**Why are LGBT+ individuals more likely to have mental health problems?** The causes of mental health problems are complex, however they are compounded by experiences such as bullying, discrimination, hate crimes, and social isolation.

As LGBT+ people are more likely to report feeling lonely or socially isolated this can lead to poorer mental health.

**Why focus on the mental health of LGBT+ people?** The literature reviewed for the health needs assessment found evidence indicating that LGBT+ people in Scotland are at much higher risk of mental health problems than heterosexual/cisgender people.

Only one in four (25%) of survey respondents rated their general mental and emotional wellbeing positively.

**What were the findings in relation to mental and emotional wellbeing?** Data from the survey showed that over half (54%) of respondents said they had mental health problems. Over half of respondents (58%) had self-harmed and nearly two-thirds (64%) indicated signs of eating disorders. Almost one in three (31%) respondents had attempted suicide.

**1**

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**3**

**Were there any trends in the data around mental health?** The prevalence of self-reported mental health problems varied across different groups within the LGBT+ community. Gay men were the least likely to report a mental health problem (38%) and trans masculine were most likely to report a mental health problem (75%).

**How can we help to improve the mental health of LGBT+ people?**

By working to eliminate bullying and discrimination and being allies to the LGBT+ community we can remove some of the factors that contribute to poor mental health.

Clinicians should be aware that LGBT+ patients are more likely to experience mental health problems and signpost to support services where appropriate.

To support LGBT+ staff we promote our LGBT+ Staff Network as a safe space and opportunity for peer support.

**What were the findings in relation to eating disorders?** In the qualitative data, many respondents mentioned a `difficult relationship with food` or either over- or under-eating when depressed or anxious. Trans men and women spoke about either over or under eating in a deliberate attempt to change their body shape. The pressures around physical appearance, particularly for men on the gay scene, were also felt to be catalysts for body dysmorphia and eating disorders.

The COVID pandemic exacerbated eating disorders for those who controlled food intake as a mechanism for exerting control at times when many aspects of life were uncontrollable.

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**What were the findings in relation to self-harm?** Self-harm appeared to be most common in younger years and prior to coming out or transitioning. Non-binary and trans people were among those who more frequently mentioned self-harming, and this was often linked to their gender dysphoria or hatred of their body.

**5**