Emerging Post-Pandemic Issues for the LGBTQ+ Community
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As vaccinations roll out and reopenings begin, the world starts its transition to a “new normal.” Part of this transition includes coping with the challenges created by the pandemic. As Pride Month comes to an end, we want to acknowledge the ways the pandemic has disproportionately impacted sexual and gender minorities and provide resources for these pressing issues.

During the pandemic, many LGBTQ+ people lost their communities. Many people had to go back in the closet at home or they were unable to maintain the ties to the LGBTQ+ community that had become a part of their everyday life. As the world opens up again, members of the LGBTQ+ community are facing challenges unique to their identities. Below are some resources to help with these challenges.

Are you struggling to find employment?

You’re not alone. A 2021 study found that those who identified as transgender and nonbinary were disproportionately impacted by unemployment[1] during the pandemic. Additional research revealed that those who identified with the LGBT community were more likely to report unemployment[2] compared to those who identified as cis/heterosexual. Here is a list of resources to help those struggling with unemployment move forward in their job search:

- **SF LGBT Center [3]**: Offers services such as resume review, mock interviews, job fairs, and ongoing employment workshops. Their employment services also include LGBTQ+ career fairs, entrepreneur training and drop-in appointments. They also provide services for those trying to build small business.
- **The Trans Employment Program [4]**: The program focuses on creating an inclusive workplace and job search environment for transgender and non-conforming people. Their services include career coaching, job search support, networking, and workshops.
- **JobsNOW [5]**: Aimed at helping people in San Francisco get back into the job market. Call (877) 562-1669 or email hsa.jobsnow@sfgov.org [6].

Have been experiencing newfound anxiety, depression, or substance use since the pandemic?

We hear you. Research suggests that that the pandemic disproportionately impacted LGBTQ+ peoples’ anxiety and depression levels[7]. Unfortunately, positive coping mechanisms such as access to LGBTQ+ public spaces which are often affirming of our identities and foster a sense of belonging and connection were lost due to the COVID lockdown[8]. As a result, many have turned to alcohol and other substances
[9] to cope with these unprecedented stressors during the pandemic.

There is hope. Research suggests that this negative impact can be moderated by cultivating community resilience [10]. Cultivating resilience can be done by increasing social support and confiding in affirming communities. Reaching out for peer support or seeking a LGBTQ+ affirming mental health professional can offer additional ways to cope with mental health challenges. One of the silver linings of the pandemic has been that many community-based supports and mental health providers are offering remote telehealth options, making services available to more people.

Community building:

- Get involved in either the San Francisco [11] or Oakland LGBT Community Center [12].
- OpenHouse: [13] Enables LGBTQ+ seniors to face the challenges of aging by providing groups, classes, and other community activities.
- Or join one of the many Meetup groups or events [14] specifically for the LGBTQ community.

Peer support:

- Trans Lifeline [15]: Offers 24-hour peer support service ?run by trans people for trans people.? Call (877) 565-8860 (United States).
- LGBT National Help Center [16]: Provides hotlines as well as chat rooms and a database of nearby LGBT resources.
  - LGBT National Hotline (888) 843-4564
  - LGBT National Youth Hotline: (800) 246-7743
  - LGBT National Senior Hotline: (888) 234-7243
- NAMI LGBTQI: [17] Provides information and resources regarding LGBTQI mental health.
- The Trevor Project [18]: Offers warmlines and chatrooms for LGBTQ+ youth. If you are in need of a safe space or a listening ear, this resource is for you.

Professional mental health and substance use support:

Find an LGBTQ+ affirming psychotherapist in the Bay Area by searching the following web sites or calling the centers:

- Gaylesta [19]: Provides referrals for psychotherapists who specialize in gender and sexual diversity.
- Bay Area Open Minds [20]: Provides psychotherapy referrals that affirm sexual and gender diversity.
- Psychology Today [21]: Offers a search function for providers that can be sorted by experience and expertise.
- UCSF Alliance Health Project [22]: An option for low-income LGBTQ+ or HIV-affected people who are uninsured or have Medi-Cal insurance seeking mental health and substance use treatment in the San Francisco Bay Area. For more information, call (415) 476-3902.
  - Pacific Center for Human Growth [23]: Offers similar resources and groups in the
Berkeley area. They can be reached at (510) 548-8283.