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SECTION 16.
PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY

SECTION 17.
MEDICAL SCIENCES AND PUBLIC HEALTH

SECTION 16.
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I'M NOT BROKEN: LIFE OF LGBT TEENAGERS IN THE ABSENCE OF FAMILY ACCEPTANCE

Anatation: *The article examines the psychological consequences of the absence of family acceptance for adolescents who identify as members of the LGBT community. The emotional, behavioral, and psychosomatic reactions of adolescents in the context of stigmatization, condemnation, and rejection by loved ones are analyzed. Special attention is paid to the phenomenon of the "chosen family," the role of psychotherapy, online communities, and the school environment in the adaptation of adolescents. Based on a survey and analysis of interviews, the author outlines the typical requests, experiences, and resources of adolescents in crisis conditions. Visual materials reflecting the internal state of the respondents are presented. Recommendations are proposed for adults who can play the role of a supportive environment.*

Object of Article: Mental health of LGBT adolescents.

Subject of Article: Psychological consequences of family rejection in LGBT adolescents and factors contributing to their adaptation and self-preservation.

Aim of the Article: To identify the emotional, behavioral, and psychosomatic characteristics of LGBT adolescents in the context of family rejection, as well as to outline effective sources of support and adaptive mechanisms.

Relevance of the Topic: In modern society, an increasing number of adolescents openly declare their sexual or gender identity; however, many of them face condemnation, rejection, and denial from their families. This creates a significant risk to the mental health, self-esteem formation, socialization, and safety of such adolescents. The issue of supporting LGBT youth, especially in the context

of the family environment, requires in-depth interdisciplinary study and practical solutions. The topic is extremely relevant for Ukraine, where LGBT adolescents are often left defenseless against the pressure of social norms that do not take their identity into account. The article not only raises an important social issue but also proposes options for its practical resolution.

Introduction

Adolescence is a complex and crucial stage in personality development, especially for LGBT adolescents who face social, psychological, and existential challenges. "Rejection" is not just the absence of support, but often a deep trauma that shapes internal conflicts, feelings of isolation, and threatens mental health. In light of the growing attention to the issues of LGBT youth worldwide, it is important to investigate how rejection manifests itself, what consequences it entails, and what resources and methods of help can effectively support adolescents during this critical period.

What "Rejection" Means for a Teenager

The concept of "rejection" for an LGBT teenager has not only a social, but also a profound existential dimension. The idea of coming out as a step towards freedom often clashes with a radical reaction from the family, where this step may be perceived as "betrayal," "shame," or even a "disease." Such a reaction undermines the teenager's basic sense of security, as they risk losing support that includes psychological, material, and physical aspects [1], [2].

How teenagers themselves experience this is well illustrated by a quote from one respondent from Germany:

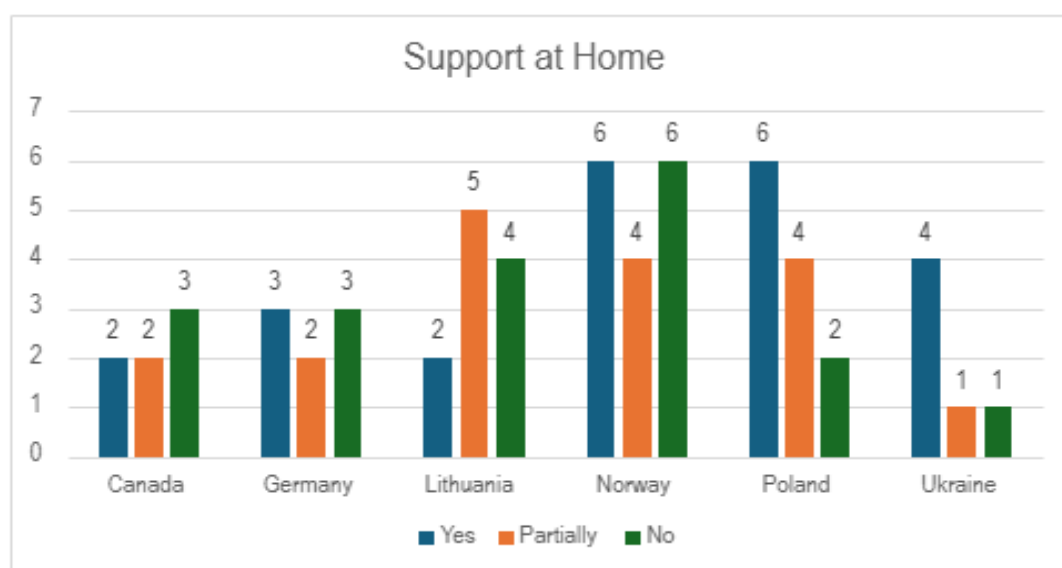"My mom said I am a disappointment. For the first time, I realized that I no longer have a home."

Diagram №1

In diagram №1, the following indicators are demonstrated:

Canada:

In Canada, the levels of "Yes" and "Partially" are the same (2), while the level of "No" is slightly higher (3). This indicates a relatively balanced distribution of responses, with a slight predominance of negative answers.

Germany:

Similar to Canada, Germany has equal numbers for "Yes" and "No" (3), with a slightly lower level of "Partially" (2). Here, too, there is a balanced distribution, but with more positive and negative responses compared to partial support.

Lithuania:

In Lithuania, the level of "Partially" is significantly higher (5) compared to "Yes" (2) and "No" (4). This suggests that partial support prevails in Lithuania, with fewer responses expressing full support or its absence.

Norway:

In Norway, the highest numbers are for "Yes" and "No" (6), and a moderate level for "Partially" (4). This indicates a polarization of opinions: a significant portion of respondents express either full support or none at all, with fewer expressing partial support.

Poland:

Poland shows a similar picture to Norway, with high levels of "Yes" (6) and "Partially" (4), but a lower level of "No" (2). However, unlike Norway, the "No" level in Poland is much lower than the "Yes" level, indicating an overall tendency towards support.

Ukraine:

Ukraine displays the lowest levels of "Partially" and "No" (1), and a moderate level of "Yes" (4). This suggests that most respondents express full support, while partial support and its absence are of minimal significance.

General Conclusions:

The chart shows significant differences in the levels of support at home among different countries. In some countries (such as Canada and Germany), there is a relatively balanced distribution of responses, while in others (such as Norway and Poland), polarized opinions prevail. Lithuania stands out with a large number of responses indicating partial support, while in Ukraine, full support predominates with a minimal number of negative responses [3].
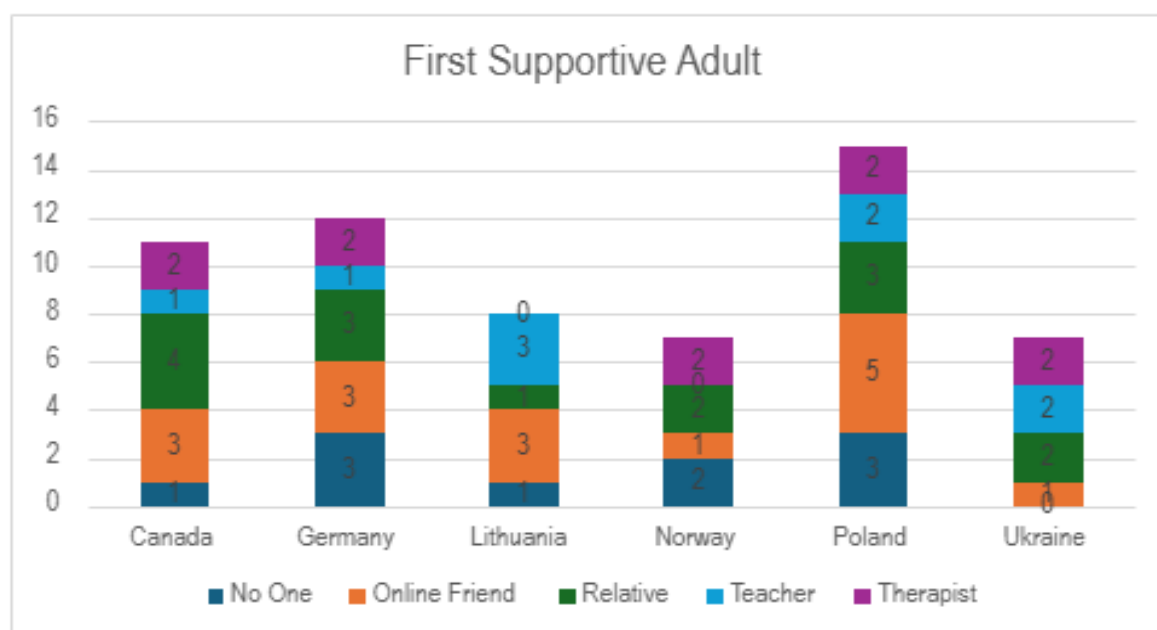
First Supportive Adult

Diagram №2

Where LGBT Teenagers Seek Shelter: Resources for LGBT Youth

After losing family support, LGBT teenagers look for alternative sources of safety, including:

Chosen family - groups of close friends, mentors, and supportive adults who accept them and provide emotional support [9].

Online communities, where young people can find understanding and acceptance without the risk of judgment or discrimination [10].

Psychotherapy, which becomes the first space where they can safely express themselves and work through trauma [11].Research data confirm that in countries with lower levels of family support (Canada, Lithuania), therapy and support groups effectively replace family, creating a sense of belonging and safety [9].

What Can Help: Survey Results

Support, even partial, is crucial for the mental health of LGBT teenagers. For example, in Ukraine, only one in six people did not receive support, whereas in Canada this number is higher. Partial acceptance correlates with reduced social isolation and improved emotional well-being [3].

The key point is that even one accepting person-whether a family member, friend, or educator-can significantly impact a teenager's life by reducing the risks of mental disorders and improving quality of life [12], [13].
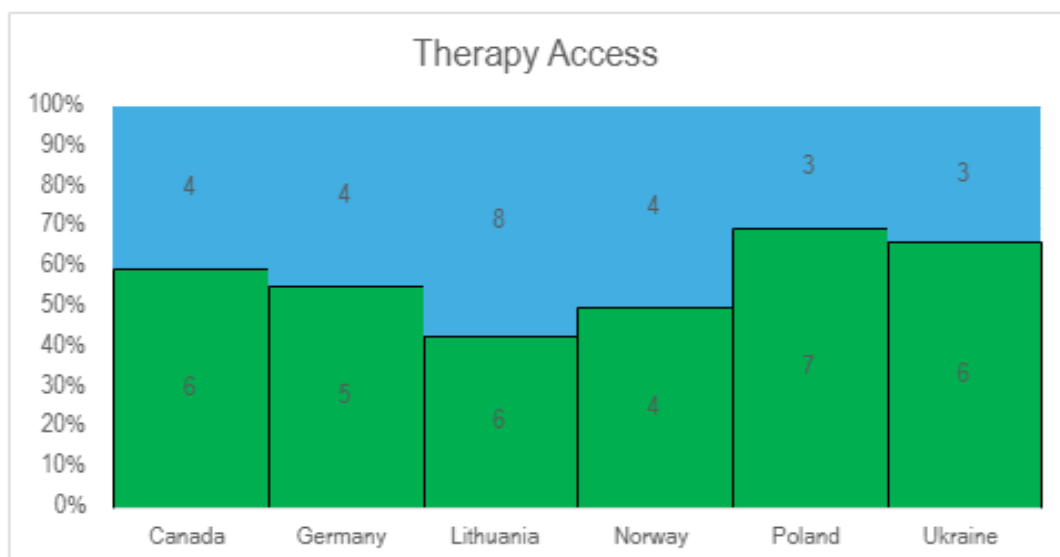
Diargam №3

Art Therapy Block

Art therapy is recognized as one of the most effective ways for LGBTQ+ adolescents to express complex emotions [14][15]. It allows for the symbolic regaining of control over emotions and contributes to the formation of a new identity.

One of the participants in a therapy group in Kyiv confessed, "I didn't disappear—I was dissipating, and then I gathered myself again," while painting herself as smoke transitioning into light. Exercises such as "Me—Before and After Rejection," "Shadow and Light Within Me," and "My Body Speaks" help to understand and transform inner experiences [14].

General Context:

The graph displays the percentage of respondents in each country who have access to therapy (green portion of the bar) and those who do not (blue portion of the bar).

Description by Country:

Canada: Approximately 60% of respondents have access to therapy, while 40% do not.

Germany: Slightly more than 50% of respondents have access to therapy, and almost 50% do not.

Lithuania: The lowest rate of therapy access is less than 50%, and the highest percentage of those without access is over 50%.

Norway: Exactly 50% of respondents have access to therapy, and 50% do not.
Poland: The highest rate of therapy access is about 70%, and 30% of those who do not have access.

Ukraine: Slightly more than 60% of respondents have access to therapy, and slightly less than 40% do not.

General Conclusions:

Access to therapy varies between countries. Poland has the best access rate, while Lithuania has the worst. Access rates in Canada, Germany, Norway, and Ukraine are at a moderate level.
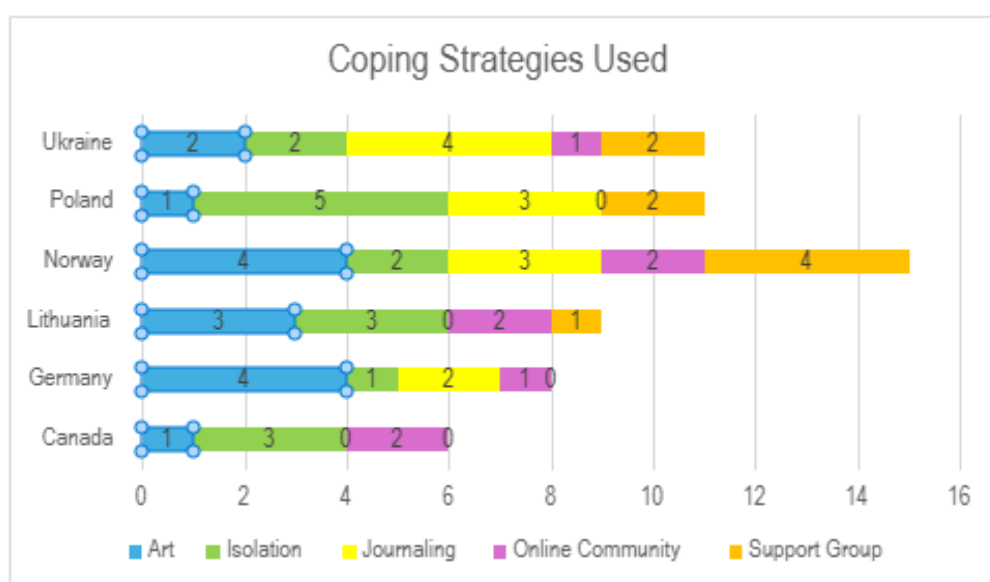

Diagram №4

General Context:

The graph displays the number of respondents in each country who use different coping strategies. The strategies include: Art, Isolation, Journaling, Online Community, Support Group

Description by Country:

Canada: Isolation is the most used strategy (3 respondents), followed by Online Community (2 respondents) and Art (1 respondent). Journaling and Support Groups are not used.

Germany: Art is the most used strategy (4 respondents), followed by Journaling (2 respondents), Isolation and Online Community (1 respondent each). Support Groups are not used.

Lithuania: Art and Isolation have the same amount of usage (3 respondents each), followed by Online Community (2 respondents) and Support Group (1 respondent). Journaling is not used.

Norway: Support Groups and Art are the most used strategies (4 respondents each), followed by Journaling (3 respondents), Isolation and Online Community (2 respondents each).

Poland: Isolation is the most used strategy (5 respondents), followed by Journaling (3 respondents), Support Groups (2 respondents) and Art (1 respondent). Online Communities are not used.

Ukraine: Journaling is the most used strategy (4 respondents), followed by Art and Support Groups (2 respondents each), Isolation and Online Community (1 respondent each).

General Conclusions:

Coping strategies vary depending on the country. Isolation, Art, and Journaling are popular in many countries, while Online Communities and Support Groups have less consistency in usage.

Practical Recommendations:

For Parents: Listen to your child without judgment or criticism. "Active listening is the foundation of support, helping adolescents feel heard and understood, reducing the risks of depression and anxiety" [1]. One study emphasizes: "Psychological support from parents contributes to the formation of positive self-esteem in LGBT youth" [2]. If you cannot accept, at least refrain from humiliation and insults. "Even a neutral stance without humiliation significantly reduces traumatic impact and lowers the likelihood of self-harm" [4]. Researchers indicate that "the absence of aggression from loved ones creates space for further trust-building" [5].

For Teachers: Openly speak about the rights and respect for all students regardless of their identity. "Educational programs that emphasize human rights and inclusion reduce instances of bullying and discrimination in schools" [6]. As the authors note, "open discussion promotes the formation of a culture of respect among students" [7]. Create a safe school environment. "The presence of supportive programs and safe spaces improves the psychological well-being and enhances the academic achievements of LGBT adolescents" [8]. "Psychological safety in the learning environment is associated with lower rates of anxiety and depression" [9].

For Adolescents: Remember—you are not alone. "Supportive communities create a sense of belonging, reduce isolation, and help build resilience" [10]. "Having like-minded people is an important component of emotional recovery" [11]. Your feelings matter. "Recognizing and accepting one's own emotions is a key factor in mental health and personal development" [12]. Asking for help is strength, not weakness. "Seeking support demonstrates inner strength and an active stance in overcoming difficulties" [13]. As experts emphasize, "asking for help is about responsibility for oneself, not about weakness" [14]. "Psychotherapy and support reduce the risks of suicidal thoughts and improve quality of life" [15][16].

Conclusion

Support for LGBT adolescents from family, school, and communities is a key factor in their mental health and social adaptation. Even minimal acceptance significantly reduces the risks of depression, isolation, and suicidal thoughts. Practical recommendations for parents, teachers, and the adolescents themselves help to create a safe and supportive environment. Acknowledging feelings and willingness to ask for help contribute to emotional recovery and personal growth. Thus, everyone can make a significant contribution to the lives of LGBT youth, supporting them in their search for identity and self-realization.

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