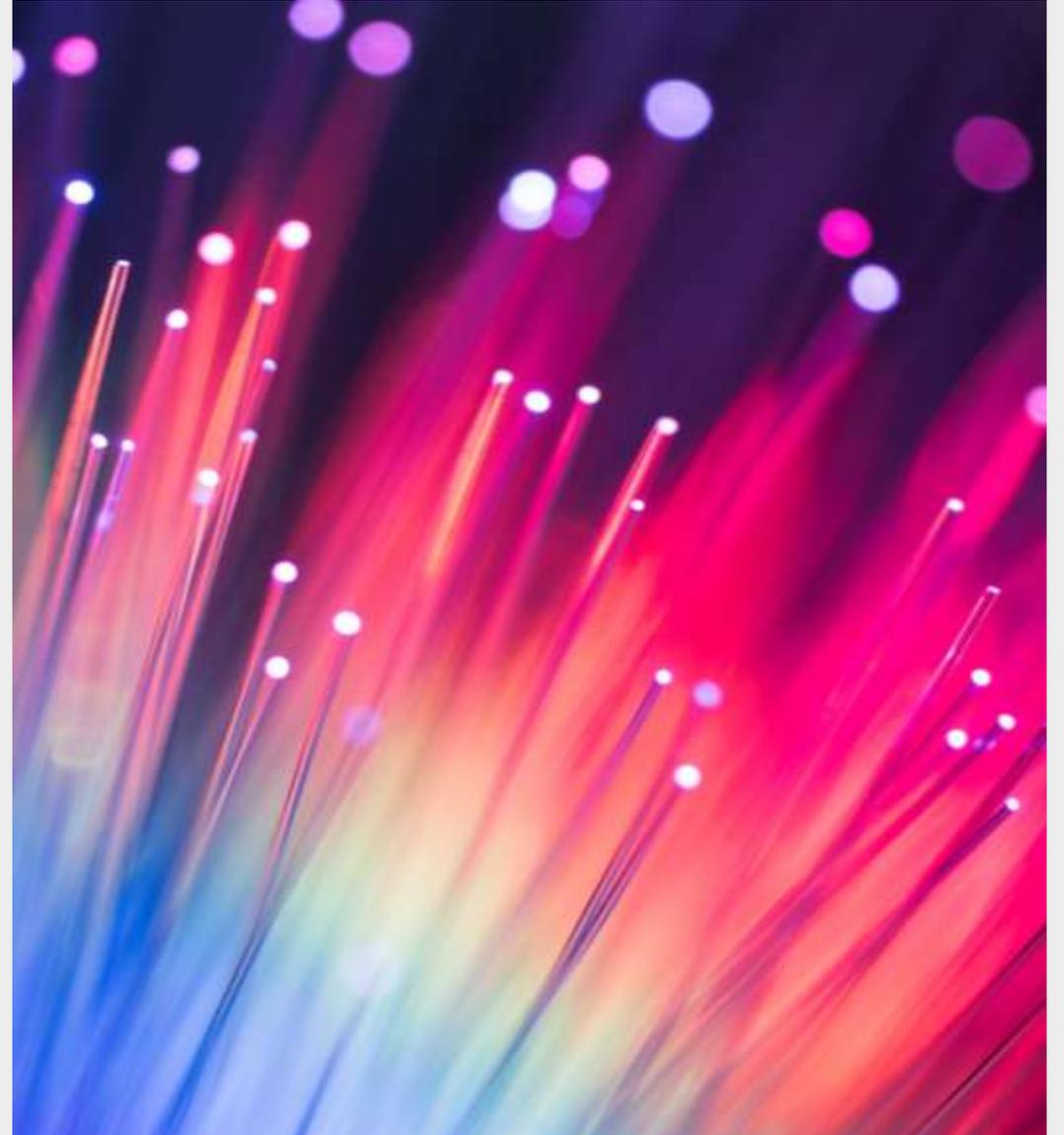


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# Pride Month Conversations: LGBTQ+ and Mental Health



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# Being Queer Is Not a Mental Illness

- In 1973 The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) de-pathologized homosexuality where it was no longer a diagnosis
- Being Queer is beautiful and doesn't mean you are abnormal
- Much of the stress queer people face is due to discrimination and ignorance from society. This unfair treatment can lead to mental health concerns.
- The importance of pride month and pride visibility has led to greater protections and acceptance of the queer community, although there is more work that needs to be done....



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# Mental Health Statistics

According to the NAMI website:

1. Queer Adults are **twice as likely** than heterosexual adults to experience a mental health disorder
2. Transgender individuals are **four times as likely** as cisgender individuals to experience a mental health disorder
3. LGB youth are more than **twice as likely** to report experiencing persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness than their heterosexual



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# Statistics Continued

4. Transgender youth are **twice as likely** to experience depressive symptoms, seriously consider suicide, and attempt suicide compared to cisgender lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and questioning youth.

5. According to a 2013 survey by the Pew Research Institute **40% of Queer adults** have experienced rejection from a family member or friend.

6. A 2019 climate survey by the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) showed that **86% of LGBTQ youth** reported being harassed or assaulted at school, which can significantly impact their mental health.

7. High school students who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual are more than **four times as likely** to attempt suicide compared to their heterosexual peers.

8. **40% of transgender adults** have attempted suicide in their lifetime, compared to less than 5% of the general U.S. population.



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# Trauma in Our Community

Many of us have been traumatized one way or the other. We could face intimate partner distress, loss of friends, stares in public, discrimination, bullying, harassment, or have a difficult coming out experience.

**Internalized Homophobia**-A form of personal homophobia where a queer individual believes being gay is a sin and they are abnormal. This is mainly due to growing up in a heteronormative society.

It is very important that we support each other and remember that we all have different experiences as a queer individual and cannot assume someone knows what we are going through just because they are



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# Queer People of Color (QPOC)

QPOC experience much more discrimination than White Queer individuals. Sometimes this is even within the Queer community on apps and in other spaces.

It is important that we continue to fight for QPOC, especially as Black Transgender individuals typically are left out of the Queer rights discussions and are more likely to attempt suicide or be killed by cis people.

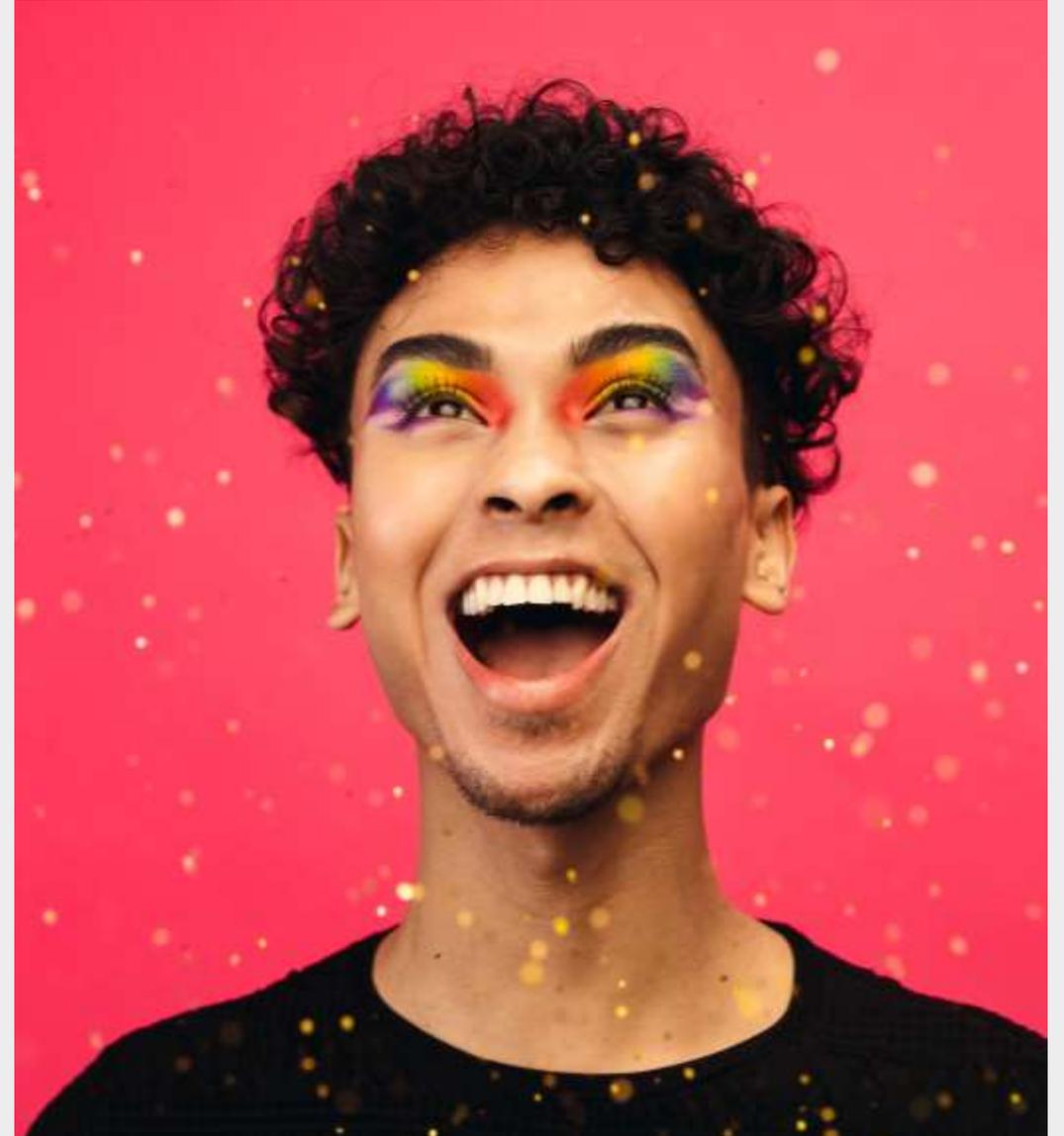
As a clinician I recognize that I don't know the experiences of my clients who are QPOC. Unfortunately, there is a lack of representation mental health professionals of color, and we need more representation to continue assisting and advocating for clients of color.



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## Finding a Queer Friendly Therapist

- **Psychology Today** features the largest online inventory of therapists in the US and its free to use. You can search for a therapist based on location, health insurance, and if they specialize in LGBTQ populations
- **Violet** is a great option to find a mental health provider who has experience in working with the LGBTQ community. Violet therapists are queer-competent providers with extensive experience working in the LGBTQ community and have the utmost respect and support for their patients' gender identities and sexual identities.
- **The National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network** is a network of Queer and Transgender identified therapists of color transforming mental health for Queer and Transgender People of Color (QTPoC)





## Queer Friendly Therapists Continued....

- **PrideCounseling** is an online therapy platform that's operated by BetterHelp. It connects you with licensed therapists in your state and can connect international clients with US licensed therapists. Therapists on PrideCounseling specialize in working with the LGBTQ community.
- **Lighthouse** connects you with LGBTQ friendly healthcare and wellness providers in your area. These can be therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, dentists, etc.
- **LGBTCenters.org** can connect you with LGBTQ centers in your area, that may have access and resources for queer mental health providers.

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# Coping Skills

- **Meditation apps** that are free like Insight Timer, Headspace, Aura, MyLife, and Smiling Mind.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)**- This is where you tighten a muscle group for 15 seconds as hard as you can and then release
- **Deep Breathing**- When deep breathing I like to utilize the 5-5-5 technique. This means you breathe in 5 seconds through your nose, hold at the top of the breath for 5 seconds, and breathe out through your mouth for 5 seconds.



# Coping Skills Continued



- **Imagery-** In this technique you imagine the last moment where you were completely relaxed and at peace. Maybe you were at the beach with your partner, camping with friends, traveling overseas, or playing board games with your chosen family.
- Now think about your five senses: Taste, Sight, Sound, Smell, and Touch
- Imagine yourself in this scenario and try to name all the five sense. What are you looking at? What are the sounds around you? What are you tasting on your tongue? What are the smells your nose is picking up? What are you feeling with your hand?

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# Silencing The Haters

Love and Activism are important but can also be exhausting. It is important to recognize how much you can endure before you need to step away

Don't be a keyboard warrior on social media because it is very rare that you will change someone's mind.

Some people are willing to listen and some aren't. Others may take time to reflect and will eventually come around.

Being authentic and living your truth will always make someone annoyed. Try to only spend time with people that respect you. You are not meant to educate every homophobic person. This is not your job.



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# Resources

<https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt>

<https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/LGBTQI>

<https://www.glsen.org/research/2019-national-school-climate-survey>

<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2013/06/13/a-survey-of-lgbt-americans/>

[www.Psychologytoday.com](http://www.Psychologytoday.com)

<https://www.choosingtherapy.com/finding-an-lgbtq-therapist/>

<https://www.joinviolet.com/>

<https://www.mywellbeing.com/>



<https://nqttcn.com/en/>

<https://www.pridecounseling.com/>

<https://www.lighthouse.lgbt/>

<https://www.lgbtcenters.org/LGBTCenters>

<https://www.wellandgood.com/free-meditation-apps/>

[www.witterwellness.com](http://www.witterwellness.com)