

Sex Education and HIV/STI Prevention in LGBTQ Reentry

NATIONAL
LGBTQ
TASK FORCE



LGBTQ people are disproportionately impacted by the mass incarceration epidemic.¹ Transphobia, homophobia, racism, poverty, and experiences of homelessness increase the risk of being targeted by the criminal justice system. As we work to end mass incarceration, it is important to consider the unique needs of LGBTQ people preparing to return to our communities. Currently, most reentry programs do not include sex education or HIV/STI prevention training. The National LGBTQ Task Force and other partner organizations are working with the federal government to integrate a sex education curriculum into the federal reentry education mandate.

Who is affected?

Although high rates of incarceration affect all segments of the LGBTQ population, people of color, transgender people, and LGBTQ youth are among the most likely to come into contact with the criminal justice system.

- The lifetime likelihood of imprisonment for all Black men is 1 in 3, and 1 in 6 for all Latino men.²
- Black and Latina women are also at a high risk for incarceration – 1 in 18 black women and 1 in 45 Latinas have a high risk of imprisonment.³
- 16% of transgender adults have been incarcerated, compared to 2.7% of all adults.⁴
- Experiences of homelessness, poverty, and systemic bias make LGBTQ youth especially vulnerable to detention and incarceration.⁵ 20% of incarcerated youth is LGBTQ, 85% of which are youth of color.⁶
- Girls are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system – and 40% of all incarcerated girls are lesbian, bisexual, queer, and/or gender nonconforming.⁷

Why is sex education and HIV Prevention important in the reentry curriculum?

Reentry programs are designed to ease the process of an individual's return to their home and/or community. Education is a big part of a successful reentry, and it ranges from literacy classes to interpersonal communication skills training.⁸ However, comprehensive sex education and HIV/STI prevention training are currently missing from most reentry program curriculums on both state and federal levels.

- Men who have sex with men (MSM) have the highest risk of contracting STIs.⁹ HIV specifically greatly affects MSM – 57% of people living with HIV in the U.S. are reported to be gay and bisexual men.¹⁰
- Young MSM in the U.S., especially young Black and Latino men are affected disproportionately – approximately 58% of HIV- infected young MSM are Black, and 20% are Latinx.¹¹
- Transgender people and LGBTQ youth in the U.S. also have a heightened risk of exposure to HIV, especially when sharing and reusing needles for hormone injection or drug use.¹²

Prevention of HIV and other STIs for those reentering their communities is challenged by the lack of education, especially among LGBTQ youth.¹³ Adding sex education to the reentry curriculum will increase knowledge about overall STI prevention, testing, and access to healthcare in the larger LGBTQ community.

be you.

References

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