

Minimizing Health Disparities Among Gay Adolescents: The Role of the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse

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Introduction

- **Gay Adolescents:
A Vulnerable Population**
- **Scope of the Problem**

Health Disparities

- **Substance Use and Abuse**
- **Eating Disorders**
- **Suicidality**

Risky Sexual Behaviors

**Violence Exposure and
Victimization**

**The Role of the Psychiatric
Mental Health Nurse:
Implications for Practice**

Conduct a Self-Assessment

Assess for Negative and Proactive Factors

- **Do family and friends know that the adolescent is gay?**
- **What are their reactions?**
- **Have they received any positive support?**
- **Have there been any negative consequences of disclosure?**

Avoid Heterosexism

- **Use Gender-Neutral Language**
- **Review Intake Forms for the Assumption of Heterosexuality**

Provide Privacy and Ensure Confidentiality

Do not Disclose Sexual Orientation to the Family without the Adolescent's Permission

Be Aware of Community Based Organizations

- **GLSEN**
- **PFLAG**
- **Rainbow Health Ontario**
- **The Trevor Project**
- **It Gets Better**
- **Canadian Mental Health Association**
- **LGBT Youth-line**

Revise Educational Material to Include Images of Gay Adolescents



**Provide Education
Regarding the Lack of
Empirical Evidence for
“Reparative Therapy”**

Encourage Family Support

- **Talk to adolescent about being gay**
- **Express compassion when they come out**
- **Help other family members respect the gay adolescent**
- **Invite the adolescent's gay friends and partner to their home**
- **Reinforce the chance of having a happy future as a gay adult**
- **Books for gay adolescents**

Combatting Substance Use and Abuse

- **Assess if there is a relationship between sexual identity formation and substance use**
- **Rehabilitation combined with therapy regarding these issues**

Treating Eating Disorders Gender Specific

- **Boys – Body Image and Masculinity**
- **Girls – Stress Associated with Negative Stigma of Being Gay**
- **Both - Require Multidisciplinary Approach: Mental Health Nurse, Physician and Registered Dietician**

Decreasing Risky Sexual Behaviors

**Provide Gay Sensitive
Sexual Education**

Preventing Suicidality

- **Ongoing Suicidal Assessment**
- **Improving Protective Factors
(Family Connectedness,
Teacher Caring, Safe School
Environments)**

Conclusion

Questions and Answers