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A Systems of Care Approach to Identifying and Addressing Alcohol Use Among LGBTQ+ Youth

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Background

- Substance use prevalence among transgender youth has been shown to be 2.5 to 4 times higher than cisgender peers (1).
- Transgender youth may be at elevated risk for recent substance use, early age onset of use, and both lifetime or past 30-day polysubstance use (1,2).
- Transgender youth subjected to higher levels of violence and stigma showed greater probability of engaging in past month binge drinking (3).

Objectives

- Design a novel case-based curriculum for physicians in training that utilizes a systems perspective with the following goals:
 - a. Increase knowledge of disparities in alcohol use among LGBTQ+ youth and dispel stigmatizing narratives.
 - b. Identify opportunities for harm reduction and interventions that can be implemented across systems.
 - c. Highlight the importance of affirming practice and building relationships with youth, families, and affirming providers.

Case-Based Curriculum

Sophia (she/her) is a 15-year-old biracial transgender girl with a history of depression, anxiety, and multi-system involvement who presents for "binge drinking."



Methods

- Conduct literature search on existing alcohol use disparities and affirming substance use treatment practices for LGBTQ+ youth.
- Identify gaps in residency training curriculum and review existing LGBTQ+ substance use treatment resources.
- Develop novel case-based curriculum for physicians in training that will be disseminated through didactic seminars.

Discussion

- Existing research and medical training rarely focuses on protective factors, ways to partner with youth and families, or joys associated with transgender and gender diverse identity.
- Current systems are often not designed with LGBTQ+ people in mind and continue to perpetuate a gender binary.
- A systems-based lens can help to identify structural forces that perpetuate substance use disparities and to develop affirming interventions in partnership with LGBTQ+ youth.

Scan here for references:

