



LGBTQ+ individuals face specific mental health challenges. Indeed, discrimination, rejection, and daily stigma generate chronic stress that can have a detrimental impact on psychological balance. Epidemiological studies show a higher prevalence of anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, and suicidal risk within this population.

Anxiety affects numerous LGBTQ+ individuals, whether it manifests as social anxiety, panic attacks, or obsessive-compulsive disorders. The fear of rejection, the worry of being "found out", and the insecurity related to sexual orientation or gender identity can generate hypervigilance and apprehension of social interactions. For instance, a closeted young gay person will live with the constant fear of their homosexuality being revealed, scrutinizing the reactions of the people around them and censoring their behaviors.

Depressive episodes are also common, linked to isolation, lack of family and friends support, internalized homophobia/transphobia, or repeated experiences of rejection. Depression can accompany a loss of self-esteem, a feeling of shame, and guilt. A poorly experienced coming-out, rejection by loved ones, or endured homophobic behaviors are all events that undermine mental health. A young lesbian rejected by her family during her coming-out may have a major depressive episode, with feelings of abandonment and powerlessness.

Suicidal risk is a central issue among LGBTQ+ people, especially among the youth. Suicide attempts and completed suicides are markedly higher than in the general population. This heightened risk stems from the accumulation of vulnerabilities: internalized homophobia, minority stress, lack of support, isolation, endured violence... A trans adolescent, rejected by peers and without support in their environment, may see suicide as the only escape from their suffering.

Facing these challenges, it is crucial to systematically evaluate mental health when assisting LGBTQ+ individuals. Early detection of signs of psychological distress allows for a suitable intervention and tailor-made support. The creation of a kind, safe space, free from any judgment, is a prerequisite to facilitating discussions. Referrals to specialized resources (therapists, support groups, associations) often become necessary in addition to coaching.

Beyond individual support, it is important to remember that these mental health issues are rooted in a societal context of inequality and discrimination. Efforts to change attitudes, recognize rights, and include LGBTQ+ people are crucial to create a favorable environment for their psychological well-being. The coach must be a committed ally in the fight against homophobia and transphobia, both in practice and at the societal level.

Key takeaways:

- LGBTQ+ individuals are more at risk of suffering from anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, and have a high suicidal risk due to chronic stress related to discrimination and stigmatization.
- Anxiety among LGBTQ+ individuals can take various forms (social anxiety, panic attacks, OCD) and is often linked to fear of rejection and insecurity about their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Depressive episodes are common, linked to isolation, lack of support, internalized homophobia/transphobia, and experiences of rejection. These often accompany a loss of self-esteem and a sense of shame.
- Suicidal risk is a major issue, particularly among young LGBTQ+ individuals, due to the accumulation of vulnerabilities (internalized homophobia, minority stress, isolation, endured violence).
- It is crucial to systematically evaluate mental health when assisting LGBTQ+ individuals, in order to detect signs of distress early and offer suitable intervention.
- The coach should create a kind, safe space, direct toward specialized resources if necessary, and commit to combating homophobia and transphobia at a societal level to promote an inclusive environment, ensuring better psychological well-being for LGBTQ+ individuals.