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PSYCHOLOGICAL PORTRAIT OF THERAPEUTIC REQUESTS FROM LGBT CLIENTS

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Abstract

The article examines the primary psychological needs of LGBT clients seeking psychotherapy. It utilizes testing results from tools such as the STAI, BDI-II, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and MSPSS to determine levels of anxiety, depression, self-esteem, and social support among LGBT individuals residing in various countries. Specifically, it explores issues related to identity, coming-out trauma, relationships, sexuality, and loneliness. The test results are presented using a sample of 50 respondents from different countries: Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Canada, and Norway.

Keywords: LGBT, psychological needs, therapy, identity, anxiety, depression, self-esteem, social support.

Introduction

The LGBT community is one of the most vulnerable social groups, facing numerous psychological challenges related to both the internal acceptance of their sexuality and external factors such as societal condemnation, stigmatization, and discrimination. Psychological support for LGBT individuals is a crucial component of the process of adaptation and integration of this community into society. Psychotherapeutic needs can vary greatly: from difficulties in self-acceptance and acceptance of one's sexuality to challenges in building stable relationships or social integration [3]. In this context, it is especially important to use appropriate diagnostic tools that help measure levels of anxiety, depression, self-esteem, social support, and more. The study includes 50 respondents from Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Canada, and Norway, and is aimed at identifying the characteristics of the psychological state of LGBT individuals in different cultural and social contexts [4].

Primary Psychological Needs of LGBT Clients

One of the main reasons LGBT individuals seek psychotherapy is the difficulty related to identity and self-perception. Many people in this group fear being themselves due to potential social stigmatization or dislike from those around them. The identity of LGBT individuals is a particularly important theme that requires open support in the process of self-acceptance. The fear of being rejected or disliked by loved ones can lead to depression, anxiety disorders, as well as a decrease in self-esteem [5]. LGBT individuals often also face coming-out trauma, a process that can be very challenging and accompanied by deep psychological trauma. Coming-out trauma can cause feelings of loss of support from family or friends, contributing to the development of depressive disorders and anxiety. Additionally, loneliness is another significant problem for LGBT individuals. The feeling of isolation due to social stereotypes or the inability to openly express their sexuality can lead to significant mental difficulties [6].

Therapeutic needs often also involve difficulties in relationships and sexuality. LGBT people often face biases and stereotypes in relationships with others, which can cause problems in building healthy and stable relationships. This, in turn, can lead to low self-esteem and depressive symptoms [7].

Methods of Diagnosis and Tools Used

To detect levels of anxiety, depression, and self-esteem among LGBT clients, various psychometric tools are applied. Some of the most common include:

1. STAI (State-Trait Anxiety Inventory) – a test to determine the level of anxiety, which helps assess whether a patient has anxiety problems in different life situations [8].

2. BDI-II (Beck Depression Inventory) – an instrument for determining the

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level of depression, which includes questions reflecting symptoms of depression in various areas of life [9].

3. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale – a test for measuring the level of self-esteem, which allows evaluating how a patient perceives themselves [10].

4. MSPSS (Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support) – a scale for measuring social support, which is important for studying the level of support from family, friends, and significant others [6].

Let's examine the test results for each of these tools.

3.1. STAI Test (State-Trait Anxiety Inventory)

The STAI test, which measures anxiety levels in two aspects – situational (related to a specific situation) and personal (a characteristic that describes an individual) – revealed high anxiety indicators among LGBT individuals in Ukraine and Norway. In particular, 10 respondents from Norway and 9 from Canada showed a high level of anxiety, which may indicate the influence of negative social factors such as stereotypes, discrimination, or social pressure that these individuals may face in their country. This suggests that the social context in which LGBT individuals exist has a significant impact on their psycho-emotional state. Meanwhile, respondents from other countries, such as Lithuania, Poland, and Germany, demonstrated average values for anxiety levels, which may indicate some stability and adaptability to social conditions. The highest indicators were recorded among respondents from Norway, where the topic of LGBT rights is highly discussed, and possibly this creates an additional stressful context [8]. The results are presented in diagram №1.

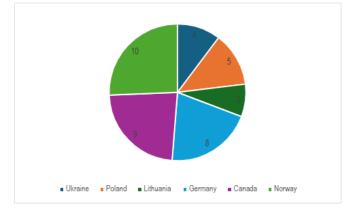


Diagram №1

3.2. BDI-II Test (Beck Depression Inventory-II)

The BDI-II test, which assesses the level of depression based on 21 questions, showed that the highest rates of depressive symptoms are observed among respondents from Canada and Ukraine. In Ukraine, a high level of depression may be associated with a high level of social stigmatization, as well as a lack of sufficient psychological support for LGBT individuals. Canadian respondents also showed a high level of depression, which may indicate an internal struggle with cultural and social difficulties, even in a country with a relatively developed system of support for the LGBT community. However, respondents from Norway and Germany showed relatively low levels of depression, which may be a result of more progressive social conditions and better acceptance of LGBT individuals in these countries. Perhaps this suggests that in societies with a high level of acceptance of the LGBT community, people experience less stress and anxiety due to their identity [9]. The results are presented in diagram №2.

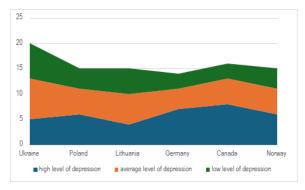


Diagram №2

3.3. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale Test

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale test, which assesses self-esteem through 10 questions, showed low self-esteem among respondents from Ukraine and Poland. This may be a result of deep cultural and social barriers, as LGBT individuals often feel less valuable due to societal rejection or internal conflicts. In these countries, there may be a tendency towards stigmatization, which can negatively affect self-esteem and self-perception. On the other hand, respondents from Canada and Norway demonstrated a high level of self-esteem. This may be due to the fact that in these countries, the LGBT community is more open and accepted, allowing people

with these characteristics to feel more confident in their identity [10]. The results are presented in diagram N_{23} .

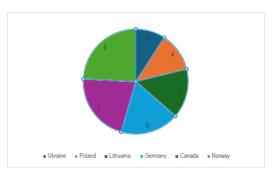


Diagram №3

3.4. The MSPSS (Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support) Test

The MSPSS test, which measures the perception of social support from family, friends, and significant others, showed that respondents from Canada and Norway experience significantly greater support from their family and environment, which is an important factor for psycho-emotional well-being. This indicates that social support is a key element that reduces stress factors and contributes to improved mental health. In contrast, respondents from Ukraine and Poland reported a somewhat lower level of social support, which may be associated with social restrictions and traditional views on LGBT individuals in these countries. In Ukraine and Poland, LGBT individuals may face a lack of support from family or close ones, which increases the level of stress and anxiety. Therefore, the level of social support is an important aspect for understanding the psycho-emotional state of LGBT individuals in different countries [6]. The results are presented in diagram №4.

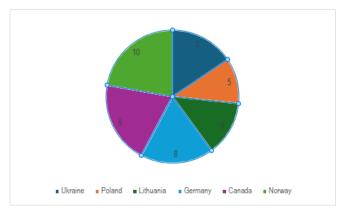


Diagram №4

Conclusions. The study conducted among LGBT individuals from various countries (Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Canada, Norway) demonstrated significant cultural and social differences in the psycho-emotional state and psychological needs of this group. Overall, the results confirm the hypothesis that the psycho-emotional well-being of LGBT individuals significantly depends on the socio-cultural context of each country where they live. Important factors include the level of societal support, attitudes towards the LGBT community, and the presence of cultural barriers or stigmatization, which affect the levels of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and social support among LGBT individuals.

Anxiety and Depression

The highest rates of anxiety and depression were observed among respondents from Ukraine and Canada. In Ukraine, the high level of anxiety and depression can be explained by social and cultural difficulties related to insufficient support for LGBT individuals and often negative attitudes towards them in society. LGBT individuals in Ukraine often face discrimination, which contributes to the development of anxiety disorders. Meanwhile, despite the presence of progressive laws and support for the LGBT community at the state level in Canada, high anxiety rates among respondents may indicate individual experiences, such as fear of social rejection or rejection by loved ones. This highlights that even in countries with progressive legislation and support for the LGBT community, individual experiences and internal conflicts can have a significant impact on the psycho-emotional state. In countries with lower levels of acceptance of LGBT individuals, such as Poland, the rates of anxiety and depression were also high, again emphasizing the role of social and cultural factors in the development of psycho-emotional problems in this group.

Self-Esteem

The level of self-esteem was significantly lower among respondents from Ukraine and Poland. This can be explained by the high social stigmatization of LGBT individuals in these countries, where negative attitudes towards sexual minorities often lead to feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem. In contrast, respondents from Canada and Norway showed a significantly higher level of self-esteem. High selfesteem in these countries is the result not only of open acceptance of LGBT individuals in society but also of support at the state and community levels, allowing individuals to openly accept their sexual orientation without fear of rejection. This underscores the importance of social support for developing healthy self-esteem among LGBT individuals.

Social Support

One of the key differences in the psycho-emotional state of LGBT individuals between countries is the level of social support. Respondents from Canada and Norway had significantly higher levels of support from family, friends, and society, which positively affected their psycho-emotional state. Such support reduces stress, anxiety, and depression, facilitating better adaptation in society and greater openness in expressing their sexual orientation. In Eastern European countries, particularly in Ukraine and Poland, social support was significantly lower. This is explained by traditional cultural views on LGBT individuals and the lack of adequate support from the environment. As a result, LGBT individuals in these countries often experience social isolation, which exacerbates their psycho-emotional problems and creates additional stress. The lack of open support from family and close ones can lead to significant difficulties in accepting one's identity, increasing the risk of depression and anxiety disorders.

Identity and Self-Acceptance

The process of coming out is one of the greatest psychological challenges for LGBT individuals, which can lead to stress, depression, and social isolation. In countries with high levels of homophobia, this process is accompanied by significant psychological pressure, including fear of rejection and loss of support from family and friends. This, in turn, increases the level of anxiety and depression and complicates the process of self-acceptance. A high level of trauma associated with coming out was observed among respondents from Ukraine and Poland, where the culture of homophobia is still very strong. Negative attitudes from family and close ones can create significant psychological difficulties and even lead to social isolation, which in turn exacerbates depressive and anxious symptoms.

Recommendations for Therapists

Therapists working with LGBT individuals should consider cultural, social, and personal factors that can significantly affect the psycho-emotional state of clients. It is important to create a safe and supportive environment that allows clients to openly work on their experiences, overcome the trauma of coming out, and accept their sexual orientation. Working with social support is a crucial element of therapy, especially for individuals who face a lack of support from family or community. Therapists should also actively work on reducing social isolation, promoting the integration of LGBT individuals into society and supporting them in the process of adaptation and self-acceptance.

Perspectives for Further Research

Further research can focus on a deeper study of the impact of social and cultural contexts on the psycho-emotional state of LGBT individuals, particularly analyzing how different factors (e.g., the level of support at the state and social levels) affect depression, anxiety, and self-esteem. It is also necessary to investigate the effectiveness of various therapeutic approaches to reduce the levels of depression and anxiety in this group, particularly in the context of interventions that include group support, coming-out therapy, and work with social support.

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