

HELPING OUR
LGBTQ YOUTH
THRIVE AND
SURVIVE

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Objectives

- List some ways LGBTQ identified youth are more likely to experience violence than non-LGBTQ identified youth
- Explain why LGBTQ identified youth are at more risk for homelessness, drug/alcohol abuse, survival sex work, and suicide, than non-LGBTQ identified youth
- List some ways YOU can help LGBTQ identified youth thrive and survive

Ways LGBTQ Youth Experience Violence

- Violence can include behaviors such as:
 - Bullying
 - Teasing
 - Harassment
 - Physical assault
 - Sexual assault
 - Survival Sex
 - Suicide related behaviors

Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS) conducted during 2001-2009 in seven states and six large urban school districts.

Violence Cont...

- Among LGBT Youth in a National Survey
 - 65.3% had been sexually harassed
 - 39.1% had been physically harassed
 - 64.3% felt unsafe at school
- Perpetrators may be family members, peers, teachers, coaches and even employers
 - Victim may feel confused about who to turn to for help with these circumstances
 - Leads to distrust, fear of community and isolation

Violence Cont...

- Among LGBT youth, half (51%) have been verbally harassed at school, compared to 25% among non-LGBT students.
- LGBT youth are more than two times as likely as non-LGBT youth to say they have been verbally harassed and called names at school.

Why LGBT Youth Don't Report Bullying

- Some reasons LGBT youth don't report bullying:
 - Might cause them to be “outed” to family
 - Feel nothing will happen to stop the bullying
 - Might be further victimized by staff, family, etc.

Leads to feelings of isolation, depression and self-harm (i.e. drugs, alcohol, unprotected sex, suicide)

Risk Factors for LGBTQ Youth

- **LGBT youth are more than twice as likely as non-LGBT youth to experiment with alcohol and drugs.**
 - Over half (52%) of LGBT youth say they have used alcohol and drugs while only 22% of **non-LGBT** youth say they have.
 - Alcohol/drugs may be used to “self-medicate” against loneliness, depression.
 - Substance use is associated with high-risk sex and HIV/STI transmission.

Risk Factors for LGBTQ Youth

- LGBT youth are at high risk of homelessness, often as a result of family rejection and abuse.
 - About 40% of homeless youth are LGBT
 - Statistically, LGBT youth make up approximately 10% of the total population segment, yet make up 40% of homeless youth.
 - In some cases, parents no longer allow their teens to remain in the home.
 - In other situations, stress, abuse and conflict at home can cause some youth to run away.
 - As a result, LGB youth are at greater risk for homelessness than their heterosexual peers

<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/press/americas-shame-40-of-homeless-youth-are-lgbt-kids/#sthash.11acUsPf.dpuf>

Risk Factors for LGBTQ Youth

- Nearly 7 in 10 (68%) respondents indicated that **family rejection** was a major factor contributing to LGBT youth homelessness, making it the **most cited factor**.
- More than half (54%) of respondents indicated that abuse in their family was another important factor contributing to LGBT homelessness.

The data comes from the LGBT Homeless Youth Provider Survey, a web-based survey conducted from October 2011 through March 2012 as a collaboration by The Palette Fund, True Colors Fund and the Williams Institute.

Risk Factors for LGBTQ Youth

- **Non-LGBT** youth are nearly twice as likely as **LGBT** youth to say they are happy.
 - Among **non-LGBT** youth, **67%** report being happy while only **37%** of **LGBT** youth say they are happy.
 - A nationally representative study of adolescents in grades 7–12 found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth were more than **twice** as likely to have **attempted suicide** as their heterosexual peers.

<https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>

- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Being LGBT is not a risk factor in itself; however, the minority stressors they encounter such as discrimination and harassment are directly associated with suicidal behavior.

HRC Youth Survey

Top Three – “Most Difficult Problems in Your Life These Days”

- **LGBT** youth identified
 - **Non-accepting families (26%)**
 - **School/bullying problems (21%)**
 - **Fear of being out (18%)**
- **Non-LGBT** youth identified
 - **Classes/exams/ grades (25%)**
 - **College/career (14%)**
 - **Financial pressures (14%)**

HRC Youth Survey

Top Three – “Would Like to Change Right Now”

- **LGBT** youth identified
 - Understanding/ tolerance/ hate
 - My parent(s)/ family
 - Where I live/ who I live with
- **Non-LGBT** youth identified
 - Money/debt/finances
 - Appearance/weight
 - Improving mental health

HRC Youth Survey

- Compared with their peers, LGBT youth in this survey report a greater sense of isolation or separation from their community in general, and among specific community activities.
- Fewer LGBT youth have an adult in their community to talk with if they feel worried or sad, compared with their peers.
- When thinking of their future, **LGBT youth believe to a greater extent than their peers that they must leave their community to make their hopes and dreams come true.**

Facts About Gay and Lesbian Youth Suicide

- Suicide is the leading cause of death among Gay and Lesbian youth nationally.
- 30% of Gay youth attempt suicide near the age of 15.
- Gays and Lesbians are **two** to **six** times more likely to commit suicide than Heterosexuals.
- Almost **half** of the Gay and Lesbian teens state they have attempted suicide more than once.
- It has been conservatively estimated the 1,500 Gay and Lesbian youth commit suicide every year.

****Shoes****

Exercise – Close your eyes



What Can We DO?

Despite the obstacles LGBTQ youth face, there is much that can be done to diminish the suicide rate among this population. Protective factors for LGBTQ youth include:

- Support from family and peers
- Safe and affirming school environments
- The presence of organizations such as Gay-Straight Alliances in schools
- Family connectedness

Video – LA Times

Same-Sex Marriage Laws Helped Reduce Suicide Rate Among LGB Youth

Video - Click on the link below:

<http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/92621703-132.html>

If above doesn't work – click on below:

<http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-gay-marriage-suicide-20170221-story.html>

What Parents Can Do

- Only about half (**49%**) of LGBT youth say they have an adult in their family they could turn to for help if they felt worried or sad.
 - Comparatively **79%** of **non**-LGBT youth say they have an adult in their family they could turn to for help.
- Less than a third of LGBT youth (**32%**) chose their family among a list of places where they most often hear **positive** messages about being LGBT; whereas nearly half (**46%**) chose their family among a list of places where they most often hear **negative** messages about being LGBT.

Parents Cont...

- What Parents Can Do
 - How parents respond to their LGBTQ teen can have a tremendous impact on their adolescent's current and future mental and physical health.
 - Supportive reactions can help youth cope with the challenges of being an LGBTQ teen.
However, some parents react negatively to learning that they may have an LGBTQ daughter or son.

Parents Cont...

- **Provide support.** Parents who take time to come to terms with how they feel about their teen's sexual orientation will be more able to respond calmly and use respectful language. Parents should develop common goals with their teen, including being healthy and doing well in school.

<http://www.suicidology.org>

Parents Cont...

- **Stay involved.** Parents who make an effort to know their teen's friends and know what their teen is doing can help their teen stay safe and feel cared about.
- **Be proactive.** Parents can access many organizations and online information resources to learn more about how they can support their LGB teen, other family members, and their teen's friends.

What YOU can do

- Listen without judgment
- Mirror pronouns used
- Validate identities
- Not make assumptions about identities
- Advocate for respectful treatment of LGBTQ youth

Stay Safe!!!

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