



Emotional Impact of Prejudice in the LGBTQ Community

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From Australia to New York, the LGBTQ community is celebrated through laughter, group presence, and festivities from joyful colors to endearing messages. However, despite growing appreciation and acceptance, prejudice of the LGBTQ community is still prevalent in today's society. The detriment caused by hateful words and actions leaves emotional scars that contradict the message of pride and therefore its presence in a community environment. From subtle comments to forceful protests, the face of discrimination in the LGBTQ community has many forms. Although not all are immediately recognizable, the scars left by such toxic remarks contribute to an unhealthy emotional state and can ultimately lead to homelessness due to discrimination in the workplace. Thus, it is vital to recognize and appreciate the struggles endured by the LGBTQ community which cannot only improve hostile societal conditions but the emotional and physical state of LGBTQ people.

From the squeaky halls of public schools to the sunny lawns of community parks, discrimination against the LGBTQ community comes in many forms and at many venues. An article by Psychology Today illustrates how "...LGBT adults who report family rejection are six times more likely to be depressed...". A place that is supposed to be a safe haven and a protective vanity can turn into a place of judgement and resentment for LGBTQ children and adults. Furthermore, the LGBTQ community is harassed at school as well. The same article details how "Eighty-five percent [of LGBTQ students] are verbally bullied during the course of a school year". This demonstrates that over half of students in the LGBTQ community are tormented every day because of their sexual orientation. This constant oppression can lead to emotional turmoil for the victims and ultimately contributes to the downfall of their mental health.

The bullying and discrimination that contributes to poor mental health in the LGBTQ community not only engenders lack of self-respect in the identity of an LGBTQ individual, but also has the power to lead to homelessness due to employment issues. These "employment issues" are caused by false notions and preconceptions surrounding the LGBTQ community; more specifically, in the workplace. Although the majority of people believe that discrimination is open and seldom secretive, the prejudice experienced by the LGBTQ community in the workplace is not only present, but is covertly established in some respectable institutions. This failure to obtain a job and make an income leads to homelessness because the people of the LGBTQ community who are discriminated against are not given equal opportunities for employment. Because they are unable to support themselves financially or, in some cases of discrimination, mentally and emotionally, people of the LGBTQ community are forced to live on the streets and struggle to get by. Although not all corporations and businesses subscribe to such discrimination, dangerous preconceptions not

only build a wall between potential employers and the LGBTQ community, but this “wall” leads to homelessness because of unfair opportunities fueled through discrimination.

Although prejudice is openly observed by the a large portion of the population, the emotional repercussions of such actions are seldom seen on the surface. For example, US and International Studies exhibit through research that “LGBT youth report elevated rates of emotional distress, symptoms related to mood and anxiety disorders, self-harm, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior when compared to heterosexual youth”. The LGBTQ community has to regulate their inner emotions far more frequently because of backlash received regarding their sexual identity. The disparity between mental health of the two communities shows the negative social and cultural implications carried with LGBTQ discrimination. The cynical perspective of many cultural and social venues not only contributes to the mental health of the LGBTQ community but demonstrates the emotional impact words and actions can have on mental health.

Despite increasing support and advocacy for LGBTQ rights, the LGBTQ community still is forced to combat toxic public behavior every single day. The emotional impact of discrimination is dangerous and harbors egregious medical states for most in the LGBTQ community. The malleable form of such detrimental actions and words leaves for limitless possibilities in terms of problems emotionally and mentally. From depression and anxiety to suicidal thoughts and behaviors, prejudice in the LGBTQ community is not only a catalyst for poor mental health, but is in some ways the mother of a distinctive group that embody the idea that “discrimination breeds ills” (Al Zwiars).

Resources:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/brick-brick/201402/the-psychological-impact-lgbt-discrimination>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4887282/>

<http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/lgbt-vol6/lgbt-people-and-mental-health>