

Challenges Faced by LGBTQA+ Female Service

Members and Veterans

LGBTQA+ female service members and veterans represent a unique demographic within both the military and veteran populations. While progress has been made, these individuals often face significant discrimination, healthcare, mental health, and social acceptance challenges.

Despite repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in 2011¹, many LGBTQA+ service members still experience discrimination and harassment. A 2020 study found that 69% of LGBTQA+ servicewomen reported experiencing sexual harassment during their military service².

Mental Health

LGBTQA+ female veterans are at an increased risk for mental health disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety³. They're also more likely to engage in harmful behaviors like substance abuse. Transgender veterans often encounter difficulties in accessing gender-affirming healthcare. Although the VA provides many transition-related medical services, it doesn't cover surgeries⁵. This can lead to financial strain and exacerbate health disparities among transgender veterans.

Social Acceptance and Support

Acceptance within the military community and society at large remains a significant issue. LGBTQA+ service members may feel isolated due to fear of discrimination or ostracism. This lack of social support can impact their mental well-being and job performance. LGBTQA+ veterans, particularly transgender women, are at a higher risk of homelessness than their non-LGBTQA+ counterparts⁷. Discrimination and a lack of understanding from housing providers can contribute to this disparity.

While strides have been made towards equality, LGBTQA+ female service members and veterans continue to face significant challenges. Addressing these issues requires policy changes, increased access to tailored healthcare services, and a shift toward greater acceptance within the military community and society at large.