

Case Study

## Psychological Adjustments among LGBTQ Young Adults: Using Medical Simulation to Address Mental Health Challenges and Promote Well-Being

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The psychological well-being of LGBTQ young adults' is significantly influenced by societal stigma, discrimination, and minority stress. Despite increasing visibility and acceptance of the LGBTQ community, mental health challenges persist due to prejudice and lack of social support. This research explores the potential of medical simulation in addressing mental health challenges and promoting psychological adjustment among LGBTQ individuals, aiming to provide practical interventions for enhancing psychological adjustments. **Materials and Methods:** This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining both a review of existing research and data collected from medical simulation activities. A group of LGBTQ young adults took part in education simulations meant to mimic real-life experiences of discrimination, social support, and identity affirmation. Participants were evaluated using Carol Ryff's psychological well-being framework and self-report surveys. These surveys measured their mental health, social adjustment, and coping skills both before and after the simulations. The researcher created seven questions in English to explore the participants' views on the LGBTQ community. The LGBT Self-Report Questionnaire was used for the study because it allowed participants to explain their experiences in detail, giving them more freedom to share a range of information. **Results:** The findings showed that medical simulations can be a helpful tool for LGBTQ young adults in dealing with mental health issues. Students who took part in education and awareness activities had better mental health, with noticeable improvements in handling stress and negative feelings about being part of a minority group. The education also gave them a chance to practice coping strategies and social skills in a safe and supportive setting, which boosted their confidence in real-life situations. Social support and being part of a community played an important role in improving the students' resilience and mental health. **Conclusion:** Medical simulation can be a powerful tool in helping LGBTQ young adults adjust mentally. It provides realistic, safe experiences where they can work through mental health challenges in a supportive environment. Provided medical education to the participants regarding their insecurities and discrimination they are have experienced around their surroundings. This method can be used in healthcare and mental health care to reduce stigma, improve coping skills, and boost overall well-being. The findings highlighted how important

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it is to have inclusive and supportive environments to promote mental health and strength within the LGBTQ community.

**Keywords:** *LGBT, Acceptance, Bullying, Harassment, Mental Health, Issues Faced By LGBT, Sexuality, Victims, Discrimination*

Psychological well-being, which includes positive emotions and life satisfaction (Carruthers & Hood, 2004), is a fundamental human goal. However, LGBTQ+ young adults often face unique mental health challenges due to past discrimination, social stigma, and family dynamics. These stressors can significantly impact their mental health during a crucial stage of development. As a result, there is growing interest in exploring new interventions, including medical stimulation techniques, to support their well-being.

The LGBTQ+ community has historically faced marginalization, leading to internalized stigma and higher rates of mental health issues. While societal attitudes have improved, many still experience discrimination and rejection, especially within families. Supportive family environments can build resilience, but lack of acceptance can contribute to isolation and emotional distress.

To address these challenges, various treatments have been explored, including medical stimulation techniques like Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) and Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (TDCS). These methods, which influence brain activity, have shown promise in treating mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety. Their potential to help LGBTQ+ young adults cope with minority stress deserves careful study.

If effective, medical stimulation could serve as a valuable addition to existing treatments, improving psychological well-being. However, ethical considerations are crucial. It is important to ensure informed consent, avoid pathologizing LGBTQ+ identities, and focus on addressing real mental health needs. Research is needed to understand the safety, effectiveness, and ethical implications of these techniques for LGBTQ+ young adults, ensuring they are used in a way that genuinely supports mental health and well-being.

### **Objectives**

1. To explore the impact of psychological adjustment on the well-being of LGBTQ young adults and the role of medical stimulation in addressing mental health challenges.
2. To examine the diverse experiences of LGBTQ individuals in society and how medical stimulation can aid in coping with psychological distress.
3. To analyze societal perspectives on the LGBTQ community and the potential of medical stimulation in fostering acceptance and mental well-being

### **Hypotheses**

1. Psychological adjustment challenges would have a significant effect on the mental well-being of LGBTQ young adults.
2. Gender identity differences would significantly influence psychological adjustment and mental health outcomes among LGBTQ individuals.
3. The interaction effect of psychological adjustment challenges and gender identity would have a significant impact on the mental well-being of LGBTQ young adults, and medical stimulation could play a role in addressing these challenges.

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### *Sample*

A total of 20 undergraduate students (13 males, 7 females) aged 18–24 years were recruited from different universities, Dehradun. Inclusive criteria required that participants tell the truth; Using your own expertise and experiences, give accurate information. Carefully read each question: Before responding, be sure you understand the question. Ask for the explanation if you are unclear.

### *Tools Used*

- LGBT SELF- REPORT Constructed by Researchers (Mentor and Students)
- Psychological Well-Being by Carol D. Ryff (1995)

### *Procedure*

Permission was obtained from the colleges appropriate authorities prior to the actual data gathering procedure. Once permission was obtained from the respective colleges administrative departments for data collection, the researcher approached the participants directly during their college hours, explained the purpose and method of using the questionnaires, and also ensured the confidentiality of the data. An effort was made to establish rapport with the students to make them comfortable. All the participants were given an orientation about the research and their consent was taken before administering the questionnaires for data collection.

### *Data Analysis*

Once transcribed, the data was encoded, analyzed, interpreted, and verified. Transcribing responses allowed the researcher to engage deeply with the data by repeatedly reviewing the transcripts. Data coding began after full transcription, using keywords to categorize and organize responses. Interpretation involved identifying recurring themes, similarities, and differences. Finally, data verification ensured validity by re-checking transcripts and codes, allowing for refinement of hypotheses.

Data collection occurred between January till March using the LGBTQ Self-Report Questionnaire. Of the 20 participants, some were acquainted with the researcher, while others were recruited through third parties. The questionnaire followed a structured format but allowed flexibility for additional questions based on significant responses. This approach facilitated rapport-building and encouraged participants to share their experiences freely.

Most questions were open-ended, enabling participants to express their thoughts and emotions in depth, particularly on sensitive issues. A few closed-ended questions were included to gather specific information, such as challenges faced and perceptions of societal attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals in India. For example, one open-ended question asked, "How might your family react to a homosexual member within the family?"

The researcher ensured that the language used was clear and relevant to the participants' experiences. Participants were thanked for their time and assured that all information would remain confidential and used solely for research purposes.

## **CASE STUDY/ANALYSIS**

### **CASE 1 (R\*\*) Female (Bisexual) 21 years old**

She discovered her sexual identity when she was 18 years old. She has discussed her sexual orientation with her friends although she believes that her family would accept her sexual

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orientation. In her opinion homosexuals face challenges such as discrimination, aggression, hatred, social and emotional isolation and non-acceptance. She believes that stereotypical notions against homosexuals will change and youngsters are becoming more and more acceptable. She feels that there are two types of heterosexuals in the society, one who accept and support homosexuals and the other who discriminate and don't see them as equals. She has never faced any kind of stigma or discrimination for her sexual orientation. She feels that there are various misconceptions about the homosexual like homosexuals dating a lot of people. She is aware of social support systems that exist for homosexuals which includes cafes, online communities and apps where they can feel a sense of belongingness. She feels hesitant about expressing her sexual orientation to her closing as she wants to dress a bit masculine and is afraid that people might judge her. She had never been victimized. She doesn't feel that being a part of the LGBT community has affected her mental health a lot because people around her have been very supportive. She prefers having the same partner over a variety of partners and feels that there are no detrimental effects of being a part of the community.

### **Case-2 (Y\*\*) Male (Gay) 21 years old**

He discovered his sexual orientation when he was 12 years old. His best friend knows about his sexual orientation and he supports him as for his family he is hesitant to tell them as you think that they would not support him initially but he still feels that after sometime they would try to understand him and support him. He believes the major challenges that homosexuals face in the society is that everyone is judging them on the basis of their walking and talking style and they face discrimination and would not get equal opportunities as people make fun of them. He is very optimistic about the future LGBTQ community in India and he is looking forward for same sex marriage legalization, adoption laws and surrogacy for the same sex couple, and no discrimination against the LGBTQ community. In his opinion heterosexuals are very supportive and protective towards him and if he feels happy being himself. He had never experienced any adversity or stigma because of his sexual orientation. He thinks the common misconception that heterosexual people hold is that every homosexual is interested in them and he feels that is not true and most people think that every homosexual person wants to change their sex. He is not aware of the social support system but he feels that his friends and family are the ones to whom he can turn to for emotional or practical support. Sometimes when he wants to wear something to express his sexual identity he starts questioning himself and feels uncomfortable about it. He was victimized when he was in High school when his friends started talking about him behind his back and started calling him names. In the organizational setting he feels that colleagues and peers are friendly towards him. Being a part of the LGBT community has affected his psychological well-being a few years back when he sees himself in the mirror and would cry and over think about how people would see and treat him but now he is unbothered by people's perspective towards him. He prefers a mixture of polyamorous and single partners when it comes to his sexual orientation. If he is not dating anyone he would go on casual dates but if he is dating somebody he would stick to that partner only. In his experience people from the LGBTQ community have affected his psychological well-being as many people from the community are toxic as they would body shame people on the basis of how they look.

### **Case-3 (M\* \*) Female (Lesbian) 20 years old**

She realized her sexual orientation when she was 19 years old. She had discussed a sexual orientation with I love the ones and they were supportive about it as for her family. She feels

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that her family would be shocked to know that her daughter is a homosexual and would not accept the fact initially. In her opinion the major challenges that homosexuals face are stereotypical thoughts, judgment and non-acceptance. In her opinion the attitude towards homosexuality is changing in India and people are showing more and more acceptance towards homosexuals. Heterosexual perceive her to behave according to her assigned gender but the people who are supportive around her do not judge her for her choices. She has never been victimized or felt any significant adversity or stigma because of her sexual orientation. In her opinion the major misconception that people hold about LGBTQ is that there are only Trans people in the LGBTQ community. She Knows about many social support systems like the LGBTQ community, NGOs, social services, friends and family. She doesn't feel hesitant to express her sexual identity through her physical appearance. She believes that in organization homosexual people get to see discrimination. She believes that being a part of LGBT community has not affected her psychological well-being at a huge level but it has made her more confident about her own sexuality. She prefers having the same partner rather than having a variety of partners when it comes to her sexual orientation.

### **Case-4 (D\*\*) Male (Bisexual) 22 years old**

He discovered his sexual orientation when he was 13 years old. He feels that he is lucky enough to have supported friends and his father as they are supportive about it but they are not so comfortable discussing his sexuality in detail. Although his family is really traditional and he expected them to be completely against the idea of homosexuality but when he came out as a bisexual person, they showed him support after an initial heated conversation. In his opinion homosexuals are seen as 'freaks 'and they are pushed into corners for being a little different, they get bullied a lot and face stereotypes and discrimination against them. He believes that the new generation is very accepting towards homosexuality and sometimes they admire homosexual people like influencers on social media. He had experience where people told him that he was meant to be taken by a group of hermaphrodites at the time of his birth and there are also people who believe that homosexuals should not exist at all or should get themselves fixed. He feels very self-conscious when he is in a different setting and surrounded by unknown faces if feel that he should act straight in public places and when kids and some parents see him they gave a disapproving look to him. In his opinion the major misconception that people hold about LGBTQ is that being homosexual is a mental disorder and people think that every person in the LGBT is a transgender and that gay men like all men. He wants to wear colors and designs that would accentuate his body but he is scared that people might react in a negative way because of this he feels insecure most of the time. He got bullied in High school and throughout school life because he acted girlish and people would call him out with names like girl, transgender or "chakka" In college people started joking about it but since he feels insecure, they started calling him 'multisexual'. He feels a sense of belongingness and validated being a part of the community he feels that he could learn a lot. and can find people who make him feel like being included. He prefers having a stable relationship and meaningful connection or relationships that are all platonic. He feels being a part of the community is both good and bad. At one end you feel like belonging and at the other end you feel pressured to follow certain rituals or things to be a member of the community.

### **Case-5 (H\*\*) Male (Gay) 22 years old**

He discovered his sexual orientation when he was 17 years old. His parents and some friends know about his sexual orientation and they were shocked initially but now they have become comfortable with it. He feels that the major challenges that homosexuals face in the society

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is community biasness, stereotypical judgments, bullying and lack of opportunities. He thinks that the homosexual culture might get accepted in India but he also thinks that the community is portraying the Western concept of homosexuality in an exaggerated way. He feels that some people see homosexuals with hatred and judgment while some accept them without judgments in a friendly way. He had experiences where his friends' thinking and comments made him feel unsafe. He believes the misconception that people hold about LGBT is that they spread STDs and HIV and those who befriended them become a part of the community too. He believes that as such there was no social support system provided to homosexuals previously but now there are some losses which aid homosexual. He feels that he can express his sexual orientation through his clothing and physical appearance. He has also been victimized before but with time, things have changed and he has also developed some coping strategies to deal with situations like these. In the organization setting he has experienced discrimination for his sexual orientation, people used to give him side views and saw him as a pervert. He feels that being a part of a community has improved his psychological well-being by making him more confident in accepting his sexual orientation and people have started to accept how much sexually without being disgusted. He prefers to have a partner with whom he feels connected with and would go for only one person at a time.

### *Analysis*

The study's key findings highlight themes of acceptance, discrimination, unawareness, hesitation, relationship choices, and support within the LGBTQ community. Many individuals experience a lack of acceptance from family, friends, peers, and society due to negative perceptions of homosexuality. Discrimination remains prevalent, with participants reporting prejudice, homophobic slurs, and derogatory treatment that contribute to emotional distress. Unawareness, fueled by misinformation and misconceptions, leads to societal bias and a decline in respect and social support. Hesitation arises from societal pressure, making it difficult for individuals to navigate their identities openly. Relationship choices among LGBTQ individuals vary, with some engaging in monogamous relationships while others prefer polyamorous ones, based on personal preference and emotional maturity. Despite these challenges, emotional and psychological support from friends, family, and communities plays a crucial role in fostering resilience and well-being.

In terms of psychological health, the study reveals that LGBTQ individuals face higher risks of mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, trauma, and self-acceptance struggles, largely due to ongoing discrimination. LGBTQ youth are three to four times more likely to attempt suicide compared to their peers. Many internalize societal stigma, leading to shame, guilt, and fear, which further exacerbate their emotional struggles. Exposure to violence and negative societal attitudes threatens their sense of security, often resulting in withdrawal and isolation, which intensifies mental health issues. However, findings indicate that a strong support system significantly reduces these risks. While coming to terms with one's identity remains complex, a positive and accepting environment fosters emotional well-being, highlighting the critical role of societal acceptance in improving the mental health of LGBTQ individuals.

### *Implications*

This study highlights the impact of societal attitudes on LGBTQ young adults' mental health, emphasizing the need for acceptance and support. Discrimination and unawareness contribute to anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation, while resilience emerges despite

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these challenges. Medical stimulation offers a promising approach to enhance coping mechanisms and psychological well-being through neurofeedback and cognitive interventions. These findings stress the need for inclusive mental health strategies to support LGBTQ individuals effectively.

### *Limitations*

- 1. Small Sample Size:** The limited number of participants restricts generalizability. A larger, more in-depth study would provide a more comprehensive analysis.
- 2. Time-Consuming Data Collection:** While semi-structured questionnaires yielded rich insights, they required significant time and effort. However, they facilitated open discussions, offering valuable perspectives on LGBTQ mental health.
- 3. Researcher Bias:** As with any qualitative study, researcher bias is a potential limitation. Efforts were made to remain objective, but some level of bias is inevitable.
- 4. Need for Medical Simulation Integration:** Future studies should explore medical stimulation techniques (e.g., neurofeedback, virtual therapy) to assess their effectiveness in improving LGBTQ mental health outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

This research explored the psychological well-being of LGBTQ young adults, examining the impact of acceptance, discrimination, unawareness, hesitation, relationship choices, and support on their mental health. Findings reveal that lack of acceptance from family, peers, and society remains a major challenge, leading to emotional distress and hesitation in expressing one's identity. Discrimination in social and professional settings further exacerbates mental health struggles, while unawareness fosters misconceptions and limits support. Despite these challenges, relationship choices and strong social support positively influence psychological well-being, fostering resilience and growth.

A crucial takeaway is the need for medical stimulation as an innovative approach to addressing LGBTQ mental health concerns. Techniques such as neurofeedback, cognitive-behavioral interventions, and virtual therapy can provide new coping mechanisms and enhance emotional resilience. This research underscores the importance of societal awareness and inclusive mental health strategies to support LGBTQ individuals, ensuring they receive the psychological care and acceptance needed for overall well-being.

### *Suggestions for Further Research*

- Further study can also be undertaken on a large sample.
- The study may also be conducted over a larger geographical domain as well.
- Other variables like bullying, loneliness, and self-esteem, may also be included
- This study focuses on the young generation (college students), but not on the adults. Further research could be conducted on other age groups.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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