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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

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Creating Supportive Environments

Putting allyship into action!

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*.**

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

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

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:

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-Exploring community support groups

-Bring your child to pride events (not only during pride month!)

-Exposing your child to media with positive queer representation

Best Practices for Allyship

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-Using correct names, pronouns and terminology

-Promoting representation for LGBTQIA+ individuals

-Advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights and policies

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

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-Affirms a person's identity

-Misgendering or deadnaming communicates that their identity is less-than others

-Shows respect

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?

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-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

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

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!