

CROSSING THE RAINBOW BRIDGE FROM HELL TO HEAVEN? LIVED EXPERIENCES OF LGBTQIA MIGRANTS ON THEIR WAY TO AND IN SWEDEN

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ABSTRACT

This presentation focuses on the lived experiences of LGBTQ migrants participating in a civil society group in Sweden during the migration process and their reflections on the future. Eleven migrants who self-identified as LGBTQ (seven male/gay, one female/lesbian, one female/bi-sexual, and two transgender/gay persons) from three local support groups for LGBTQ migrants (RFSL Newcomers) were interviewed. Participants came from Guinea, Iraq, Kurdistan, North Macedonia, Nigeria, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Syria, Uganda and Ukraine. Interpretative-phenomenological analysis resulted in three themes: Past: from daily stress to the fear of being killed; Present: safety, belonging and resources to support the transition to a new life; and Future: making a positive difference or being afraid of what's ahead. Participants' health-related journeys and reflections about the future were complex in terms of favourable and unfavourable lived experiences, which become resources and risks for personal development. Study findings offer an enhanced awareness of the complex landscape of, and interaction between, vulnerability and potentiality. We recommend to focus on the LGBTQ migrants' strengths and personal resources instead of assigning weakness and vulnerability to not promote a simplistic view on LGBTQIA migrants.

Keywords: LGBTQ migrants, vulnerability, potentiality, health promotion

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Eva-Carin is a professor at the School of Health and Welfare, Halmstad University, Sweden. She has conducted both qualitative and intervention studies in areas of health promotion (physical activity, body and empowerment, and immigration). She also conducts research in elite sports contexts and children's sports in relation to coach-athlete relationships. She adopts the perspectives of gender, intersectionality, and health promotion.

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