

## **The Resilient LGBT + Community.**

At the ICAAD conference in Paris in June this year I was asked to talk on a topic :

**The Courageous LGBT+ community. A Journey from Stigma to Identity and from Pain to Hope.”**

**“Could it well be that a minority is actually leading the majority by example of self discovery and self introspection?”**

The talk was to touch on the below quote from the Berlin Chemsex conference from March 2018.

**“Surely gay culture is not something depressing? It is also about self discovery, adventure, relating to a group of peers, having meaningful relations, reaching out to others in order to lift each other up and having all sorts of primal instincts satisfied.**

Exploring this topic I decided to look at The triggers and events that helped us grow stronger and to explore how these triggers and events shaped us.

What are the significant oppressions that we have experienced that have allowed us to look at ourselves and to be creative in the ways that we have become stronger?

### Minority Stress

Minority Stress incorporating Family rejection and marginalisation. Bullying & Homophobia - Stigma, The Transgender Movement, Trying to establish identity safely, The AIDS Crisis and Chemsex.

For gay men and lesbians, the minority stress model (Meyer,2003) conceptualizes the impact of stigmatization on their experiences of stress. In this model, negative psychological symptoms increase as a result of experiences of discrimination, the anticipation of rejection, hiding or concealing the sexual minority identity, and the internalization of the negative societal views of gay men and lesbians. The final factor in the minority stress model is the coping efforts expended in efforts to ameliorate these stresses

### Chemsex

Since the beginning of the century one of the greatest problems facing the LGBT plus community is the phenomena of Chemsex. Chemsex is the combination of crystal

methamphetamine GHB methadone problematic sexual behaviour and online dating apps for gay men. The negative consequences of this include: drug and sex addiction, drug induced psychosis, increased rates of HIV transmission and STI transmission, legal implications as sexual violation rape, physical abuse and theft.

Perhaps we can't say for sure whether LGBT+ people are the minority leading the majority in terms of becoming more skilled at self introspection and self-awareness and developing the skills we need to function as better more empathic, more courageous and more empowered human beings but what studies have shown and what is clearly evident as the world evolves is that LGBT+ people have experienced an enormous amount of adversity and in many cases have developed certain abilities and skills that certainly our heterosexual counterparts could not have learned to do because of our unique experience with oppression, stigma and marginalization.