

Symposium | Nerodiversity : [Symposium 111] LGBTQ+ and mental health

📅 Sun. Sep 28, 2025 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM JST | Sun. Sep 28, 2025 7:30 AM - 9:00 AM UTC 🏛️ Session Room 4 (Large Hall B)

[Symposium 111] LGBTQ+ and mental health

Moderator: Katsuki Harima (Harima Mental Clinic)

**[SY-111-03] What can Japanese universities do for sexual minority students?
A mixed-methods study of student and faculty experiences on Japanese campuses**

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Sexual minorities have long faced stigmatization and discrimination for non-normative orientations and gender identities. While visibility and legal protection have advanced globally, university environments often remain heteronormative. This study examined the experiences of sexual minority students and faculty on Japanese campuses using a mixed-methods design. A national survey (n=1,699 students; 494 sexual minorities) explored harassment, support systems, and perceptions of campus climate and academic performance. Qualitative interviews with 12 faculty and 21 students further illuminated coping strategies and institutional challenges. Quantitative research reveals clear disparities: 83% of sexual minority students experience microaggressions and only 18.6% have disclosed their identity on campus, while those who have come out are more likely to report microaggressions. Sexual minority students rate campus climate significantly lower (3.69 vs 3.96, $p < 0.001$) and report lower academic performance (3.01 vs 3.35, n.s.). Multiple minority statuses, including psychological, cognitive and physical disability, result in even lower campus climate scores ($p < 0.001$). Qualitative research shows that students adopt passive coping strategies such as avoidance and feel that they do not 'belong' on campus. Their 'soft' needs include increased faculty understanding, while 'hard' needs include gender-free toilets and safer spaces. Faculty adopt selective disclosure of their identities and seek community off-campus, but this selective approach is also a source of stress as they struggle to manage diverse institutional relationships. Faculty fear the impact of coming out on their career progression, while students fear the impact on their academic evaluation. Both students and faculty members share a common need for universities to improve understanding. Finally, we suggest some basic actions Japanese universities can take to improve campus inclusivity. Of note is the need for specialist campus mental health services and counsellors trained in supporting sexual minority students in particular.