

# Depression Looks Like Me



## Depression & the LGBTQ+ Community

If you're LGBTQ+ and experiencing symptoms of depression, you are NOT alone. Members of the LGBTQ+ community are affected by mental health conditions, including major depressive disorder (MDD) or clinical depression, at higher rates than the general population,<sup>1</sup> which is often due to stigma and discrimination.

### By the Numbers



**Nearly 60% of LGBTQ+ adults** are experiencing mental health challenges today.<sup>2</sup> In fact, LGBTQ+ adults are **three times as likely** to experience a mental health disorder than individuals who identify as straight.<sup>3</sup>



The bisexual and transgender communities specifically have the **highest rates** of mental health challenges within the LGBTQ+ population.<sup>4</sup>



**Half of all transgender adults** who report not feeling supported by their families are currently experiencing serious psychological distress.<sup>5</sup>



An analysis of the recorded deaths by suicide in 18 US states showed that the **largest incidence of suicide** is among middle-aged LGBTQ+ people.<sup>6</sup>



**40% of all transgender adults report they have attempted suicide** in their lifetime compared to less than 5% of the overall US population.<sup>5</sup>



## Do I Have Depression?

Depression is a serious mental illness that can have a significant, negative impact on the way you think, feel and act. Depression symptoms and severity vary by person and may include persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness or tension; changes in sleep or appetite; difficulty concentrating or performing activities of daily living; lack of interest; and or thoughts of self-harm or suicide.<sup>7</sup>

Living with depression is challenging for anyone. But when you're also facing disparities and hurdles associated with being LGBTQ+, such as rejection, discrimination, and violence, it can add to mental health challenges.



## Not All Depression Is the Same

When a person with MDD does not respond adequately to two or more antidepressant medications, they may be considered to have treatment-resistant depression (TRD).<sup>8</sup> TRD isn't your fault. You haven't failed — it's more common than you think. Approximately 1/3 of people with MDD may have TRD.<sup>9</sup>

Sometimes, symptoms also can progress to a point where a person starts actively considering suicide and requires urgent intervention to treat their symptoms.<sup>10</sup>

While these forms of depression can be more persistent, there is still hope. There are treatment options for these ongoing or more severe types of depression.

- 1 LGBTQI. Accessed January 11, 2022. <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/LGBTQI>
- 2 Human Rights Campaign Foundation. The State of Mental Health in the LGBTQ Community. Accessed January 4, 2022. <https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/files/documents/LGBTQ-MentalHealth-brief-022221.pdf>
- 3 LGBTQ+. Accessed January 11, 2022. <https://adaa.org/find-help/by-demographics/lgbtq>
- 4 LGBTQ+ Communities and Mental Health. Accessed January 10, 2022. <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/lgbtq-communities-and-mental-health>
- 5 National Center for Transgender Equality. The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey Executive Summary. Accessed January 6, 2022. <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Executive-Summary-Dec17.pdf>



## How Can I Seek Help?

Only 1/3 of those suffering from severe depression seek treatment from a healthcare professional.<sup>11</sup>

Many don't know what to do when symptoms become more severe. But there are other options and places to turn for help. An important step is finding a healthcare provider that makes you feel safe, supported and heard.

Finding providers with whom you can create a personal connection will establish a safe space and allow you to develop a more personalized approach to your treatment plan.



Visit [www.DepressionLooksLikeMe.com](http://www.DepressionLooksLikeMe.com) for additional trusted resources and information.

Please know you are not alone. If you or someone you know is struggling emotionally or has concerns about their mental health, there are ways to get help. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **988** or **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, or visit [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

- 6 Lyons BH, Walters ML, Jack SPD, Petrosky E, Blair JM, Ivey-Stephenson AZ. Suicides among lesbian and gay male individuals: findings from the National Violent Death Reporting System. *Am J Prev Med*. 2019 Apr;56(4):512-521. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2018.11.012. Accessed January 6, 2022. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6886000/>
- 7 What Is Depression? Accessed January 13, 2022. <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/depression/what-is-depression>
- 8 Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Treatment-Resistant Depression: A Narrative and Systematic Review of Definitions and Methods in Clinical Research Studies. Accessed January 4, 2022. <https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/research/findings/ta/topicrefinement/trdepression-protocol-amendment.pdf>
- 9 Zhdanova M, Pilon D, Ghelerter I, et al. The prevalence and national burden of treatment-resistant depression and major depressive disorder in the United States. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2021;82(2):20m13699. <https://www.psychiatrist.com/jcp/depression/prevalence-national-burden-treatment-resistant-depression-major-depressive-disorder-in-us/>
- 10 Depression. Accessed January 13, 2022. <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/depression>
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