

Analysis of Position Papers for Vulnerable Populations: Substance Abuse

Student's Name

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In today's generation, substance abuse has become an epidemic issue as many individuals are affected globally, especially among the "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual/Transgender, and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ)" community. The LGBTQ community is a vulnerable population that experiences significant health and social disparities compared to the general population (Hafeez et al., 2017). Individuals in this population have the highest rates of HIV/AIDS, substance and alcohol abuse, mental health disorders, suicide incidences and suicide attempts, poverty, homelessness, and emotional, sexual, and physical abuse. The immense challenges transgender individuals experience contributed to high rates of substance abuse. According to Juergens (2019), about 20 to 30 percent of the LGBTQ population abuse substances and alcohol compared to only 9 percent of the general population.

Facilitating Improvements

Study findings have reported substantially higher overall rates of substance use and substance abuse among the LGBTQ than the heterosexual population (Juergens, 2019). Therefore, to facilitate improvement, there is the need to create an inclusive environment that considers the substance and abuse health issues and healthcare needs of the LGBTQ community. This way, the healthcare providers treating and interacting with individuals from the LGBTQ community must design forms and health questions that are more sexually and gender-inclusive. The enhancement may entails developing healthcare brochures featuring same-sex couples or utilizing LGBTQ accepted symbols like a rainbow in patient education literature to develop a hospitable environment. Similar, several system-wide policies can be transformed to take care of the interests of the LGBTQ population. the modifications may incorporate offering gender-inclusive health insurance policy, designing and integrating non-gender specific private

washrooms in all hospitals, and encouraging diversity through recruiting individuals from the LGBTQ population through non-discriminatory recruitment procedures.

Improving the quality and outcomes

There are endless stereotypes and prejudices held against the LGBTQ population prompting efforts to be made by healthcare professionals to develop a more friendly and inclusive environment for individuals in this population. These efforts should aim at improving the quality and outcomes of care offered to this vulnerable population and improve their likelihood of seeking treatment when whenever they need healthcare services. Research indicates that heterosexual providers who specialize in substance abuse treatment but have few LGBTQ friends often display negative biases against individuals from the LGBTQ population than providers belonging to the LGBTQ community (Holthouser et al., 2015). Consequently, to establish a hospitable and inclusive healthcare setting for the LGBTQ substance abuse individuals, the efforts need to pay attention to sensitivity and unconscious bias training for all healthcare practitioners caring for the LGBTQ individuals seeking substance abuse treatments.

The training needs to incorporate training for developing skills and expertise that enhance empathy and compassion towards individuals in the LGBTQ community (Noon, 2018). The training on unconscious bias must provide healthcare practitioners with skills that can motivate them to engage in a comprehensive but non-judgmental and objective social health history avoid making personal presumptions. The providers should also able to identify the unique healthcare needs specific to the LGBTQ substance abuse patients (Klein & Nakhai, 2016). Lastly, to create improvement, it is vital to reach out to the LGBTQ community by celebrating their culture, making them feel safe and accepted in the healthcare atmosphere, such as recognizing and celebrating the National Pride Day.

Positions that Support Team's Approach

The best team approach to treating LGBTQ patients with substance use and substance abuse is the interprofessional team approach. The interprofessional team will play a substantial role to implement the quality improvement recommendations that are critical in creation of an inclusive healthcare setting that fits the LGBTQ population. Besides, the team will have to incorporate inputs from other disciplines such as healthcare educators who specialize in LGBTQ substance abuse treatment and those that can provide essential information regarding the particular healthcare issues and needs tailored for the LGBTQ persons with substance abuse disorders (Holthouser et al., 2015). The team may also need to incorporate social workers and case managers trained to handle LGBTQ substance abuse individuals to address substance abuse treatment options for the LGBTQ community.

Moreover, the psychiatrists and therapists whose focus is on treatment for substance abuse among LGBTQ individuals and other mental health issues can be incorporated in the interprofessional team (James et al., 2016). Besides, the team needs to entail healthcare leaders who are particularly vital in creating and coordinating an inclusive and friendly LGBTQ atmosphere, policies, and outreach towards the LGBTQ population. Lastly, having a member of the LGBTQ community to offer perspectives and advise is also paramount.

The interprofessional team works together for the end goal of enhancing the healthcare atmosphere and reducing the health disparities of the LGBTQ community and while setting personal feelings aside to avoid being biased. Further, it is vital to note that unawareness and lack of knowledge concerning the LGBTQ community and lack of awareness concerning the subconscious bias can be associated with the stigmatization that substance abuse LGBTQ patients go through when seeking healthcare services and offering sensitivity (Juergens, 2019).

The religious beliefs of healthcare providers must not let religious beliefs compromise their professional obligations as care providers. Any kind of discrimination can adversely affect the health status of the LGBTQ patients (Juergens, 2019). Therefore, the team must be educated on subconscious bias and maintaining sensitivity, which can help to shift the negative biases and attitudes against LGBTQ patients and work to eliminate discrimination on the part of healthcare professionals (Klein & Nakhai, 2016).

Positions of others that are contrary to a team's approach

While implementing an inclusive environment to treat substance abuse LGBTQ patients, it is expected that others within the healthcare environment will resist the steps toward creating an inclusive and friendly environment for the LGBTQ population. For instance, healthcare providers from various groups have strong and hard directives against homosexuality and will resist any attempts to create an inclusive environment to treat substance abuse LGBTQ patients. Moreover, many of the religious countries consider homosexuality as a criminal act and thus, not accepted. For Muslims, this act is punishable with death. Therefore, healthcare providers with such faith may be against the treatment of substance abuse LGBTQ patients because their religion condemns homosexuality. This fact implies that it can be extremely tough or close to impossible for a religious healthcare provider that follows any religious faith that considers homosexuality a sin or a crime to reconcile his or her personal religious beliefs with LGBTQ inclusivity policy compromising the healthcare environment for the substance abuse LGBTQ.

Conclusion

Substance abuse among the LGBTQ population remains significantly high due to the stereotyping and discrimination the individuals in this vulnerable population experience. The challenges the LGBTQ community face prevents healthcare-seeking behaviors among its

members, thus, prompting healthcare providers to take steps to improve substance abuse treatment through creating an inclusive and friendly environment for the LGTQ community to feel included in the healthcare environment (Juergens, 2019). Interprofessional enables creating an inclusive and friendly environment because experts from different discipline work together to achieve a common goal; creating an inclusive and friendly environment for the LGBTQ population. The healthcare providers must be aware of personal but subconscious biases to create a friendlier and inclusive environment for the LGBTQ patients with substance abuse disorders to seek medical help.

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