



Occupational Therapists Role in Reducing Mental Health Disparities among the LGBTQ+ Community

Erin Brennan Flores, OTR/L
(she/her)

About me!

- Sole Occupational Therapist in Cordova
- BA's in Theology & Psychology, MS in Occupational Therapy
- Originally from PA, found my way to Alaska via travel therapy
- Out lesbian, former Catholic, social justice warrior
- Married to my best friend and travel PTA partner, Melanie
- Dog-Mom to our beautiful shelter mutt, Akna
- Lover of IPAs, Pickles, Googly Eyes and Novelty Socks



Learning Objectives



- 1) Identify risk factors, common misconceptions and the stigma surrounding LGBTQ+ culture, specifically as it applies to healthcare.
- 2) Recognize and identify personal biases that may impact practitioners' ability to care for LGBTQ+ patients across the lifespan
- 3) Implement newfound knowledge into holistic responses to case studies as well as organizing ways to apply to individual work settings

UNDERSTANDING

someone else's identity



a PREREQUISITE for

EMPATHY

EMPATHY



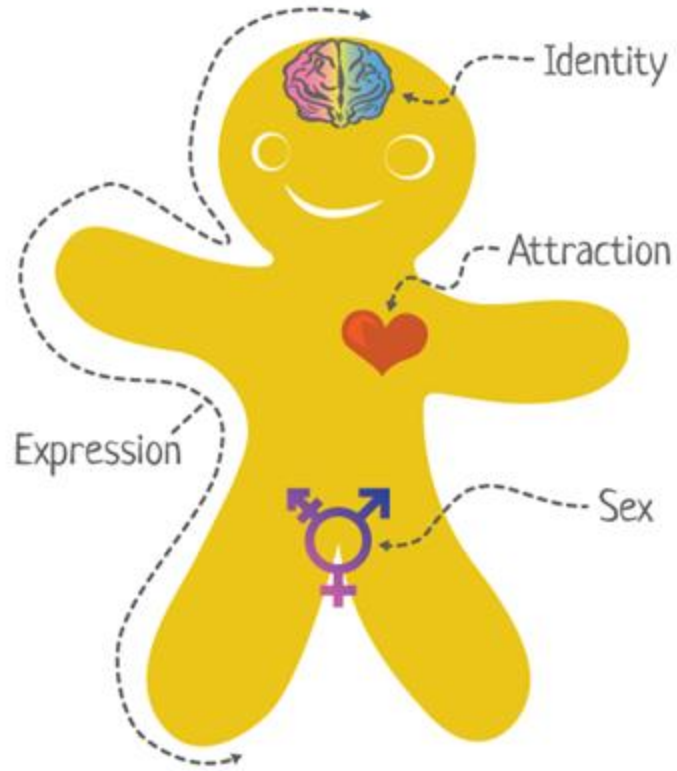
a PREREQUISITE for

UNDERSTANDING

itspronouncedmetrosexual

According to the OT Practice Framework (2014), occupational justice is defined as “a justice that recognizes occupational rights to inclusive participation in everyday occupations for all persons in society, regardless of age, ability, gender, social class, or other differences” (p. S9).

Genderbread Person





Of those, over
39%
reported having a
mental illness in the
past year²

Red text indicating that 39% of the LGBQ+ population reported a mental illness in the past year.



That is nearly
5.8
million
people

Text indicating that 4.5% of the U.S. population is nearly 5.8 million people.



More than the entire population
of Kentucky³

Text indicating that 5.8 million people is more than the population of Kentucky.



SOURCES

¹<https://news.gallup.com/poll/234863/estimate-lgbt-population-rises.aspx>

²Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s public online data analysis system (PDAS)

³<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-state-total.html>



That's the population
of Alaska 31 TIMES!



7.1% of the U.S population identifies
as LGBTQ+
(Approximately 23 million people)

~50% (or 11.5 Mil) of those individuals reported having a mental illness in the past year

National LGBTQ+ Health Care Crisis



Bass & Nagy (2023) researched the most common healthcare specific concerns within the LGBTQ+ population:

- Higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases (MSM)
- Higher BMIs in WSW leading to higher rates of Diabetes and Heart Disease
- Higher rates of nicotine, illegal drug and alcohol abuse
- Reduced preventive care & follow-up due to discrimination or fear of judgement
- Transgender individuals on hormone therapies causing higher rates of metabolic and cardiac episodes

National LGBTQ+ Mental Health Crisis



- LGBTQ+ youth are 4x more likely to attempt suicide than their peers
- Up to 50% of all transgender people have attempted suicide, statistically before the age of 25
- It is estimated that approximately 1.8 million LGBTQ youth in the United States seriously consider suicide each year
- Minority Stress Model: 12x as more likely than their peers

Transgender Health Care Crisis



- Discrimination
 - Implicit and Explicit
- Denial of care and/or insurance
- Insensitive remarks/comments causing alienation
- Repetitious explanations required
- Excessive providers

Legislation as a Barrier

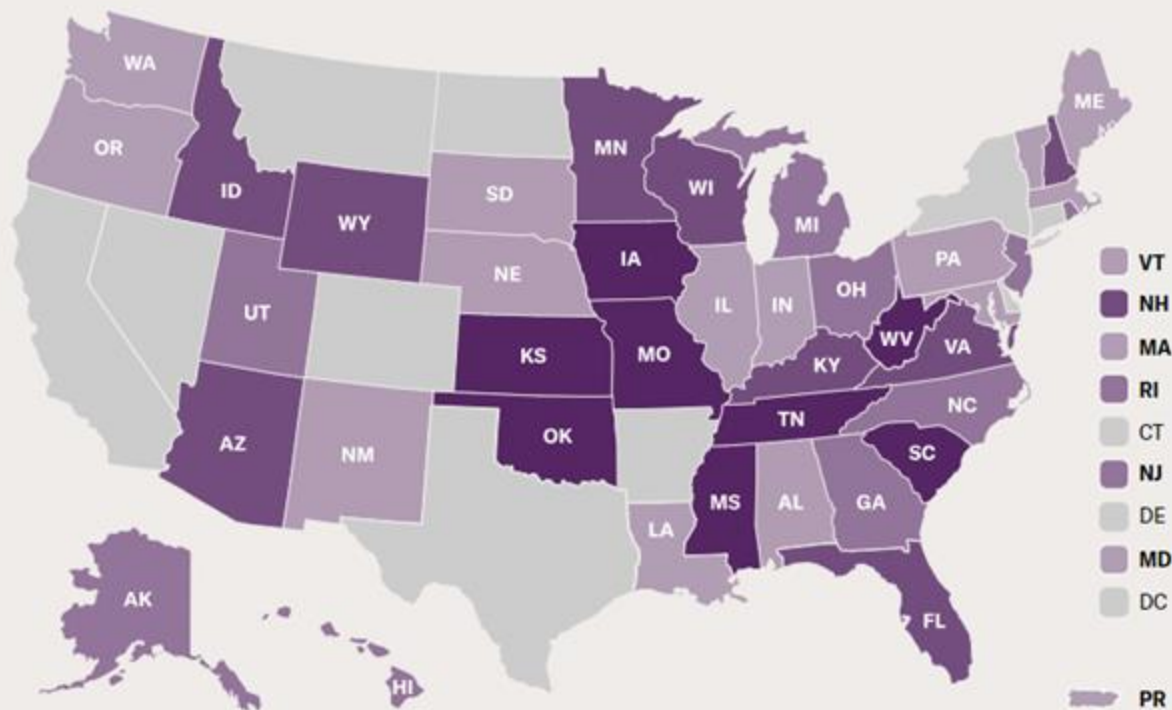
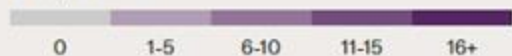
▼ 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The ACLU is tracking **478** anti-LGBTQ bills in the U.S.

Choose a state on the map to show the different bills targeting LGBTQ rights and take action. While not all of these bills will become law, they all cause harm for LGBTQ people.

Last updated on March 12, 2024 ⓘ

Bills per state



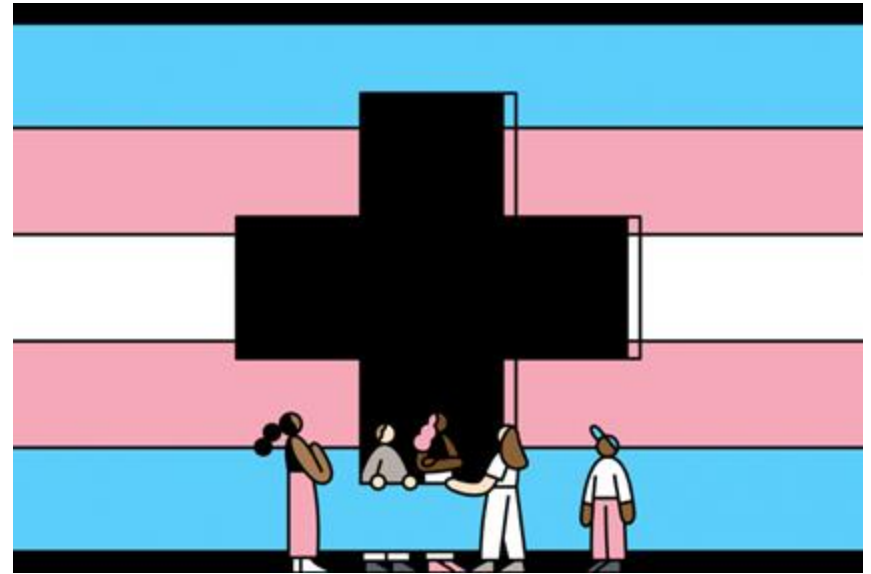
Promoting Cultural Competence



- Education
 - >2 hours committed specifically to BSN programs (Lim et al., 2013)
 - Improvement in subjective scales with Interdisciplinary Case Studies (McCave et. al., 2019)
 - Safe Zone Project
 - The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Development of Clinical Skills Scale
- Exposure
- Correction

OT's Unique Role in Transgender Care

- Promote gender as an OCCUPATION (Kimmelstein, 2019)
 - Dressing (including tucking, binding)
 - Bathing & Grooming
 - Toileting
 - STP Devices
 - Leisure
 - Sex
 - Work
- Pelvic Floor
- Reducing Occupational Injustices
 - Sports
 - Name Change
 - Employment



(Retrieved from: commonwealthfund.org)



Alaska Resources

<https://www.juneausuicideprevention.org/>

<https://www.identityalaska.org/>

<https://www.alaskanstogether.org/>

National Resources

www.thetrevorproject.com

www.Afsp.org

www.pflag.org



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