

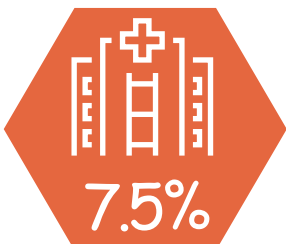
LGBTQ Communities Emerging After COVID



LGBTQ Workers Work in Highly Affected Industries¹

The top 5 industries that employ LGBTQ people are some of the industries most vulnerable to the dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic.

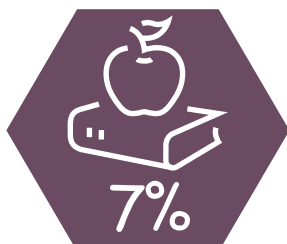
Hospitals



7.5%

1 million

K-12 Education



7%

~1 Million

College Education



7%

~1 million

Food Service



15%

2 Million

Retail



4%

0.5 Million

2 out of 5 LGBTQ people works in one of these five industries.

Social Isolation and LGBTQ Communities



Social isolation is a silent killer among LGBTQ people, who often rely upon the support of chosen family units over that of traditional family structures. Prolonged social isolation has devastating effects on mental health,⁴ and its effects on physical health have been compared to that of smoking 15 cigarettes a day.⁵

LGBTQ Youth and Elders are particularly vulnerable to the dangers of social isolation.¹

Youth:

- Nearly two thirds (64%) of LGBTQ college students reported that being forced to move back home impacted their ability to express their identity.³
- Youth in rural areas are at even higher risk than their urban peers due to limited access to LGBTQ-inclusive resources and prevailing conservative views.⁴
- 69% of LGBTQ youth and 75% of trans/nonbinary youth reported feeling more lonely in 2020.³

Elders:

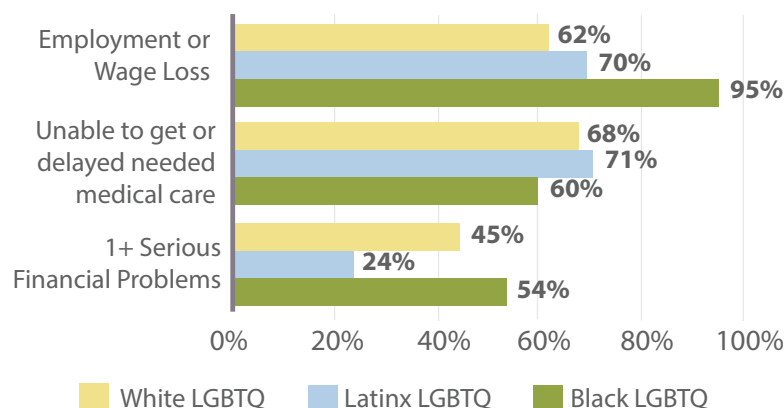
- Twice as likely to be single or live alone.⁵
- Four times as likely to be childless.⁵
- 34% of LGBTQ Elders fear having to re-closet themselves to receive senior housing,⁵ and 75% fear not having support from family as they age.¹
- Nearly 60% report a lack of companionship and over 50% reported feeling isolated from others.

Pre-COVID Risk Factors¹

Before 2020, LGBTQ people saw higher rates of:

- Unemployment, low wages, lack of benefits
- Housing discrimination, eviction, instability
- Health insurance coverage gaps
- Health care discrimination, uneven provider training
- Chronic Illness – Cancer, Diabetes, HIV, Hypertension
- Tobacco, alcohol, substance misuse
- Mental Health challenges – anxiety, depression, PTSD
- Incarceration and other institutionalization
- Trauma, sexual assault, street violence
- Youth family rejection, Elder isolation

LGBTQ Racial Economic Disparities Summer 2020²



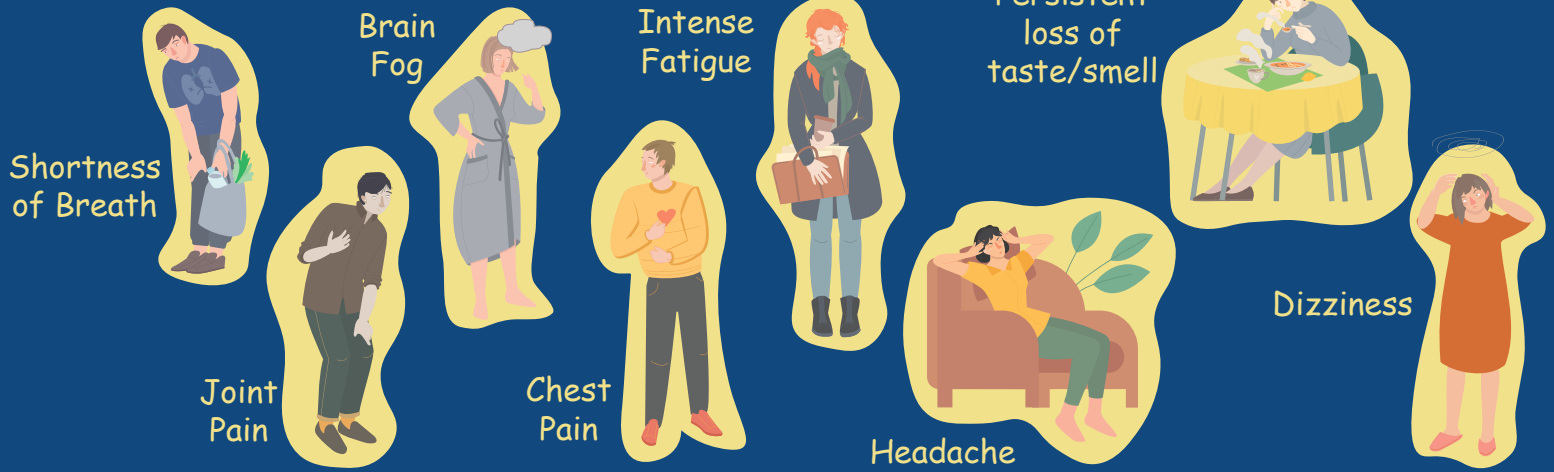
Central East (HHS Region 3)

ATTC

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



Long COVID Symptoms⁶



Long COVID, the condition where symptoms that surface after recovering from COVID-19 linger for weeks, months, or even years, is still a mystery to doctors and researchers. We still don't know why only some people develop the condition or why others can get it after a mild COVID-19 infection.

Proposed Cause Theories:



Residual Organ Damage: symptoms may be caused by damage from initial infection



Remaining Virus: small amounts of the virus may persist in the body and cause an immune response



Exaggerated Immune Response: the immune system remains in an excited state even after the initial infection is resolved

Fostering Wellness Through Community

Rebuilding a sense of community is key to healing LGBTQ people from the traumas of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Reaffirming importance of "chosen family"
- Virtual LGBTQ events and gatherings
- Social Media can provide a space for otherwise isolated LGBTQ people to find education and community, especially LGBTQ youth⁴
- Mutual aid and political activism
- Support groups
- (Re)building a sense of "mattering"

Acknowledging COVID as Shared Cultural Trauma⁷

The COVID-19 Pandemic is an unprecedented event that has caused great loss and trauma across many communities. Thus, trauma-responsive, strengths-focused treatment methods may be effective.

- What behaviors have helped you survive your traumatic experiences (during and afterward)?
- What are some of the creative ways that you deal with painful feelings?
- What characteristics have helped you manage these experiences and the challenges that they have created in your life?
- How do you gain support today? (family, friends, activities, coaches, counselors, other supports)
- What does recovery look like for you?

Validating Disenfranchised Grief⁸

1 in 5 White LGBTQ people and 1 in 3 POC LGBTQ people personally know someone who has died of COVID-19.⁹ Additionally, studies show that suicidal ideation was high for many LGBTQ people during the pandemic.^{1,3} Many LGBTQ Elders may also be carrying around a familiar pain from having lived through the AIDS Crisis.⁵

With these facts in mind, it is important to recognize the pain that many LGBTQ people are carrying.

- LGBTQ people who have lost a partner/spouse or other loved one often do not have the same types of support as non-LGBTQ people.
- LGBTQ people may feel they cannot openly acknowledge or publicly mourn a partner, or may find that others minimize their loss—a problem often referred to as disenfranchised grief.
- Such disenfranchised grief is common among those who survived the HIV/AIDS crisis but lost so many of their peers.
- Losing a loved one to suicide further disenfranchises grief due to the stigma associated with mental illness and suicide.
- In addition, disenfranchised grief may itself be a risk factor for suicide.

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4. Karim, S., Choukas-Bradley, S., Radovic, A., Roberts, S. R., Maheux, A. J., & Escobar-Viera, C. G. (2022). Support over Social Media among Socially Isolated Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Rural U.S. during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Opportunities for Intervention Research. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(23), 15611. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192315611>

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7. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services. Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series 57. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 13-4801. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.

8. Alex Keuroghlian, 2018 Suicide Risk and Prevention for LGBTQ People, Webinar for The Fenway Institute

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