Care That Lets You Be You

The best mental health treatment for LGBTQ people begins with therapy that supports each person as an individual.

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According to experts, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer people experience a higher rate of depression and anxiety than their straight counterparts. What's more, suicidal thoughts and attempts among LGBTQ people are significantly higher compared with other population groups in the United States.

But treatment of these issues requires that psychiatrists fully understand and appreciate the comprehensive nature of the real-life challenges LGBTQ people face—whether at work, at home or at play.

In a special report he wrote for Psychiatric News, Eric Yarbrough, MD, the medical director at GMHC (Gay Men's Health Crisis) in New York City, observes that mental health practitioners must focus on individuals' "acceptance of not who they wish to be but of who they are."

Therapists "can play a major supportive role by providing emotional relief," Yarbrough stresses, because "even those who are lucky enough to have an extremely accepting support system can still struggle with the process because of what they read and hear about from the larger world."

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