LGBT AND EATING DISORDERS

YOU A RE NOT A L ONE

Potential factors that may contribute to an LGBT person's development of an eating disorder may include, but are not limited to:

- Coming out: Fear of rejection/experience of rejections by friends, family and co-workers
- Internalized negative messages/beliefs about oneself due to sexual orientation, non-normative gender expressions, or transgender identity
- Experiences of violence (gay bashing), contributing to development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which research shows sharply increases vulnerability to an eating disorder
- Discrimination
- Being bullied
- Discordance between one's biological sex and gender identity
- Homelessness or unsafe home environment
- Body image ideals within some LGBT cultural contexts
- LGBT persons, in addition to experiencing unique contributing factors, may also face challenges for accessing treatment and support. Some of those barriers include:
    - Lack of availability of culturally-competent treatment, which addresses the complexity of unique sexuality and gender identity issues
    - Lack of family/friend support if not a part of an accepting family/community

(http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/eating-disorders-lgbt-populations)

SIZE DOESN'T MATTER

Within the broader gay community, sexual minority men often tend to socialize with similar others, including those with similar body types
(Forrest et al., 2014; Hennen, 2005; Willoughby et al., 2008)

LGBT HEALTH MATTERS

The gay community, a community that has been described as highly focused on physical appearance (Feldman & Meyer, 2007) and especially likely to endorse both a thin and muscular body ideal (Tiggemann, Martins, & Kirkbride, 2007).

Although lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people are as diverse as the general Canadian population in their experiences of mental health and well-being, they face higher risks for some mental health issues due to the effects of discrimination and the social determinants of health.

This information was compiled by Rainbow Health Ontario and CMHA Ontario.

LOCAL NUMBER. LOCAL SERVICES.

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1-855-969-5530

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