

Gender, Sexuality and Identity

Trust and Respect - Video 3

Mikiki:

Yes - I have seen positive changes, and I'm thankful to be able to report that. I feel like there has been a cultural shift in the last 20 years that I've been a part of the queer activist community and HIV response, and feminist activist communities. I definitely have seen some movement forward; I think that a lot of that is around the kind of cultural shift toward a greater acceptance of LGBT2QI people. I think that's very helpful, and as cultures shift towards more normalization and inclusion, that also means that clinical practices shift. So as we saw homosexuality removed from the DSM [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders] we're also now having - there's been questions ongoing and advocacy from trans communities around getting gender dysphoria removed from the DSM. I feel like that's a really important kind of next step. And the over-pathologization and over-medicalization of trans bodies I think is a thing that we're - we're definitely seeing community mobilized to move that issue forward.

I think around sexual health management we're definitely seeing big strides there with the acknowledgement of the effectiveness of HIV treatment in not only disease progression but also preventing the onward transmission of HIV. We're actually seeing a pretty marked and radical shift in how people understand sexual health right now. So those are definitely some areas that we've seen some improvement in. I feel like a lot of it comes from more queer and trans people being involved in research and being involved in the clinical world, and taking up space and making our voices heard, demanding a seat at the table.

I feel like one of the - one of the great moments in the history of western medicine, let's say, would be the response to the AIDS epidemic - the initial response to the AIDS epidemic in the early-mid-'80s with organization in North America like ACT UP [AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power] and Gran Fury [a group of artists] really mobilizing a community, really mobilizing multiple communities to become the first kind of like en masse patient advocacy voices. And it really is - I mean we see a lot of history around psychiatric survivors and also people living with disabilities, around patient advocacy, but we saw it really, really - really crystallized with the HIV response. And I feel like there's a lot of - a lot of beautiful and juicy lessons that were learned in that time that we are still holding on to and moving forward, so

I'll just say thank you to that part of history for creating that - creating that voice that we can now - like that torch that we now pick up to make more space for our bodies and our identities.