LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER or QUESTIONING (LGBTQ+)

There is a high prevalence of trauma, mental illness, and substance use for individuals, young and old, who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning. It is important for members of advisory boards and commissions to understand the need, and the key components for successful programs and services.

THE STATISTICS

Adults
- 59% of LGBTQ adults & 60% of transgender adults are battling poor mental health
- LGBTQ adults are 2X as likely to use illicit drugs
- 54% of LGBTQ BIPOC adults and 61% of Transgender Adults of Color are battling poor mental health
- 50% of transgender adults reported having made a suicide attempt. 92% of these individuals reported having attempted suicide before the age of 25.

Children & Youth
- 41.6% LGB report 4 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), compared to 25.3% for heterosexual individuals
- Over 50% of LGBTQ+ youth report feelings of chronic sadness
- 35% of LGBTQ youth, 45% of transgender youth and 40% of questioning youth have seriously considered attempting suicide, compared to 13% of non-LGBTQ youth.
- Over 50% of transgender youth report contemplating suicide compared to about 15% of non-transgender youth
- LGBT youth are 2X as likely to experiment with drugs and alcohol.
- LGBTQ BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) youth report feeling:
  - Depressed (79%)
  - Hopeless or worthless (73%)
  - Nervous or anxious (82%)

KEY COMPONENTS

All Ages:
- Culturally relevant providers that represent and relate to age, ethnicity, race, religion, and culture, including LGBTQ+
- Data Collection
  - Forms that provide options for multiple gender identities
  - Performance outcome program reporting specific to LGBTQ+
- Policies & Procedures
  - To prevent the use of stigmatizing or invalidating language
  - To prevent bullying/harassment
  - Inclusivity/Anti-Discrimination Statements visible on materials, in offices and facilities
- Training for Providers, Families, Schools
  - Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression
  - Intersectionality: How race, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, health and many other characteristics are inseparable and experienced simultaneously

Suicide Prevention
Programs that provide accessible resources to LGBTQ+ identified individuals

Children & Youth:
- Gay Straight Alliances: Support networks
- Supportive Educators: LGBT students who report having a greater number of supportive staff (6 or more) had higher GPAs
- Youth & Families: Advocacy and therapeutic-style support for families and youth
Prevention & Early Intervention

Community Counseling & Supportive Services (CCSS) (Orange) is a short-term counseling program for Orange County residents of all age groups, who have or are at risk of developing a mild to moderate behavioral health condition. The program specializes in providing services to diverse communities including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and/or Questioning (LGBTIQ+), deaf and hard of hearing and underserved ethnic communities. CCSS provides:
- Screening & Assessment
- Individual Counseling
- Groups (Support & Educational)
- Case Management
- Referral and Linkage
- Community Outreach

Respite

Danelle’s Place Respite Program (Sacramento)
Danelle’s Place Respite Program, administered by Gender Health Center (GHC), provides mental health respite care, via a drop in center, to unserved and underserved adults ages 18 and over, who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and/or allied. There is an emphasis on serving transgender individuals who are experiencing overwhelming stress.

Lambda Lounge Respite Program (Sacramento)
Lambda Lounge Adult Mental Health Respite Program provides drop-in mental health respite care designed to prevent an acute mental health crisis from occurring, as well as suicide prevention support services to unserved and underserved adults ages twenty-four (24) and older who identify as LGBTQ.

Workforce Education & Training (WET)

FACES (San Francisco) introduces high school students to career paths in healthcare, public health, mental and behavioral health while supporting them with academic and behavioral health services that address their needs.
YOUTH & TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH (TAY) PROGRAMS

Our Safe Place (San Diego) provides a full range of mental health treatment services for LGBTQ youth. Multiple drop-in centers across San Diego County will provide supportive services to any youth who identifies as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning. The drop-in centers will have support groups for youth, family members and/or caregivers, youth partners, and alumni mentorship programs.

The Youth Acceptance Project (YAP) is designed to keep LGBTQ youth safe in their family homes (family reunification/family preservation) and to advocate for safe and equitable permanency of LGBTQ youth when family reunification is not possible. This involves working with parents and caregivers of children either in care or at risk of entering in order to increase acceptance of LGBTQ children among their support systems. The YAP intervention reduces the time that children spend in foster care and reunites children with their families.

The Trevor Project is a national organization that provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) young people under 25.

LGBT Support (Calaveras)
With a contract from BHS, a local therapist provides bi-weekly community support group facilitation, in order to improve wellbeing, increase confidence/self-esteem, increase support network, and gain coping skills. The support group meets in local High Schools twice a month.

LGBTQ12 Services (Los Angeles) works to increase recognition of early signs of mental illness, increase community awareness, and increase access to community-based programs for LGBTQI2 Transitional Age Youth (TAY).

Services include
1) Outreach and Engagement;
2) Peer Support groups;
3) Toolkit to support mental health providers and community-based organizations in developing the capacity to increase access;
4) Referrals and linkage services;
5) Community partnerships with educational, health, law enforcement, faith-based, and other organizations;
6) Training curriculum to educate the community and providers;
7) Training of mental health providers on reaching out to and working with LGBTQI2 TAY including approaches such as LGBT Affirmative Therapy.
End Notes:

3. The State of Mental Health in the LGBTQ Community, Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2021
4. Sexual Orientation and Estimates of Adult Substance Use and Mental Health, Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 2015
5. The State of Mental Health in LGBTQ Communities of Color, Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2021
8. Family Builders: Best Practice for Serving LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care, Council on Accreditation
9. Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) Program Search Tool

More information is at: www.calbhbc.org/lgbtq

CA Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards & Commissions supports the work of California’s 59 local mental and behavioral health boards & commissions.