CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explores research on bisexuals’ substance use and treatment. Studies find that bisexual individuals experience a set of additional stressors and risk factors not necessarily encountered by gay men and lesbians and rarely addressed in treatment.

OVERVIEW

Bisexuality is defined as the capacity for emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction to more than one sex or gender. Though research is unequivocal in its conclusion that bisexuality is a true sexual orientation and that this demographic makes up the largest single population within the LGBT community, the very existence of bisexuality is sometimes still questioned. Many bisexuals experience physical- and mental-health complications arising from a confluence of minority stress, lack of acceptance by lesbians and gay men, and insistence that one must be either gay or straight. The situation is even further complicated for those engaging in behavioral bisexuality, defined as men who consider themselves heterosexual but who engage in sex with men or express the desire to do so.

Programs that pride themselves on their competence in working with LGBT people often have little expertise with bisexuals, and bisexuals typically receive treatment protocols tailored for lesbians and gay men. Treatment of bisexual individuals who engage in substance use must take into consideration concerns such as minority stress, double discrimination, and invisibility.

KEY TERMS

Bisexuality; behavioral bisexuality; bisexual health; straight men who have sex with other men (SMSM); invisibility; double discrimination; coming out as a bisexual; minority stress; bisexual substance use prevalence and patterns; bisexual substance use treatment
NOTES TO CHAPTER 5


2 Carey, “Straight, Gay, or Lying?”

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.


6 Ibid., 37.


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<tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Miller et al., <em>Bisexual Health</em>.</td>
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<td>30</td>
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33 Dobinson et al., “Improving the Access and Quality of Public Health Services for Bisexuals.”


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