

Sexual/gender minorities in Thailand: Identities, challenges, and voluntary-sector counseling

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Description:

This article has 3 objectives: (a) to chart current Thai sexual/gender-minority terminology and identities, (b) to identify challenges in the lives of sexual/gender minorities in Thailand, and (c) to evaluate how both identities and challenges are reflected in voluntary-sector counseling. The author summarizes terminology and issues from existing Thai and foreign studies and reports the results of a qualitative inquiry into the state of counseling in 3 Thai nongovernmental organizations. The Thai sexual/gender-minority identities charted include s?aw-pràphêet-soong/kàthoey gay (king, queen, quing), torn (one way, two way, gay), dee, les (king, queen), and bi. These individuals face a number of challenges, such as legal nonacknowledgment, prevention of HIV, insufficient health and psychological services, discrimination, and troubled relationships. In the voluntary sector, HIV/AIDS counseling is the service most often emphasized, but all of the challenges that these minorities face need to be addressed through both services and continued activism to effect societal changes.

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