

LGBT QUEER Community and Emotional First Aid: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Counseling/mental health and LGBT community share many similarities, they are both associated with a lot of stigma and are under rated in terms of legal laws in India. Cultural norms presume gender appropriate behavior and this has digressed into lot of repression to those who feel otherwise. We generally throw around words such as Sex, gender, Sexual orientation without understanding what these terms actually mean. Lesbian, Gay, Bi -Sexual and Transgender are such communities that live miserably in India as they are deprived of their basic right to fulfill their physical needs and employability. This paper intends to understand the mental agony faced by LGBT+ community and how counseling as a therapeutic intervention can come handy in enhancing their holistic well-being.

Keywords: Therapy, counseling, transgender,LGBT+

INTRODUCTION

Most of us are aware of what is psychology and the various disorders attached to it, however, very few of us take the interest to empathize and decriminalize Psychological disorders. Depression, Hallucination, Anxiety and schizophrenia is a lot common than we think, yet only 40 % of the population seek help. This is due to the stigma attached to Psychological Well-being. When we have a cold or fever, we approach a medical expert and get ourselves treated but when we have a mental concern we are not even aware of it, let alone seek help. India is the second most depressed country as one out of four of us goes through depression at least once in a lifetime. Some of us are equipped to deal with it efficiently while the rest of us aren't; this is because of the major discrepancy in the ratio between psychologists and people suffering with mental illness. World Health Organization (2017) has reported that there is just **one psychologist for every ten lakh Indians**. This is solely due to the stigma attached and also the employability status of psychologists. The scope of psychologists revolves mainly around educational institutions and hospitals; however, the IT is left untouched. This pocket of people result the highest in stress and depression and yet there are no full time psychologists available.

The other community that is rampant and yet highly discriminated is the LGBTQUEER community. To understand this, we need to first address the fundamental difference of what is gender and what is sex. The difference between sex and gender is that sex is a biological concept based on biological characteristics, whereas gender deals with personal, societal and cultural perceptions of sexuality. Sex is what we fill out in an application form, whereas gender is subjective and exploratory. The LGBT community usually strives to achieve equilibrium between the two. Sex is also known as the assigned title and gender is accepted one.

In India, the LGBT+ community faces a lot of Physical as well as psychological distress. They are usually called as “**Chakkas**” right from school years. They are abused and harassed throughout life by nicknames and evil name callings. They are also prey to bullying and often resort to depression due to continuous abuse and harassment. If there is a romantic relationship of any sorts, then there would be constant threats or blackmails. LGBT community is often isolated from community as they are termed abnormal, due to this, the parents of such children, often fear society and renounce children. To add on this, Queer community is denied of basic rights of work and physical needs. The IPC Section 377, a statute imposed on India and many Commonwealth nations by their British colonizer’s that prohibits “carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal”. Police and judges have widely interpreted this as referring to homosexual sex. This brings a lot of pain as a researcher to see what even animals have basic rights that the LGBT+ community is denied of. Needless to say that very few people from the community have family support.

Recent research shows that 40% of family doesn’t want to have any relationship after the child comes out with their sexual identity. This is something to be concerned about, In a country like India, families pay importance to society more than the happiness of child, this is due to lack of awareness of sexual orientation and the mere stigma attached to it.

This brings us to an understanding that the stake holders need to be informed about the various psychological and sexual orientation as well as be aware of the sensitivity around it.

Cecilia Dhejne, Roy Van Vlerken, Gunter Heylens& Jon Arcelus(2016) in their article of Mental Health and gender dysphoria, explained that for people with gender dysphoria the levels of

psychopathology and psychiatric disorders in trans people are higher at the time of assessment, however they do improve following gender-confirming medical intervention, in many cases reaching normative values.

Dr. Annelou L. C. de Vries MD and PhD ,Peggy T. Cohen-Kettenis PhD &Henriette Delemarre-van de Waal MD in their article focus on the clinical management of Gender Dysphoria in Adolescents. They assessed gender dysphoric adolescents in pre-puberty and Physical interventions, including GnRH analogues to inhibit puberty and cross-sex hormones were prescribed.

According to the Psychology Today, it is important for counselors to understand how their transgender and gender-nonconforming clients identify, especially given that gender identity is now considered to be more a spectrum between male and female and may indeed be a galaxy of possibilities. Understanding the importance of gender identity and sexual orientation is of utmost priority here. The family of the transitioner has to be given sensitivity training and coping techniques to deal with the emotional turmoil.

In this article we will explore the interventions to adopt for gender dysphoric students as well as the family. The Mental Health Bill states that every citizen of the country has the right to seek mental assistance and treatment and the same to be provided under medical insurance in the companies.

Sensitivity training for the public in general is of paramount importance here. It is important to educate and spread awareness about the various sexual orientations present in today's world. Support system from the family, workplace and peers must be established. Identifying and

“coming out” is a very exhausting process for the transitioner thus, it is very important to create a close-knit family structure to support and help with smooth transitioning of the process.

At the school level, we need address to Homophobia the irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality or homosexuals that most of the population deals with. As a society, Homophobia must be decriminalized and has to be organically accepted as the other gender.

Student based Interventions must be designed, since the gender identity roles play out mostly In adolescents , it is very important to impart sensitivity knowledge to teenagers in order to reduce ragging and bullying of the transitioner

It is also vital to create a platform for transtioners to voice out their problems and seek support from self-help groups. This will assure a sense of belongingness. Suicide is another important aspect that is at a high rate among transgender. A study conducted by American Academy of pediatrics revealed alarming levels of attempted suicide among transgender youth -- with the highest rates among transgender boys and non-binary youth. 29.9 percent of transgender female teens said they attempted suicide at some point in their lives and this is may be due to Family Rejection, bullying and harassment. Due to victimization, LGBT+ community succumb to suicide and it is one for the major causes that we need to worry about. Hence, trasitoners themselves need to undergo counseling sessions in order to keep their emotions in check.

In an attempt to compile a guide on what are the do's and don'ts while interacting with transgender and LGBT community, here is what one should know:

1. What is transgender and LGBT+: understanding what is meant by “Trans” or Lesbian, Gay etcis of paramount here, we can define this as A person whose gender identity differs from the one assigned to them at birth."
2. What is the correct pronoun and when should we use it? Addressing the other gender can be often confusing and offensive. It is always courteous to ask the person how they would like to be addressed and always keep it on a neutral tone.
3. Never ask the other gender if they have undergone surgery, Editor of LGBT magazine says "If someone wants to talk about it, in the right place and time, then that's their call, but don't put people on the spot with invasive questions about surgery, about ... what underwear you wear, how you go to the toilet, all those sorts of things”
4. Dead Naming must be addressed: "Dead naming" is where a person's former name or pronoun is used in place of the name they are living as. For eg: Caitlyn Jenner was always addressed as Bruce Jenner in spite of coming out in the open with her new name.
5. Using the phrase “ Born in the Body “ is inappropriate: while dealing with people who identify themselves as the other gender, it is important to not criminalize them jst because your lack of understanding of the said subject.
6. Media must be more responsible while talking about the other gender; Not every news about LGBT+ community has to be a sob story, sometimes showing progressive achievements will help mitigate stigma.

7. Celebrities to be watchful of what they say: President Donald Trump recently banned LGBT community from joining the armed forces. When one is an influence it is his/her responsibility to rightfully communicate the message to the followers, providing job opportunities based on gender is foolish, looking at the person's capability is what will make the country grow with pride.

8. Sensitivity campaigns : students, teachers, peers, public, government must amalgamate and completely support in making the " OTHER GENDER" as a common practice in the coming years.

9. Mental health service: counselor must exclusively work with LGBT community to help mitigate suicide and chronic depression among adolescent transistioners. Needs and necessities of the the other gender must be met with and ultimately motivated.

10. Research and development: government must make it mandatory to conduct many research projects on LGBT community there by increasing awareness among the general population and mitigate harassment and bullying right from school level.

We the citizens of the country must really adopt measure to ensure mental capabilities of the queer community are strengthened. When we practice inclusion in diversity that is when we will really grow as a country.

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