ADVERSITY AND MENTAL HEALTH OF SEXUAL & GENDER MINORITIES IN RHODE ISLAND

ADVERSITY OF SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES

Sexual and gender minorites (SGMs) face extraordinary rates of abuse, stigma, and discrimination. Despite continued efforts to increase societal acceptance, SGMs regularly report adverse experiences and exposure to hate speech, victimization, and microaggressions. These have been reported nationally and across various settings, such as in schools, doctor’s offices, and the workplace. As a result, SGMs often face health disparities, with higher rates of adversity and mental illness compared to their peers.¹

DISPARITIES IN ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual and Gender Minorities</th>
<th>Cisgender Heterosexual Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal Abuse</strong></td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Mental Illness</strong></td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Substance Abuse</strong></td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Abuse</strong></td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Violence</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Abuse</strong></td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incarcerated Household Member</strong></td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately 1 in 3 SGM adults experience food insecurity compared to less than 1 in 5 heterosexual cisgender adults.

63% of SGM adults get the social support they need compared to 74% of heterosexual cisgender males.

21% of SGM adults have difficulty concentrating or remembering whereas on 8% of heterosexual cisgender males do.

RIYAS 2020

BRFSS 2020
Adolescence is a vulnerable developmental period in which youth are highly impacted by their peers and environment. Discriminatory acts from peers have been correlated with increased self-harm, suicidal ideation, and depression among SGM students. The effects of bullying also interfere with education, being linked to decreased attendance, decreased engagement, and lower academic achievement.\(^2\)

While some data sources allow for the identification of sexual and gender minority youth in Rhode Island, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) only identifies sexual minorities: lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) youth.
SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH

The SGM population have well-documented and dramatic mental health disparities including higher rates of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and substance abuse disorders. Major influential factors include discrimination, internalized and structural stigma, limited access to health care services, and limited provider and educator training in SGM health.

YOUNG ADULT MENTAL HEALTH

- 48% of SGMs had anxiety
- 67% of SGM had depression
- 25% of SGM considered suicide

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

- 50% of SGM often felt very sad
- 30% of SGM considered suicide

ADDRESSING ADVERSITY AND POOR MENTAL HEALTH

CHANGES IN HEALTHCARE

- Develop culturally tailored SGM screening protocols and trainings for providers.
- Establish a network of SGM-affirming providers to SGMs seeking healthcare.
- Develop SGM community and youth outreach programs.

CHANGES IN EDUCATION

- Provide comprehensive and SGM-inclusive health and sex education to ensure SGM youth have access to age-appropriate, medically accurate information.
- Implement trauma-informed teaching practices among staff and faculty.

CHANGES IN POLICY

- Collect sexual orientation and gender identity data in healthcare and state surveys to provide more accurate evidence to inform public health initiatives and policy.
- Establish and maintain SGM protection laws for healthcare, education, and the workplace.
LOCAL SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITY RESOURCES

OPEN DOOR HEALTH
odhpvd.org
(401) 648-4700 - During Clinic Hours

HAUS OF CODEC Safe shelter space for ages 18-24
hausofcodec.org
(401) 484-7465

YOUTH PRIDE RHODE ISLAND
youthprideri.org info@youthprideri.org
(401) 421-5626

PFLAG GREATER PROVIDENCE
pflagprovidence.org pflagprovidence@gmail.com
(401) 307-1802

LIFESPAN Adult Gender and Sexuality Behavioral Health Program | Lifespan (401) 606-3711

SAGE RHODE ISLAND Services and Advocacy for Elders (sage-ri.org)
(401) 406-1714

BH LINK For confidential support and care:
(401) 414-LINK (5465)
855-KID(543)-LINK(5465) for those under 18

LGBTQ HEALTH Healthcare resources
Rhode Island Department of Health
righttimeapp.com
(401) 222-5960

SOJOURNER HOUSE Advocacy for survivors:
sojournerri.org/lgbtq/
(401) 861-6191

RISAS School counseling and resources
Rhode Island Student Assistance Services
risas.org

BRFSS: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System is a population-based dataset of non-institutionalized adults.
RIYAS: Rhode Island Young Adult Survey is a large convenience sample of Rhode Island-residing 18-25 year olds.
RISS: Rhode Island Student Survey is a large survey or more than 60% of middle and high school students.
YRBS: Youth Risk Behavior Survey is a population-based survey of high school students.

References

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