



Gay and Bisexual Men and all Men who have sex with Men

*A brief guide for people
or practitioners working
in mental health*

Gay and Bisexual Men, and all men who have sex with men (GBMSM), experience higher rates of poor mental health, particularly anxiety, depression and eating disorders. They are also more likely to experience suicidal thoughts and self-harm.

GBMSM are more likely to have poor sexual health and there is increased use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs when compared to the general population.

Why?

GBMSM are more likely to experience bullying and verbal abuse at school, rejection by family, danger of violence in public places, rejection by their religion, harassment, and experience casual homophobia. In addition, GBMSM living with HIV face further stigma and discrimination because of their status, from their own community and wider society.

Barriers

“How can I speak openly with someone about my anxiety when I don’t know if they’re going to accept me as a bisexual man, or even have an understanding of what I’m feeling”.

Despite the fact that mental health issues are common for GBMSM, many find it difficult to talk about mental health, or feel ashamed and stigmatised for doing so, particularly when interacting with services.

What You Can Do

- o Include representation of GBMSM in your posters, leaflets and website
- o Display LGBTI+ friendly materials in waiting rooms and meeting areas
- o Provide rainbow lanyards for staff to wear to provide a clear indication that GBMSM will not be negatively judged due to their sexual orientation
- o Avoid making assumptions about people's gender, sexual orientation or relationships
- o Think about your language and the terms you use
- o Provide LGBTI+ awareness training to all staff and volunteers
- o Understand that GBMSM access services for a number of reasons, some of which may or may not relate to their sexual orientation
- o Capture sexual orientation information to ensure that GBMSM don't remain hidden – within your client group and staff
- o Promote GBMSM/LGBTI+ services.
- o Engage with your local GBMSM/LGBTI+ third sector organisations in Lothian to find out more about the services they offer

Remember: Sexual orientation is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010

Background Reading:



Straight Jacket. How to Be Gay and Happy.
Matthew Todd. Bantam Press, 2016.



Gay men are battling a demon more powerful than HIV – and it's hidden.
Owen Jones , Guardian Newspaper, 2016



Prejudice, Social Stress, and Mental Health in Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Populations: Conceptual Issues and Research Evidence, Ilan H. Meyer, 2007

The experiences of GBMSM are closely linked to the challenges they face, from experiences of homophobia and discrimination, to accepting their own identity and the pressure to conform to mainstream societal norms.
Frankis, J., Flowers, P., Welsh, M. and McDaid, L. 2018

Social Media, Men who have sex with men, Sexual and Holistic Health Study (SMMASH2) Executive Report: A report commissioned by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and NHS Lothian Health Boards.
Institute for Applied Health Research: GCU, Glasgow, 2016

FAQ Scotland is the community engagement part of a larger project that wants to prevent HIV infections in Scotland among gay and bisexual men carried out in 2014/15 includes a specific section on mental health and feeling down GBMSM .

Good Practice Information and Guides:

- Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland - *'LGBT Inclusive Mental Health Services'*
www.mwcscot.org.uk
- Stonewall - *'What's it Got to Do with You'*
www.stonewall.org.uk/sites
- Stonewall - *'Guide for Delivering LGBT Inclusive face to face services'*
www.stonewall.org.uk/resources
- Mind - *'Stand Bi Me. Information and Guidance on supporting Bi People'*
www.mind.org.uk/media/18833979/stand-bi-me.pdf
- Equality Network - *'LGBTI Glossary'*
www.equality-network.org/resources/glossary/
- SX National Website - *'Mental Health'*
www.s-x.scot/mental-health/
- LGBT Health and Wellbeing - *'LGBT Mental Health Audit Tool'*
www.lgbthealth.org.uk (bit.ly/2LLppOr)



Sex Health Wellbeing
For Gay & Bisexual Men

SX - provides health and wellbeing information, advice and support for GBMSM across Scotland. We offer dedicated one to one support, opportunities for group work, outreach and BBV testing.

www.s-x.scot



LGBT Health and Wellbeing - delivers a range of social opportunities, events and courses to LGBT adults. We offer a counselling service, individual support mental health support and LGBT Helpline

www.lgbthealth.org.uk



LGBT Youth Scotland - supports young LGBTI people ages 13-25 years, providing social events, informations and individual support

www.lgbtyouth.org.uk



Equality Network - promotes LGBT equality and rights across Scotland

www.equality-network.org



Stonewall Scotland - campaigns for equality of LGBT people across Scotland

www.stonewallscotland.org.uk



AMIS – supports men who are or have experienced domestic abuse

www.abusedmeninScotland.org



NHS Lothian – all our services are LGBT friendly and welcome gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men. You can see your GP or come to any walk-in clinic or phone for a routine appointment in Chalmers or the Local Clinics.

www.lothiansexualhealth.scot



Support. Testing. Outreach.

ROAM – a community-based, outreach sexual health service working across Lothian and the Scottish Borders with cis/trans gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM).

www.roam-outreach.com



Waverley Care
making a positive difference

Waverley Care – supports people affected by HIV or Hepatitis C in Scotland

www.waverleycare.org



Galop – is the UK's LGBT+ anti-violence, charity. We have been providing advice, support and advocacy to LGBT+ victims/survivors.

www.galop.org.uk

You can request up to date posters and leaflets from these organisations.



This resource was developed in partnership by



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