

## Eating Disorders Awareness Week February 26 - March 3, 2024

# Healing in Community

## Eating Disorders in **LGBTQ+** Populations

Community is an essential force in our lives that helps us thrive and grow. Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ are at increased risk for eating disorders due to a variety of circumstances. During Eating Disorders Awareness Week, we focus on ways to help members of this community. It is important to understand the risk factors, what to look for, and protective factors when caring for this population.

### Common Risk Factors for LGBTQ+ Individuals

- ⓘ Anti-LGBTQ+ bias and stigma
- ⓘ Family and community rejection
- ⓘ Gaps in access to care
- ⓘ Media influences
- ⓘ Unrealistic pressure to assume certain appearance expectations

### Protective Factors for LGBTQ+ Individuals

- ♥ LGBTQ+ affirming care
- ♥ Media influences that represent a range of LGBTQ+ bodies and appearances
- ♥ Family acceptance
- ♥ LGBTQ+ competent health care providers
- ♥ Emphasis on body neutrality and functionality
- ♥ Trauma-informed care

### Considerations for Transgender and Nonbinary Individuals



Transgender individuals who present with eating disorders often have a delay in identification of gender dysphoria. **Eating disorder treatment is often ineffective without the use of gender-affirming treatment at the same time.**



Eating disorder treatment for patients with gender dysphoria or who identify as transgender can fall short. Individuals note that treatments often lack a gender-affirming approach or fail to recognize that the root cause of the eating disorder is not the same as those among the cisgender population. **It is important that providers understand the nuances of gender dysphoria and euphoria.**



**Integrating gender affirming approaches into care are crucial.** Gender affirming approaches can foster an increased ability to gain body acceptance and satisfaction, experiences of gender euphoria, and improved overall well-being.

### Important Factors to Consider

- ✔ Eating disorders in **LGBTQ+ youth present differently** and often meet criteria for Other Specified Feeding and Eating Disorder (OSFED).
- ✔ Sexual minority girls are **2-4 times more likely to purge or use diet pills** compared to heterosexual peers. Sexual minority boys are **3-7 times more likely to have these behaviors** as compared to heterosexual peers.<sup>1</sup>
- ✔ Transgender college students **report diagnoses of eating disorders** at a rate four times higher than cisgender peers.<sup>2</sup>
- ✔ Eating disorders are **associated with serious psychiatric conditions** such as anxiety disorders, depression, substance use, and self-harm. That is why it's **critical to identify eating disorders early**, especially among individuals who face higher risks.<sup>3</sup>



This infographic developed in partnership with

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#### Sources:

1. Austin SB, Nelson LA, Birkett MA, Calzo JP, Everett B. Eating disorder symptoms and obesity at the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation in US high school students. *Am J Public Health.* 2013 Feb;103(2):e16-22. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2012.301150. Epub 2012 Dec 13. PMID: 23237207; PMCID: PMC3558764.
2. Diemer EW, Grant JD, Munn-Chernoff MA, Patterson DA, Duncan AE. Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, and Eating-Related Pathology in a National Sample of College Students. *J Adolesc Health.* 2015 Aug;57(2):144-9. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2015.03.003. Epub 2015 Apr 28. PMID: 25937471; PMCID: PMC4545276.
3. Micali N, Solmi F, Horton NJ, et al. Adolescent Eating Disorders Predict Psychiatric, High-Risk Behaviors and Weight Outcomes in Young Adulthood. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry.* 2015;54(8):652-659.e1. doi:10.1016/j.jaac.2015.05.009.