

PEER SUPPORT FOR TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE CLIENTS

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Please find following a summary of a literature search and relevant results. All articles can be provided in full - email library@monashhealth.org for a list of the articles you require.

QUESTION

What are the effects of peer support groups on health outcomes of TGD individuals?

RESULTS

PEER-REVIEWED LITERATURE – MOST RECENT FIRST

Articles are grouped by theme:

- Online support
- Education
- Mental health
- Support group perspectives

Each article summary contains excerpts from the abstract and an online link.

ONLINE SUPPORT

Newman, P. A., et al. (2024). **Effectiveness of an eHealth intervention for reducing psychological distress and increasing COVID-19 knowledge and protective behaviors among racialized sexual and gender minority adults: A quasi-experimental study (#SafeHandsSafeHearts).** *PloS one*, 19(5), e0280710. [Click for full-text.](#)

We demonstrated the effectiveness of a brief, peer-delivered eHealth intervention for racialized LGBTQ+ communities in reducing psychological distress and increasing protective behaviors amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Implementation through community-based organizations by trained peer counselors supports feasibility, acceptability, and the importance of engaging racialized LGBTQ+ communities in pandemic response preparedness.

Berger, M. N., et al. (2022). **Social Media Use and Health and Well-being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth: Systematic Review.** *Journal of medical Internet research*, 24(9), e38449. [Click for full-text.](#)

We found that social media may support the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ youths through peer connection, identity management, and social support, but findings were limited by weaknesses in the evidence.

Selkie, E., et al. (2020). **Transgender Adolescents' Uses of Social Media for Social Support.** *The Journal of adolescent health*, 66(3), 275–280. [Click for full-text.](#)

Social media platforms represent hubs of community for transgender adolescents. These communities provide emotional, appraisal, and informational support that transgender youth may not otherwise be able to access.

Heng, A., et al. (2019). **Clinician and client perspectives regarding transgender health: a North Queensland focus.** *The international journal of transgenderism*, 20(4), 434–446. [Click for full-text.](#)

A collaborative holistic approach to transgender healthcare should be taken by client and clinician to best support the transgender individual during transition. The establishment of Australian guidelines and online peer support groups would facilitate this approach, particularly in rural or regional areas where specialist services are limited.

Ybarra, M. L., et al. (2015). **Online social support as a buffer against online and offline peer and sexual victimization among U.S. LGBT and non-LGBT youth.** *Child abuse & neglect*, 39, 123–136. [Click for full-text.](#)

Perceived quality of social support, either online or in-person, did little to attenuate the relative odds of victimization for LGBT youth. For all youth, in-person social support was associated with reduced odds of bully victimization (online and in-person) and sexual harassment (in-person), but was unrelated to the other outcomes of interest. Online social support did not reduce the odds of any type of victimization assessed.

EDUCATION

Arteaga, R., et al. (2024). **Patient education and surgical decision-making in genital gender-affirming surgery.** *Current opinion in urology*, 34(5), 308–313. [Click for full-text.](#)

Peer support experiences are a critical facilitator for patient surgical decision-making, both for informed decision-making and for psychosocial support.

McNair, R. P., & Bush, R. (2016). **Mental health help seeking patterns and associations among Australian same sex attracted women, trans and gender diverse people: a survey-based study.** *BMC psychiatry*, 16, 209. [Click for full-text.](#)

Peer support is an important adjunct to professional support, however may not be fully meeting the needs of some identity sub-groups. Mental health promotion should be tailored for diverse sub-groups to build mental health literacy and resilience in the face of ongoing discrimination.

MENTAL HEALTH

Bird, K., et al. (2024). **Risk and protective factors for self-harm thoughts and behaviours in transgender and gender diverse people: A systematic review.** *Heliyon*, 10(5), e26074. [Click for full-text.](#)

Encouraging TGD people to utilise and foster existing support networks, family/parent and peer support groups, and creating safe, supportive school environments may be critical for self-harm and suicide prevention strategies.

Kia, H., et al. (2023). **"Nowhere else to be found": Drawing on peer support experiences among transgender and gender-diverse people to substantiate community-driven gender-affirming care.** *Social science & medicine (1982)*, 339, 116406. [Request full-text.](#)

Our findings suggest, broadly, that TGD peers may enhance gender-affirming care by: (1) validating a growing diversity of embodiments and experiences in healthcare decision-making, (2) nurturing and diversifying relevant networks of safety, community support, and advocacy outside formal systems of care, and (3) strengthening possibilities for resisting and transforming existing healthcare systems.

Kia, H., et al. (2023). **“It saves lives”**: Peer support and resilience in transgender and gender diverse communities. *SSM – Qualitative Research in Health*, 3, 100264. [Click for full-text.](#)

Our findings are organized into four interrelated themes that both represent the constituent parts of peer support, and that explicate the connections between peer support and resilience. These include: (1) becoming visible to connect with similar others, (2) sharing embodiment, experience, and space, (3) constructing possibilities of being and collectivizing, and (4) surviving and thriving (at a cost). We leverage our findings to consider implications for research, policy, and practice

Dowers, E., et al. (2020). **Trans, gender diverse and non-binary adult experiences of social support: A systematic quantitative literature review.** *International journal of transgender health*, 21(3), 242–257. [Click for full-text.](#)

Social support was commonly reported as a protective factor, with TGDNB peer support the most frequently reported correlate of health and well-being for TGDNB adults.

Johnson, A.H., et al. (2020). **“We're the Normal Ones Here”**: Community Involvement, Peer Support, and Transgender Mental Health. *Sociological Inquiry*, 90, 271-292. [Request full-text.](#)

The study builds on existing research that suggests that trans community involvement and peer support among trans people enhance mental health experiences and moderate the effects of stigma and discrimination on health outcomes.

Williams, S. M., et al. (2018). **Exploring lived experience in gender and sexual minority suicide attempt survivors.** *The American journal of orthopsychiatry*, 88(6), 691–700. [Request full-text.](#)

Moreover, there is a need for mental health, crisis, and support resources and services tailored for GSM individuals that emphasize the importance of peer support in healing and recovery after a suicide attempt and in preventing future suicidal behavior.

Bockting, W. O., et al. (2013). **Stigma, mental health, and resilience in an online sample of the US transgender population.** *American journal of public health*, 103(5), 943–951. [Click for full-text.](#)

Respondents had a high prevalence of clinical depression (44.1%), anxiety (33.2%), and somatization (27.5%). Social stigma was positively associated with psychological distress. Peer support (from other transgender people) moderated this relationship.

SUPPORT GROUP PERSPECTIVES

Worrell, S., et al. (2024). **'It feels meaningful': How informal mental health caregivers in an LGBTQ community interpret their work and their role.** *Culture, health & sexuality*, 26(6), 808–823. [Click for full-text.](#)

Recognising the meanings that LGBTQ caregivers derive from helping fellow community members provides useful information service providers and policymakers seeking to better address mental distress in LGBTQ communities and support caregivers.

Klotzbaugh, R., & Fawcett, J. (2023). **Gender Minority Persons' Perceptions of Peer-Led Support Groups: A Roy Adaptation Model Interpretation.** *ANS. Advances in nursing science*, 46(1), 59–74. [Click for full-text.](#)

The purpose of this study was to identify gender minority peoples' perceptions of their experiences in a peer-led support group. The themes were then interpreted within the context of Roy's Adaptation Model.

Worrell, S., et al. (2023). **Coping with the stress of providing mental health-related informal support to peers in an LGBTQ context.** *Culture, health & sexuality*, 25(8), 991–1006. [Request full-text.](#)

Thus, we conclude that LGBTQ people providing informal support to peers should be better assisted to do so, in ways that acknowledge the diversity of support provided in LGBTQ communities.

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Worrell, S., et al. (2023). **Coping with the stress of providing mental health-related informal support to peers in an LGBTQ context.** *Culture, health & sexuality*, 25(8), 991–1006. [Request full-text.](#)

Drawing on interviews with 25 LGBTQ people in Melbourne, Australia, we consider how community members being 'leant on' engage in self-care practices and seek help from their communities to cope with the stress of their support roles. We demonstrate that participants' ways of coping, even when similar, can vary in effectiveness and often come with limitations. Thus, we conclude that LGBTQ people providing informal support to peers should be better assisted to do so, in ways that acknowledge the diversity of support provided in LGBTQ communities.

Lawlis, S. M., et al. (2020). **Evaluating transgender youth and parent interest and preferences regarding support groups.** *Global pediatric health*, 7, 2333794X20954680. [Click for full-text.](#)

Both groups endorsed benefits of a support group, including help with managing school issues, learning about local resources for transgender teens, and providing peer support. Both groups indicated “no time” as the most common potential barrier to attendance. Both groups expressed moderate interest in support groups, with minor differences between youths and parents noted in preferred support group structure. Further examination is warranted to determine optimal support group characteristics aimed specifically at parents and, separately, for youth.

Willging, C. E., et al. (2016). **Coaching mental health peer advocates for rural LGBTQ people.** *Journal of gay & lesbian mental health*, 20(3), 214–236. [Click for full-text.](#)

We concluded that peer advocacy for LGBTQ people with mental distress offers an affirmative, community-based strategy to assist the underserved. To be successful, however, peer advocates will likely require ongoing training, coaching, and infrastructural support to negotiate contextual factors that can influence provision of community resources and support to LGBTQ people within rural communities.

APPENDIX

SEARCH METHODOLOGY

A systematic search was conducted for literature. The results were screened by librarians using [Covidence](#).

SEARCH LIMITS

- English language

DATABASES SEARCHED

- Medline – index of peer reviewed articles across health sciences and medicine.
- Embase – index of biomed and pharmacological peer reviewed journal articles.
- Emcare – index of nursing, allied health, critical-care medicine and more.
- Cochrane Library – collection of databases containing high-quality independent evidence.

SEARCH TERMS

Concept	MeSH headings	Keywords
Peer support	[No relevant MeSH term]	Peer(s) [within 3 words of] Support(s)(ed)(ing); Assist(s)(ed)(ing); Counsel(s)(ed)(ing); Mentor(s)(ed)(ing); Guide(s); Guidance; Network(s)(ed)(ing) Lived Experience Worker(s); Lived experience employee(s); Lived experience support; Lived experience assistance
Transgender and Non-Binary	Transgender Persons; Gender-Nonconforming Persons	Transgender*; Trans-m?n; Trans m?n; Trans-male*; Trans male*; Trans- wom?n; Transwom?n; Trans-fem*; Transfem*; Trans-masc*; Transmasc*; Gender divers*; Non binary; Non-binary; Gender- Nonconform*; Gender Nonconform*; TGD; TGDNB

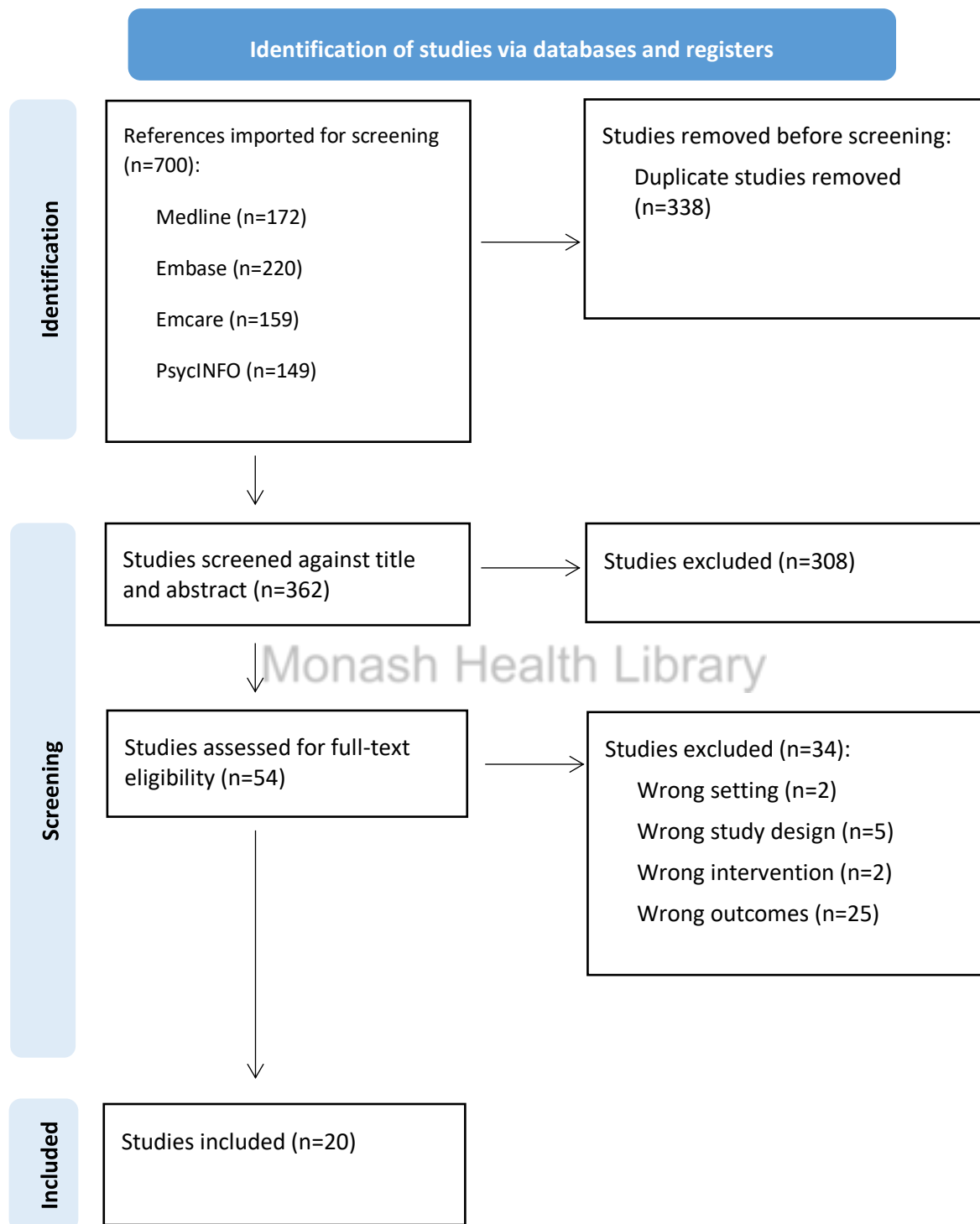
MEDLINE SEARCH STRATEGY

Ovid MEDLINE(R) ALL <1946 to October 10, 2024>

- 1 (peer* adj3 (support* or assist* or counsel* or mentor* or guide* or guidance or network*)).tw,kf. 16571
- 2 (lived Experience Worker* or lived experience employee* or lived experience support or lived experience assistance).tw,kf. 15
- 3 1 or 2 16583
- 4 (transgender* or trans-m?n or trans m?n or trans-male* or trans male* or trans-wom?n or transwom?n or trans-fem* or transfem* or trans-masc* or transmasc* or gender divers* or non binary or non-binary or Gender-Nonconform* or Gender Nonconform* or TGD or TGDNB).tw,kf. 25951
- 5 Transgender Persons/ or Gender-Nonconforming Persons/ 8109
- 6 4 or 5 26833
- 7 3 and 6 172

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