

Where We Stand:

NAMI believes that all people should be treated with respect and dignity and experience equitable outcomes. NAMI supports public policies and laws that work to eliminate mental health inequities perpetuated by bigotry and discrimination against LGBTQI populations.

Why We Care:

NAMI represents the interests of all people with mental health conditions, yet all people with mental health conditions do not have the same level of access to care and do not receive the same quality of care. Data shows that members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex (LGBTQI¹) community are at a higher risk for experiencing mental health conditions and often experience discrimination in health care settings.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) adults are more than [twice](#) as likely as heterosexual adults to experience a mental health condition. Transgender individuals are nearly [four](#) times as likely as cisgender individuals (people whose gender identity corresponds with their birth sex) to experience a mental health condition.

LGB youth also experience greater risk for mental health conditions and suicidality. LGB youth are more than [twice](#) as likely to report experiencing persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness than their heterosexual peers. Transgender and nonbinary youth face further disparities as they are [twice](#) as likely to experience depressive symptoms, seriously consider suicide and attempt suicide than their cisgender LGBQ peers.

For many LGBTQI people, socioeconomic and cultural conditions negatively impact mental health conditions. Many in the LGBTQI community face discrimination, prejudice, denial of civil and human rights, harassment and family rejection – all of which can lead to new or worsened symptoms, particularly for those with intersecting racial or socioeconomic identities.

LGBTQI people experience discrimination in health care settings including but not limited to lack of cultural competency, harassment and humiliation by providers, and being turned away by hospitals, pharmacists, and doctors. Fear of discrimination can also discourage LGBTQI individuals from seeking care. Both circumstances result in LGBTQI people not accessing to the mental health care they deserve. For example, one study showed that [60%](#) of LGBTQ youth report that there had been a time in the past year when they wanted professional mental health treatment, but were unable to receive it.

NAMI supports public policies and laws that work to eliminate mental health inequities perpetuated by bigotry and discrimination against LGBTQI populations.

It is critical that public policies and laws work to eliminate mental health inequities perpetuated by bigotry and discrimination against LGBTQI populations. We can achieve this by robustly enforcing non-discrimination protections in health care, removing barriers to access of appropriate mental health care, and eliminating stigma, discrimination and unconscious bias.

¹ This list of initials is not an exhaustive list of identities included in this community and related groups. We want to be explicit in our support of all people who identify as community members, whether their identity is commonly acknowledged or not. This includes those who are non-binary, two-spirit, third-gender, asexual and more.

To learn more about NAMI's work on this issue, visit www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities