

Why is Addiction Such a Problem?

It is important not to assume that homosexuality causes drug or alcohol abuse. When gay men, lesbians and bisexuals internalize society's homophobic attitudes and beliefs, the results can be devastating.

From the McGill University Student Health Service Website:

It is important not to assume that homosexuality causes drug or alcohol abuse. When gay men, lesbians and bisexuals internalize society's homophobic attitudes and beliefs, the results can be devastating. Society's hatred becomes self-hatred. As a minority group, gay men, lesbians and bisexuals are victims of systemic and ongoing oppression. It can lead to feelings of alienation, despair, low self-esteem, self-destructive behavior and substance abuse. Some gay men, lesbians and bisexuals resort to substance abuse as a means to numb the feelings of being different, to relieve emotional pain or to reduce inhibitions about their sexual feelings.

Substance abuse often begins in early adolescence when youth first begin to struggle with their sexual orientation. When surrounded by messages telling you that you are wrong and sick for who you are, eventually you may begin to believe it. Having to hide your identity and deal with homophobic comments and attitudes — often made by unknowing family and friends — can have a profound effect on you. Lesbians and gay men are also 7 times more likely to be the victims of crimes than the average citizen. In response to this overwhelming oppression and homophobia, many lesbian, gays and bisexuals use alcohol and drugs to cope.

There is also a lack of alternative alcohol-free places and occasions to socialize within the gay or lesbian community. This only intensifies the implied connection between drinking and socializing in gay and lesbian social circles.