

Coming out as an LGBTQI+ person: family experiences (a scoping review)

Marco Correia¹

 orcid.org/0000-0001-5218-3724

José Carlos Santos²

 orcid.org/0000-0003-1574-972X

Luísa D'Espiney³

 orcid.org/0000-0002-9018-0134

¹Enfermeiro Especialista em Enfermagem de Saúde Mental e Psiquiatria; Unidade de Local de Saúde de Castelo Branco; Escola Superior de Saúde Dr. Lopes Dias.

²Professor Doutor na Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Coimbra, ESEnFC

³Professora Doutora na Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Lisboa, ESEL.

Abstract

Introduction

In recent years, the process of coming out as an LGBTQI+ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual / transgender, queer, intersex and others) person has emerged as a phenomenon that has been receiving increasing attention from researchers, both for its impact on family dynamics and mental health.¹⁻⁵

Aim

Considering this premise, and given the lack of research in this field, a scoping review was developed to map the existing evidence regarding the experiences of families of LGBTQI+ people, during the process of disclosing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. To achieve that, the following review question was defined - “What are the experiences of families of LGBTQI+ people, given the phenomenon of coming out?”.

Methods

A PCC (participants, concept, context) methodology, indicated for this type of review, was adopted. Families of LGBTQI+ persons were determined as participants. The concept under analysis in this review underlies their experiences during the coming out phenomenon. Considering that the context of a scoping review can include cultural, community or gender factors, young adults with an LGBTQI+ identity were included in this domain. The search was conducted in five major databases – Medline, CINAHL, Cochrane, Pubmed and APA Psycinfo. The selection, evaluation and data extraction process followed the procedures recommended by the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI). This research project was developed between July 2021 and April 2022 and resulted in the identification of eighty articles, of which only nine were included in the last stage of synthesis.

Results

The analysis of the selected literature led to the emergence of five main themes “a pathway from shock to acceptance”, “coming out, learning about”, “the influence of culture”, “navigating the outside world” and “naturalizing and normalizing”.

Conclusions

The emerged results from the selected articles allow us to conceive coming out as a complex phenomenon, with a significant impact on family dynamics. This transition process influences and is highly influenced by family members and can dramatically impact the mental health of everyone involved. We believe that the evidence mapped in this scoping review will allow the development of future mental health intervention projects within these populations.

Keywords

Sexual and Gender Minorities; Sexuality Disclosure; Family; Life Change Events.

Corresponding Author:

Marco Correia

E-mail: mrmartinscorreia@gmail.com



References

1. Mustanski B, Liu RT. A longitudinal study of predictors of suicide attempts among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. *Arch Sex Behav.* 2013 Apr;42(3):437–48.
2. Montoya RQ, Sánchez-Loyo LM, Correa-Márquez P, Luna-Flores F. Proceso de Aceptación de la Homosexualidad y la Homofobia Asociados a la Conducta Suicida en Varones Homosexuales. *Masculinities and Social Change.* 2015;4(1):1–25.
3. Lucassen MFG, Clark TC, Denny SJ, Fleming TM, Rossen F v., Sheridan J, et al. What has changed from 2001 to 2012 for sexual minority youth in New Zealand? Vol. 51, *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health.* 2015. p. 410–8.
4. Craig SL, Keane G. The Mental Health of Multiethnic Lesbian and Bisexual Adolescent Females: The Role of Self-Efficacy, Stress and Behavioral Risks. *J Gay Lesbian Ment Health.* 2014;18(3):266–83.
5. Correia M, Frazão P, Santos J. Risco Suicidário em Adultos LGBT. In: Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Coimbra, editor. *Prevenção de comportamentos suicidários: Contributos da investigação.* 1st ed. Coimbra: Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Coimbra; 2018. p. 105–15.