Resilience and Brilliance: LGBTQIA+ Persons of Color

"Perhaps the mission of an artist is to interpret beauty to people - the beauty within themselves."

LANGSTON HUGHES

Being a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/ally/advocate (LGBTQIA+) person of color (POC) is something to be proud of and confident in. Know that your life experiences are valuable, and your insight is much needed. Leveraging our strengths, talents, and perspectives, many LGBTQIA+ POC have significantly contributed to the betterment of society.

While there are many benefits to being LGBQIA+, unfortunately, LGBTQIA+ POC often experience traumatic events that are based in homophobic, transphobic, sexist, racist, and/or xenophobic attitudes and beliefs. Additionally, historical, and generational trauma are particularly relevant for LGBTQIA+ POC communities. The LGBTQIA+ POC community has been subjected to hate crimes, police brutality, discriminatory laws and policies, and xenophobia. For example, research shows that LGBT persons are more likely to experience sexual assault and domestic violence than their heterosexual and/or cisgender counterparts. Similarly, Black transgender individuals are more likely to be physically attacked compared to those of other races and ethnicities. Yet, despite this history, there are many practitioners and organizations that center on LGBTQIA+ POC culturally relevant healing.

Find and Celebrate Your Pride: As members of the LGBTQIA+ POC community, we are each valuable, worthy of love and acceptance, and deserve to be treated with fairness and respect. Healing from trauma is possible, and we can support each other on our healing journeys. We are not alone.

Pride Organizations and Communities: Connecting with others is a powerful way to heal from trauma and, at the same time, gain pride, self-empowerment, and friendships. LGBTQIA+ POC can connect with other people who have had similar life experiences, and who share common interests and values. Where can we find and connect with similar folks? Surprisingly, there are various organizations and events that are specifically geared towards LGBTQIA+ POC nationally and locally. Searching for groups and organizations in your local community can connect you with other people who are fostering community and connectedness.

Connect With a Mentor: Finding a mentor can also be extremely beneficial during times of struggle and triumph. Mentors may be able to draw on their own experience and share: how they navigated and overcame obstacles in their life; how they coped with racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia; and how they infuse joy, happiness, and love in their lives. For example, research has shown that Black gay men found that having Black gay mentors was a positive source of emotional support and professional guidance. Therefore, some of the same spaces that you find connection and community, like pride organizations, can be the same place where you find mentors.

Seek Counseling: Another way of healing may be to find a licensed therapist. Given that there are many specific and complex experiences that we encounter as LGBTIA+ POC, it can feel that there are few people who genuinely or personally understand us. See here for tips on what to look for in a therapist. Finding a trained mental health professional who understands the unique experiences of LGBTQIA+ people of color, can be especially rewarding as they can help you heal and assisting you to realize your strengths, abilities, and inherent power.

Resilience and Brilliance: Regardless of the path you choose, healing, wellness, and happiness is possible! For more information on interpersonal trauma, violence, and abuse, *see* here. To learn about collective trauma, *see* this. To learn more about how to heal and thrive, *go to* here.