

The Anti-Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying Alliance

LGBT+ young people and mental health

Prevalence of mental ill health in LGBT+ young persons

LGBT+ people have higher rates of mental health difficulties than heterosexual people. Young LGBT+ people are more likely to have attempted suicide, self-harmed and have higher rates of depression and anxiety. There is evidence that bisexual people have higher rates of mental health difficulties. Research shows that LGBT+ young people are less likely to access mental health services. Homophobic biphobic and transphobic bullying impacts the experiences of LGBT+ young people and therefore impacts on their mental health.

Research shows that trans young people, if they are well supported, do not have higher rates of mental health needs than other cisgender people. Being trans is not a mental health issue, however many young trans people are not well supported and experience discrimination which affects mental health. Delay to appropriate support and care will impact on a young trans person's mental health. There is evidence that demonstrates that incidences of self-harm and suicide are disproportionately high for trans young people.

Impact

Poor mental health impacts on the educational attainment of LGBT+ young people and there is evidence that demonstrates that young LGBT+ people leave school earlier. The 2017 School Report shows that 52% of LGBT+ young people who are bullied said it had a negative effect on their plans for future education. The life chances of LGBT+ young people are impacted by bullying and mental health concerns. Some young people who do not receive support at home and face hostility due to their sexual orientation or gender identity will face greater disadvantage and greater mental health concerns.

What needs to happen to support positive mental health

Being in a school environment that both challenges the stigma of mental health and provides opportunity for all to be respected and included will enhance young LGBT+ people's mental health

- Challenge the stigma of mental ill health
- Ensure LGBT+ feel represented in the classroom and school life
- Ensure respect for all
- Enhance social visibility
- Tackle the causes of shame - provide a prejudice free environment
- Support young people to attend LGBT+ youth groups to help them develop a positive self-identity
- Provide programmes of support within school such as Pride/Rainbow group

This factsheet was produced by ELOP & Mosaic LGBT Youth Centre

The Anti-Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying Alliance is a nationally driven, locally delivered project
LGBT+ Consortium | 2BU Somerset | ELOP | Free 2B Alliance | Mermaids | MESMAC | Mosaic LGBT Youth Centre
| North East Federation | Proud2Be | Schools Out UK | SPACE Youth Project | Intercom Trust

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Intersectionality

Research shows that LGBT+ young people with additional protected characteristics may face some additional areas of disadvantage and those who receive free school meals are more likely as well to face bullying and other difficulties. It is important to recognise that mental health improves in persons who can positively navigate any conflict between their identities should this occur; an example could be those who belong to a faith community and are LGBT+. They may feel the need to find ways to reconcile their faith and being LGBT+ through different interpretations of religious texts, for example.

Providing Support

Ensuring LGBT+ young people can gain appropriate support is important and will not only provide support in the present but is likely to provide long term support as young people may be more likely to seek support again if it has been successful first time. This support could be provided through school where there is a school counsellor, or mentor, referring to specialist LGBT+ support such as a local LGBT+ youth group, or LGBT+ charity, or on-line LGBT+ support and for those with greatest need referral to CAHMS alongside specialist LGBT+ support. Teachers can also receive support through the advice line and contacting national and local LGBT+ charities.

Education Links

For additional support for teachers in providing an inclusive environment in the classroom the following would be useful:

- Our [Rainbow Alliance factsheet](#)
- [RARE research](#)
- [Youth chances](#)
- [Stonewall Report 2017](#)

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