



SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH FOR LGBTQ STUDENTS

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Overview

- ▼ Introduction
- ▼ Terminology
- ▼ Climate
- ▼ Mental Health Needs
- ▼ Best Practices



Terminology

Speaking the Language

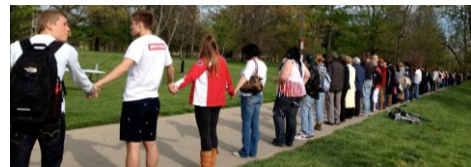
Terminology

- ▼ No glossary could encompass the range of identities and terms that are used within LGBTQA communities.
- ▼ If you hear a term you don't recognize, or feel like someone is using a term in a new way, ask the individual what the term means to him or her.




Identity Dimensions

- ▼ Sexual Orientation
- ▼ Sex
- ▼ Gender
- ▼ Gender Identity





Sexual Orientation

- ▼ LGBT = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
- ▼ Questioning
- ▼ Pansexual
- ▼ Same-Gender Loving (SGL)
- ▼ Asexual
- ▼ Queer
- ▼ Ally
- ▼ Heterosexual/straight





Gender Identity

- Transgender
- Trans man
- Trans woman
- Transsexual
- Two-spirit
- Genderqueer
- Cisgender

Terms to Avoid

- ▼ Homosexual
- ▼ Lifestyle
- ▼ Sexual Preference

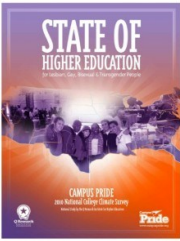

Climate on Campus

Nationally and Locally

Experiences with Climate

According to Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer (2010):

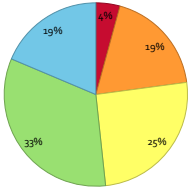
- ▼ 23% of LGBO people and 35% of trans people on college campuses have been harassed.
- ▼ 30% of LGBO and 38% of trans people have considered leaving their campus.
- ▼ LGBTQ people on college campuses feel less comfortable with campus climate, compared to heterosexuals.

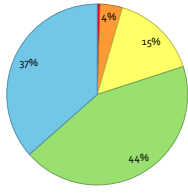
Climate at Miami

In the past semester, how often have you felt that you belong at Miami?


LGBT Students (N=118)



Straight Students (N=200)



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Climate at Miami

Experiences of LGBT Students at Miami (N=119)

- ▼ 7% had experienced physical violence due to sexual orientation/gender identity.
- ▼ 45% had experienced verbal harassment due to sexual orientation/gender identity.
- ▼ 51% had witnessed negative portrayals of LGBT identities in the classroom.

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Climate at Miami

In your past semester at Miami, how often have you experienced any of the following situations? (LGBT students; N=119)


Felt excluded or not welcome due to sexual orientation/gender identity

Frequency	Percentage
Never	50%
Rarely	30%
Occasionally	17%
Often	2%
Always	1%

Feeling that staff and faculty on campus support your sexual orientation/gender identity

Frequency	Percentage
Never	7%
Rarely	6%
Occasionally	31%
Often	40%
Always	16%

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Mental Health and LGBTQ Students

Risk and Protective Factors


Risk Factors Specific to LGBTQ Students

- Personal**
 - Being closeted.
 - Lack of support from family.
 - Internalized homophobia.
- On Campus**
 - Multiple minoritized identities.
 - Bullying/harassment/violence.
 - Discrimination/misunderstanding from service providers.
- Society-wide**
 - Historical connection between homosexuality and mental illness.
 - Lack of relationship role models.
 - Lack of religious support.




Concerns by Sexual Orientation Category

Identity	Specific Considerations
Lesbian Women	Substance use/abuse. Less likely to be physically fit.
Gay Men	Higher rates of recurrent major depression. Stress related to body image. More likely to be physically attacked.
Bisexual Women and Men	Higher levels of self-harm and suicide attempts. Overall mental health sometimes worse than gay and lesbian people. Stigmatized by both gay community and straight community.
Questioning People	Risk for less safe sexual practices.





Concerns for Transgender Students

- ▼ Institutional Issues
 - ▶ Housing.
 - ▶ Restrooms.
 - ▶ Name recognition.
- ▼ Issues related to physical transition.
- ▼ Lack of family and peer support.
- ▼ Depression and risk of suicide, especially before transition.
- ▼ Risk of physical assault.
- ▼ Lack of research.



Consequences

- ▼ Slightly higher risk of suicide than heterosexual youth.
- ▼ Higher risk for depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders.
- ▼ Minority stress model.
- ▼ Silence surrounding relationship issues.

Protective Factors

Personal


- Coming out is linked to increased mental health.
- Gender role equality in relationships.
- Higher use of mental health services for people with same-sex partners.
- Lesbians report being as mentally healthy as straight women.

On Campus

- Out, positive role models and allies.
- Peer support.
- Inclusive university services
- Supportive staff/faculty.

Society-wide

- Increased visibility.
- Legal recognition of relationships and identities.
- Education about LGBT identities.






Best Practices

What You Can Do




Small Scale

- ▼ Use inclusive language on forms and in conversations.
- ▼ Set a baseline expectation for inclusive behavior from staff.
- ▼ Display inclusive imagery (such as a Safe Zone symbol) in shared spaces.

Large Scale


- ▼ Seek input from and partnerships with existing LGBT groups.
- ▼ Implement staff-wide training.
- ▼ Write inclusive policies.
- ▼ Collect data about LGBT students.
- ▼ Create an official liaison to the LGBT community.
- ▼ Emphasize the needs of people with multiple minoritized identities.



Resources

LGBT Mental Health Syllabus	www.aglp.org/gap
National Coalition for LGBT Health	lgbthealth.net
Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resources	www.lgbtcampus.org

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