

# Health Disparities and Self-Injury among Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth and Adults

2<sup>nd</sup> North Dakota Conference on Injury Prevention and Control

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## Overview

- What we know about health disparities and self-injury among LGB youth and adults?
- Why these disparities exist and persist?
- What can be done?

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## What do we know?

- Sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS
- Cancer
- Nutrition and weight
- Substance abuse

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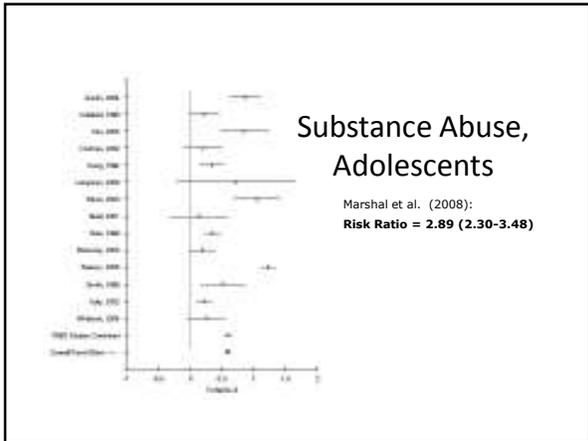
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- ### What do we know?
- Sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS
  - Cancer
  - Nutrition and weight
  - Substance abuse
  - Tobacco use
  - Mental health and mental disorders

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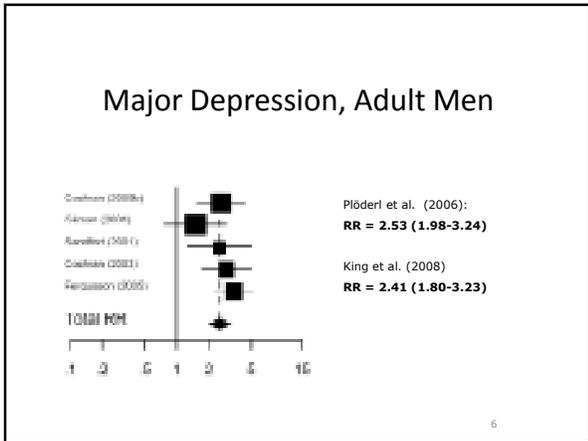
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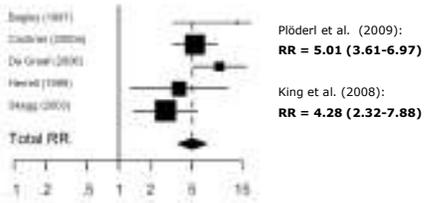
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## Lifetime Suicide Attempts Adult Men



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## What do we know?

- Domestic violence
  - Rates equal to heterosexual couples
  - Victim resources and legal protection are unequal, and have consequences for health
- Hate crimes
  - 9,691 victims in 2008; 17.6% victims of bias against sexual orientation (FBI)

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## What do we know?

- Risk and Protective Factors:
  - Normative to all people, but disproportionate among LGBT people
  - Unique to LGBT people

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## What do we know?

- **Unique Risk Factors: “Minority Stress”**
  - Disclosure / coming out
  - Homophobic discrimination & victimization
  - Family rejection / abuse for being LGB
  - Gender non-conformity
- **Unique Protective Factors:**
  - LGB coping (community integration and social support)

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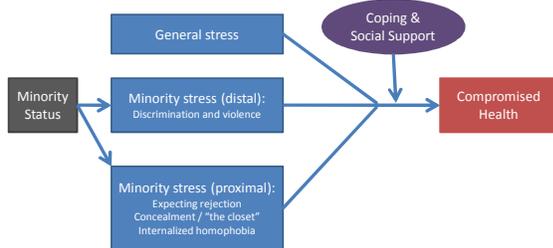
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## Minority Stress Model (Meyer, 2003)



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## Persistent disparities

- This model has been applied to each of the health disparities:
  - Substance use
  - Disordered eating
  - Sexual risk-taking
  - Compromised mental health

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### Directions for Prevention and Intervention

- Develop supportive systems of care:
  - Visible support for LGB people and health
  - Training for health, education, and social services (future) professionals
- Develop LGB-tailored interventions
- Implement guidelines that already exist from major professional associations

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### Directions for Prevention and Intervention

- Develop public information campaigns to:
  - Encourage help-seeking among LGB people
  - De-stigmatize health risks and disorders
- Involve LGBT people in program planning, design, development and implementation

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### Directions for Policy

- Advocate for anti-bullying / safe schools legislation
- Advocate for improved access to health services through nondiscrimination policies and expansion of health insurance coverage to same-sex partners
- Advocate for legislation requiring measures of sexual orientation and gender identity to be incorporated into federally-supported benchmark surveys

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