

LGBT

4 OUR HEALTH

A LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER HEALTH NEWSLETTER

EXAMINING ALCOHOLISM IN THE QUEER COMMUNITY

By Leah Stampe

Rates of alcoholism are shown to be on the rise today, especially amongst young people and people in the LGBT community. The exact reasons for these increases are not known, but there are theories about what could be causing LGBT youth to turn to alcohol in increasing numbers.

Homophobia, both internal and external, is the basis of one theory. People in the LGBT community experience a large amount of prejudice and persecution in today's society, and this homophobia can become internalized. This self-hatred and prejudice can then lead people to turn to substances, such as alcohol and other drugs, as a form of self medicating.

Another aspect of the LGBT community that influences the rate of consumption of alcohol is that of the bar culture. In the early years of the LGBT movement, bars were often the only places that people could go to meet each other. During the 1950s and earlier, going to gay bars was extremely dangerous, but it was the only way LGBT people could be themselves for at least one evening a week. While other social outlets are more available now, bars still remain the only

outlet for some LGBT people.

Additionally, the historic roots and escapism keep the bar scene a central social aspect of queer culture. Alcohol can be the center of many social gatherings, both gay and straight, but LGBT people's reliance on places that sell alcohol for most of their interactions with other members of the community can be detrimental and can breed alcohol abuse and alcoholism. In an effort to tap in to LGBT dollars, brewers have recently started gearing some of their advertising to the LGBT community through national publications.

College-aged LGBT people can be even more at risk. The college drinking culture encourages binge drinking. This is especially true at OU where there are 22 bars in the uptown area of Athens.

The first six weeks of freshman year can be the critical time period in determining how students will

function through the rest of college, and this is the time that can determine if a student is going to develop a drinking problem. Alcoholism in college can lead to many problems such as vandalism, violence, sexual aggression, death, academic problems, and especially unsafe sex.



According to the National Council for Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCAADD), alcoholism is a chronic disease that results in impaired control over drinking, preoccupation with alcohol, use of alcohol despite the consequences, distortion of thinking, and denial. Genetics and the environment can both influence the development of alcoholism.

There are also physical consequences for heavy or excessive drinking. Some of these possible health problems are liver disease, heart disease, nervous disorders and certain types of cancer such as pancreatitis.

There are, however, ways that we can help reduce the numbers of people in our community that have alcohol dependencies. One is education. We must teach our youth the effects and consequences of alcohol and alcoholism. We must also teach prevention strategies, such as reducing the number of drinks you have at one sitting, or reducing the number of nights in a week that you will drink. **Continued on pg. 3**

IN THIS ISSUE:

STI EXPOSE: GONORRHEA	2
TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE	2
PLANNED PARENTHOOD SERVICES	3
DEVELOPING AN EXERCISE PROGRAM	3

COMING OUT: A SUPPORT NETWORK IS IMPORTANT

By Doug Cloud

I will always remember coming out as one of the most exciting and difficult times of my life. Looking back, I can remember how difficult some things were and just how serious life seemed. I have come to see those days as the beginning of a great adventure and the start of a more open and honest life.

Some may not remember their coming out process in such a positive light. For many of us, coming out is tantamount to going through a meat grinder. Some will emerge as very different people with more baggage

than anyone can carry alone.

To make coming out easier, it is critical to have a strong support network during this difficult time. Friends, family, co-workers, and even neighbors can all serve in this capacity. Your support should be positive, nurturing, knowledgeable, and readily available. Supportive relationships should also be platonic.

Even with a strong support network, it may be helpful to seek professional help. The OU Counseling and Psychological Services offers free up to 13 sessions to Ohio University

students. Seeing a therapist does not mean that a person is "sick" or "damaged" but it can help change someone's life for the better.

Few of us were raised with access to knowledge about LGBT people and history. Now is the time to educate oneself and learn the truth about LGBT people. The LGBT Programs Center has a resource library with hundreds of books available for checkout.

Finally, remember that things are probably only going to get easier. Make mistakes, stay strong, and hang in there.

STI EXPOSE: GONORRHEA

By Sara Mosher

What is Gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea, commonly called “the clap” or “the drip,” is a bacterial infection affecting the vagina, penis, throat, anus, urethra or cervix. In the United States, 600,000 men and women are affected by this STI every year. Easy to treat and completely curable, gonorrhea sounds like a simple annoyance, but the real danger is failure to detect or to treat this potentially harmful infection.

What are the Symptoms?

Unfortunately, 10% of men and 80% of women show no symptoms, making detection very difficult. Even worse, the symptoms in men, while noticeable if they occur, are often mild, only occur in the morning, and are easily ignored. Symptoms for men include discharge from the penis, burning or pain

during urination, and more frequent urination than usual. Women’s symptoms also include discharge, painful urination, and frequent urination, but abdominal pain, fever, bleeding between menstrual cycles, swelling or tenderness of the vulva, painful intercourse, and vomiting can also occur.

How is Gonorrhea Transferred?

Gonorrhea is transferred through vaginal, anal, and oral intercourse by a partner infected in his or her throat, vagina, urethra or anus. If left untreated, gonorrhea can spread and become a Pelvic Inflammatory Disease, possibly causing infertility in both men and women.

What’s the Good News?

Unlike many STIs, Gonorrhea is easy to treat. Simple antibiotics can clear up an infection. When a sexually active person is

treated for gonorrhea their partner should also be treated since gonorrhea often has no symptoms and re-infection can occur.

How can I get Tested?

Hudson Student Health Services offers gonorrhea testing for both men and women. The test costs \$26 and results come back within a few days. Procedures are simple; a swab is taken from the urethra in males and from the cervix in females. Pap smears in Hudson include this service, but *most clinics do not include a gonorrhea test with a pap smear.*

Gonorrhea tests are available by *request only* in most cases. “I see that with students all the time, they come in with symptoms and say, “But I was just tested!” and I ask, “For what?” They don’t know!” – Lauren Gillian, Student Health Services staff member.

TRANSGENDER: A HEALTH TRANSITION

By Elliot Long

Many obstacles stand in the way for transgender people to maintain regular health check-ups, and it is often easier to just avoid doctor visits altogether. A large percentage of trans people have experienced insensitivity to their concerns and transgender status while in the hands of medical professionals, and it makes it very difficult to go back.

Also, it is difficult to find physicians who are knowledgeable about trans-specific health concerns, not to mention the difficulties of dealing with health insurance companies. However, avoiding the doctor can be very dangerous to one’s health.

The most important step to staying in good health is to be knowledgeable about the major health risks for transgender people.

These risks depend on several things, namely whether or not a person is on Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) and what kind of Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) a person has undergone. These risks can be seen from the chart below.

Also, it is important to find a good physician who is knowledgeable about and respectful of trans issues. Easy ways to find trans-friendly physicians is by networking with other trans people either in person or online, checking with Harry-Benjamin (www.hbigda.org) for their listing of medical professionals, checking out local resource centers and searching the internet.

While it may be difficult and frustrating to find decent healthcare, it is vital to maintain regular check-ups to stay in good health before, during, after, or regardless of physically transitioning.

HEALTH SPOTLIGHT: THE FARMACY



The Farmacy is a locally-owned health food store and deli on East Stimson Avenue. They sell organic and locally grown food, environmentally-friendly health necessities, vitamins, spices and herbs, free trade organic coffee, gifts and much more!

If you are vegetarian, vegan or just into really good food from a locally-owned business, this place is definitely one to check out! The deli serves soup, sandwiches, and salads Monday through Saturday 11 AM - 5 PM.

Store Hours: Monday through Saturday
9:30AM - 6:00 PM

Visit the Farmacy on the web at:

<http://www.45701.com/farmacy/>

Transgender Health Needs

	Always applicable	Pre-hormones Pre-surgery	After hormones	After surgery
Male-to-Female (MTF)	Prostrate exams Sigmoidoscopies	Routine testicular examinations	Breast exams Mammograms	Clinical vaginal examinations Pap smear
Female-to-Male (FTM)	Breast exams Mammograms Sigmoidoscopies	Examination of uterus and ovaries	Blood pressure, cholesterol Heart health	Breast exams (though not as often) Clinical penis exams

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OFFERS SERVICES FOR LGBT PEOPLE

By Megan Snow

“Promoting the reproductive rights and responsibilities, as well as the health of residents through education, advocacy, and accessible services” is the motto of Planned Parenthood of Southeast Ohio, an organization dedicated to the sexual and reproductive health of our region.

Kate Hubner, Director for Educational Outreach, said, “We offer various services to LGBT individuals.” Planned Parenthood performs gynecological exams (pap smears, breast & pelvic exams), testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), mid-life services, which includes counseling and management of menopausal symptoms,

and Male Health Services.

Planned Parenthood of Southeast Ohio also offers anonymous and confidential HIV testing with counseling. Recently they added the new Rapid 20 Minute HIV Test with a counseling session.

Recently the Athens PPSEO Clinic added the new Rapid 20 Minute HIV Test with a counseling session.

Confidential testing means that the results of the test will be put into a patient’s chart but will be protected by doctor-client privilege, whereas with *anonymous* testing there is no identifying information linked to the test result.

In order to provide accessible care for all, Planned Parenthood bills based on a sliding fee scale and offers discounts for Ohio University students. A patient can call before an appointment and receive an estimate of their bill at the time.

Planned Parenthood of Southeast Ohio’s Athens Health Center is located near campus

at 280 East State Street. It is open Monday 8:30-5:00p.m., Tuesday 10:00-6:00p.m., Wednesday through Friday 8:30-5:00p.m. Call 740.593.6979 or 1.800.604.9831 to set an appointment or for more details. Additional info is available at www.ppseo.org.



DEVELOPING AN EXERCISE PROGRAM IS TO SUCCESS

By Doug Cloud

Before creating an exercise plan, you must have attainable goals that can be reached through healthy levels of exercise. It is also strongly advised that you consult a physician.

If you attend Ohio University, the Ping Recreation Center offers a variety of services that include fitness sessions, fitness assessments, and even personal fitness training. However, there may be some moderate cost involved.



You may decide that you want to plan and maintain your own fitness regimen. If this is the case, you will be responsible for challenging yourself—plan carefully. Exercise can be an utterly relaxing and healthy activity; but that does not mean it is always easy to maintain. Here are a few hints that might help with maintaining a constant routine:

-The key to developing a habit is positive reinforcement. In addition to being a challenge, your exercise routine should also be enjoyable and satisfying.

-Set a time and place that are both relaxing and convenient. If you feel strained for

time or uncomfortable with your surroundings, you probably will not enjoy your exercise sessions.

-Some people prefer solitude when they exercise, but many people enjoy having

an exercise partner who will help with motivation and add another level of enjoyment to the experience.

-When you are scheduling your week, plan the important things first. Exercise and health are paramount, and they should take priority.

-Stretching might seem like a given; but many abandon the practice to save time. Stretch every time before and after. No exceptions. Regular stretching will help prevent injury and soreness and help you become more flexible.

-Finally, be persistent and flexible. Sometimes routines do not work out on the first try and need to be adjusted. Finding your exercise niche can take time. Be patient.

ALCOHOLISM ~ continued from pg 1

Another preventative strategy is to create other places for LGBT people to socialize that does not center around the consumption of alcohol or other illegal substances.

If you or someone you know has issues with alcohol or other drug dependence and needs help, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services either in person on the third floor of Hudson Health Center or by phone at 740.593.1616. If you need ideas on how to approach a friend or loved one about their alcohol or other drug use, you can also meet with Mickey Hart in the LGBT Programs Center for resources. Call 740.593.0239 or email lgbt@ohio.edu to arrange a meeting.

Visit us on the web at
<http://www.ohiou.edu/lgbt>



OHIO
UNIVERSITY

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
Programs Center

314 Baker University Center

Phone: 740.593-0239

Email: lgbt@ohio.edu

4 OUR Health

Editor: Elliot Long

Publisher: Mickey Hart

Fall 2005

MISSION

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Programs Center advances the missions of Ohio University and the Division of Student Affairs by serving people of all sexual orientations and gender identities as individuals and as groups. We are committed to fostering human development and cultivating an inclusive, open, and supportive community through education, support, collaboration, and advocacy at Ohio University and beyond.

4 O U R H E A L T H ~ 4 Y O U R L I F E T I M E

HUDSON HEALTH CENTER

Student Health Services 593-4730

Counseling & Psychological Services 593-1616

Health Education & Wellness 593-4742

THANKS FOR PICKING US UP, NOW KEEP IN TOUCH!

We hope you like this issue of *4 OUR Health!* Please write us and let us know what you think and what you want to see more or less of. Remember this resource is here to provide for your needs and concerns while adhering to the mission of the LGBT Center and the most current information available to us. We want to make sure that you are given the best information and facts so that you can make informed and sound decisions concerning your life and your health.

If we are not providing what you need, we want to know about it. And if we are providing what you need, we want to know about it. Any way it goes, we would really appreciate your input and ideas. We can be reached by telephone at 740.593.0239 or by email at lgbt@ohio.edu.