

Use of Psychotherapy Support among LGBTIQ+ Individuals in Harare, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This original study explored the psychotherapy experiences of LGBTIQ+ individuals in Harare, Zimbabwe. Employing purposive and snowball sampling, twelve participants were selected to provide in-depth insights. Data collection methods included "draw, write and tell" techniques and face-to-face interviews, allowing participants to express their experiences creatively and verbally, while the reflective journal allowed the researcher to record their thoughts as they gather data and collect data that they deemed significant during the course of the study. Findings revealed that participants were frustrated with the current psychotherapy practices in Harare deeming them too rigid in dealing with the plight of LGBTIQ+ persons, and highlighted Affirmative Therapy as an efficacious alternative. The study shares the experiences of LGBTIQ+ individuals seeking mental healthcare services in Harare indicating that they experience stigma and discrimination, lack of cultural competence among mental healthcare providers, traditional therapeutic approaches failing to address their needs, and their desire for affirming therapy practices. Recommendations include mandatory cultural competence training for mental health professionals, integration of affirmative therapy into mainstream mental health practices, policy reforms to promote non-discriminatory practices in healthcare settings and further research on the mental health needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals in rural areas.