

The Rainbow Connection

Strategies to Foster Belonging for LGBTQIA+ Youth



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Overview

During this webinar, participants will learn more about the LGBTQIA+ community, the obstacles and risk factors LGBTQIA+ youth face, and concrete strategies for providing love, acceptance, and a strong support network. By surrounding LGBTQIA+ youth with understanding and advocacy, we can help them thrive.

Objectives

- Understanding LGBTIA+ Identities
- Overview of the LGBTQIA+ community and the unique needs and challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ youth
- Importance of creating inclusive, affirming, and supportive environments for LGBTQIA+ children and adolescents

Understanding LGBTQIA+ Identities

Lesbian: A woman attracted to other women; can include non-binary individuals.

Gay: A person attracted to the same gender; used by men, women, & non-binary individuals.

Bisexual: A person attracted to more than one gender; can be similar to pansexual.

Transgender: A person whose gender identity/expression differs from their sex assigned at birth; includes various sexual orientations.

Understanding LGBTQIA+ Identities

Queer: An inclusive term for identities & orientations outside the mainstream.

Questioning: A person exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Intersex: A person born with varied sex traits & reproductive anatomy.

Asexual: A person with no or little sexual attraction; exists on a spectrum.



Aspect	Definition	Key Points	Examples
Sexual Orientation	Enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to others	Describes who you are attracted to.	Heterosexual, Homosexual, Bisexual, Asexual, Pansexual
Gender Identity	Innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither.	Describes who you are.	Cisgender, Transgender, Non-binary, Genderqueer, Genderfluid
Gender Expression	Outward manifestation of gender identity through behavior and appearance.	Describes how you present yourself to the world.	Masculine, Feminine, Androgynous, Non-conforming

Acknowledging the Diversity within the LGBTIA+ Community

Intersectionality: Members of the LGBTQIA+ community often have intersecting identities, such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and disability, which shape their unique experiences and challenges.

Fluidity: Many people within the community experience fluidity in their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression over time.

Cultural and Regional Differences:

Cultural background and geographic location can greatly influence how individuals understand and express their identities.

Activism and Advocacy:

The community encompasses diverse perspectives on activism and advocacy, with different groups prioritizing various issues such as legal rights, healthcare access, and social acceptance.

Challenges Faced by LGBTQIA+

Bullying

49%

Physically
Threatened
or Harmed

23%

Discrimination

60%



Challenges Faced by LGBTQIA+



Anxiety

66%

Considered
Suicide

39%

Depression

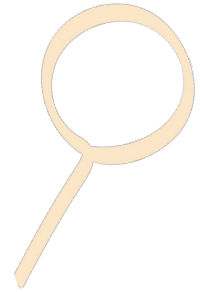
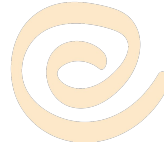
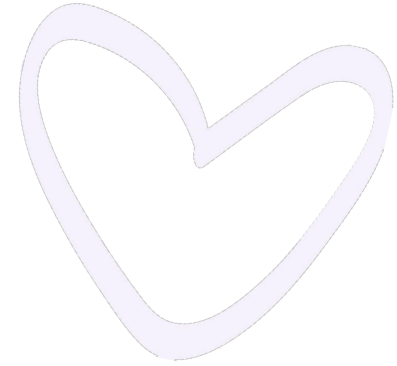
53%

Attempted
Suicide

12%
(1 in 10)

Importance of Family, School, & Community Support

- ★ **Impact of Recent Politics**
- ★ **School Support**
- ★ **Mental Health Care Needs**
- ★ **Barriers to Mental Health Care**
- ★ **Community Acceptance**
- ★ **Access to Affirming Places**



Creating Supportive Environments

Putting allyship into action!

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Ways to create a supportive environment:

-Educate Yourself!

Remember, you don't have to fully understand something immediately in order to continue supporting your child. Begin the work of allyship with open ears and *learn as you go*.



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What if supporting the LGBTQIA+ community conflicts with my beliefs?

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We won't pretend to have all the answers on this one – each situation is unique and nuanced. However, research indicates that cultural and religious barriers can be navigated more easily if your actions are rooted in:

- Compassion and empathy towards the child
- This is not something that the child can change about themselves and there is no one to blame for it
- Your child is evolving and learning more about themselves, which is developmentally appropriate and shows that they are becoming more independent

Other Resources for Learning

More:

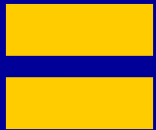
-PFLAG

-The Human Rights
Campaign

-Johns Hopkins

The logo for PFLAG, featuring the word "PFLAG" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a dark green rectangular background. A small white heart is positioned above the letter "A".

PFLAG



Practice Active Listening

- Open-Ended Questions

- Consider the questions you ask and be sure you understand *why* you are asking. All questions asked directly to your child should be in good faith.

- Use compassionate language when engaging in these conversations



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Ensuring Policies Curricula and Resources in Schools



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- Engage with the child's school
- Look for **policies that protect LGBTQIA+ students from bullying and harassment**
- Look for **curricula that shares positive representative and narratives** around the LGBTQIA+ community and its history
- Look for any **social support such as a Gay and Lesbian Alliance Chapter or other LGBTQIA+ club**



Connecting LGBTQIA+ youth with affirming communities and role models by:

- Exploring community support groups
- Bring your child to pride events (not only during pride month!)
- Exposing your child to media with positive queer representation



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Best Practices for Allyship

- Using correct names, pronouns and terminology
- Promoting representation for LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights and policies



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Why is it important to use correct names, pronouns and terminology?

- Affirms a person's identity
- Misgendering or deadnaming communicates that their identity is less-than others
- Shows respect



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Why is representation important?



- Allows children to see themselves in the stories they engage with
- Normalizes these identities and experiences
- Educates and offers diverse perspectives

An example of coming out in media:

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eYLrrC3sQ8>



How can I promote representation?

- Engage with queer media
- Engage with local queer media be seeing plays with LGBTQIA+ representation, seeing local queer musical artists and seeing local queer speakers



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Advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights and policies

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- Educate yourself on state and federal policies that could or currently do impact the LGBTQIA+ community
- Attend protests and sign petitions against anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation
- Speak out at town halls, etc.
- Donate to or share information about organizations working to protect LGBTQIA+ rights
- Testify against anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation at hearings in your state

The Trevor Project

Crisis Support

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Text 'START' 678-678

Call 1-866-488-7386

Chat:

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help>

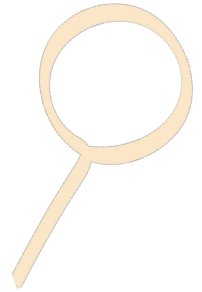
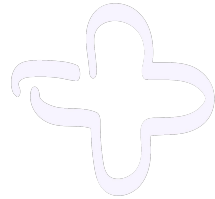
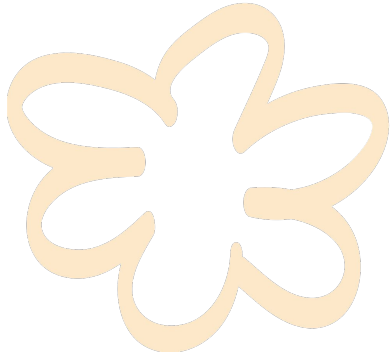
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Q & A

Resources

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2024/>
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/tips-for-parents-of-lgbtq-youth>
<https://pflag.org/resource/parents-comingout/>
<https://childmind.org/article/how-to-support-lgbtq-children/>



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Thank
you!

