

CHAPTER 3

TREATMENT OF LGBT SUBSTANCE USE

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter examines current concepts of substance use treatment and the nuances and modifications that must be acknowledged in order to supply culturally competent treatment for LGBT people, particularly in affirmative and trauma-informed models.

OVERVIEW

History is replete with treatments for substance use that had marginal results. Fortunately, new conceptualizations of treatments have better outcomes. LGBT substance users needing treatment will progress through the same sequence of intervention as the general population, receive the same pharmaceutical and psychosocial treatment protocols, and likely be referred to supportive self-help groups as well. Still, success requires culturally competent treatment.

Clinical environments demonstrating cultural competence reduce fear of discrimination, increase LGBT patients' willingness to access care, and improve provider-patient communication about health concerns related to sexual orientation and/or gender identity. One manifestation of cultural competence in addressing LGBT groups is affirmative treatment, which is a way of helping sexual minorities move from shame to pride and undoing the damage of heterosexism and minority stress. Trauma-informed treatment recognizes the bidirectional relationship between trauma and substance use, acknowledges that many LGBT individuals experience trauma during their lives, and aims to prevent retraumatization during the treatment process. Support groups have a history of inclusion, but some LGBT individuals have had negative experiences with them. Helping LGBT substance users to locate welcoming twelve-step groups is important.

KEY TERMS

Assessment; evidence-based practices; treatment principles; cultural competence; organizational practices; trauma-informed treatment; affirmative treatment; twelve-step programs; implicit bias; social justice counseling

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Fundamentals of LGBT Substance Use Disorders: Multiple Identities, Multiple Challenges

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NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

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