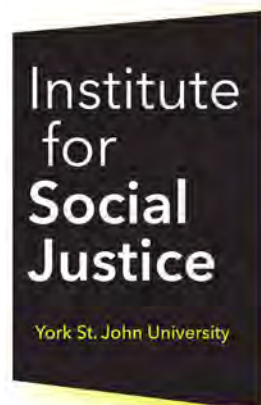


Does
Symbol
Count?

EXPLORING
THE DISORDERED
EATING
EXPERIENCES
OF THE TRANS
COMMUNITY

Design by
Roma Loudun



Back image "Grow outside
gender norms"
by Orange Ibreck

Eating disorders have a serious negative effect on individuals' lives, and the amount of people experiencing them has increased since the covid-19 pandemic began.

However, trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people are traditionally excluded from eating disorder research. This means our understanding of gender and eating disorders is limited, and trans individuals living with these experiences might not be getting the support they need.

Who are
we?

We are a
group of
researchers at

YORK ST
John
University

Many of
us identify as
trans, non-binary or
gender non-conforming.
We want to make eating
disorder research more
representative, and in this
project we interviewed
community members to
learn about their
experiences.

We

generated

5

themes

Negative experiences of eating disorders treatment

①

Many participants had experienced transphobia in treatment

There was a lack of understanding by clinicians around how gender influences body image and a lack of recognition that trans people experience eating disorders

2 Disordered eating behaviours can be a way to change the body when gender affirming care is inaccessible.

We know it's really hard to access gender affirming care in the UK, with long waiting lists and stringent referral criteria

For some participants, eating disorder behaviours like restricting or obsessive exercise were ways to change body shape in line with gender identity

These long waiting lists & lack of access to services have dangerous effects for our community, pushing people to engage in damaging behaviours

Shared understanding
helps queer people
help each other

The importance of
COMMUNITY (3)

participants
talked about the
LGBTQ+ community
as being a key source
of support.

Disordered eating as a form of control

We know that trans folks are subject to a lot of things that are outside of their control, including transphobia as well as social structures

for some people, disordered eating allowed them a means of control, particularly over their own bodies

4

The pressure to

PASS

and the effect of passing

Most participants found that their eating disorder was worse and they experienced more distress when their outward appearance did not match their gender

The pressure to pass had a negative effect on body satisfaction

Many participants felt a pressure to pass, and felt their disordered eating was less severe when they did pass

Trans, non-binary
and gender non-
conforming people
deserve affirmative,
evidence-based
care when they
are experiencing
an eating
disorder!

We call on
researchers and
clinicians to
deepen their
understanding
of how gender
influences
disordered
eating.



GROW

OUTSIDE

UNDER

THE SKY