family can be valuable assets, and family acceptance can run on a wide spectrum from total connection, acceptance, and love, to extreme disconnection, rejection, and violation of individuals. Families will shame and abandon individuals due to their sexual and gender identity which in turn would hurt the individual emotionally.

An example of this would be an individual that comes out as lesbain and begins to dress more masculine and cut their hair short, however their family member's want them to dress and act in a traditionally feminine way. According to McGraw et. al. (2021), challenging family dynamics need to be considered when making a connection to suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Individuals tend to tie what others think of them directly into their self-esteem, and if their family rejects them this can lead to low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and body-dysmorphic disorder. One way that families try to fix their children is conversion therapy, which is often run

through churches. Conversion therapy camps are intended to try and change a homosexual individual into a heterosexual because they operate under the idea that homosexuality is wrong. Williams et. al. (2023) states that in many international spaces conversion therapy is classified as a type of torture.

Between the rejection of family, and conversion therapy LGB individuals mental health is in jeopardy if they come out.   According to McGraw et. al. (2021), lower levels of parental bonds predicted negative mental health symptoms for LGBTQ individuals. Individuals with negitive mental health symptoms are at higher risk for developing depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Loving a family member unconditionally can make all the difference in one's life. According to Clark et. al. (2022), sexual minorities are known to be more at risk of committing suicide than their heterosexual counterparts. Fostering a more accepting society could potentially help lower this statistic, along with better access to affirmative mental health care. It can generally be said that school is a safe spot for many students who do not have a stable living environment, however, this could be different for those in the LGB community as shown in the next section.

Schools: Bullies, Forced Counseling, and Ignorance Shape Mental Health in Youth

Schools are supposed to be places where students can feel safe and learn about the subjects they will need to get them through life. However, for members of the LGB community this can be a challenge with the bullying faced due to coming out or being outed by others. According to Lucas-Molina et. al. (2022), bullying is a form of aggressive actions that a student or group of students repeatedly and intentionally forces upon another student who is unable to defend themselves due to an imbalance in power. Bullying can significantly impact the self-esteem of an individual, which can then in turn lead to more serious mental health conditions

and potentially deadly consequences. Earnshaw et. al. (2020) states that bullying of lgbtq+ students occurs frequently and is harmful. Many schools will try to sweep bullying under the rug, and avoid handling the issue. Another issue that may be faced is forced counseling.

Schools who send individuals to their parents can then put them into counseling in an attempt to turn the student straight. Private religious schools can be especially dangerous to the safety of LGB individuals, and they can go so far as to remove the student from the school if they come out. Taylor et. al. (2022) found that lgbt students are more likely to be victimized during school than heterosexual students, and those who are victimized are more likely to miss a significant amount of school. If a parent is informed of the way their child identifies and they harbor internalized homophobia, then that student's safety has just been placed at risk. Blackwell (2008) states that although medical and nursing organizations have labeled conversion therapy unethical it is still prominent and based on homophobia.

Some of the disruptions to students' education can come from homophobia, and some come from ignorance. If you are unaware of what the community is facing and the dangers that can come with having an open identity then you are less likely to help protect said individual. Recent laws have been formed in California that force schools to take action when a student reports being bullied, they can no longer let the situation lay idle. Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) have been appearing on campuses nationwide, providing students with a safe place. Truong and Zongrone (2020) state that harassment and bullying has been linked to greater depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and a decreased sense of belonging at school, however, multiple studies have shown a positive link between GSAs at school and LGBTQ mental health. This shows that when students feel as if they have a place to belong they do better mentally. According to

Sadowski et. al. (2009), attitudes from the youth and society have evolved regarding LGBTQ issues for the better. Now that schools are being held accountable, how about churches.

Church: Preaching Prejudice Leads to Excommunication, Attempted Conversion, & Discrimination

Churches have a long standing opposition to the LGB community, stating that being gay is one of the worst sins to be perpetrated. Many churches run conversion therapy camps for individuals, primarily minors to try and help them come back to the true form God intended them to be. These camps not only damage mental health, but they can also be deadly to individuals. States in the middle of the United States tend to be more religious and have been dubbed the suicide belt. According to McGraw et. al. (2021), Utah ranks 5th in the nation for suicide and has experienced a dramatic rise in youth deaths in the last decade. Utah is primarily Mormon, who believe that if you are gay you are going to hell, and they will not hesitate to excommunicate members of the parish. According to Hollier et. al. (2022), Christian communities teaching traditional practices treat sexual minorities as sinful and members are exposed to spiritual abuse.

Many churches run reparation camps with the idea that LGB individuals need to be straight. According to Hollier et. al. (2021), when leaders in a church attempt to erase queer spirituality, they shape the congregation's thinking and behavior. If the leaders spread a message of homophobia and prejudice, parishioners will then adopt that way of thinking and continue to pass it on. Sadowski et. al. (2009) reports that over the last two decades one of the most prominent feelings from the LGB community has been isolation. A few churches from several different religions across America have formed that are openly accepting to the LGB community.

This allows the community to go somewhere where they can continue their faith and be safe, however, we still need to work on the ideas in general churches.

By preaching prejudiced ideas in the church, it can lead to acts of discrimination, both in and outside of church. Churches will perform exorcisms or excommunicate members, and the people will ignore, bully, and belittle individuals. According to Coburn and McGeorge (2022), religious beliefs can be informative of family rejection and the degree to which families accept LGB individuals, especially when the religious beliefs are conservative and traditional.   By moving away from traditionalist views of the bible, there may be more room for acceptance within a church setting. Sadowski et. al. (2009) states that LGBTQ youth experience having to reconcile their identities with relationships central to their life such as family, school, and among peers. LGB individuals are human just like anyone else, and they should be able to feel accepted anywhere.

Conclusion

The LGB community is at a higher risk for interpersonal trauma, discrimination, isolation, and hostility than their heterosexual counterparts. Because of this LGB individuals are at a higher risk for developing mental health issues such as low self-esteem, body dysmorphia, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Due to the internalized homophobia that the community may face by family, friends, and organizations, resources need to be readily available to those who may need it. Individuals have been known to be displaced, excommunicated, and even killed because of who they love. This paper focused on the medical, social, and environmental aspects that could potentially impact the mental health of the LGB community. It covered topics such as eating disorders, body dysmorphic, depression, PTSD, and the family, and social settings that may impact the well-being of the LGB community. As

individual people struggle, and as a whole the community struggles more than heterosexual individuals. The LGB community remains strong and proud however, with their pride continuing to shine.

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