

Mental Health



Lesbian, gay and bisexual people can experience mental health problems, just like anyone. These can range from depression, anxiety and low-self-esteem to self-harm, drug and alcohol misuse and feeling suicidal.

It is generally thought that we have higher rates of mental health problems. Growing up in families and societies which do not support our homosexuality, isolation, discrimination, being closeted and rejection are thought to be behind this higher rate.

Being positive and open about being lesbian, gay or bisexual can help us to feel more confident, make friends and be part of the gay community. "Coming out" is an important process of self-acceptance, becoming proud of our sexuality and encouraging those around us to respect us.

LGB people are very varied. Women and men have different experiences: for example, higher rates of self-harm among young lesbians and greater problematic drug use among gay men. Different social classes, ethnicities, disabilities, age groups and religious backgrounds affect our well-being and the kind of support we need.

Friendships and social activities are an important way to prevent isolation. In recent years, those of us who disagree with gender identity ideology (the current trend to claim that men can be lesbians or women can be gay men) may have found ourselves isolated from the communities and organisations that we were part of. Some of us have even lost friends over this issue.

Even groups that are officially "LGBT+" are still places to meet other LGB people. Attending LGB Alliance conferences has allowed many of us to connect with like-minded lesbian, gay and bisexual people. LGB Alliance local support and student groups are starting up across the country.

Sometimes we need more help. Your local NHS doctor can refer you for mental health support. There are also voluntary organisations that can provide support, for example MIND. www.mind.org.uk

If you prefer to work with a lesbian, gay or bisexual therapist, Pink Therapists allows you to search for a therapist and you can read about their identity and approaches. If you wish, you can avoid those who appear to be pushing gender identity ideology. You can also ask them questions about this before meeting. www.pinktherapy.com

Good therapists should never impose their own beliefs onto a client. The right to have gender critical views is protected by law and you can make clear to any therapist that you will not accept advice that you are "non-binary" or "transgender" or being called "transphobic" because you are not interested in the opposite sex.

All information on this page is based on official guidance and current law.

More information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/Switchboard>, The "LGBT" helpline <https://switchboard.lgbt/>