

# Mental Health Matters

June 2023



## LGBTQ+ Communities and Mental Health

Everyone has a sexual orientation and gender identity. Sexual orientation is who you are romantically or physically attracted to. Gender identity is the internal sense of being male, female, both or neither, which is separate from your biological sex. People who have a different sexual orientation or gender identity from most people fall under the umbrella term LGBTQ+. It is really important to know that identifying as LGBTQ+ is NOT a mental illness or disorder.

Although being LGBTQ+ is absolutely not a mental illness, many LGBTQ+ people experience mental health struggles. The bisexual and transgender communities have the highest rates of mental health concerns within the LGBTQ+ population. Younger members of the LGBTQ+ community struggle the most with mental health concerns of all the age groups.

Most LGBTQ+ individuals are incredibly resilient and will thrive in the face of adversity, with the help of supportive families, communities, and peers. One study even found that LGBTQ+ people used mental health services at 2.5 times higher rates than their heterosexual counterparts. [1] However, they are also at particular risk for experiencing shame, fear, discrimination, and adverse and traumatic events.

Full article found at <https://mhanational.org/issues/lgbtq-communities-and-mental-health>

## Latinx LGBTQ Youth Suicide Risk

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth are more than four times as likely to report attempting suicide compared to straight/cisgender peers (Johns et al., 2019; Johns et al., 2020).

Increased suicide risk among LGBTQ youth is due to minority stress-related experiences of stigma, discrimination, and victimization as opposed to being LGBTQ in and of itself (Meyer, 2003).

Further, the Trevor Project's 2020 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental health found that Latinx LGBTQ youth were 30% more likely to report a suicide attempt in the past year compared to non-Latinx LGBTQ youth. According to the Trevor Project, the higher risk of attempting suicide among Latinx LGBTQ youth compared to non-Latinx LGBTQ youth can be explained by greater worries about themselves or family being detained or deported due to immigration policies. After adjusting for the impact of worries about immigration related detainment or deportation, the 30% greater risk of suicide attempt among Latinx LGBTQ youth compared to non-Latinx LGBTQ youth disappeared.

Full article found at <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/latinx-lgbtq-youth-suicide-risk/>



### Need Mental Health Support?

OPTUM EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) OFFERS **FREE CONFIDENTIAL HELP**

Call toll-free

**888-444-8624** any time

OR

Go to

[www.liveandworkwell.com](http://www.liveandworkwell.com)  
and browse as a guest using code **CSEBO**





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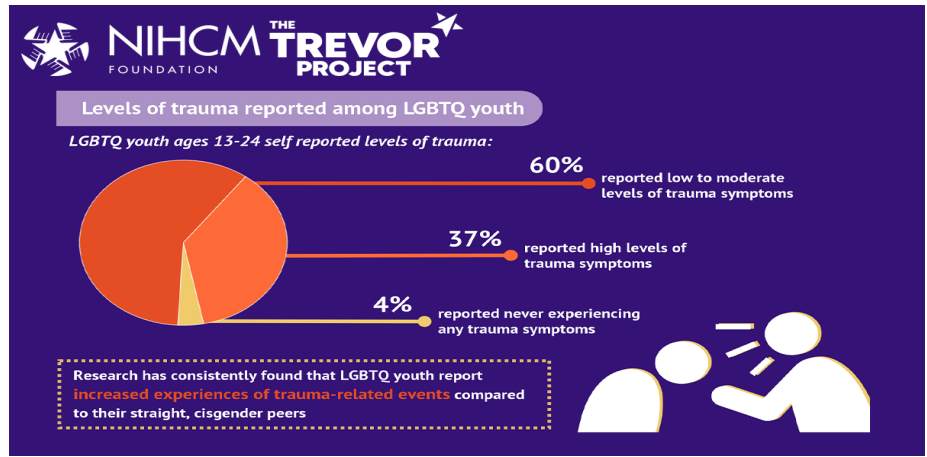
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In case of an Emergency:

- 911 For Immediate Support
- Ventura County Crisis Team (866) 998-2243 –(24 hours)

**MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS**  
#ENDTHESTIGMA



## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF LGBTQI+ LOVED ONES

Those we care about in the LGBTQI+ ((lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, inter-sexed) community — friends, family members, colleagues, and neighbors — must confront stigma and prejudice based on their sexual orientation or gender identity while also dealing with the societal bias against mental health conditions.

Families, friends, and allies play a critical role and can take actions to be supportive. Here are some suggestions on what you can do to support the mental health of LGBTQI+ loved ones and community members.

### Respect Their Identity

We can all take simple steps to respect the identity of LGBTQI+ people by affirming how they choose to live and using their chosen gender pronouns. Affirming LGBTQI+ people’s identities can actually save lives; [a study recently indicated](#) that using transgender youths’ chosen names may lower suicide risk. (Find out about [how to help prevent suicide](#).)

### Learn About the Early Signs of Mental Illness

Mental illness is complicated and difficult to understand, but knowledge and insight helps us to be supportive. Review the [warning signs of mental illness](#).

### Create and Teach Awareness

Be supportive publicly, by addressing anti-LGBTQI+ language and actions when you hear or see them.

Support organizations and policies benefiting the LGBTQI+ community.

### Support Them in Accessing Mental Health Resources

Find information and resources from [The Trevor Project](#), which provides a national, 24-hour, toll-free confidential suicide hotline for LGBTQ youth: 866-488-7386.

Share the [It Gets Better Project](#), a campaign to share hopeful, inspiring stories.

Find providers from the [Gay and Lesbian Medical Association Directory](#) and the [Association of Gay and Lesbian Psychiatrists](#).

### Listen and Be Compassionate

As always, be compassionate of the struggles of others and offer to listen and help.

Full article found at <https://namica.org/blog/what-you-can-do-to-support-the-mental-health-of-lgbtq-loved-ones/>