

While societal expectations are imposed on all individuals, gay and bisexual men experience more complicated body image standards. Homosexual men often strive to seem "feminine" to attract male partners, but simultaneously feel the societal pressure to be muscular and traditionally "masculine".



Although a more "feminine" appearance can be desirable, this look is also often weaponized against gay men. In fact, sexual minority men who more strongly identify with traditionally feminine traits are more susceptible to eating disorders, low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety.

Furthermore, there are also harmful standards for larger GBQ men within the community. Sexual minority men who are larger in size are fetishized as a particular "type" rather than normalized. Body acceptance is slim to none within the GBQ community.



There is both a fear and desire of "looking or doing gay" within the GBQ community. It is a continuous struggle for many sexual minority men and greatly impacts their mental health.

## BODY IMAGE IN THE LGB+ COMMUNITY

The pressures sexual minority women experience appear to be much more variable. However, 53–56% of individuals identifying as lesbian or bisexual expressed depression and anxiety related to body image.



Some research suggests sexual minority women face similar body standard pressures to straight women, due to the influence of western media promoting unrealistic, heteronormative body ideals of what it means to be "feminine" and "desirable."

Other research suggests sexual minority women may have more flexible beauty standards and be more accepting of various body types within their community, given they may reject conformity to standards that please men.



Despite this, external pressures remain that influence body image and self-esteem. Lesbian relationships are often hypersexualized in the media and therefore unacceptably viewed as objects for the male gaze.

Bisexual women may face even greater pressures, body image issues, and risk of developing disordered eating habits due to the unique dichotomy they experience in being attracted to both men and women.

