

Opioid Use Disorder Within the LGBTQ Community

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community has historically been disproportionately affected by substance use disorders. Across all age brackets, those who identify as LGBTQ are statistically more likely to engage in risky opioid use and are three times more likely to develop opioid use disorder (National LGBT Health Education Center)

Student Survey:

past 30-day prescription misuse.²

A 2016 Minnesota Student Survey found that LGBTQ students are up to three times as likely to report.

Heterosexual

4.6% Male
4.6% Female

Bisexual

10.6% Male
12.7% Female

Gay or Lesbian

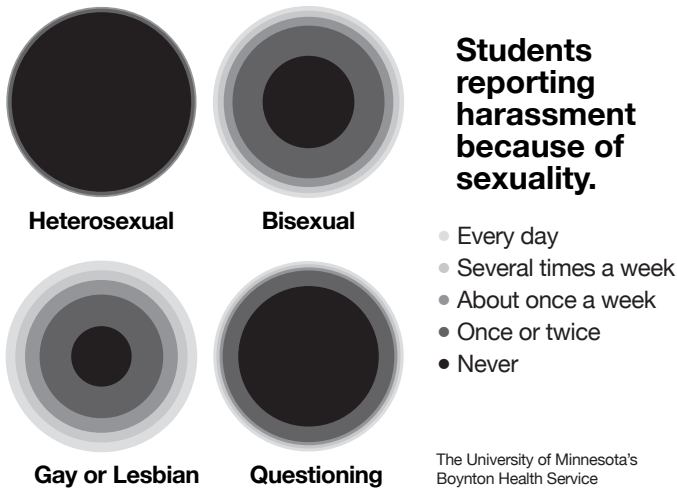
9.6% Male
10.1% Female

Questioning

7.5% Male
7.3% Female

Trauma and Stigma

LGBTQ people are often surrounded by discrimination and marginalization due to their sexual and/or gender identity. When internalized, this social stigma can create feelings of shame and worthlessness. In order to escape these emotions, some turn to opioids for relief. LGBTQ youth, in particular, are more likely than their heterosexual peers to begin misusing opioids. According to a large survey of transgender youth, for instance, 35 percent who experienced harassment in school reported turning to substances to cope (National LGBT Health Education Center).



Prescribed Opioids

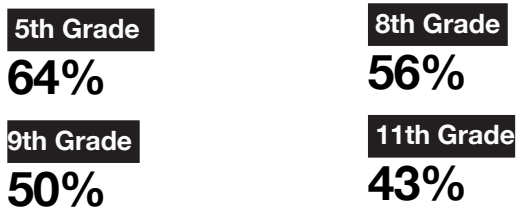
Transgender-medical patients have an increased risk of developing opioid dependence. Opioid therapy is the most common form of pain management prescribed by physicians after gender affirmation surgery.¹ Members of the LGBTQ community living with HIV are also often prescribed opioids for pain management.

Treatment

Medication assisted therapy (MAT) can be an effective method for recovery when used in combination with therapeutic interventions. When looking for providers and treatment facilities, it's important to verify their knowledge of the complex medical needs of the community, including but not limited to hormone replacement therapy, HIV treatment and trauma recovery. Behavioral interventions are often necessary in the treatment plan for LGBTQ community members.

Treatment for opioid use disorder has been associated with a reduction in high-risk sexual behaviors. (National Institutes of Health)

2022 Students reporting being a victim of bullying at least once within the past 30 days:



1 Addressing Opioid Use Disorder Among LGBTQ Populations (National LGBT Health Education Center)

2 Minnesota's LGBTQ Communities: Epidemiological Profile of Substance Use and Related Factors (Minnesota State Epidemiological Outcomes Workshop)

3 Stressful Childhood Experiences and Health Outcomes in Sexual Minority Populations: a Systemic Review (Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology)