

**Homophobia and self-esteem**

* As a result of the general homophobia, LGBT folks can manifest what is known as internalized homophobia. Internalized homophobia is defined as the involuntary belief by lesbians and gay men that the homophobic lies, stereotypes and myths about them are true.
* Study shows that internalized homophobia will have a negative impact on a person’s self-esteem, especially if that person is not yet out as LGBT or believe that doesn’t have the support to come out as LGBT.
* Internalized homophobia can also force LGBT folks to imitate heteronormative models that may not be appropriate or that can actually expose folks to high-risk behaviors that may include substance abuse.

**What can we do to increase self-esteem in LGBT folks?**

1. Seek LGBT friendly places, centers, houses where you can be free to be who you are
2. Engage with your local PFLAG chapter. PFLAG (Parents and friends of Lesbians and Gays) is the nation's largest family and ally organization, the first and largest organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people, their parents and families, and allies.
3. Seek LGBT support groups
4. Seek mental health services if needed.

<http://www.culturalbridgestojustice.org/programs/homophobia/internalized-homophobia>

<https://pflag.org/about>