Improving Care for LGBTQ+ Patients

Justin Henningsen

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/fmclerk

Part of the Medical Education Commons, and the Primary Care Commons

Recommended Citation
Henningsen, Justin, "Improving Care for LGBTQ+ Patients" (2024). Family Medicine Clerkship Student Projects. 957.
https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/fmclerk/957

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Family Medicine Community at UVM ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Family Medicine Clerkship Student Projects by an authorized administrator of UVM ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact schwrs@uvm.edu.
Improving Care for LGBTQ+ Patients

Justin Henningsen
Hardwick Area Health Center
Dec 2023 – Jan 2024
with Mckalyn Leclerc
During my first week at Hardwick Area Health Center, I asked providers what projects would be most useful.

They stated that many staff members had questions about how best to interact with LGBTQ+ patients, particularly trans and non-binary adolescents.

They suggested a training session for staff.

This addresses the following area of focus defined by AHEC:

- Interprofessional Education, Cultural Competency, and Medical Practic Transformation
• Members of the LGBTQ+ community are at increased risk for numerous health and safety concerns.

• In VT, LGBTQ+ adolescents face increased risk of: being bullied (in person and electronically); being threatened with a weapon; skipping school due to safety concerns; feeling hopeless, self-harm; using alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, medications not prescribed to them, illicit drugs; being overweight or obese; going hungry; having housing instability; being a victim of intimate partner emotional abuse or unwanted sexual contact; making plans for suicide or attempting suicide
Community Perspectives

• Evan Chartier, Hazen Union Middle School advisor to HUGS (Hazen Union Gender and Sexuality) student club:
  • Children at Hazen Union unaware that their PCP can be a resource
  • Many face a lack of support at home
  • Adolescents need access to supplies such as trans-tape, binders, packers

• Charlie Charlton, Licensed Social Worker at Hardwick Area Health Center
  • Young patients are unaware that they can discuss gender and sexuality with PCP
  • Clinicians should foster conversations that invite patients to address these
Intervention and Methodology

- Presentation given to all physicians, APPs, nurses, LNA, and office staff on January 18, 2024 during lunch all-staff meeting. The objectives of the presentation were:
  - To explain epidemiology and risks unique to LGBTQ+ patients
  - Be aware of definitions associated with gender, sexuality
  - Outline community needs
  - Describe best practices
  - Provide additional resources
Results

• Staff now planning to incorporate pronouns for all patients into EMR

• Pronoun stickers and pins will be made available for staff ID badges

• Multiple providers committed to registering with the Vermont Diversity Health Project Database
• Effectiveness
  • Proposed: to survey patients regarding (1) whether they are asked about preferred name and pronouns; (2) their comfort level in speaking with physicians and staff about gender and sexuality. Ideally, a survey prior to the intervention could be compared to a later date.

• Limitations
  • Until such sessions are made a part of regular training for new staff, each time a new employee is hired, they may or may not be aware of or follow best practices as outlined in the talk.
Future Directions

- Evan Chartier notes that there is nothing on the HAHC website that mention gender, sexuality, or explicitly or implicitly welcomes LGBTQ+ patients. Future projects may aim to add appropriate material to the site.

- Gender and sexuality education could be incorporated into training of all new hires.
• Pride Center of Vermont. "Education Programs - Pride Center of Vermont." Pride Center of Vermont, [https://www.pridecentervt.org/education/].
