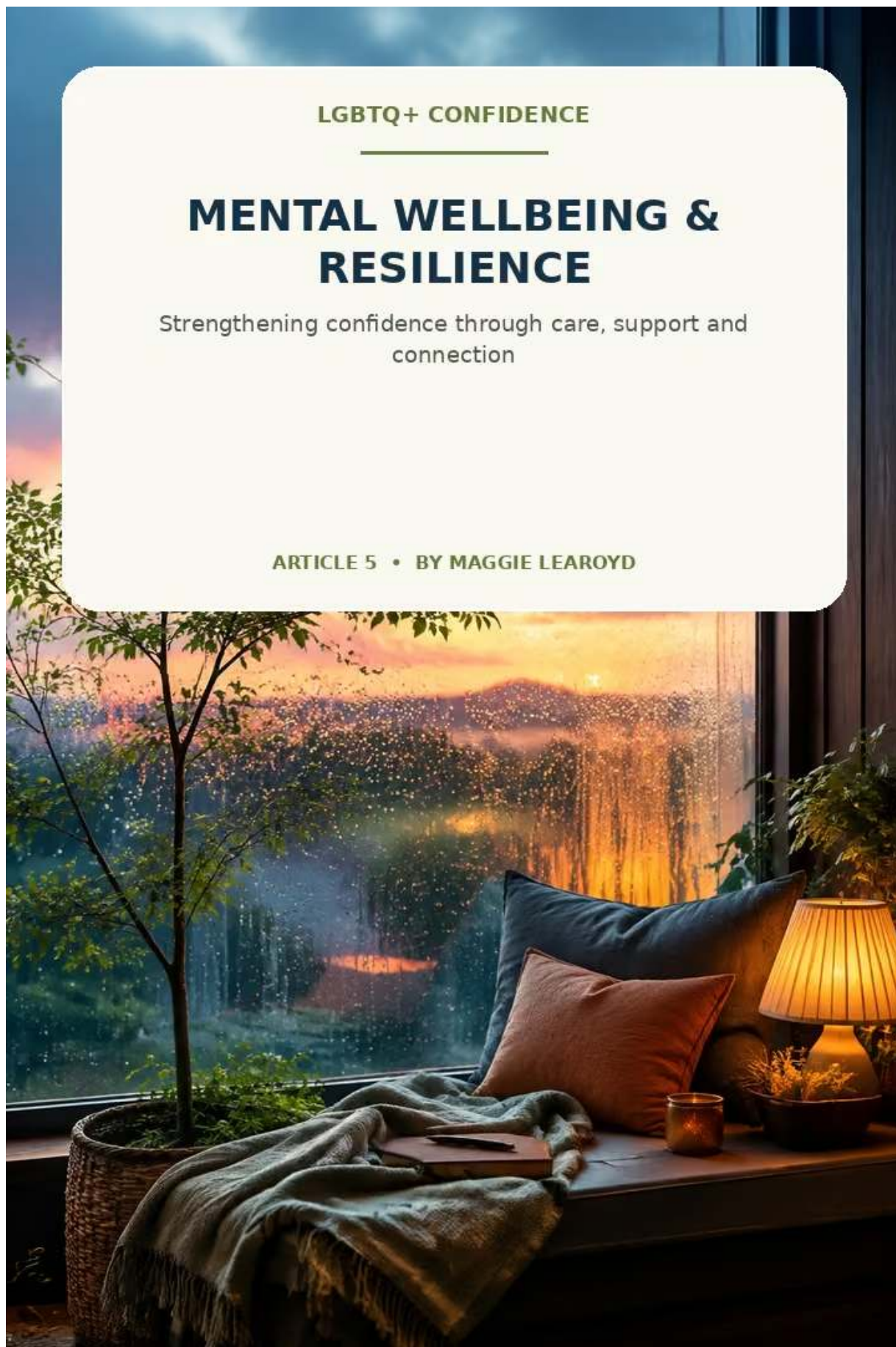


LGBTQ+ CONFIDENCE

MENTAL WELLBEING & RESILIENCE

Strengthening confidence through care, support and
connection

ARTICLE 5 • BY MAGGIE LEAROYD



Mental Wellbeing & Resilience

Strengthening confidence through care, support and connection

Mental wellbeing is not simply the absence of mental illness. It is about feeling able to cope with life's challenges, build meaningful relationships, recognise your own worth and continue growing, even during difficult times. Everyone experiences periods of stress, disappointment and uncertainty, but having good mental wellbeing helps us recover from setbacks and maintain hope for the future.

For many LGBTQ+ people, maintaining mental wellbeing can sometimes involve additional challenges. Experiences such as discrimination, bullying, rejection, social isolation or feeling unable to express one's identity openly can place additional emotional demands on everyday life. While many LGBTQ+ people live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives, it is important to acknowledge that these experiences can influence confidence, resilience and emotional wellbeing.

Building resilience does not mean ignoring difficult emotions or pretending everything is fine. Instead, resilience is about developing healthy ways to respond to life's challenges while recognising when support is needed. It grows through supportive relationships, self-awareness, self-care and the belief that difficult experiences do not define who we are.

This article explores practical ways to protect mental wellbeing, strengthen resilience and build lasting confidence through compassion, connection and healthy coping strategies.

Understanding Mental Wellbeing

Good mental wellbeing allows us to:

- Cope with everyday challenges.

Build healthy relationships.

Learn from experiences.

Make decisions.

Manage emotions.

Feel connected to others.

Work towards meaningful goals.

Recognise our strengths.

Mental wellbeing naturally changes throughout life, and experiencing difficult periods does not mean someone has failed or is weak.

Understanding Resilience

Resilience is often misunderstood.

It does not mean:

- Never struggling.

Always staying positive.

Coping without support.

Hiding emotions.

Instead, resilience means:

- Adapting to challenges.

Recovering from setbacks.

Learning through experience.

Asking for help when needed.

Continuing to move forward despite difficulties.

Resilience is something that can be developed throughout life.

Minority Stress and Emotional Wellbeing

Research has shown that many LGBTQ+ people experience what is known as minority stress.

Minority stress refers to the additional emotional strain that can result from experiences such as:

- Discrimination.

Bullying.

Rejection.

Fear of prejudice.

Concealing identity.

Social exclusion.

These experiences can increase stress, anxiety and emotional exhaustion.

Recognising minority stress helps us understand that emotional distress often reflects external experiences rather than personal weakness.

Looking After Your Emotional Health

Looking after emotional wellbeing means paying attention to your thoughts, feelings and needs.

Helpful practices include:

- Acknowledging your emotions without judgement.

Allowing yourself time to recover after stressful experiences.

Talking to trusted people.

Celebrating achievements.

Accepting that difficult emotions are part of being human.

Emotional wellbeing grows when feelings are recognised rather than ignored.

The Importance of Self-Care

Self-care is often misunderstood as something indulgent.

In reality, self-care involves taking practical steps to protect your physical and emotional wellbeing.

Examples include:

- Getting enough sleep.

Eating nourishing meals.

Being physically active.

Spending time outdoors.

Taking breaks.

Limiting exposure to unnecessary stress.

Enjoying hobbies.

Maintaining routines.

Self-care is not about avoiding responsibilities—it is about maintaining the energy needed to meet them.

Building Supportive Connections

Strong relationships are one of the greatest protective factors for mental wellbeing.

Supportive people may include:

- Friends.

Family members.

Partners.

LGBTQ+ community groups.

Colleagues.

Counsellors or psychotherapists.

Peer support groups.

Feeling connected reminds us that we do not have to face life's challenges alone.

Managing Stress and Anxiety

Periods of stress and anxiety are a normal part of life.

Helpful coping strategies include:

- Deep breathing exercises.

Mindfulness.

Journalling.

Physical activity.

Spending time in nature.

Talking through concerns.

Limiting excessive news or social media.

Maintaining healthy routines.

Different strategies work for different people, so it is helpful to explore what supports your own wellbeing.

Practising Self-Compassion

Many people are highly compassionate towards others while being extremely critical of themselves.

Self-compassion involves:

- Speaking kindly to yourself.

Accepting mistakes.

Recognising that everyone experiences setbacks.

Letting go of perfectionism.

Treating yourself with patience during difficult times.

Research suggests that self-compassion is associated with greater resilience, improved wellbeing and stronger self-confidence.

Celebrating Your Progress

Confidence often grows quietly through everyday achievements.

Celebrate moments such as:

- Setting a healthy boundary.

Asking for help.

Trying something new.

Speaking up for yourself.

Building supportive friendships.

Taking time to rest.

Learning from setbacks.

Recognising progress helps reinforce confidence and motivation.

Knowing When to Seek Support

Sometimes additional support is needed, and seeking help is a sign of strength.

It may be helpful to speak with a qualified professional if you are experiencing:

- Persistent low mood.

Ongoing anxiety.

Feelings of hopelessness.

Difficulty coping with daily life.

Social withdrawal.

Loss of confidence.

Distress related to discrimination or rejection.

Early support often prevents problems from becoming more overwhelming.

Building Hope for the Future

Resilience grows when people believe that change is possible.

Hope can be strengthened by:

- Setting meaningful goals.

Recognising personal strengths.

Building positive relationships.

Celebrating progress.

Learning new skills.

Remembering that difficult times do not last forever.

Hope is not about denying difficulties—it is about believing that life can improve.

Key Takeaways

Mental wellbeing involves more than simply the absence of mental illness.

Resilience is about adapting to challenges rather than avoiding them.

Minority stress can influence emotional wellbeing but does not define a person's future.

Self-care is an essential part of maintaining good mental health.

Supportive relationships strengthen confidence and resilience.

Self-compassion helps replace harsh self-criticism with understanding.

Seeking support early is a positive step towards protecting wellbeing.

Final Thoughts

Looking after your mental wellbeing is one of the greatest investments you can make in yourself. Confidence and resilience are not qualities that appear overnight—they develop gradually through everyday acts of self-care, self-compassion and connection with others. While life will inevitably include periods of uncertainty, disappointment and challenge, these experiences do not have to define your future or diminish your sense of worth.

For LGBTQ+ people, resilience often involves navigating experiences that others may never fully understand. Recognising the impact of minority stress, seeking supportive relationships and allowing yourself to ask for help are not signs of weakness—they are powerful acts of self-respect. Every step you take towards caring for your emotional wellbeing strengthens your ability to cope with future challenges while remaining true to yourself.

Ultimately, resilience is not about becoming unaffected by adversity. It is about learning that even after difficult experiences, you can continue to grow, build meaningful relationships, pursue your goals and live a life that reflects your values. With support, compassion and hope, confidence becomes something that is built from within and sustained by the knowledge that you are worthy of acceptance, respect and happiness.