

CHAPTER 12

LGBT INDIVIDUALS IN RURAL ENVIRONMENTS

CHAPTER SUMMARY

LGBT individuals live in rural areas throughout the country. Those needing substance use treatment will encounter a number of challenges, some applicable to all individuals living in rural communities and others relevant only to sexual minorities.

OVERVIEW

One quarter of the U.S. population lives in rural areas, and substance use—including illicit substances, alcohol, and prescription drug abuse—is not uncommon. Rural substance use treatment is stymied by a number of factors, including a paucity of treatment providers, transportation difficulties, a belief in self-reliance, and confidentiality issues. New treatment approaches are currently under development to meet the needs of rural populations.

While it is commonly believed that rural life is inhospitable to LGBT individuals, recent data inform us that many say they are satisfied living in these communities. Additionally, some LGBT urbanites are returning to their rural roots and others are relocating for the first time to rural areas for what they see as an improved quality of life. Those with a substance use issue may encounter the aforementioned challenges as well as negative views and misconceptions regarding LGBT individuals held by some treatment providers and a lack of knowledge regarding LGBT clients. There is a particular need for culturally competent treatment in rural areas.

KEY TERMS

Census data; rural communities; rural substance use; alcohol use; methamphetamine; rural values; limited transportation; limited treatment options; treatment without walls; technological approaches to reaching rural populations; high-stigma communities; integrated care

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

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NOTES TO CHAPTER 12

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