Investigating Correlations Between Internalized Homophobia and Transphobia In Adolescents and Environmental and Demographic Factors

Isak, Ditte (School: Pawling High School)

The LGBT+ community faces many hardships in today's society, but one of the less talked about issues is that of internalized oppression. Internalized oppression occurs when a member of a minority starts to believe the derogations of the majority and accepts their oppression as deserved. This leads to shame in one's own identity and self-hatred for not being "normal." Internalized oppression mainly affects the LGBT+ community through internalized homophobia and internalized transphobia, which regard gay/bisexual/pansexual individuals and trans/non-binary individuals, respectively. Internalized homophobia and transphobia can lead to a variety of issues in an affected individual, such as mental and physical health issues, inability to have intimacy, and horizontal oppression (wherein oppressed individuals who have internalized their oppression project that oppression onto other members of their community). There is currently a severe lack of research into these phenomena, however, which makes prevention and treatment hard. In my research, I investigate correlations between environmental and demographic factors, such as state of residence, religiosity, and political conservatism, and high or low instances of internalized oppression in the LGBT+ community in order to gain insight into which populations are most affected. I also study the prevalence of transphobia and homophobia, both to see if they correlate with any of the identified demographic groups and to see if they correlate with instances of internalized oppression. This research will give us better insight into the potential causes and best targets for prevention and treatment of internalized transphobia and homophobia in order to help minimize this issue and improve the quality of life of LGBT+ individuals.

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