Process Addictions and the LGBT Community: Diverse Population, Diverse Treatment

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Overview – Addiction and the LGBT Community

- Estimated that 30 percent of the LGBT community struggles with some form of addiction (alcohol, substances, process)

- Estimated that 9 percent of the general population struggles with some form of addiction (alcohol, substances, process)

- Combining alcohol, substances and tobacco, addiction is 2 to 4 times higher in the LGBT community than that of the general population
Difficult to pinpoint exact numbers due to a variety of reasons including: numbers of individuals being “out” as opposed to being in the closet, variances in what exactly LGBT means (how do we consider individuals who identify as MSM, etc), lack of consistent research, variances in the acronyms used in research and common vernacular (LGBTQQIA?).

Disparity in what is known regarding gay men and their usage versus usage in the lesbian, bisexual and transgender community

Recent research has shown addiction later into the life cycle than the heterosexual community as well as higher rates of abstinence
What fuels addiction in the LGBT Community?

1. Socialization

2. Deficiencies in the health care system

3. Social Prejudice

4. Homophobia/heterosexism leading to depression, anxiety, guilt/shame, isolation, low self esteem/self worth
Socialization

- Gay Pride parades
- Bar scene
- Circuit parties
- Advertising targeted towards the population
- Bars as primary social outlet (rural vs. urban)
Disparity in health care

- Gay and lesbian individuals are 2 times as likely not to have health care compared to those in the general population.

- Transgender individuals are even more likely to not be covered by health care.

- Percentage of adults with health insurance coverage: 82 percent heterosexual, 77 percent lesbian/gay/bisexual and 57 percent transgender.
Daily Stressors

- Although there is a heightened awareness of LGBT issues in this country (gay marriage, DOMA, Repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell), there are still daily social prejudices, both overt and covert.

- Daily stressors exacerbate higher rates of addiction.

- Bullying – both overt and covert – is at an all time high which again may lead to use of substances to handle it/high rates of suicide/overdoses (intentional or not) to deal with the bullying.
Employment Stress

- Remains legal to be fired in 29 states - or denied a job - due to being LGBT (ex: Cracker Barrel, Exxon Mobil)

- 43 percent of lesbian/gay/bisexual individuals have experienced discrimination at their job due to their sexuality

- 90 percent of transgender individuals have experienced discrimination at their job due to their sexuality
Employment Stress

- No job = no income
- No insurance
- No medical coverage
- No addiction treatment (inpatient/outpatient/ongoing aftercare)
- Entire family system impacted – partner/child
Housing Stress

- 55 percent of LGB individuals have experienced unsafe housing or have been denied housing due to their sexuality

- 70 percent of transgender individuals have experienced unsafe housing or have been denied housing due to their sexuality

- Living in the streets/homeless – high rates of addiction
Relationship Recognition

- Only 13 states plus Washington D.C. allow marriage equality while another handful have civil union laws
Minnesota Legalizes Gay Marriage

The Minnesota legislature approved a same-sex marriage bill Monday and the state's Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton will sign it, perhaps as soon as Tuesday. Minnesota is the first Midwestern state to approve gay marriage by a legislative vote. In Iowa, the state Supreme Court ruled same-sex marriage legal in 2008.

1 Four states do not allow gay marriage or civil unions, but offer domestic partnerships. They are: California, Nevada, Oregon, and Wisconsin.

2 A federal court has overturned California's gay marriage ban, but an appeal is pending.

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures and Stateline research

Stateline infographic by Adam Runtz and Jake Grovum
Updated May 13, 2013
Types of Substances Most Widely Used

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Marijuana
- Cocaine (Crack cocaine and powder)
- Amphetamines (crystal meth/Ritalin/Adderall)
Types of Substances Most Widely Used

- Ecstasy
- Opiates – Heroin, Vicodin, Oxycontin
- Club Drugs – Ketamine, GHB
- Prescription Drugs – Xanax, Ativan
Tobacco

- The LGBT community has a 200 percent higher smoking rate than that of the heterosexual community

- 45 percent of the LGBT community smokes daily with an average being 11-20 cigarettes per day

- 43 percent of lesbians and 35 percent of gay men have smoked in the last month
Tobacco

- 393,000 deaths per year

- In Illinois – 19 percent of heterosexual individuals smoke, 29 percent of lesbian or gay individuals smoke and 34 percent of bisexual individuals smoke
Alcohol

- 25 percent of the LGBT population abuse alcohol
- 5-10 percent of the heterosexual population abuse alcohol
- 73 percent of lesbians have used alcohol in the last 30 days and 81 percent have used alcohol in the last year
- 80 percent of gay men have used alcohol in the last 30 days and 89 percent have used alcohol in the last year
Marijuana

- Gay men are 3.5 times more likely to use marijuana than heterosexual men
- 63 percent of the LGBT community have experimented with marijuana
- 21 percent of lesbians have used marijuana in the last month and 36 percent have used in the last year
- 19 percent of gay men have used marijuana in the last month and 36 percent have used in the last year
Cocaine

- 2 percent of lesbians have used cocaine in the last month and 2 percent have used in the last year.

- 2 percent of gay men have used cocaine in the last month and 10 percent have used in the last year.

- More socially acceptable to use cocaine than meth?
Amphetamines

- Gay men are almost 13 times more likely to use amphetamines than heterosexual men.

- Increased likelihood of obtaining an STD/HIV due to unsafe sex practices while under the influence of the drug.
Ecstasy

- 63 percent of the LGBT community have experimented with ecstasy

- Poppers - 48 percent of the LGBT community have experimented with and/or use Amyl Nitrate regularly
Heroin

- Gay men are 10 times more likely to use heroin than heterosexual men.
- Estimated that 200,000 individuals have used it in the last 30 days
- Illinois numbers are at an all time high
Populations in LGBT Community

- Lesbians: Few studies looking specifically at the community
  - Appears they have a higher rate of addiction than their heterosexual counterparts
  - Drugs include: alcohol, marijuana, opiates, depressants – Xanax/Valium
Populations in LGBT Community

- Gay Men: More likely to use drugs than their heterosexual counterparts

- Drugs include: Marijuana, Crystal Meth, Cocaine, Crack Cocaine, Ecstasy, Ketamine and GHB
Populations in LGBT Community

- Bisexual Men: Very little studies done on this population but more so than bisexual women

- Drugs include: Alcohol, ecstasy, Ketamine, GHB

- Difficult to posit that the drugs used for their same sex heterosexual counterparts would be the same
10 Criteria for Addiction

- Loss of Control
- Compulsive Behavior
- Efforts to Stop
- Loss of Time
- Preoccupation
10 Criteria for Addiction

- Inability to Fulfill Obligations
- Continuation Despite Consequences
- Escalation
- Losses
- Withdrawal
Criteria for Addiction

- When it comes to drugs and substances, it’s fairly easy to see that the 10 criteria apply to our client base.

- When it comes to process addictions, do these same 10 criteria apply to our client base?

- If they do – and our clients have multiple substance addictions as well as process addictions - then what to treat first? Do we treat concurrently? Which comes first – the chicken or the egg?
Process Addictions

- What are they?
  - Any compulsive-like behavior that interferes with normal living and causes significant negative consequences
  - Similar physiological responses in the brain as compared to addiction to a substance (drugs/alcohol)
Process Addiction

- What are the difficulties in treating these versus addiction to substances?
  - Behaviors often occur prior to first usage of a substance
  - There is a strong component between chemical and process addictions so can be hard to recognize most acute issues/cross addictions
  - Shame/Guilt associated with the process addictions often leads to the need to “medicate” – i.e. with drugs/alcohol
Common Process Addictions
Common Process Addictions

- Food/Eating Disorders
- Sex
- Gambling
- Money
- Internet
- Porn
- Exercise
- Video Games
- Television
- Work
- Relationships
Process Addictions - Levels

- Chemical Addictions – Evident and obvious
  - Leaves of a Tree

- Process addictions – Support chemical use
  - Branch of a Tree

- Core Addictions – Sensation, suffering, power
  - Roots of a Tree
Process Addictions
- Core

- Sensation: Crisis and Chaos, Emotions
- Power: Controlling people and events
- Suffering: Co-dependency, people pleasing, suffering for others
Food/Eating Disorders

- Gay men are 3X more likely to have an eating disorder

- 15% of gay men report having an eating disorder in their lifetime

- Gay male cultural messages of what it means to be attractive/Body image/conflict within subcultures ("Bears" and "Twinks")
Food/Eating Disorders

- Lesbian and bisexual women were 2X as likely to report binge eating

- Lesbians found to have higher rates of purging by vomiting and/or use of laxatives

- Limitations in finding out stats because all females tend to be lumped into one category when looking at ED stats

- Non-existent stats for the transgender community
Food/Eating Disorders

Prevalence of Eating Disorder Symptoms in Heterosexual and LGB Populations

- Heterosexual Men
- Gay/Bisexual Men
- Heterosexual Women
- Lesbian/Bisexual Women

*OR 3.8 (1.1 to 13; 95% CI)
**OR 1.2 (0.4 to 3.5; 95% CI)
**not significant
Exercise

- Encompasses moods/thoughts and dictates a person’s life (# of times to work out, time to work out, # of calories to burn)

- Direct correlation with low self esteem, body image issues and eating disorders

- Lying about workout routine, disregard of sickness/injury, experience withdrawal symptoms when not engaging in the activity
Gambling

- 6 – 9 million people affected

- Gambling to escape problems and stress relief

- Consequences: loss of primary relationship, loss of self esteem, jail time, loss of job, depression, anxiety, high rates of suicide

- Withdrawal symptoms similar to substances

- Cross addiction – stimulants, alcohol, nicotine, sex
Gambling

- Virtually no studies directly related to the LGBT community
- Most recent study was done in 2006
- Examined 105 men who sought treatment for pathological gambling – 21% of these men identified as gay/bisexual
- No studies of lesbians and transgender individuals
Gambling cycle
Money/Spending

- Chronic repetitive purchasing that becomes a primary response to negative events/feelings

- “Purchase on credit”

- Common feelings: depression, anxiety, low self esteem

- Consequences: financial destruction of self and family, legal issues – shoplifting, embezzlement, bad checks
Sex Addiction

- 9 million Americans (3 – 6% of the population) are affected by sexual compulsivity/addiction (Is there such a thing – new controversy)

- Individuals rely on sex for comfort, nurturing, relief from stress

- Interferes with normal living and can create significant consequences

- Sex addiction tends to be male focused while love/relationship tends to be more female focused (where do transgender clients fit into the mix?)
Sex Addiction

3 Levels of Sex Addiction

- Level 1: Compulsive masturbation, pornography (collecting and use), multiple sex partners, anonymous sex, prostitution, phone sex, cybersex, multiple affairs

- Level 2: Exhibitionism, voyeurism, frotteurism, stalking behaviors, public sex

- Level 3: Sexual acts often abusive of others, rape, child molestation, professional boundary violations (priest, doctor, teacher), incest
10 Types of Sex Addiction

- Fantasy Sex
- Seductive Role Sex
- Voyeuristic Sex
- Exhibitionistic Sex
- Paying For Sex
10 Types of Sex Addiction

- Trading Sex
- Intrusive Sex
- Anonymous Sex
- Pain Exchange Sex
- Exploitive Sex
Cybersex Addiction

- 17 – 41 million people surf the internet compulsively
- Elements of tolerance/withdrawal, craving, negative life consequences
- Cross addictions to internet include spending, gambling, sex
- The Triple A Engine: Accessible, Anonymous, Affordable
Cybersex Addiction

- Cybersex “crack cocaine” of sex addiction
- 40 million Americans visit porn sites at least 1X month
- 25% in US accessing it from work (Nielsen)
Cybersex Addiction

- 20% of men and 13% of women admit to viewing porn at work
- 2.5 billion emails per day are pornographic
- 25% of all search engine requests are pornographic
- 70% of internet pornography traffic occurs between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- $83 billion dollars per year are lost in productivity for American companies due to time spent at work surfing pornography
Cybersex Addiction

- Think it’s just these??
Cybersex Addiction
Cybersex Addiction – GPS Enabled

- Manhunt
- Scruff
- Mister
- Hornet
- Jack’d
- Bareback Real Time
- Squirt
- Recon
- Craig’s List
Worse Case Scenario

- Drug/Alcohol Addiction
  - Most typical – stimulants/alcohol

- Sexually acting out
  - Using hook up websites – GPS enabled – “High off of the chase”
  - Unprotected sex – “Barebacking”

- Health Crisis
  - HIV/Aids/STD’s
Process Addictions - Recommendations

- Prevention and Treatment – similar to AOD treatment
  - Look at behaviors/goals, help to foster change, relapse prevention
  - Focus on connection between the client’s inability to regulate tension and discharging the tension with unwanted behavior
- Family, group and individual therapy
- 12-step support group attendance
Recommendations

- For drug/alcohol addiction, a consideration is medication assisted treatment such as Vivitrol and/or Suboxone.

- For drug/alcohol addiction, consider SMART Recovery as an adjunct to a 12-step fellowship.

- Gambling – Gambler’s Anonymous

- Eating/Food – Overeaters Anonymous, Food Anonymous, etc.

- For sex addiction, refer to an individual who is a CSAT. They specialize in treating chronic sex addiction.
Recommendations

- For sex addiction, it's important to refer to an LGBT affirming 12 step groups of which there are 4 major fellowships.
  - Sexaholics Anonymous (SA)
    - Defines sexual sobriety as no masturbation/only within the framework of a marriage between a man and a woman
  - Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA)
  - Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA)
  - Sexual Compulsives Anonymous (SCA)
    - Most appealing to gay/bisexual men as well as heterosexual men
Recommendations

- Develop/institute a smoking cessation program – address concurrently with addiction treatment
  - LGBT sensitive facilitators
  - Accepting and welcoming space
  - Facilitator trained by an organization such as the American Lung Association
  - Educational materials for LGBT audiences
  - Ensure safety and confidentiality
Prevention Strategies

- Public education and policy advocacy aimed at treating the LGBT community

- Training/education for providers on what constitutes culturally competent treatment – lack of trained professionals able to work with the unique needs of LGBTQI individuals
Recommendations

- All forms must include sexual orientation and gender identity

- EX: male, female, transgender male to female, transgender female to male, gender queer, not sure

- Examine the LGBTQI community as a series of subcultures as compared to one large culture (age, histories, behaviors, preferences, self identity, coming out experience, gender, race/ethnicity, social roles/responsibilities, depression/stress, childhood experience, partner experience (domestic violence?), peer and partner drinking
Recommendations

- Examine addiction from a gay male point of view, a lesbians point of view, a bisexuals point of view and a transgender point of view

- Further examination of FTM or MTF

- Examine usage in an older demographic as compared to a youth perspective

- Outreach to the LGBT community
Recommendations

- Encourage those in the LGBT community to seek help if needed

- Develop programming specific to the LGBT population – it’s not enough to say “I’ve worked with them before” – deeper programming for women-specific services

- Directly address issues related to sexuality

- Include all aspects of an individual’s life – include partners, children, parents, etc.
Recommendations

- Include visual cues in your office to carry the message that you’re affirming
  - Ex: pride flag, Ally sign, literature specific to the population

- Develop programming specifically to address trauma – operate from a trauma informed perspective

- Address treatment from a bio-psycho-social model and incorporate a treatment team (doctors, therapists, etc.)
THANK YOU!!!

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Feedback?
Contact Information

- Please feel free to contact me at:

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