



Supporting Caribbean LGBTQ+ Populations With Meaningful Interventions

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Our Caribbean



The LGBTQ+ Situation in the Caribbean

- ▶ The community is present and growing
 - ▶ More young people are comfortable with their sexuality
 - ▶ There are strong advocacy groups in some countries
 - ▶ LGBTI Aware Caribbean
 - ▶ Coalition Advocating for Inclusion of Sexual Orientation (CAISO)
- ▶ Most of our countries have laws against buggery
 - ▶ Penalties range from 10 years to life in prison
 - ▶ Includes admission to psychiatric Units
 - ▶ Many of these laws do not mention lesbian relationships
- ▶ High Court decisions in Belize, 2016 and Trinidad and Tobago, 2018 struck down their laws

Situation in the Caribbean Con't

- ▶ Immigration laws challenged at the Caribbean Court of Justice
- ▶ Moral and religious perspectives are strongly against this Community
 - ▶ In Trinidad and Tobago churches published full page ads after High Court decision
 - ▶ Some young people were asked to leave home
 - ▶ Many voices raised in the public domain

Functioning in a Toxic Environment

- ▶ Many persons are attacked verbally and physically
 - ▶ Law Enforcement has been accused in this regard
- ▶ Services are sometimes denied - health care and other areas
- ▶ Derogatory names are culturally accepted
- ▶ Stigma and discrimination are accepted
- ▶ Pride Activities - Barbados, Guyana, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago

Similar Challenges Exist In Other Areas

Adolescent Substance Use Interventions

Special populations -

- ▶ Adolescents in conflict with the Law
- ▶ Homeless adolescents
- ▶ **LGBTQ+ adolescents**
- ▶ Female adolescents
- ▶ Traumatized adolescents
- ▶ Co-existing disorders
- ▶ Male Youth



Risk Factors

Research shows this group at high risk for:

- ▶ Bullying
- ▶ Childhood abuse
- ▶ Family conflict and rejection
- ▶ Gender stereotypes
- ▶ Housing instability or homelessness
 - ▶ Sex work
 - ▶ Increased risk of abuse in relationships
- ▶ Mental health issues
- ▶ Suicide
- ▶ Substance Use

Our Reality !!!



Preparing for Development of Programmes



Our Youth Know More Than Us

- ▶ This is a fact
- ▶ They are living in a different time
- ▶ Access to information is instant
- ▶ Google is EVERYTHING!!!
- ▶ Social Media is the final frontier
- ▶ They WILL challenge us
- ▶ We MUST be prepared
- ▶ We MUST be truthful
- ▶ Our Services MUST be updated



Regional Treatment Options

- ▶ Treatment is available
- ▶ Public Sector
- ▶ Civil Society - Some operated by Religious Groups
- ▶ Most persons do not state their sexual orientation - “ As long as they keep their habits to themselves, they are welcome”
- ▶ Psychosocial issues usually avoided
- ▶ All risk factors not addressed
- ▶ Many areas for improvement
- ▶ Training needed for treatment agencies

Building A Meaningful Programme

Seek out critical stakeholders

- ▶ LGBTQ+ Community
 - ▶ Learn about their support services
- ▶ Gender Units and agencies (Government and Civil Society)
- ▶ Spiritual organizations
- ▶ Social Support Agencies
- ▶ Community support services
- ▶ Agencies that offer pro-social activities
- ▶ Law Enforcement Agencies

Train Persons to Deliver The Programmes

- ▶ Address Stigma and discrimination - Similar to HIV/AIDS
- ▶ Have persons examine themselves
 - ▶ Are there biases
 - ▶ Am I comfortable sharing information on this Community
 - ▶ Am I willing to interact with the community
- ▶ Seek accurate information
- ▶ Develop culturally appropriate messages
 - ▶ **WE CANNOT TAKE MESSAGES FROM MORE ACCEPTING SOCIETIES**

*Seek to foster understanding and acceptance
- People don't Care How much you know,
Until they know How much you care.*

Feedback?

Questions?

Suggestions?