TRUE COLORS UNITED.

AT THE INTERSECTIONS

A Collaborative Resource on LGBTQ Youth Homelessness
2019

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

NATIONAL LGBTQ TASK FORCE

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Homelessness is one of the most pressing issues facing a disproportionate number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth in our country today. According to a recent report, LGBTQ youth and young adults are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than their straight and cisgender peers.[1] Service providers also estimate anywhere from 20-40% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ, while only 7-10% of the general youth population identifies as such.[2] In 2016, True Colors United and the National LGBTQ Task Force released *At the Intersections*, a comprehensive and collaborative report on LGBTQ youth homelessness. In the three years since the first edition of *At the Intersections* was released, so much has happened in the field of youth homelessness. We are both heartened by the progress that's been made and acutely aware of the work that still needs to be done.

This second edition of *At the Intersections* reveals what has changed in the past three years regarding our understanding of LGBTQ youth homelessness. We have more information, and we are using that information to make more informed choices as we work to make youth homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time experience.

We have more information about LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness.

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago conducted a national prevalence study on youth homelessness and released preliminary findings from the study in 2018. Since Voices of Youth Count was released, we have learned that one in 10 young adults ages 18-25, and at least one in 30 adolescents ages 13-17, experience some form of homelessness unaccompanied by a parent or guardian over the course of a year.[3] We've also learned that LGBTQ young people are 2.2% more likely to experience homelessness compared to their straight and cisgender peers.[4]

1   Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018). Missed opportunities: LGBTQ youth homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved at: https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/lgbtq-youth-homelessness/

2   Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund. Retrieved at: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf

3   Morton, M. H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G. M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National Estimates. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/VoYC-National-Estimates-Brief-Chapin-Hall-2017.pdf

4   Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018). Missed opportunities: LGBTQ youth homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved at: https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/lgbtq-youth-homelessness/

This study not only highlighted the prevalence of youth homelessness across the country, but also allows us to focus in on specific subpopulations and experiences of LGBTQ folks who experience homelessness. We know that black LGBTQ youth experience the highest rates of homelessness and that LGBTQ youth experience homelessness for reasons that are much more complex than rejection after coming out to their families.[5]

We are no longer only focused on crisis response.

The Federal Government has dedicated a lot of resources and time to addressing youth homelessness. In early 2016, HUD awarded $33 million to 10 communities nationwide to develop sustainable solutions to end youth homelessness through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP). In 2018, HUD awarded another $43 million to 11 communities through the YHDP program. By participating in YHDP, these communities have the opportunity to create innovative solutions that move the needle forward on youth homelessness.

In 2017, the US Interagency Council on Homelessness released the Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Youth Homelessness, a resource to guide communities as they bring together many different programs and systems to build a coordinated community response to ending youth homelessness.

We are continuing to better understand the issue of LGBTQ youth homelessness.

True Colors United and the Annie E. Casey Foundation are working together to establish the first ever national LGBTQ homeless youth research agenda. The research agenda is being developed with input from researchers, advocates, service providers, and young people and will guide the movement on what data and research needs to be collected in order to strengthen efforts to eliminate LGBTQ youth homelessness.

Youth Collaboratory and Chapin Hall are leading a wide-scale research effort to identify credible, practical, stakeholder-informed outcomes for successfully transitioning young people out of homelessness and housing instability and into permanent, safe, and affordable housing. This Youth Outcomes Project will provide the necessary research and evidence service providers need in order to focus on successful outcomes in their programs.

Youth and young adults are leading the movement.

Through initiatives like Voices of Youth Count, the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project, and the National Youth Forum on Homelessness, a clear emphasis on youth led work and collaboration is at the forefront of the movement. The National Youth Forum on Homelessness (NYFH) is a group comprised exclusively of young people with lived experience and expertise of homelessness. NYFH ensures that national strategies to end homelessness are informed by the youth and young

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5   Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018). Missed opportunities: LGBTQ youth homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved at: https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/lgbtq-youth-homelessness/

adults who've experienced the issue firsthand. Since the beginning, NYFH has played a vital role in making sure that each YHDP community meaningfully incorporates the insights of youth with lived experience of homelessness. Across the country, young people are conducting and analyzing research, informing federal and local level policy and systems change work, and making funding decisions.

The knowledge we've obtained guides us to collective action and focuses our collective energy in new ways. *At the Intersections* brings together service providers, advocates, young people, researchers, and policy makers to share insights, data, and experiential knowledge. Their expertise, contained within this report, deepens our understanding and points us towards solutions.

Welcome

In 2016, True Colors United and the National LGBTQ Task Force released a report that provides the national youth homelessness movement with a comprehensive understanding of why and how this issue disproportionately impacts LGBTQ young people.

In the three years since *At the Intersections'* initial release, the movement has changed. Innovative strategies and best practices have emerged, youth voices and experiences are moving toward the forefront, and sectors and communities are working even more collaboratively to identify and implement solutions. With this progress in mind, we have released this updated edition of *At the Intersections* to include new and updated topic sections, detailed case studies, and an overview of partnerships and solutions that have helped service providers, advocates, researchers, and other youth homelessness stakeholders address the issue in their communities.

This report, while comprehensive, is by no means exhaustive. That's why each section includes additional resources by subject matter experts so users can learn more about certain topics. This update also features increased youth and young adult participation to ensure that topics, strategies, and solutions are filtered through the insights and expertise of those with lived experience of the issue.

The goal of this updated report is to provide stakeholders at the local, state, and national levels with a nuanced understanding of the circumstances that contribute to youth homelessness, and LGBTQ youth homelessness in particular. We hope that with this knowledge, users are challenged to reconsider existing solutions and adapt current ways of thinking to create solutions that meet the needs of all young people experiencing homelessness in America.

In Unity,

Gregory and Christa

Gregory Lewis
Executive Director & CEO

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Program Director

How to Use This Resource

At the Intersections provides an overview of several topics related to LGBTQ youth homelessness. The resource is divided into four sections: Common Narratives, Deeper Dive, Innovative Approaches, and Solution Strategies. Each section includes an overview of a specific topic – complete with basic information about the subject, recent stats, a list of takeaways, and, in some instances, a case study. Each section was drafted by a leading expert on the section topic and then peer reviewed by a different national expert. The sections were reviewed by youth and young adults who have experienced homelessness and housing instability to ensure all the information is informed by individuals with lived experience.

At the Intersections includes common narratives related to LGBTQ youth homelessness that you may have heard before – including foster care, LGBTQ youth in schools, physical health, and behavioral health. This resource also focuses the conversation on topics that are often left out of the discussion, such as intersectionality and race, homelessness prevention for LGBTQ youth, immigration, and redefining families. *At the Intersections* introduces emerging ideas and innovative solutions, creating a more nuanced portrayal of LGBTQ youth homelessness than ever before. This resource aims to challenge readers in two ways: to expand their thinking about LGBTQ youth homelessness and the young people who have experienced it firsthand; and to consider new ways to address this national issue.

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Language

Language is extremely important and very limiting at the same time. The language used throughout this resource incorporates terms that LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness may use to describe themselves and ensures that the terms chosen accurately represents the community. Here is a list of some of the terms that have been chosen to incorporate throughout the report:

Gender-Expansive

We use this term in place of the phrases "gender non-conforming" or "gender non-binary," which unintentionally place the person being described in opposition to individuals who are conforming or whose gender identities exist on the male/female binary. By using "gender-expansive," this resource aims to be inclusive of these individuals while retaining a positive connotation. It's important to note that we continue to use "gender non-conforming" and "gender non-binary" terms when reflected by the data and research that is being cited.

LGBTQ

We recognize that sexuality and gender identity exist on a broad and fluid spectrum, and hope that by using this acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning," in conjunction with "gender-expansive," that the language of this report is concise and inclusive. It's important to note that acronym usage may vary throughout this resource to reflect the data and research that is being cited (ie: LGB can be used to refer uniquely to "lesbian, gay, and bisexual" folks, etc).

Sexual Minority Youth

Another term that is used interchangeably to represent only those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Referring to people as "homeless" causes people to be defined and identified by their homelessness. Reframing this as "youth experiencing homelessness" reinstates the humanity stripped by the classification of "homeless people." It's also important to keep in mind that there are many folks for whom "homeless" is an important part of their identity and this designation is a right reserved to those with direct experiences of homelessness and housing instability.

Youth/Young Adults

Unless otherwise defined within the text, when we use the terms "youth" or "young adults," we are specifically referring to young people between the ages of 12 and 24.

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SchoolHouse Connection

Valley Youth House — Building foundations, shaping futures.

youth collaboratory — Many minds. Stronger outcomes.

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Common Narratives

No single narrative can capture all the factors that drive so many young LGBTQ young people to experience home-lessness or housing instability. In the same vein, no single narrative can explain what living without a stable home feels like, or what barriers young people face when trying to access services. While every experience is unique, similar threads of narrative are woven into the stories of so many LGBTQ young people experiencing homelessness. Under-standing these narratives is critical in ensuring that programs and services are meeting the needs of youth.

This section explores how systems like foster care, juvenile justice, and schools can simultaneously function as both drivers to homelessness, and persistent barriers to obtaining housing stability. Similarly, the section examines how the experiences of living with physical and mental health issues, experiencing violence, and living with HIV both exacer-bate the likelihood of experiencing housing instability and make time spent without stable housing more challenging.

Foster Care

The role and responsibility of child welfare in preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness

The Basics

LGBTQ youth are overrepresented in child welfare systems compared to their non-LGBTQ peers. The forces that drive them into child welfare at such high rates are similar to those that contribute to homelessness: rejection, neglect, and abuse because of their sexual or gender minority status. Once in care, many LGBTQ youth face mistreatment in the very systems designed to ensure their safety, permanency and well-being.[6] Children and youth of color are also over-represented in the foster care system.[7]

A 2014 Williams Institute study found that 13.6% of foster youth surveyed in Los Angeles County identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) and 5.6% identified as transgender.[8] In the general population, LGB youth only comprise between 6 and 8% of the total youth population and transgender youth

between 1.3 and 3.2%.[9] LGBTQ youth experienced higher rates of placement in congregate care, psychiatric hospitalizations, and juvenile justice involvement.[10] The race and ethnicity of LGBTQ youth in the Williams Institute study mirrored that, of the non-LGBTQ foster care population in Los Angeles County, the majority were youth of color.[11]

Many LGBTQ youth face serious issues while in foster care that may include physical and psychological abuse, differential treatment, lack of family-centered services, and unsupportive caseworkers, service providers, foster parents, and/or advocates.[12] All too frequently, transgender youth placed against their wishes in sex-segregated rooms or group facilities that do not align their gender identity; denied gender-affirming health care, clothing, and hygiene products;

6   RECOMMENDED PRACTICES To Promote the Safety and Well-Being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth and Youth at Risk of or Living with HIV in Child Welfare Settings Retrieved from: https://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/recommended-practices-youth.pdf

7   Summers, A., Wood, S., & Russell, J. (2012). Disproportionality rates for children of color in foster care. Reno, NV: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Link: http://www.ncjfcj.org/resource-library/publications/disproportionality-rates-children-color-foster-care-2013-technical

8   Wilson, B.D.M., Cooper, K., Kastanis, A., & Nezhad, S. (2014). Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Foster care: Assessing Disproportionality and Disparities in Los Angeles. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS_report_final-aug-2014.pdf

9   Wilson, B.D.M., Cooper, K., Kastanis, A., & Nezhad, S. (2014). Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Foster care: Assessing Disproportionality and Disparities in Los Angeles. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS_report_final-aug-2014.pdf

10   Wilson, B.D.M., Cooper, K., Kastanis, A., & Nezhad, S. (2014). Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Foster care: Assessing Disproportionality and Disparities in Los Angeles. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS_report_final-aug-2014.pdf

11   Wilson, B.D.M., Cooper, K., Kastanis, A., & Nezhad, S. (2014). Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Foster care: Assessing Disproportionality and Disparities in Los Angeles. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS_report_final-aug-2014.pdf

12   Legal, L. (2012). Getting down to basics: Tools to support LGBTQ youth in care. Link: http://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/getting_down_to_basics_-_2015.pdf

and are prohibited basic freedom of expression.[13]

Currently, youth in foster care are protected at the federal level from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.[14] However, explicit protections vary widely by state and, with many states lacking such protections at the state level, the Child Welfare League of America and other child welfare organizations recommend such protections be implemented across the country.[15] Some systems, such as New York City's Administration for Children's Services, do have comprehensive LGBTQ policies and require training for all staff, providers, and placements, and may serve as a model for others.[16] Others, however, have no explicit protections for LGBTQ youth in their care, and others still have exemptions to their child welfare laws that allow faith-based, government-funded, contract child-placement agencies to refuse to work with LGBTQ prospective foster or adoptive parents (or in some cases refuse to serve youth or engage in "conversion" therapy) if doing so would conflict with their moral or religious beliefs.[17] While the majority of these "religious refusal" laws may not directly target LGBTQ youth in care, they harm youth by reducing a pool of potential caregivers that is already too small and by sending the implicit message that LGBTQ youth are not "OK" the way that they are.[18] Conversely, states like Hawaii that have passed legal bans on so-called "conversion therapy"[19] making clear to LGBTQ youth that they are welcome as they are and don't need to change.

All youth in foster care are at higher risk of juvenile justice involvement, commercial sexual exploitation, and homelessness. Lack of affirming care and services heightens this risk for LGBTQ youth. Until child welfare systems provide for the safety, permanency, and well-being of LGBTQ youth in care, they will continue to fuel the over-representation of LGBTQ youth amongst youth experiencing homelessness.

LGBTQ youth are overrepresented in child welfare settings compared to their non-LGBTQ peers."

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13   Marksamer, J., Spade, D., & Arkles, G. (2017). *A place of respect: A guide for group care facilities serving transgender and gender non-conforming youth*. National Center for Lesbian Rights. Link: http://www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/A_Place_Of_Respect.pdf

14   Health and Human Services Grants Regulation. 81 Fed. Reg. § 75.300 (Final rule Jan. 11, 2017) (to be codified at 45 CFR pts 75) https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/12/12/2016-29752/health-and-human-services-grants-regulation

15   Child Welfare League of America. *RECOMMENDED PRACTICES To Promote the Safety and Well-Being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth and Youth at Risk of or Living with HIV in Child Welfare Settings* https://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/recommended-practices-youth.pdf

16   NYC Administration for Children and Families. (2017). Resource for LGBTQ children, youth and families. https://www1.nyc.gov/site/acs/about/lgbtq-support.page

17   Lambda Legal. "Equality Maps: Child Welfare". https://www.lambdalegal.org/map/child-welfare (December 21, 2018)

18   Movement Advancement Project. (2017). Kids Pay the Price: How Religious Exemptions for Child Welfare Agencies Harm Children . http://www.lgbtmap.org/file/Brief-Kids-Pay-Price-Two-Pager.pdf

19   Movement Advancement Project. "Equality Maps: Conversion Therapy Laws." http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/conversion_therapy (December 21, 2018))
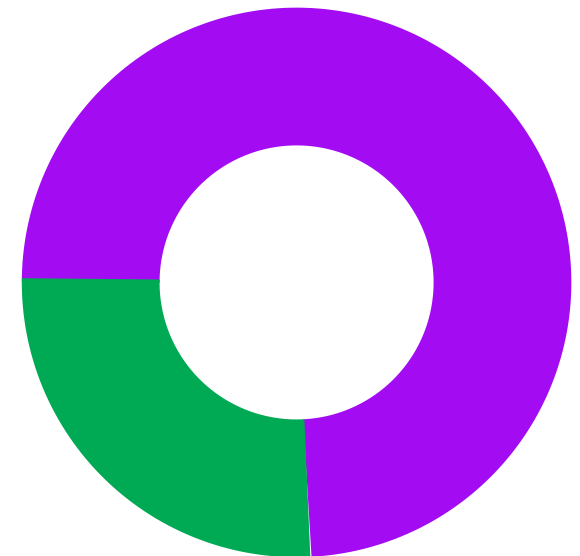
Takeaways

- Due to societal factors, institutional racism, and bias, youth of color are overrepresented in foster care, LGBTQ youth are overrepresented in child welfare settings compared to their non-LGBTQ peers.

- Due to a lack of services promoting family and kin acceptance and safe return home, LGBTQ youth are often placed in unfamiliar, non-affirming foster homes. Lack of affirming foster placements leads to an overuse of congregate care. As a result, youth often exit foster care with no adult or family support and without stable housing.

- Youth in foster care have higher incidences of contact with the juvenile justice system than non-foster care involved youth. LGBTQ youth in care thus face heightened rates of criminalization due to a combination of identity and expression, race, and child welfare involvement.

- Time in foster care and homelessness increases risk of commercial sexual exploitation.

- "Religious refusals" and other anti-LGBTQ laws harm LGBTQ young people, even if they don't target youth explicitly.

Data

74% of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness reported having been in a child welfare placement at some point in the past (n=400)[20].

■ Placed in Child Welfare (74%)   ■ Not Placed in Child Welfare (26%)

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20   Wilber, S., Ryan, C., & Marksamer, J. (2006). The model standards project: creating inclusive systems for LGBT youth in out-of-home care. Child Welfare, 85(2). Link: http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/bestpracticeslgbtyouth.pdf

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TRUE COLORS UNITED.

Juvenile Justice

Increased criminalization of homelessness and its impact on LGBTQ youth in the Juvenile Justice system

The Basics

LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness are disproportionately likely to come into contact with the juvenile justice system. As reported by service providers, up to 40% of youth experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ. Furthermore, 30% of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness were also reported to have had contact with the juvenile justice system.[21]

One experience that directly connects LGBTQ youth homelessness with increased involvement in the juvenile justice system is mistreatment in schools. Research shows that more than half of LGBTQ students hear homophobic remarks in their schools, that 6 in 10 LGBTQ students reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation; and 4 in 10 reported feeling unsafe at school because of how they expressed their gender, and more than 8 out of 10 LGBTQ students have experienced physical assault or harassment.[22] Other research has found that LGBTQ youth are three times more likely to be injured or threatened with a weapon at school and twice as likely to report getting into a fight the

previous year.[23] This fighting can lead to referrals by school resource officers to the justice system.

Experiences with bullying in school coupled with family rejection in the home, result in some LGBTQ youth skipping school or running away. These behaviors are known as status offenses and violate the law solely because the person engaging in them is younger than the age of majority (in most states this is 18 years old however, some states set the age of majority lower than 18). This further increases the likelihood that they will enter the justice system. Presently, more than half of all states report that they incarcerate youth for status offense behaviors (see chart below).[24]

Running away can also lead to homelessness, which further increases the chance that youth will enter the justice system due to the criminalization of homelessness. Youth experiencing homelessness frequently report that they have been apprehended by police for loitering, and/or panhandling.[25] Youth who are living on the streets may also engage in sell-

21   Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund. Retrieved at: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf

22   Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Zongrone, A. D., Clark, C. M., & Truong, N. L. (2018). The 2017 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN. Retrieved from: https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%202017%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20%28NSCS%29%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf

23   Kann L, Olsen EO, McManus T, et al. Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9–12 — United States and Selected Sites, 2015. MMWR Surveill Summ 2016;65(No. SS-9):1-202. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.ss6509a1

24   STATUS OFFENSES: A NATIONAL SURVEY. http://www.njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/CJJ_Status-Offenses-ANationalSurvey_WEB_2015.pdf

25   What Works to End Youth Homelessness? https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015-What-Works-to-End-Youth-Homlessness.pdf

ing or trading drugs and sex in exchange for shelter, food, and other necessities, which can lead to their arrest. In many states, running away itself is classified as a status offense and can result in charges for the young person.

Researchers argue that this combination of bullying, family rejection, running away, and homelessness has led to the over-representation of LGBTQ youth in the justice system.[26] LGBQ and gender nonconforming/transgender (GNCT) youth are overrepresented at twice the rate of their presence in the population at large. Gallup has found that 4.2-5.6% of the general youth population is LGBQ, while 12.5% of youth in detention halls are LGBQ. [27] [28] [29] Similarly, research shows that 6% of the youth population identifies as "highly gender nonconforming,"[30] while 13.3% of youth in the justice system can be categorized as gender nonconforming.[31]

Youth who cycle into homelessness, survival crimes, and the justice system are exposed to increased danger. Crimes like selling drugs and trading sex put youth at increased risk of victimization from violence.[32] In addition, research shows that when placed in detention facilities, youth at an increased risk for physical and sexual assault by peers and adult staff.[33]

Instead of incarcerating youth for status offenses, misdemeanors, immigration code violations, and minor school code violations, juvenile justice systems should consider diverting youth into community-based programs prior to arrest.[34] Communities such as Los Angeles County are working to divert low level felonies prior to arrest.[35] Serving low-risk youth through the court system can increase recidivism and should be avoided.[36] Higher risk youth with high needs can be served by the courts, but should still be referred to community-based programs whenever possible to meet their underlying needs.

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26   Irvine, Angela, and Canfield, Aisha. 2017. "Reflections on New National Data on LGBQ/GNCT Youth In the Justice System." LGBTQ Pol-
       icy Journal at the Harvard Kennedy School, Volume VII, 2016-17. Link: http://bit.ly/harvard_lgbtq

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28   Beck, A. C. (2013). Sexual Victimization in Juvenile Justice Facilities Reported by Youth 2012. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

29   Irvine, Angela, and Canfield, Aisha. 2017. "Reflections on New National Data on LGBQ/GNCT Youth In the Justice System." LGBTQ Pol-
       icy Journal at the Harvard Kennedy School, Volume VII, 2016-17. Link: http://bit.ly/harvard_lgbtq

30   Wilson, B., Jordan, S., Meyer , I., Flores, A., Stemple, L., & Herman, J. (2017). Disproportionality and Disparities among Sexual Minority Youth in Custody. Journal on Youth and Adolescence.

31   Irvine, Angela, and Canfield, Aisha. 2017. "Reflections on New National Data on LGBQ/GNCT Youth In the Justice System." LGBTQ Pol-
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32   Irvine, Angela Ph.D. and Canfield, Aisha M.P.P (2016) "The Overrepresentation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning, Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Youth Within the Child Wel-
       fare to Juvenile Justice Crossover Population," Journal of Gender, Social Policy & the Law: Vol. 24: Iss. 2, Article 2. Available at: http://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/jgspl/vol24/iss2/2

33   The Holman/Ziedenberg brief is a great citation that I still use. We should ALSO have the BJS report by Beck: Beck, A. C. (2013). Sexual Victimization in Juve-
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       ing Youth Diversion in Los Angeles County. Los Angeles, CA: The County of Los Angeles.

36   Latessa, E. J., & Reitler, A. K. (2015). What Works in Reducing Recidivism and How Does it Relate to Drug Courts. Ohio Northern University Law Review, 41, 757-789.
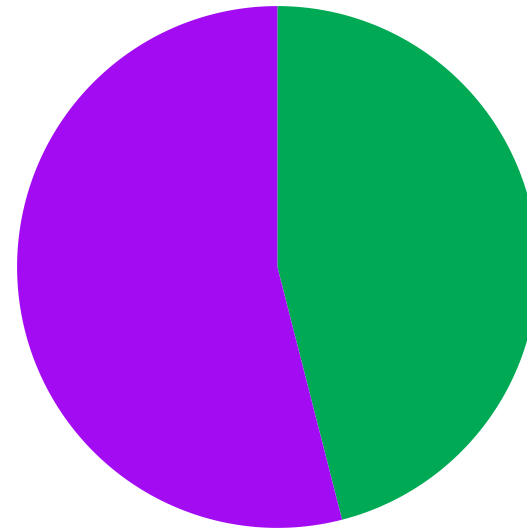
Takeaways

- Adolescent misbehavior is frequently a response to problems such as bullying, or physical or sexual abuse.

- Incarcerating youth often punishes them for being mistreated by family members and peers.

- Once LGBTQ youth are in the street, they often resort to drug dealing and prostitution as a means of survival — activities that simultaneously increase the chances that youth will be victims of violence.

- Justice professionals should consider youths' underlying needs for food, shelter, education, and employment when making recommendations to the court.

- Locked-confinement is an inappropriate response to status offenses, misdemeanors, immigration code violations, minor school code violations, and low-level felonies and should be prohibited.

"The overrepresentation of LGBTQ youth in the juvenile justice system is due in large part to the criminalization of homelessness."

Data

A recent study from the University of Chicago Chapin Hall found that among youth who said they experienced homelessness 46% had also been in a juvenile detention facility, jail, or prison compared to 15% of the general youth population.[37]

■ Juvenile Detention/Jail/Prison (46%) ■ Not in detention (54%)

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37   Morton, M. H., Dworksy, A., & Samuels, G. M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National Estimates. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

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Poverty

Breaking the cycle of poverty and housing instability

The Basics

In the U.S., poverty impacts more than 15.5 million young people. Currently, 1 in 5 young people live in poverty.[38] It is an issue that affects every aspect of a person's life, including access to food, shelter, institutional education, healthcare, and employment. Although the U.S. recognizes a human right to adequate housing, more than 2.5 million young people, or 1 in 30 young people, experience homelessness each year.[39] Poverty and homelessness are inextricably linked and perpetuate one another – because people of limited resources often cannot afford stable housing, many will experience homelessness. People experiencing homelessness often lack the stability to maintain or gain access to basic needs like food, healthcare, and employment.

This cycle of poverty is particularly common among LGBTQ people, especially people of color, lesbian and bisexual women, and transgender women. Among young people who experience homelessness, an overwhelming number are LGBTQ – approximately 40%.[40] Where identities and injustices intersect, on the basis of race, age, ability, immigration status, gender identity, and sexual orientation, the vulnerabilities and disparities are even starker – with LGBTQ people of color being most consistently vulnerable to disparate treatment and outcomes across the board.

Nationwide, 30% of all transgender and gender-expansive respondents have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives according to the National Center for Transgender Equality's 2015 U.S. Trans Survey.[41] Transgender and gender-expansive individuals are three times more likely than cisgender people to have annual incomes of less than $10,000 per year while transgender people of color experience four times the national rate of unemployment. Barriers, harassment, and violence are widespread. 30% of those surveyed reported experiencing harassment, mistreatment, or discrimination on the job. Respondents also reported alarming rates of harassment in school. 54% reported verbal harassment, 24% had been physically attacked, and 13% has been sexually assaulted. Presenting gender incongruent identification makes transgender individuals vulnerable to violence. 32% of respondents who presented gender incongruent identification reported harassment, assault, attack, or being asked to leave an establishment. More than 68% of respondents reported having no updated identity document.

38   Watch, & By. (n.d.). Facts About Child Poverty in the U.S.A. | Children International | US Poverty Facts. Retrieved from https://www.children.org/global-poverty/global-poverty-facts/facts-about-poverty-in-usa

39   Lbogle. (2018, September 27). National Center on Family Homelessness. Retrieved from https://www.air.org/center/national-center-family-homelessness

40   Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund. Retrieved at: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf

41   James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). Executive Summary of the Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality; available at: https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf.

Transgender women and gender-expansive people of color are disproportionately impacted by poverty and experience barriers in accessing food, shelter, employment, healthcare, etc. Over 50% of Black transgender women have experienced homelessness in their lifetime, while 44% of Black transgender women and 46% of Black gender-expansive people live in poverty, compared to 12% of the general population.[42] Nearly 50% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander respondents had experienced some form of housing discrimination or instability.[43] Furthermore, although 63% of the general population reports owning their own home, only 16%of transgender and gender-expansive people own their home.[44]

Young LGBTQ people in particular face unique challenges. They are often forced to leave their homes due in part to family/community rejection, lack of safety within schools or communities, physical and emotional abuse targeting their identities, and inability to meet basic needs for food, clothing, safety, and security. While experiencing housing instability, it is not uncommon for young LGBTQ people to engage in at-risk work – such as sex work or selling drugs – because of the high rates of discrimination in obtaining employment. Because these types of work tend to be over-policed and over-criminalized, it is not uncommon for young LGBTQ people to enter the criminal legal system. As a result, experiencing homelessness or housing instability, especially for young LGBTQ people, can lead to involvement with the criminal legal system, difficulty in obtaining and maintaining employment, and entry into the cycle of poverty.

To address LGBTQ poverty and homelessness, we must also address the institutions and systems in place that prevent people from achieving economic security."

In a new report[45] addressing poverty and economic justice for LGBTQ people, the report authors had conversations with

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42   James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). Executive Summary of the Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality; available at: https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf.

43   Ibid.

44   Ibid.

45   Lourdes Ashley Hunter, Ashe McGovern, and Carla Sutherland, eds., Intersecting Injustice: Addressing LGBTQ Poverty and Economic Justice for All: A National Call to Action (New York: Social Justice Sexuality Project, Graduate Center, City University of New York, 2018) Retrieved from: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a00c5f2a803bbe2eb0ff14e/t/5aca6f45758d46742a5b8f78/1523216213447/FINAL+PovertyReport_HighRes.pdf

directly impacted people and found that the most innovative solutions came from people who are living in poverty, rather than from advocates or service providers. For example, solutions like cooperative housing, community land trusts, and community food sharing often came from a desire to build on existing solutions that have worked for people living in poverty. In contrast, many advocates and service providers suggested solutions that repaired or reformed programs already in place at the federal, state, or local level.

To change the landscape of housing and homelessness advocacy for LGBTQ people, and ultimately eradicate the cycle of poverty in our nation, we need to center local and grassroots leaders and activists who implement innovative, effective solutions in their own communities. To address LGBTQ poverty and homelessness, we must also address the institutions and systems in place that prevent people from achieving economic security.

Key Takeaways

- Poverty is an issue that affects every aspect of a person's life, including access to food, shelter, institutional education, healthcare, and employment.

- This cycle of poverty is particularly common among LGBTQ people, especially people of color, lesbian and bisexual women, and transgender women.

- Transgender women and gender-expansive people of color are disproportionately impacted by poverty and experience barriers in accessing food, shelter, employment, and healthcare.

- To change the landscape of housing and homelessness advocacy for LGBTQ people, and ultimately eradicate the cycle of poverty in our nation, we need to center local and grassroots leaders and activists, who implement innovative, effective solutions in their own communities.

Data

Transgender and gender-expansive individuals are three times more likely than cisgender people to have annual incomes of less than $10,000 per year while transgender people of color experience four times the national rate of unemployment.[46]

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46   James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). Executive Summary of the Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality; available at: https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf.

Schools

How challenges within the educational system can lead to experiences of homelessness for LGBTQ youth

The Basics

Students who are harassed based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity report higher levels of risk on a wide array of academic, health, and safety measures. For example, they are more likely to report being threatened or injured with a weapon, being hurt by an intimate partner, lower grades, depression, suicide, and missing school because they felt unsafe. This instability, along with various other factors (living in poverty, racism, or familial conflict), can result in housing instability and homelessness especially among LGBTQ students of color who report being harassed and bullied based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and race.[47] In the 2015-2016 school year, public schools identified a record 1,304,803 homeless children and youth – a 100% increase since 2006-2007.[48]

Homelessness poses many challenges for youth in schools, including:

1. Students experiencing homelessness are usually living in extreme poverty. They do not have money to meet their basic needs, such as food, clothing, and hygiene products. This can be especially important for transgender and gender-expansive youth, whose safety and overall well-being are impacted by their ability to express their gender in school settings. They also lack the means to pay for school supplies and extra-curricular activities that require fees and equipment.

2. Youth experiencing homelessness, especially those who are LGBTQ, are vulnerable to human trafficking and other forms of physical and emotional abuse.[49] They suffer from more chronic illnesses than their housed peers and deal with high levels of stress every day. The consequences of this trauma can make it very difficult for students to concentrate in school.

3. Students experiencing homelessness have high levels of school mobility. They may move frequently due to limits on the length of their stay in a shelter or temporary accommodations or to escape abusive family members. Too often, these moves lead to school changes. School changes make it more difficult for high school students to earn credits and stay on track for graduation.

At the high school level, these challenges can make it extremely difficult for youth to stay in school and work toward graduation. Data shows that students who experience

47   Citation: Russell, S. T., Clarke, T. J., & Laub, C. (2009). Understanding School Safety and the Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, and Sexual Orientation. (California Safe Schools Coalition Research Brief No. 10). San Francisco, CA: California Safe Schools Link: http://www.casafeschools.org/CSSC_Research_Brief_10.pdf

48   National Center For Homeless Education. (2017). *Federal Data Summary School Years 2013-14 to 2015-16.* Link: https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/data-comp-1314-1516.pdf

49   Greene, J. M., Ennett, S. T., & Ringwalt, C. L. (1999). Prevalence and correlates of survival sex among runaway and homeless youth. American journal of public health, 89(9), 1406-1409.. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1508758/pdf/amjph00009-0102.pdf

homelessness even one time while in high school have higher dropout rates than other economically disadvantaged students.[50] Studies have found that as many as three quarters of high school students who have experiences with homelessness drop out or are pushed out of school.[51] In fact, a youth who experiences homelessness is 87% more likely to stop going to school – higher than any other risk factor, including placement in foster care.[52] This increased likelihood of not completing high school also increases the likelihood that youth will experience homelessness as young adults, as the lack of a high school diploma or GED has been found to the be the number one risk factor for young adult homelessness.[53] Data also shows that due to experiences of victimization in school settings, LGBTQ youth are more likely to experience bullying, threats, or physical violence and LGBTQ students of color report experiencing greater surveillance, policing, and receiving harsher disciplinary practices.[54] Combine all of these experiences – housing instability, LGBTQ identity, discrimination – and the cards are stacked against LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness.[55]

Many communities do not have a youth shelter, making schools the only public agency where youth experiencing homelessness can find safety, food, clothing, hygiene products and facilities, connections to health and mental health services, and access to an education that can lead to future stability. Many schools have started housing programs for youth. Even so, because schools may be the only connection to youth at risk of homelessness and housing instability, it is of utmost importance to ensure schools have the proper LGBTQ competency and knowledge to support their LGBTQ students.

Without access to school, young people's risk of trafficking and victimization is even greater. This risk is even higher for LGBTQ youth. The McKinney-Vento Act gives many rights to students experiencing homelessness to help mitigate some of their challenges, including but not limited to:

1. Ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness are enrolled into school immediately, even if they lack documents or have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness;[56]

2. Ensuring that homeless children, youth, and families receive referrals to health, dental, mental health, housing, substance abuse, and other appropriate services; and[57]

3. Transportation to the school of origin is required, including until the end of the academic year when a student obtains permanent housing (if it is in the student's best interest to remain in that school).[58]

4. Ensuring that unaccompanied homeless youth are informed, and receive verification, of their status as in-

50   State Laws to Support Youth Experiencing Homelessness. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/state-laws-to-support-youth-experiencing-homelessness/

51   Cauce, A. M., Paradise, M., Ginzler, J. A., Embry, L., Morgan, C. J., Lohr, Y., & Theofelis, J. (2000). The Characteristics and Mental Health of Homeless Adolescents: Age and Gender Differences. Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 8(4), 230–239. https://doi.org/10.1177/106342660000800403

52   Hynes, M. (2014). Don't Call Them Dropouts: Understanding the Experiences of Young People Who Leave High School before Graduation. Center for Promise. Link: http://www.americaspromise.org/report/dont-call-them-dropouts

53   Morton, M. H., Dworksy, A., & Samuels, G. M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National Estimates. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/VoYC-National-Estimates-Brief-Chapin-Hall-2017.pdf

54   Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Bartkiewicz, M. J., Boesen, M. J., & Palmer, N. A. (2012). The 2011 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN. Link: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535177.pdf

55   Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Bartkiewicz, M. J., Boesen, M. J., & Palmer, N. A. (2012). The 2011 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN. Link: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535177.pdf

56   42 U.S.C. §(g)(3)(C).

57   42 U.S.C. §(g)(6)(A)(iv).

58   42 U.S.C. §(g)(1)(J)(iii).

dependent students for college financial aid;[59]

Schools must implement the McKinney-Vento Act and actively work to make school a safe, welcoming and supportive environment for youth experiencing homelessness.

Takeaways

- Youth who are harassed based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity are also more likely to report weaker connections to schools, adults, and their community making them more susceptible to homelessness.

- LGBTQ youth of color are bullied based on race, sexual orientation, gender identity, or all of the above at once.

- LGBTQ youth of color report experiencing greater surveillance and policing, receiving harsher disciplinary practices and bias in application or policies, and being blamed for their own victimization.

- Often times, schools are the only public agency where students can find food, hygiene products and facilities, connections to health and mental health services, and access to education that can lead to future stability.

- Mobility due to homelessness often changes where students go to school, making it more difficult for high school students to earn credits and stay on track for graduation.
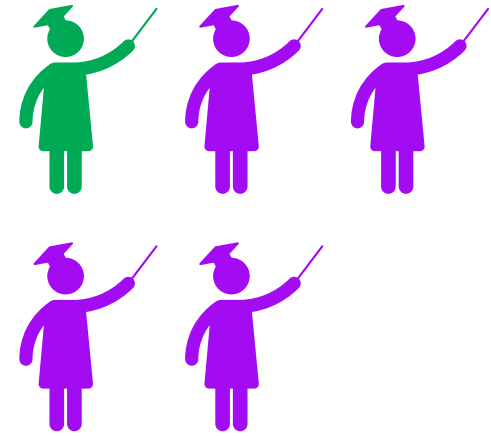
"**Many communities do not have a youth shelter, making schools the only public agency where youth experiencing homelessness can find safety.**"

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59   42 U.S.C. §(g)(6)(A)(x)(III).

Data

Research shows that many schools nationwide are hostile environments for LGBTQ and gender-expansive students of color. In the 2016-2017 school year, public schools identified a record 1,355,821 homeless children and youth – a 70% increase in the decade since the 2007-2008 school year.[60]

According to one study, "1 in 5 LGBTQ students report being bullied due to race, ethnicity, or national origin."[61]

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60   SchoolHouse Connection (February 13, 2019). "Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness Reaches All-Time High; Growth in Numbers of Unaccompanied Youth Most Marked." Available at https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/number-of-students-experiencing-homelessness-reaches-all-time-high-growth-in-numbers-of-unaccompanied-youth-most-marked/

61   Jackson, M., Diliberti, M., Kemp, J., Hummel, S., Cox, C., Gbondo-Tugbawa, K., Simon, D., and Hansen, R. (2018). 2015–16 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS): Public-Use Data File User's Manual (NCES 2018-107). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC. Retrieved Dec. 21, 2018 from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch

Violence and LGBTQ Youth Homelessness

How violence and discrimination lead to experiences of homelessness

The Basics

An approach to ending LGBTQ youth homelessness would not be comprehensive without also addressing the high rates of violence that LGBTQ youth experience – whether by a family member, intimate partner, service provider, or teacher – and the resulting social, emotional, and economic consequences.

Research has shown that LGBTQ youth experience high rates of violence in their homes by family members – setting them on a path to housing insecurity at an early age. In a recent report from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) on hate violence against LGBTQ communities, LGBTQ people under the age of 25 were nearly five times more likely to experience violence from a relative or family member than LGBTQ people who were 26 or older.[62] According to a report from the Williams Institute on LGBTQ youth homelessness, 32% of LGBTQ youth were experiencing homelessness because of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse at home.[63] For many LGBTQ youth, the only way to escape this violence is by leaving their family home, making them housing insecure and at risk for chronic homelessness. While many families are loving and accepting, too many young people continue to experience violence and rejection from their families, leading to low self-esteem, unhealthy boundary setting, and increased risk for violence in other areas of their lives.

Experiencing violence by family members and housing insecurity means that LGBTQ youth may become more reliant on unhealthy or even violent relationships to survive. Research shows that LGBTQ communities experience similar to much higher rates of intimate partner violence than their cisgender or heterosexual peers. According to the 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 18% of LGB students had experienced some form of physical dating violence compared to 8% of heterosexual students.[64] Research shows that transgender and gender-expansive people also experience high rates of intimate partner violence. According to a systematic review from the Williams Institute, upwards of 50% of transgender people will experience intimate partner violence at some point in their lives.[65]

62   National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP). (2016). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV-Affected Hate Violence in 2016. New York, NY: Emily Waters.

63   Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund. Retrieved at: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf

64   Kann L, Olsen EO, McManus T, et al. Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12 – United States and Selected Sites, 2015. MMWR Surveill Summ 2016; 65(9): 1-202.

65   Brown T. and Herman J.L. Intimate partner violence and sexual abuse among LGBT People: A Review of Existing Research. Williams Institute. 2015

Despite non-discrimination policy advances for LGBTQ communities in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA), far too many LGBTQ survivors of intimate partner and sexual violence continue to experience discrimination and further violence when attempting to access care and support. In NCAVP's national report looking at the experiences of nearly 2,000 LGBTQ survivors of intimate partner violence, 44% of survivors who attempted to access emergency shelter were denied mostly due to the lack of gender-inclusive programs.[66] Barriers to accessing safe shelter lead too many LGBTQ survivors to choose between being homeless or returning to their abusive partners or violent family environments. These barriers may be particularly challenging for LGBTQ youth who may have less access to financial or social resources to find other sources of housing.

LGBTQ youths also experience high rates of violence in schools and other educational settings. According to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, the majority of transgender people who were out or perceived to be transgender while in school experienced some form of violence and discrimination, including 24% of students who were physically attacked and 13% of students who experienced sexual violence. Additionally, 17% of students reported that they were forced out of school due to the high levels of mistreatment experienced.[67] Hostile school environments may increase LGBTQ youths' vulnerability to violence, financial instability, and housing insecurity.

Considering the high rates of family and intimate partner violence, violence by service providers, and violence in schools, it is easy to see how LGBTQ youth can get caught in a cycle of violence. This cycle increases the likelihood that they will experience homelessness, which along with housing instability increases the likelihood of experiencing violence. These trends are especially alarming for LGBTQ youth whose identities lay at various intersections of oppression and discrimination such

> **"Barriers to accessing safe shelter lead too many LGBTQ survivors to choose between being homeless or returning to their abusive partners or violent family environments."**

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66   National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP). (2016). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV-Affected Intimate Partner Violence in 2015. New York, NY: Emily Waters.

67   National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE). (2016). The report of the 2015 U.S. transgender survey. Washington, DC: James, S.E., Herman, J.L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. Retrieved from http://www.ustranssurvey.org/
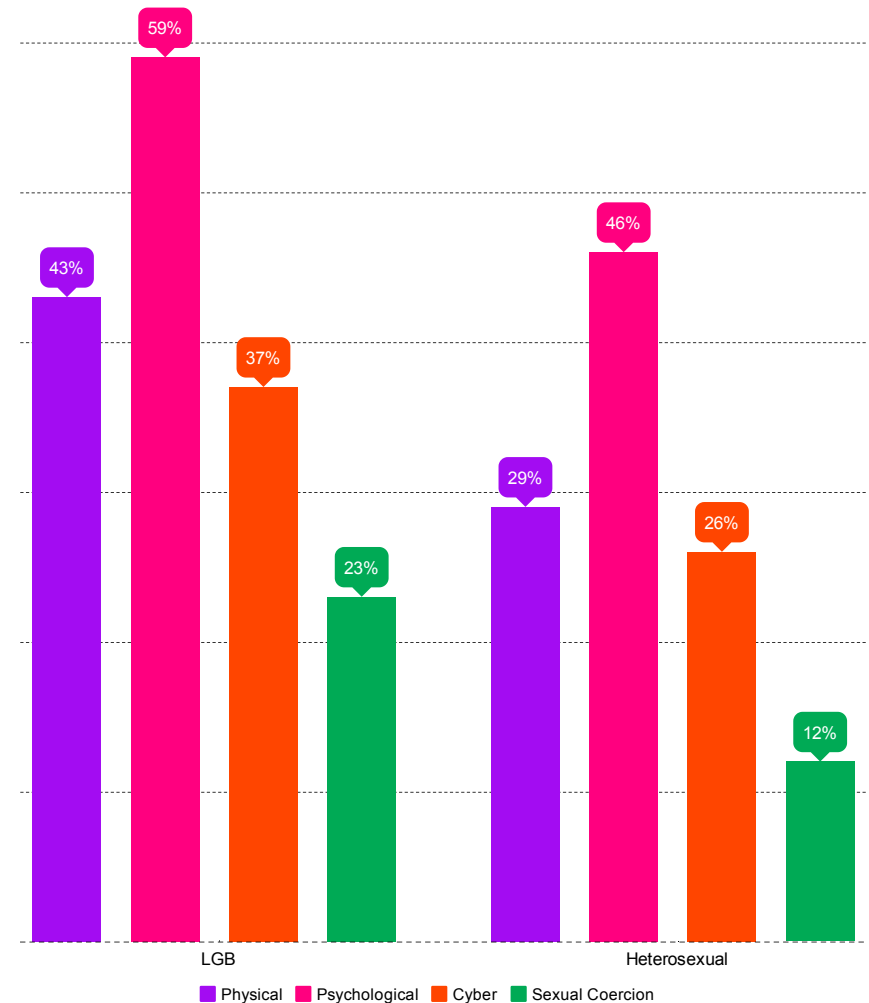
as youth of color, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ youth with disabilities. Addressing LGBTQ youth homelessness requires a holistic approach, one that looks at the root causes of violence and one that dedicates resources to the social and emotional consequences of this violence in our communities.

Takeaways

- Research has shown that LGBTQ youth experience high rates of violence in their homes by family members for many, the only way to escape this violence is by leaving their family home, making them housing insecure and at risk for chronic homelessness.

- Research shows that LGBTQ communities experience similar to much higher rates of intimate partner violence than their cisgender or heterosexual peers.

- Despite non-discrimination policy advances for LGBTQ communities in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA), far too many LGBTQ survivors of intimate partner and sexual violence continue to experience discrimination and further violence when attempting to access care and support.

- LGBTQ youth also experience high rates of violence in schools and other educational settings – hostile school environments may increase LGBTQ youths' vulnerability to violence, financial instability, and housing insecurity

Data

Dating violence and abuse victimization by sexual orientation.[68]

Bar chart: LGB — Physical 43%, Psychological 59%, Cyber 37%, Sexual Coercion 23%; Heterosexual — Physical 29%, Psychological 46%, Cyber 26%, Sexual Coercion 12%

Legend: ■ Physical ■ Psychological ■ Cyber ■ Sexual Coercion

68   Dank, M., Lachman, P., Zweig, J.M. & Yahner, J. (2103). Dating Violence Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth. In Press: Journal of Youth and Adolescence. Retrieved from: https://www.urban.org/research/publication/dating-violence-experiences-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-youth/view/full_report

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Behavioral Health

The prevalence of substance misuse among LGBTQ young people experiencing homelessness

The Basics

A growing body of research has focused on the cumulative harmful effects that discrimination, prejudice, police violence, anti-LGBTQ attacks, and other stressors have upon the behavioral health of marginalized people and communities. As a unique type of social and behavioral tension, "minority stress"[69] helps researchers and community members understand the relationship between marginalized people, like LGBTQ people and people of color, and homelessness and substance use. LGBTQ people often utilize substances as a method for coping with stress,[70] including minority stress; for some, drug use can be a survival tool for managing life on the street.

In general, LGBTQ people are more likely to use substances[71][72] and are more likely to develop substance use disorder than non-LGBTQ people. Minority stress helps us to understand these higher rates of substance use and substance use disorder when we accept that substances can be used as a method of coping with stress.[73] Quite simply, substances help some to cope with these negative social forces, as they happen on the street, to us or to other members of our community. While substances certainly help people to cope with significant stress, we must remember that our risk for developing substance use disorder is higher for LGBTQ people than for non-LGBTQ people. And, we cannot forget that these substances are generally (aside from alcohol and marijuana) criminalized as controlled substances. Possessing, selling, or even using these substances can be grounds for arrest, prosecution, and incarceration.

LGBTQ youth have higher rates of homelessness than other young people, and are more vulnerable to harm while homeless. Many young LGBTQ people who are experiencing homelessness lack access to resources of all types and are surrounded by chaos and chaotic stress; some find their already difficult circumstances exacerbated by service providers that engage in sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination, lack cultural humility, or demonstrate a lack

69   Lehavot, K., & Simoni, J. M. (2011). The impact of minority stress on mental health and substance use among sexual minority women. Journal of consulting and clinical psychology, 79(2), 159-70.

70   Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018). Missed opportunities: LGBTQ youth homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

71   NIDA. (2017). Substance Use and SUDs in LGBT Populations. Retrieved from https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/substance-use-suds-in-lgbt-populations

72   Hunt J. (2012).Why the Gay and Transgender Population Experiences Higher Rates of Substance Use: Many Use to Cope with Discrimination and Prejudice. Center for American Progress

73   Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018). Missed opportunities: LGBTQ youth homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

of empathy for the young people they serve. A survey of homeless youth service providers indicated that over half of their LGBTQ residents (53 percent) had a history of substance use.[74] Combined with our knowledge that homeless youth in general are more likely to use substances,[75] the effect of minority stress may have a significant impact for LGBTQ youth and young people of color.

Substance Use

Substance use is a broad term that represents the ingestion of natural or synthetic chemicals that have mind and/or body altering effects. It is important to note that substance use exists along a wide spectrum from abstinence to overdose to sustainable use guided by the principles of harm reduction. Within this spectrum, substance misuse is a term that represents using a substance for anything other than its intended purposes, or using the substance in a way that was not prescribed by a doctor or by the directions on packaging. Substance use disorder is defined by a person's relationship to a drug: some continue to use despite the significant chaos it brings to their life, others want to stop using drugs but feel as though they cannot.[76]

Street drugs like heroin and other opioids may be used to manage pain, while methamphetamine has been used as a tool among homeless populations to stay awake when shelters and the streets are unsafe.[77] This is particularly relevant for homeless LGBTQ youth, who often experience discrimination and violence in shelters - especially for transgender youth who may

"While substances certainly help people to cope with significant stress, we must remember that our risk for developing a substance use disorder is higher for LGBTQ people than for non-LGBTQ people."

74   Durso, L.E., & Gates, G.J. (2012). Serving Our Youth: Findings from a National Survey of Service Providers Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth who are Homeless or At Risk of Becoming Homeless. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund and The Palette Fund.

75   National Health Care for the Homeless Council. (September 2016). Substance Abuse Among Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Healing Hands, 20:2. (Author: Melissa Jean, Writer). Nashville, TN: Available at: www. Nhchc.org

76   Substance Use Services. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.amhc.org/substance-use-services/

77   McKenna S. A. (2013). "We're Supposed to Be Asleep?" Vigilance, Paranoia, and the Alert Methamphetamine User. Anthropology of consciousness, 24(2), 172-190.

be denied access for not conforming to the gender they were assigned at birth.[78]
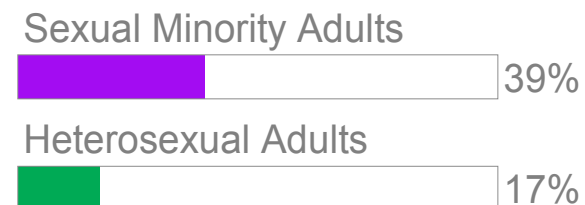
While abstinence-based recovery has been the dominant model for working with people with substance use disorders, it is important to take other models into account when working with homeless LGBTQ youth, especially since their use may be related to their survival and/or social environment. Harm reduction, in particular, is an approach that neither condones nor condemns substance use. Instead, it recognizes the use of substances as a reality of life, and seeks to reduce the potential harms related to using. This includes sterile syringe distribution to prevent HIV and Hepatitis C transmission from sharing needles, education on wound care and naloxone (overdose reversal drug), and safety planning to develop additional coping mechanisms. Harm reduction solutions treat people who use substances holistically, and develop personalized strategies for increasing safety and health.

Takeaways

- LGBTQ homeless youth are more than twice as likely to use substances as their cisgender and heterosexual peers.

- The reasons for increased substance use may have to do with social conditions and survival needs.

- The stresses of discrimination and prejudice play a significant role that often more deeply impacts LGBTQ people of color.

- Shelter violence, and other structural harms, also create conditions where substance use can be a coping mechanism.

- Harm reduction can be helpful approach in providing LGBTQ youth holistic care.

Data

According to 2015 data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, sexual minority adults were more than twice as likely as heterosexual adults (39.1 percent versus 17.1 percent) to have used any illicit drug in the past year.[79]

Sexual Minority Adults

39%

Heterosexual Adults

17%

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78 Quintana N.S.,Rosenthal J., & Krehely J. (2010). On the Streets The Federal Response to Gay and Transgender Homeless Youth. Center for American Progress.

79 NIDA. (2017). Substance Use and SUDs in LGBT Populations. Retrieved from https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/substance-use-suds-in-lgbt-populations

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TRUE COLORS UNITED.

Physical Health

The physical impact of homelessness on LGBTQ health and well-being

The Basics

Homelessness poses many challenges to managing and maintaining good health. Without access to hygienic living spaces and regular patterns of eating and sleeping, young people can develop health issues such as diabetes, dental problems, infectious diseases such as influenza and hepatitis, and dermatological and respiratory conditions.[80] [81] Unstable and dangerous living conditions make them more vulnerable to morbidity and mortality resulting from assault compared with their hosused peers, like acquired traumatic brain injury. Young people without emotional or financial resources often turn to high-risk coping strategies that are readily accessible. These coping strategies include self-medicating with alcohol and/or other substances and engagement in high-risk sexual behaviors, including survival sex work, the act of engaging in sexual activities to meet an individual's basic needs such as clothing, food, shelter, security, and safety. These high-risk coping strategies can place homeless individuals at greater risk for contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

All youth experiencing homelessness are at risk of these health outcomes, though certain conditions have been found to be worse for LGBTQ youth. LGBTQ young people are at greater risk for exposure to violence and injury.[82] Social prejudice towards LGBTQ identities contributes to these young people being targeted for violence. Relative to their heterosexual peers, sexual minority youth experiencing homelessness report higher rates of high-risk sexual behaviors, including unprotected sexual intercourse and survival sex.[83] They also report relatively higher rates of substance use, including intravenous drug use.[84] These risk behaviors may lead to higher rates of STIs. Sexual minority youth were twice as likely to report a history of STIs or HIV compared with their heterosexual peers.[85]

In particular, transgender young people at risk of homelessness may not have access to transition related medical care – such as hormone replacement therapy, behavioral health support, and gender affirming surgeries. Young transgender people may turn to treatments from unlicensed street providers due to financial barriers, discrimination, or previous

80   Jennifer P. Edidin and others, "The Mental and Physical Health of Homeless Youth: A Literature Review," Child Psychiatry & Human Development 43 (3) (2012): 354-375, available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22120422.

81   Sharon Medlow, Emily Klineberg, and Kate Steinbeck, "The health diagnoses of homeless adolescents: A systematic review of the literature," Journal of Adolescence 37 (5) (2014): 531-542

82   Elizabeth M. Saewyc, "Research on Adolescent Sexual Orientation: Development, Health Disparities, Stigma, and Resilience," Journal of Research on Adolescence 21 (1) (2011): 256-272, available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4835230/.

83   Elizabeth M. Saewyc, "Research on Adolescent Sexual Orientation: Development, Health Disparities, Stigma, and Resilience," Journal of Research on Adolescence 21 (1) (2011): 256-272, available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4835230/.

84   Tumaini R. Coker, S. Bryn Austin, and Mark A Schuster, "The Health and Health Care of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual adolescents," Annual Review of Public Health 31 (2010): 457-77, available at https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.012809.103636.

85   Kelly A. Williams and Mimi V. Chapman, "Comparing Health and Mental Health Needs, Service Use, and Barriers to Services Among Sexual Minority Youths and Their Peers," Health & Social Work 36 (3) (2011): 197-206, available at https://academic.oup.com/hsw/article-abstract/36/3/197/718918.

negative experiences with medical/mental health systems. It is well documented that gender affirming medical treatment can help transgender individuals' gender expression and presentation be more congruent with their authentic gender identity.[86] In addition, a gender presentation that aligns with social norms can decrease barriers that they experience accessing housing and employment.[87] Transgender and gender nonconforming individuals may be determined to accessing gender-affirming care regardless of the associated risks, including ordering hormones online and sharing them with friends.[88] Street hormones might be easier to access for people with limited resources, but seeking medical interventions from the street come with inherent risks. Transgender patients undergoing "filler" procedures (silicone injections in the face and body, typically injected by an unlicensed medical provider)[89] have suffered serious health complications, including blood clots, scarring, respiratory distress, acute pulmonary hemorrhage, and even death.[90] Transgender patients using street hormones may not be monitoring for health risks associated with Hormone Replacement Therapy such as blood clots, elevated liver enzymes, and decreased insulin sensitivity.[91] On the other hand,

patients working with a licensed medical provider for gender affirming medical care undergo routine blood tests and can be monitored by their providers. Those using injection hormone treatments can also obtain needles by prescription, reducing the risk for contracting infections.

Youth experiencing homelessness are more likely to visit emergency rooms as their primary source of health care compared with their housed peers.[92] Due to limited resources and instability with housing, young people experiencing homelessness may not seek medical care until their symptoms are advanced. The lack of prevention and early intervention can cause illnesses to become more expensive and complicated to treat.[93] Young people experiencing homelessness may not be able to afford care because they do not have health insurance or due to the cost of transportation to a provider. Low or no cost medical care can also be prohibitive if there are limited hours for youth experiencing homelessness, if there are long wait times, or if eligibility requirements include proof of address and identity documents.

With the passage of the Affordable Care Act, young people at risk of homelessness have more options for obtaining health insurance coverage.[94] In all states, young people are eligible for Medicaid if they have aged out of the foster care system. Medicaid coverage may depend on the state in which the young person is a legal resident, not where they are physically located. Youth who are 18 years old or younger are eligible for Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance

86   American Psychological Association, Task Force on Gender Identity and Gender Variance, "Report of the Task Force on Gender Identity and Gender Variance," (Washington, DC: 2009), available at https://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/gender-identity.

87   Erin Wilson and others, "The use and correlates of illicit silicone or "fillers" in a population-based sample of transwomen, San Francisco, 2013," Journal of Sexual Medicine 11 (1) (2014): 1717-1724, available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4304636/.

88   Jennifer L. Glick and others, ""Tiptoeing Around the System": Alternative Healthcare Navigation Among Gender Minorities in New Orleans," Transgender Health 3 (1) (2018): 118-126, available at https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/pdf/10.1089/trgh.2018.0015.

89   Barry Zevin and Madeline B. Deutsch, "Free silicone and other filler use," Center of Excellence for Transgender Health, June 2016, available at http://transhealth.ucsf.edu/trans?page=guidelines-silicone-filler.

90   Erin Wilson and others, "The use and correlates of illicit silicone or "fillers" in a population-based sample of transwomen, San Francisco, 2013," Journal of Sexual Medicine 11 (1) (2014): 1717-1724, available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4304636/.

91   Nelson F. Sanchez, John P. Sanchez, and Ann Danoff, "Health Care Utilization, Barriers to Care, and Hormone Usage Among Male-to-Female Transgender Persons in New York City," American Journal of Public Health 99 (4) (2009): 713-719, available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2661470/.

92   Lydie A. Lebun-Harris and others, "Health Status and Health Care Experiences among Homeless Patients in Federally Supported Health Centers: Findings from the 2009 Patient Survey," Health Services Research 48 (3) (2013): 992-1017, available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3681240/.

93   Gayathri Chelvakumar, "Healthcare Barriers and Utilization Among Adolescents and Young Adults Accessing Services for Homeless and Runaway Youth," Journal of Community Health 42 (3) (2017): 437-443, available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27817043.

94   Shabab Ahmed Mirza and Kellan Baker, "The Impact of the Affordable Care Act on LGBTQ Youth Experiencing Homelessness" (Washington, Center for American Progress: 2016), available at https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/reports/2016/08/31/143226/the-impact-of-the-affordable-care-act-on-lgbtq-youth-experiencing-homelessness/.

Program if their household incomes are below the poverty line. In many states, those with higher incomes may qualify. These programs may require parental approval, which can be a challenge if the LGBTQ young person does not have a positive relationship with their parents. In states that have adopted the Medicaid expansion, low-income young adults over the age of 18 are eligible for financial assistance to purchase insurance.

Sexual minority youth are more likely than heterosexual youth to have concerns about confidentiality during their treatment. Youth experiencing homelessness may avoid seeking care due to actual or perceived discrimination from their provider. Fear-based concerns may be a larger barrier to care than external obstacles, highlighting the need for cultural humility, a practice that acknowledges patients' authority over their own experiences, acknowledges power imbalances, and invites partnership between providers and patients to achieve health goals.[95] Providers can incorporate patients' reliance on social networks to navigate the healthcare system and their use of complementary and alternative medicine for emotional health support in their services.[96] Young people do take advantage of health care services if they are easily accessible and tailored to meet their unique needs.[97] Integrating complementary and alternative medicine

Young people do take advantage of health care services if they are easily accessible and tailored to meet their unique needs."

95   Jennifer McGee-Avila, "Practicing Cultural Humility to Transform Health Care," Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Blog, June 21, 2018, available at https://www.rwjf.org/en/blog/2018/06/practicing-cultural-humility-to-transform-healthcare.html.

96   Jennifer L. Glick and others, ""Tiptoeing Around the System": Alternative Healthcare Navigation Among Gender Minorities in New Orleans," Transgender Health 3 (1) (2018): 118-126, available at https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/pdf/10.1089/trgh.2018.0015.

97   Gayathri Chelvakumar, "Healthcare Barriers and Utilization Among Adolescents and Young Adults Accessing Services for Homeless and Runaway Youth," *Journal of Community Health* 42 (3) (2017): 437-443, available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27817043.
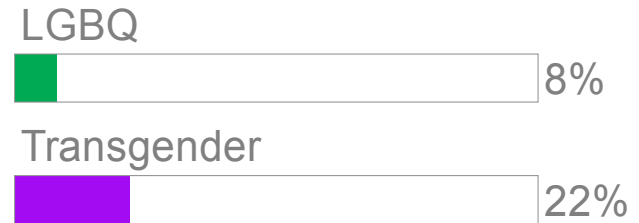
Takeaways

- Health programs and providers should collect sexual orientation and gender identity information universally from all young people they serve to capture the full range of identities related to their health and wellbeing.

- Doctors, nurses, and other health care providers should be trained to provide culturally humble care to LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. In particular, they should consider the mental health needs of these patients while addressing physical health concerns to achieve positive health outcomes.

- Further research is needed to better understand the physical health of LGBTQ youth before, during, and after periods of homelessness, particularly dermatological, respiratory, nutritional, and dental disorders, as well as injuries from sexual and physical assault.

- While the Affordable Care Act has improved health care and coverage for LGBTQ people and for young people, research is needed to understand the role of specific policy interventions on health care access for LGBTQ young people experiencing homelessness.

Data

Accessing culturally sensitive, affirming health care continues to be a challenge for LGBTQ patients.

- In a nationally representative survey, 8% of LGBTQ peo-ple—and 22% of transgender people—avoided or postponed needed medical care in the year prior to the survey because of disrespect or discrimination from health care staff.[98]

- In a different national survey, one-third (33%) of transgender adults those who had seen a health care provider in the past year reported having a negative experience related to being transgender.[99]

LGBQ

8%

Transgender

22%

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98   Shabab Ahmed Mirza and Caitlin Rooney, "Discrimination Prevents LGBTQ People from Accessing Health Care" (Washington, Center for American Progress: 2018), available at https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2018/01/18/445130/discrimination-prevents-lgbtq-people-accessing-health-care/.

99   Sandy E. James and others, "The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey" (Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016), avail-able at http://www.ustranssurvey.org.Bernstein, S. M. 1. sarahbernsteinmd@gmail. co., & Lewis, H. C. . (2018). The World Was Not Built for Us: Improv-ing Access to Care for Transgender Youth. Pediatrics, 142(6), 1–3. https://doi-org.proxy.wexler.hunter.cuny.edu/10.1542/peds.2018-2781

HIV/AIDS

Ramifications of HIV discrimination on LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness

The Basics

HIV disproportionately impacts young people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. About 21% of all new HIV infections in the U.S. in 2016 occurred among young people aged 13-24,[100] with unstably housed youth 2-10 times more likely to contract HIV than their stably housed peers.[101] Age, race, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation correlate with HIV rates, with one or more marginalized identities compounding inequities and heightening transmission risk. While the total annual number of new HIV infections in the U.S. fell by 5% between 2011 and 2015, diagnoses have increased among young men who have sex with men (MSM), with young Black and Latino MSM being disproportionately affected. Among MSM of all ages, HIV diagnoses fell 10% for white men, but increased 4% for Black men and 14% for Latino men between 2011 and 2015. Over half of new HIV diagnoses were in the South in 2017.[102] Further, the prevalence of HIV among young transgender women is much higher than it is for others of the same age, including MSM.[103] An estimated 22%-28% of transgender women of all ages are living with HIV in the United States.[104]

Because HIV remains heavily stigmatized in most parts of America, living with the virus substantially influences how young people experience homelessness and housing instability. Stigma acts as a disincentive to seek testing and to any subsequent disclosure, as well as a barrier to medication adherence. Conversely, stable housing is a strong predictor of improved access to treatment, health outcomes, and life expectancy for people living with HIV (PLWH).[105] Young PLWH dealing with homelessness or housing instability face barriers in accessing transportation, insurance, and medical providers – often resulting in low adherence to medication. Adherence rates are lower among young PLWH (27% to 41%)[106] than for adults, even though HIV-positive young people acknowledge they need to take their medications to stay health.[107] Nonetheless, half of all youth respondents in one study skipped doses for fear that family or friends would discover their status.[108]

For HIV-negative young people, there is also a strong inter-

100 Center for Disease Control, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, (2018) *HIV and Youth*. Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/group/age/youth/cdc-hiv-youth.pdf

101 National Healthcare for the Homeless. (2012). In Focus: A Quarterly Research Review of the National HCH Council. Retrieved from: http://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/InFocus_Dec2012.pdf

102 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *HIV in the United States by Region* (Nov. 2018). Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/geographicdistribution.html

103 Wilson, E. C., Garofalo, R., Harris, R. D., Herrick, A., Martinez, M., Martinez, J., ... & Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions. (2009). Transgender female youth and sex work: HIV risk and a comparison of life factors related to engagement in sex work. AIDS and Behavior, 13(5), 902-913. Retrieved from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2756328/

104 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *HIV Among Transgender People* (2018). Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/gender/transgender/index.html

105 Housing and Health. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://national-aidshousing.org/housing-and-health/

106 Ibid.

107 Rao, D., Kekwaletswe, T. C., Hosek, S., Martinez, J., & Rodriguez, F. (2007). Stigma and social barriers to medication adherence with urban youth living with HIV. AIDS care, 19(1), 28-33. Retrieved from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09540120600652303

108 Ibid.

play between HIV risk and housing instability. Young people experiencing homelessness and housing instability are at increased risk for HIV, with LGBTQ young people disproportionately impacted.[109] In one study of LGB young people with experiences of homelessness, lesbian and bisexual females were found to be at particularly high risk for HIV.[110] LGBTQ young people experiencing homelessness are at greater risk for victimization, substance abuse, depression, and psychopathology.[111] The longer young people are homeless, the less likely they are to reduce risk-taking behavior,[112] perhaps due to a correlation between homelessness and depression,[113] which decreases interest in self-care.[114] LGBTQ young people are at especially high risk because they often face discrimi-

nation and harassment in shelters[115] and are thus more likely to stay on the street. And on the street, this community is more likely to engage in sex work and other behaviors considered to be higher-risk — reporting more inconsistent condom usage and greater numbers of clients.[116]

Further, more than half of young PLWH in the U.S. were unaware of their status in 2012,[117] partly due to a lack of access to testing. To be effective, HIV testing must be integrated into services that respond to this population's basic needs, meeting them where they are — which too often is lacking access to preventative technologies, such as condoms and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).[118] Without public health interventions that recognize the intersecting identities of youth dealing with homelessness and housing instability, these young people will continue to be disproportionately harmed by HIV.

109   Tyler, K. A. (2013). Homeless youths' HIV risk behaviors with strangers: Investigating the importance of social networks. Archives of sexual behavior, 42(8), 1583-1591. Retrieved from: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10508-013-0091-3#/page-1

110   Gangamma, R., Slesnick, N., Toviessi, P., & Serovich, J. (2008). Comparison of HIV risks among gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual homeless youth. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 37(4), 456-464. Retrieved from: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10964-007-9171-9#/page-1

111   Cochran, B. N., Stewart, A. J., Ginzler, J. A., & Cauce, A. M. (2002). Challenges faced by homeless sexual minorities: Comparison of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender homeless adolescents with their heterosexual counterparts. American Journal of Public Health, 92(5), 773-777. Retrieved from: https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.92.5.773

112   Collins, J., & Slesnick, N. (2011). Factors associated with motivation to change HIV risk and substance use behaviors among homeless youth. Journal of social work practice in the addictions, 11(2), 163-180. Retrieved from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1533256X.2011.570219#.Vw5pFhMrKF0

113   Rosario, M., Schrimshaw, E. W., & Hunter, J. (2012). Homelessness among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth: Implications for subsequent internalizing and externalizing symptoms. Journal of youth and adolescence, 41(5), 544-560. Retrieved from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3215813/

114   Rao, D., Kekwaletswe, T. C., Hosek, S., Martinez, J., & Rodriguez, F. (2007). Stigma and social barriers to medication adherence with urban youth living with HIV. AIDS care, 19(1), 28-33. Retrieved from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09540120600652303

115   Keuroghlian, A. S., Shtasel, D., & Bassuk, E. L. (2014). Out on the street: a public health and policy agenda for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth who are homeless. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 84(1), 66. Retrieved from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4098056/

116   Marshall, B. D., Shannon, K., Kerr, T., Zhang, R., & Wood, E. (2010). Survival sex work and increased HIV risk among sexual minority street-involved youth. Journal of acquired immune deficiency syndromes (1999), 53(5), 661. Retrieved from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3753193/

117   NCHHSTP Newsroom. (2013, December 27). Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/2012/vital-signs-pressrelease.html

118   Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: US Public Health Service: Pre-exposure prophylaxis for the prevention of HIV infection in the United States—2017 Update: a clinical practice guideline. https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/risk/prep/cdc-hiv-prep-guidelines-2017.pdf. Published March 2018.

Key Takeaways

- HIV disproportionately impacts LGBTQ young people experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

- Service providers and policymakers must address social determinants of health to link unstably housed young people to care and retain them.

- Providers must foster open conversations that both destigmatize HIV and discuss precautions young people living with or at risk of contracting HIV can utilize.

- HIV testing and prevention efforts must address the basic needs of young people with experiences of homelessness and be designed to take into account the systemic and institutional effects of their multiple marginalized identities and social markers.

- Providers must ensure that shelters are inclusive and culturally competent to serve LGBTQ young people.

Case Study

Going back to the days of The Denver Principles, which states that the voices and experiences of PLWH must inform national, state, and local advocacy regarding the HIV epidemic, PLWH have historically been at the forefront of the HIV/AIDS movement. The leadership of folks with lived experience in the HIV/AIDS movement has influenced other movements for social justice, including the youth homelessness movement.

One great example of service integration and collaboration is through the Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan developed by the Office of Infectious Disease in the Washington State Department of Health. This comprehensive plan includes activities that increase housing options for PLWH including allocated funding for transitional, emergency and permanent housing options through various funding streams and campaigns. This plan also recognizes the leadership of and collaborates with PLWH to generate solutions. Activities to promote community engagement and collaboration include promoting leadership development of PLWH and targeted outreach and engagement strategies to communities disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS.

"Young people experiencing homelessness and housing instability are at increased risk for HIV, with LGBTQ young people disproportionately impacted."

Data

In 2016, black youth accounted for an estimated 47% (4,002) of all new HIV infections among youth in the United States, followed by Hispanic/Latino (22%, 1,821) and white (15%, 1,254) youth.[119]
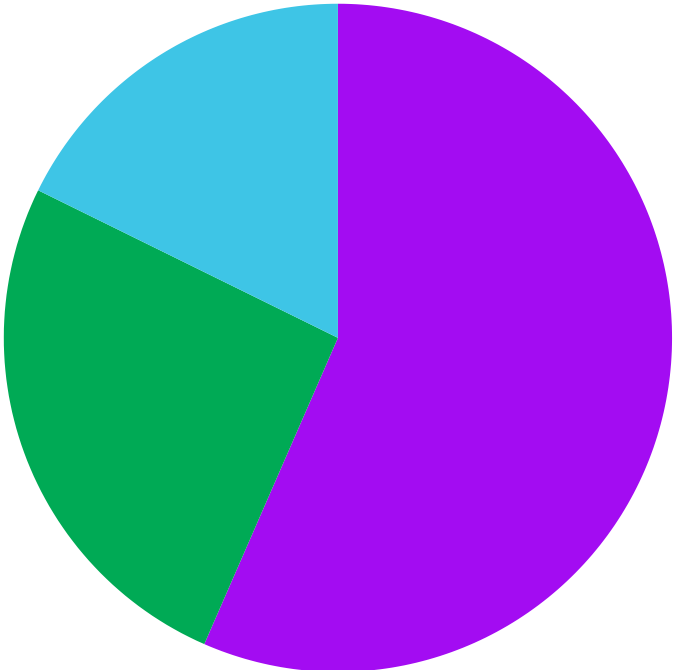
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119   Center for Disease Control, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, (2018) HIV and Youth. Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/group/age/youth/cdc-hiv-youth.pdf

Survival Sex

LGBTQ young people's involvement in survival sex for basic needs

The Basics

The landscape for those who trade sex is a diverse constellation of experience. A person trading sex can move seamlessly through moments of choice, narrowed circumstances, and coercion. Sex work, the exchange of sexual services for resources, lives at the intersection of access to resources, bodily autonomy, self-determination, and resilience. For LGBTQ individuals often barred from traditional forms of labor, services, and resources, survival sex can provide support when institutions fail.

One form of sex work, survival sex, is the exchange of sexual services for the most basic resources including shelter, food, safety, medication and controlled substances. Individuals may trade sex for those resources directly or for money to meet that need, but the defining scope is one of immediacy and need. These periods can be sustained or time-bound and are experienced by individuals of every gender identity, age, ethnic makeup, and immigration status. Keep in mind that survival sex may only be one of many ways that an individual meets their needs

LGBTQ folks are disproportionately impacted by the factors which make people more likely to engage in survival economies. In one study, LGBTQ youth were seven times more likely than straight peers to exchange sex for a place to stay.[120] Discrimination and stigma from formal employment can bar people from access to living wage jobs[121] and increase rates of poverty. Informal economies such as the sex trade have provided a backbone of community survival for queer and trans folks in the face of systems that often fail them.

Every aspect of survival sex – including buying, selling, and sharing resources – is criminalized in the United States, and youth in particular face the possibility of status crimes for simply living outside of formal systems. LGBTQ communities experience disproportionately higher levels of policing overall, and laws criminalizing the sex trade contribute significantly to that over-policing and incarceration. LGB young women are twice as likely and LGB young men ten times as likely to be incarcerated in juvenile detention for prostitution charges compared to their peers.[122] The transgender community and trans women in particular are disproportionately targeted and profiled as sex workers by law enforcement, who often make the assumption that trans women in certain neighborhoods, or simply standing on the sidewalk, must be engaged in the sex trade. This form of over-policing and profiling is so prevalent that it is referred to as "walking while trans".[123] [124]

120   Freeman, Lance, and Darrick Hamilton. 2008. A Count of Homeless Youth in New York City: 2007. New York: Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services.

121   Williams Institute, Bias in the Workplace: Consistent Evidence of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination, accessible at https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Badgett-Sears-Lau-Ho-Bias-in-the-Workplace-Jun-2007.pdf

122   Addressing the Invisibility of LGB & GNC Youths in the Juvenile Justice System, 2010

123   Amnesty International, USA (2005) "Stonewalled: Police Abuse And Misconduct against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People in the U.S."

124   Human Rights Watch (2012) "Sex Workers at Risk: Condoms as Evidence of Prostitution in Four US Cities."

Criminalization of the sex trade compromises peoples' health, safety, and wellbeing.[125] To avoid policing, individuals may take other risks, such as moving into more isolated spaces, increasing their vulnerability to physical and sexual violence. An arrest and subsequent criminal record could bar access to public housing and benefits, end opportunities for other forms of employment, and incur fines, fees, and court costs. These harms are all layered onto the existing trauma of policing, arrest, and incarceration.

Within systems of capitalism in which many people are precariously housed and employed, survival sex is a grey area. Rather than over-policing and criminalization, sex workers require low-threshold, comprehensive resources and opportunities. Consistent, long term housing and a living wage job can be a pathway out of sex work for those who wish to stop. For others, harm reduction information and non-judgment can be powerful tools to help keep sex workers safe. Many survival sex workers are meeting basic needs in the face of socially-constructed circumstances. Criminalizing sex work isn't about cracking down on sex – it's about compromising a community's basic survival.

> **Criminalizing sex work isn't about cracking down on sex – it's about compromising a community's basic survival."**

Takeaways

- One form of sex work, survival sex, is the exchange of sexual services for the most basic resources including shelter, food, safety and drugs.

- Every aspect of survival sex – including buying, selling, and sharing resources – is criminalized in the United States, and youth in particular face the possibility of status crimes for simply living outside of formal systems.

- LGBTQ communities experience disproportionately higher levels of policing overall, and laws criminalizing the sex trade contribute to a significant part of that over- policing and incarceration.

- Criminalization of the sex trade compromises peoples' health, safety, and wellbeing.

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125   Global Network of Sex Worker Project, The Impact of Criminalisation on Sex Workers' Vulnerability to HIV and Violence, 05 Dec 2017, available at: http://www.nswp.org/resource/the-impact-criminalisation-sex-workers-vulnerability-hiv-and-violence

Data

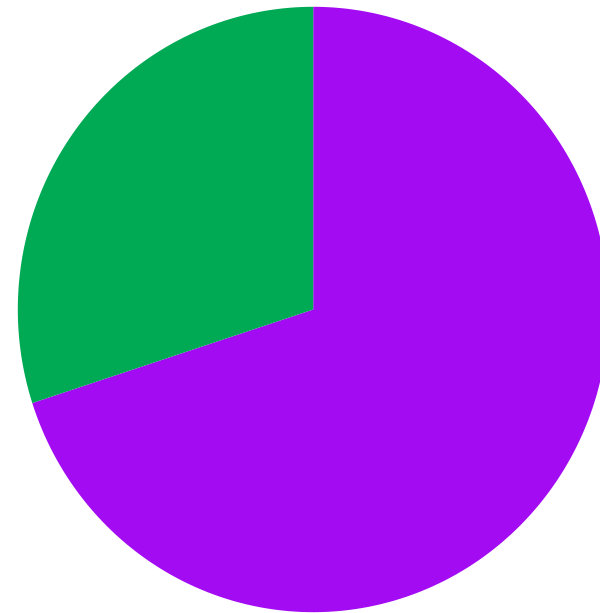Over 70% of the young people from one NYC study had been arrested at least once (n=278).[126]

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■ Arrested Once (70%) ■ Never Arrested (30%)

126   Dank, M. (2015). Surviving the streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ youth, YMSM, and YWSW engaged in survival sex. Re-
         trieved from: https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/42186/2000119-Surviving-the-Streets-of-New-York.pdf

Deeper Dive

Section Overview

While no single narrative can capture the varied lives of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, certain narratives are more commonly discussed than others. A more nuanced understanding is needed in order to create effective systems and programs to meet the diverse needs of LGBTQ young people experiencing homelessness. This section takes us deeper. Contributors examine the connection between racism and LGBTQ youth homelessness, the impact of immigration on LGBTQ young people, and the systemic barriers faced by transgender and gender-expansive youth experiencing homelessness. Contributors also offer suggestions for changing the narrative, authentically engaging youth, and shifting the stigma often associated with housing instability and homelessness.

Immigration

The effects of immigration and forced migration on homelessness and housing instability for LGBTQ youth

The Basics

Forced migration, coupled with marginalization and discrimination in the United States, are likely the greatest contributors to homelessness for unauthorized immigrants who identify as LGBTQ. Forced (or involuntary) migration refers to the condition of people who have been left with no choice but to flee their homes and seek refuge elsewhere. Drivers for displacement include political unrest, economic instability, HIV-status and inadequate health care access, violent conflict, criminalization of LGBTQ identities, and severe human rights abuses. While most of the displaced – as many as 95% – will remain in their country of origin or in the immediate region, forced migrants are increasingly relying on wider patterns of mobility, both on the regional and global scale, to ensure their access to livelihoods and safety.[127]

Same-sex relationships are against the law in nearly 69 countries around the world, with punishments including years in prison and in some cases even the death penalty.[128] Many more countries are fundamentally unsafe for LGBTQ people. Even in countries without laws explicitly targeting LGBTQ people, rejection, abuse, and lack of government protection often force LGBTQ people in intolerant communities to leave home.[129] For LGBTQ people who face persecution based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, abandoning their country of origin is often the "option of last resort".

Many LGBTQ migrants make the difficult, and often dangerous, journey to the U.S. in hopes of finding safety and access to basic human rights, but are often ineligible for visas[130] to enter the U.S. Upon arrival in the U.S., migrants face a complicated and costly immigration system that inadequately addresses their urgent need for relief. Asylum, is often the only opportunity to adjust the immigration status of unauthorized individuals who identify as LGBTQ. A New York study found that having a lawyer gave migrants six times the likelihood of a successful outcome in their asylum case, yet attorneys are not guaranteed in immigration proceedings.

Forced migrants that fall outside the recognized refugee and asylum apparatus, and even many of those who qualify, face mounting risks. Among LGBTQ immigrants in the U.S., nearly one of every four said they faced discrimination when seek-

127   Zetter, Roger. 2015. *Protection in Crisis: Forced Migration and Protection in a Global Era.* Washington, D.C.: MIgration Policy Institute Accessed at: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/protection-crisis-forced-migration-and-protection-global-era

128   Maps - Sexual orientation laws. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://ilga.org/maps-sexual-orientation-laws

129   Gruberg, S., West, R. 2015. *Humanitarian Diplomacy The U.S. Asylum System's Role in Protecting Global LGBT Rights.* Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress. Accessed at: https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/LGBTAsylum-final.pdf

130   Lester Feder, J. (2017, May 18). *Russian Activists Say They've Been Told US Visas Are Out Of Reach For Gay Chechens.* Retrieved from: https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/lesterfeder/us-denies-visas-to-gay-russians-fleeing-kidnapping-and#.krZdLXX1d

ing a place to live because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Additionally, LGBTQ respondents expressed severe levels of discrimination when seeking housing due to their immigration status.[131] Many unauthorized immigrants live in the shadows, afraid of being caught and placed in removal proceedings to be deported. Because they cannot legally work for the first six months after filing for asylum, many asylum applicants experience homelessness while trying to survive in a new, unfamiliar country where the immigration laws work against them. Once homeless and without income or support from family or friends, LGBTQ unauthorized immigrants are sometimes forced to turn to survival crimes, such as stealing food, stealing over-the-counter medication to self-treat medical conditions, engaging in sex work, or jumping subway turnstiles. Unauthorized immigrants are generally ineligible for public housing and Housing Choice vouchers.[132] This remains true unless they are adjusting their status, in proceedings to adjust their status, or in cases involving mixed status families. The Trump Administration is working on a rule[133] that would make immigrants who access the limited assistance they do qualify for in-eligible for a green card. There are not nearly enough shelter beds, particularly in LGBTQ-friendly facilities, to meet the need of homeless LGBTQ immigrants.[134] In 2008, through the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) responsibilities were redefined and expanded in regards to unaccompanied immigrant children under the age of 18. HHS, through the Office of Refugee Resettlement, works to either reunite the child/youth to family already in the US, place the child/youth in foster care, or find another legal remedy. However, if the youth ages out of ORR custody without achieving a legal remedy to their status, they[135] are transferred into the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and often detained pending deportation.

This leaves the over 267,000 adult LGBTQ unauthorized individuals across our country even more vulnerable to prolonged and chronic homelessness and criminalization. A survey of young immigrants under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program found that 10% of respondents identified as LGBT. 76% of LGBT DACA recipients reported that DACA helped them earn more money and become financially independent.[136] Unfortunately, the Trump Administration is trying to eliminate the DACA program, putting the economic and housing security of recipients in jeopardy.

131   Pérez, Z.J., Hi, D.M., Padilla, C. (2016). *NO MORE CLOSETS Experiences of discrimination among the LGBTQ immigrant community.* United We Dream. Retrieved at: http://unitedwedream.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Report-No-More-Closets-1.pdf

132   National Immigration Law Center. (2002). *Guide to Immigrant Eligibility for Federal Programs, 4th ed*. Retrieved from: https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/tbl1_ovrvw-fed-pgms.pdf

133   Batalova, Jeanne, Michael Fix, and Mark Greenberg. 2018. *Chilling Effects: The Expected Public Charge Rule and Its Impact on Legal Immigrant Families' Public Benefits Use*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/chilling-effects-expected-public-charge-rule-impact-legal-immigrant-families

134   Gruberg, S., Rooney, C., McGovern, A., Mirza, S.A., Durso, L.E., (2018, January 24). *Serving LGBTQ Immigrants and Building Welcoming Communities.* Center for American Progress. Retrieved at: https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/reports/2018/01/24/445308/serving-lgbtq-immigrants-building-welcoming-communities/

135   Stewart, E., (2018, June 21). Immigrant children can be detained, prosecuted, and deported once they turn 18. Retrieved from: https://www.vox.com/2018/6/21/17489320/unaccompanied-minors-ice-detention-family-separation-18

136   Gruberg, S., (2017, October 11). *What Ending DACA means for LGBTQ Dreamers.* Retrieved at: https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2017/10/11/440450/ending-daca-means-lgbtq-dreamers/

Even for authorized immigrants, criminalization leads to a loss of lawful status. Both authorized and unauthorized immigrants face abuse in detention. A recent study by the Center for American Progress found that LGBTQ people in immigration detention were 97 times as likely as cisgender, straight people to be sexually abused and even deported back to the violence that many fled in the first place. On the state level, each state licenses their runaway and homeless youth programs differently.[137] Some state licensing requirements call for gender segregated facilities and define gender as "sex assigned at birth," regardless of gender identity. These state-level licensing rules create additional barriers for service providers to provide affirming care for transgender youth, particularly those without immigration status who have no other options. In partnership, advocates and decision-makers can take action to address licensing barriers as well as advance a pro-immigrant policy agenda inclusive of LGBTQ immigrants, as well as reach out to and educate immigrant communities to ensure unauthorized LGBTQ people experiencing homelessness can count on shelters as safe havens. Ultimately, the most meaningful and lasting national solution is comprehensive and inclusive immigration reform legislation with a pathway to citizenship, as well as broad, accessible relief for asylum seekers and refugees seeking a safe place to call home.

"For LGBTQ people facing persecution because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, abandoning their home is often the 'option of last resort.' "
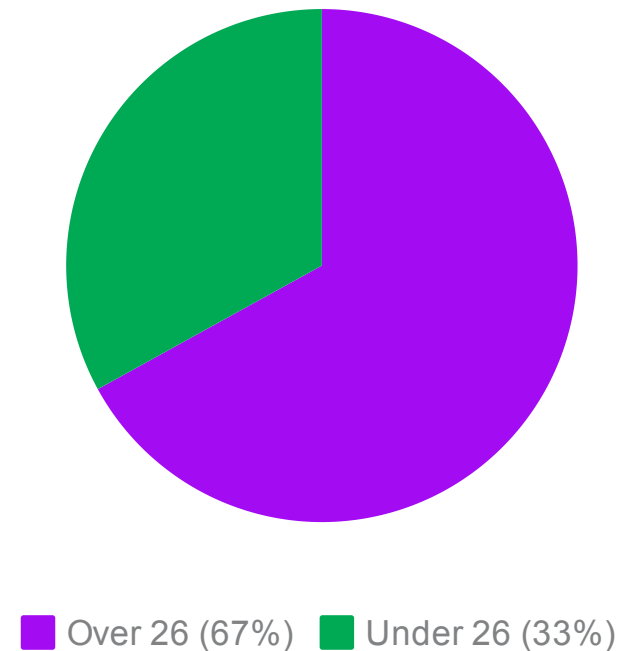
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137   Hananel, S., (2018, May 30). RELEASE: LGBT Immigrants in Detention Centers at Severe Risk of Sexual Abuse, CAP Analysis Says. Retrieved at: https://www.americanprogress.org/press/release/2018/05/30/451380/release-lgbt-immigrants-detention-centers-severe-risk-sexual-abuse-cap-analysis-says/

Takeaways

- After a year, asylum winners may apply for a green card and benefits that can prevent a once-undocumented LGBTQ immigrant from experiencing homelessness and connect them to opportunities that can bring their incomes above the poverty level.

- Having a lawyer greatly increases one's chances of being granted asylum.

- Forced migrants that fall outside the recognized refugee and asylum apparatus – and even many of those who qualify – face mounting risks and challenges.

- Unauthorized children with unauthorized parents and unauthorized persons above the age of 18 experiencing homelessness are generally ineligible for public housing and Housing Choice vouchers, unless they are adjusting their status, in immigration proceedings to adjust status, or in cases of mixed status families.

- Comprehensive immigration reform and increased access to the asylum and refugee systems are meaningful and lasting solutions for LGBTQ immigrants at risk of homelessness.

Data

33% of the clients represented by Immigration Equality are under the age of 26.

■ Over 26 (67%) ■ Under 26 (33%)

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Intersectionality and Race

How structural racism contributes to homelessness among LGBTQ youth

The Basics

Youth and young adults of color are at especially high risk of homelessness. Recent research by the SPARC Initiative (Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities) found that 9 out of 10 young adults 18-24 in SPARC communities were people of color.[138] These findings echo research by Chapin Hall, which found that Black/African American youth had an 83% higher risk of homelessness compared to their white peers.[139] This growing body of research points to the persistent impact of structural racism, which is further complicated by discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and/or expression. Racism, transphobia, and homophobia remain ubiquitous and are inextricably linked to homelessness. Recent studies surveying homeless youth service providers have shown that LGBTQ youth comprise 29-40% of the population of youth experiencing homelessness.[140] LGBTQ youth of color are particularly at risk of homelessness and make up a disproportionate number of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. According to a recent study LGBTQ youth of color experienced some of the highest rates of homelessness and housing instability.[141] Furthermore, LGBTQ young people of color are vulnerable to discrimination in education, employment, housing, and involvement in the criminal justice system. As documented in the SPARC research, structural racism contributes to pathways into homelessness for these young people, and it stymies their ability to exit homelessness.

Causes

While multiple factors contribute to overrepresentation of youth of color in the homelessness population, racism, homophobia, and transphobia drive high numbers of LGBTQ youth of color into homelessness. Due to discrimination within the white

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138   Olivet, J., Dones, M., Richard, M. et. al. (2018). SPARC: Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities: Phase One Study Findings. Center for Social Innovation. Retrieved at: http://center4si.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/SPARC-Phase-1-Findings-March-20181.pdf

139   Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. (2017, September). *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America.* Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved at: http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ChapinHall_VoYC_1-Pager_Final_111517.pdf

140   Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund. Retrieved at: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf

141   Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. (2017, September). *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America.* Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved at: http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ChapinHall_VoYC_1-Pager_Final_111517.pdf

mainstream gay community, LGBTQ young people of color may engage in fewer activities in that community,[142] which can make them feel left out or even pushed out of LGBTQ spaces. Youth of color also disclose their sexual orientation and gender identity to fewer people.[143] Additionally, young people of color encounter numerous barriers as they attempt to access care and support from programs that are not designed to serve them. Health care, social services, housing, employment, and education systems are often undertrained and ill-equipped to meet the specific needs of young people who have experienced the multiple stigmas.

Responses

To respond to the needs of LGBTQ young people of color, we must create solutions at multiple levels, including individual, family, community, and institutional systems. For these responses to be effective, it is critical to understand that racial and ethnic identities develop in parallel and in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, but are not dependent on each other. This requires understanding that LGBTQ young people of color live intersectional lives that need to be addressed independently of one another. In order to integrate the perspectives and needs of LGBTQ people of color, we need to ensure that they are appropriately represented within our governance structures and that system administrators and program directors are both being consistently provided with input from the communities they are attempting to serve.

At the broader societal level, we must renew our commitment to dismantling structural racism and supporting LGBTQ people. We must all commit to the difficult work of eradicating the racism, homophobia, cisgenderism, and transphobia in our culture that have led to homelessness for too many young people. The tools to end homelessness are within our reach. Our willingness to use them remains to be seen.

> We must commit to the difficult work of ending the structural racism, homophobia, cisgenderism, and transphobia that have led to homelessness."

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142   Rosario, M., Schrimshaw, E. W., & Hunter, J. (2004). Ethnic/racial differences in the coming-out process of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths: A comparison of sexual identity development over time. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 10(3), 215. Retrieved at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/8399400_EthnicRacial_Differences_in_the_Coming-Out_Process_of_Lesbian_Gay_and_Bisexual_Youths_A_Comparison_of_Sexual_Identity_Development_Over_Time
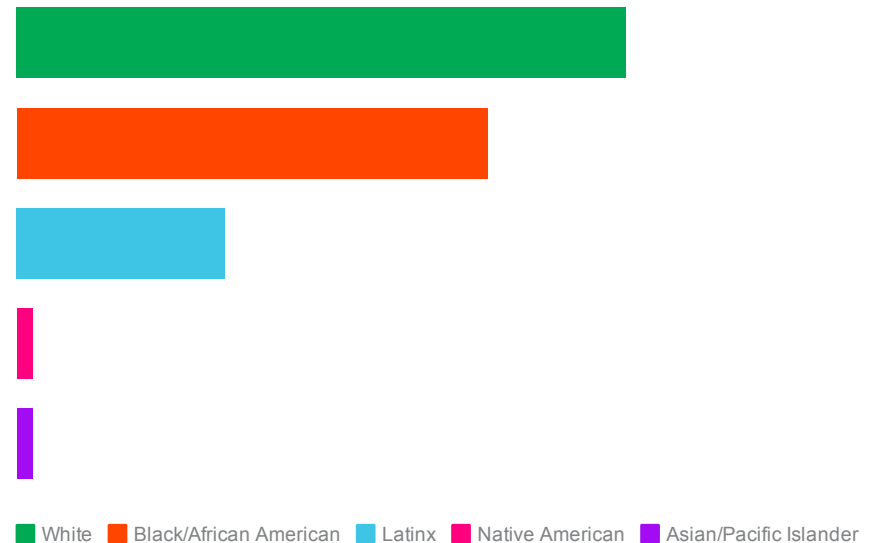
143   Ibid.

Takeaways

- To respond to the needs of LGBTQ young people of color, we must create solutions at multiple levels, including individual, family, community, and institutional systems.

- LGBTQ youth of color are particularly at risk of homelessness and make up a disproportionate number of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness.

- Create safe spaces for LGBTQ young people of color through open, destigmatized conversations about race, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

- Train staff to be anti-racist and LGBTQ-affirming, not simply competent.

- Use strengths-based approaches that recognize and celebrate young people's resilience.

- Establish structures that promote youth leadership, advocacy, and peer connections.

- Provide help for biological/legal families to be supportive and involved in the lives of young LGBTQ people of color when requested by the youth. When young people do not feel safe with these family members, honor the young person's chosen family.

- Ensure that the demographics of program staff reflect the demographics of the population served (i.e. LGBTQ people of color) and that they are cognizant of the issues that LGBTQ youth who are surviving homelessness face.

Data

Percentage of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness by race, as reported by providers.[144]

■ White ■ Black/African American ■ Latinx ■ Native American ■ Asian/Pacific Islander

144   Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund. Retrieved at: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf

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Transgender and Gender-Expansive Youth Experiencing Homelessness

The strength and resilience of transgender and gender-expansive youth

The Basics

Transgender and gender-expansive youth and young adults are overrepresented in the population of youth experiencing homelessness. In a survey of street outreach programs, 7% of youth and young adults surveyed (N = 656) self-identified as transgender.[145] Similar prevalence rates were found in the most recent New York City Youth Count, where approximately 9% of unstably housed youth and young adults surveyed (N = 265) self-identified as transgender or gender-expansive.[146]

Transgender and gender-expansive young adults experiencing homelessness have often experienced violence in their homes and communities of origin and continue to experience discrimination and violence once out of their homes. Additionally, they face systemic barriers that are not encountered by cisgender youth, including institutional practices that deny their own understanding and expression of their gender.[147] [148] Despite the challenges associated with the experience of homelessness, coupled with navigating hostile social environments, transgender and gender-expansive young adults are finding innovative ways to resist the multiple overlapping institutionalized challenges they face. It is important to understand both the challenges and the resourcefulness of transgender and gender-expansive youth.

Transgender and gender-expansive young adults experiencing homelessness often face discrimination, rejection, and violence in the systems that are supposed to help them. These difficulties can be magnified for transgender and gender-expansive youth of color, who navigate systems at the intersections of multiple marginalized identities. Intersectionality theory provides a frame-work for understanding

145   Whitbeck, Lazoritz, Crawford, & Hautala. (2014). Administration for Children and Families: Family and Youth Services Bureau: Street Outreach Program: Data Collection Survey, FInal Report. University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Retrieved at: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/data_collection_study_final_report_street_outreach_program.pdf

146   City of New York. (2017). New York City Youth Count Report, 2017. Center for Innovation Through Data Intelligence and Department of Youth and Community Development. Retrieved from: https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/cidi/downloads/pdfs/youth_count_report_2017_final.pdf

147   Abramovich, A. (2017). Understanding how policy and culture create oppressive conditions for LGBTQ2S youth in the shelter system. *Journal of homosexuality*, *64*(11), 1484-1501.Retrieved at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27691779

148   Shelton, J. (2015). Transgender youth homelessness: Understanding programmatic barriers through the lens of cisgenderism. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *59*, 10-18. Retrieved at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740915300761

the experiences of multiply marginalized young adults, positing that social identities (such as race, class, age, gender, ability, sexual orientation, immigration status) intersect and impact one's experiences of oppression, privilege, and power in unique and different ways.[149] Housing, employment, health care, and social service systems are often not constructed for nor trained appropriately to meet the specific needs of youth who have experienced multiple stigmas related to racism, cisgenderism, transphobia, heterosexism, and homophobia.[150] Young transgender women of color frequently experience severe marginalization in shelters and social services based on their gender and sexual identity, race, and age.[151]

A recent survey conducted by the REALYST Co-Lab (https://www.realyst.org/) sought to identify both risk and protective factors of young adults experiencing homelessness, and included 107 transgender/gender-expansive youth in 7 U.S. cities. Transgender/gender-expansive young adults reported positive coping strategies that included seeking support from someone they trust (65.4%) and concentrating on problem solving (70.5%). 68% reported a desire for help obtaining housing. Among this group of youth, earning money was identified as the biggest stressor, followed by finding work. Transgender people in general report high rates of employment discrimination due to their gender identity or expression, with an unemployment rate three times that of the general population.[152] Unemployment and underemployment

can make finding and maintaining stable housing incredibly difficult for young adults, who may face discrimination from landlords due to their age, and who may not have previous housing histories, credit histories, or other sources of external support that would contribute to their desirability as tenants. Further, LGBTQ people are not universally protected from housing discrimination and people of color often encounter racial discrimination in the housing market. In a recent study, nearly a quarter of transgender people surveyed (N=27,715) reported experiencing housing discrimination related to their gender identity. Transgender women of color were more likely to report housing discrimination, and participants who also reported being kicked out of their family's homes due to their gender identity were almost twice as likely to report experiencing housing discrimination at the time of the survey.[153] Given the frequency with which transgender youth have reported being kicked out/asked to leave their homes in recent research, and the reported increased likelihood of experiencing future housing discrimination as adults,[154] it is important to identify programmatic and policy strategies for supporting transgender young adults in maintaining safe and stable housing.

A survey of homeless youth service providers found that LGBTQ youth experienced longer durations of homelessness than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts, and respondents were more likely to report longer periods of homelessness for the transgender young adults they serve.[155] This is an important finding as longer durations of homelessness have been identified as a threat to resilience among youth experiencing homelessness,[156] and are associated with higher

149   Crenshaw. K. W., (1994). "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color" In: Martha Albertson Fineman, Rixanne Mykitiuk, Eds. *The Public Nature of Private Violence.* New York: Routledge, p. 93-118. Retrieved at: https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mapping-margins.pdf

150   Olivet, J., Dones, M. (2016). Intersectionality and Race. In *At the Intersections: A collaborative report on LGBTQ youth homelessness*, Price, C., Wheeler, C., Shelton, J., & Maury, M. (Eds.). True Colors Fund and the National LGBTQ Task Force.

151   Pyne, J. (2011). Unsuitable bodies: Trans people and cisnormativity in shelter services. *Canadian Social Work Review/Revue canadienne de service social*, *28*(1), 129-137. Retrieved at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263124972_Unsuitable_Bodies_Trans_People_and_Cisnormativity_in_Shelter_Services

152   James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality. Retrieved at: https://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/USTS-Full-Report-FINAL.PDF

153   ibid.

154   ibid.

155   Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund. Retrieved at: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf

156   Cleverley, K., & Kidd, S. A. (2011). Resilience and suicidality among homeless youth. *Journal of adolescence*, *34*(5), 1049-1054. Retrieved at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21122909

levels of sexual risk behaviors.[157] Additionally, longer durations of homelessness resulted in greater difficulty exiting homelessness among a sample (N=1,677) of Australian people who first experienced homelessness when they were 18 years of age or younger.[158]

Takeaways

- Transgender and gender-expansive youth and young adults are overrepresented in the population of youth experiencing homelessness.

- Despite the challenges associated with the experience of homelessness, coupled with navigating hostile social environments, transgender and gender-expansive youth are finding innovative ways to resist the multiple overlapping institutionalized challenges they face.

- Young transgender women of color frequently experience severe marginalization in shelters and social services based on their gender and sexual identity, race, and age[159].

- Unemployment and underemployment can make finding and maintaining stable housing incredibly difficult for young adults, who may face discrimination from landlords due to their age, and who may not have previous housing histories, credit histories, or other sources of external support that would contribute to their desirability as tenants.

"Transgender and gender-expansive youth and young adults experiencing homelessness often face discrimination, rejection, and violence in the systems that are supposed to help them."

157   Rew, L., Grady, M., Whittaker, T. A., & Bowman, K. (2008). Interaction of duration of homelessness and gender on adolescent sexual health indicators. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, *40*(2), 109-115. Retrieved at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18507564

158   Johnson, G., & Chamberlain, C. (2008). From youth to adult homelessness. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, *43*(4), 563-582. Retrieved from: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/j.1839-4655.2008.tb00119.x

159   Pyne, J. (2011). Unsuitable bodies: Trans people and cisnormativity in shelter services. *Canadian Social Work Review/Revue canadienne de service social*, *28*(1), 129-137. Retrieved at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263124972_Unsuitable_Bodies_Trans_People_and_Cisnormativity_in_Shelter_Services

- A survey of homeless youth service providers found that LGBTQ youth experienced longer durations of homelessness than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts, and respondents were more likely to report longer periods of homelessness for the transgender young adults they serve.[160]

Data

Nearly one-third (30%) of respondents have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. One in eight (12%) experienced homelessness in the past year because of being transgender.[161]
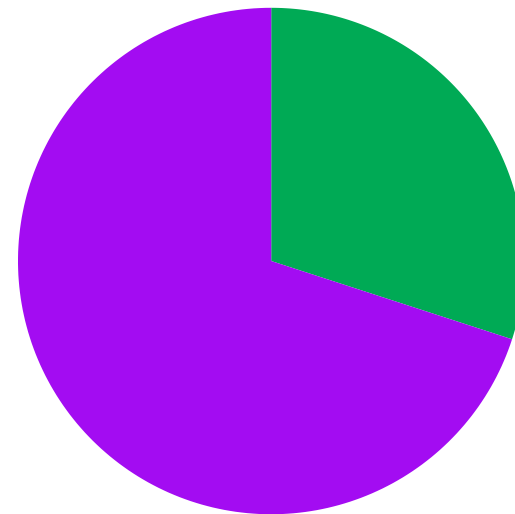
Contributors

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■ Experienced Homelessness (30%) ■ Did Not Experience (70%)

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160   Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund. Retrieved at: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf

161   National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE). (2016). The report of the 2015 U.S. transgender survey. Washington, DC: James, S.E., Herman, J.L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. Retrieved from http://www.ustranssurvey.org/

Youth Engagement

Effectively engaging and working with youth who have experienced trauma through homelessness and housing instability

The Basics

Historically, youth experiencing homelessness have been taken advantage of and tokenized in many ways. Youth have been asked to tell their stories on panels and at conferences, often being defined (and retraumatized) by their experiences. People have used their experiences with no exchange of information or services. How we engage youth is an integral part of how we create effective solutions. Intention plays a huge role. Being intentional about how and why youth are included in creating solutions is essential. It is important to be clear about your intentions and collaborate with young people to figure out their role in your particular area of focus.

Older adults can be very quick to dismiss young people simply because they're young and deemed inexperienced or un-knowledgeable. Many adults feel that because they are older, they have more power or influence. Doing this work properly requires one to flip this idea on its head. It requires being mindful of language. Using words/phrases like "kids" can under-mine and patronize young people. This work also demands being intentional about the decision-making power that youth have in your work. In what ways do youth directly impact decisions in your organization?

Youth are the experts of their own truth. When you realize that, you also recognize the knowledge and experience they bring to the table and how that can positively inform your work. As an adult partner, it is your responsibility not to speak for a young person, but rather to facilitate spaces where young people can build their own power.

LGBTQ youth who have experiences of homelessness or housing instability tend to mistrust due to several factors including rejection and abuse. Engaging LGBTQ youth in the work in the wrong way can perpetuate their resistance to seeking services or engaging in solutions to the issue at large.

This specifically relates to youth engagement because true youth engagement is about partnership and collaboration. When asking young people to be involved in your work, hear them out and build a reciprocal relationship where you honor their experience and thoughts and allow their opinions to truly inform the process.

Case Study:

The Austin Youth Collective strives to create opportunities for youth voice to shine. We work to incorporate youth voice in all stages of development in the recent YHDP grant projects being implemented by LifeWorks. The youth have provided feedback and guidance in the structures of the new programs, been involved in the hiring process for all new employees, and have been presenting at various conferences on the importance of incorporating youth voice. The team is comprised of youth with lived experience who want to show that having experienced homelessness isn't the whole of their stories, in fact it's barely the prologue. The team has selected trainings they are most interested in to forward their lives, everything from social media marketing to project management. As we move into the next phase of YHDP, the AYC is working to expand their outreach and impact.

Find out more about the AYC at http://austinyouthcollective.org

Takeaways:

- It is important to be clear about your intentions when engaging youth in your work

- Youth are the experts of their own truth

- Adults should elevate youth voices, not speak for them

- Youth engagement is about partnership and collaboration

- Work with youth to lead solution efforts

> **Older adults can be very quick to dismiss youth and young people simply because they're young and deemed inexperienced or unknowledgeable."**

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Shifting the Narrative

The responsibility of advocates, policymakers, service providers and researchers to focus on the strengths of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness

The Basics

The way we talk about LGBTQ youth homelessness matters. Without meaning to, advocates and homeless youth serving organizations may perpetuate stigma in their public messages. The thing about these public messages is that they often reinforce half truths. Whether geared toward potential donors, policy makers, or community members, public messages often tell a small part of the story – be it to pull on heartstrings or to inspire people to action. And they often relegate LGBTQ young people to a single, sensationalized aspect of their experiences.

For example, how many times have you heard the message, "We must rescue these kids from life on the streets?" That message completely ignores the strength and survival skills young people possess, and reinforces several unhelpful power dynamics (including youth/adult, unhoused/housed, victim/hero dynamics). How often have you heard the message, "[young person's name] was kicked out of his home for being gay, then forced to prostitute himself on the street." While this narrative may be true for some LGBTQ young people, it is not true for all. There's often a lot more to the story. LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness hear these messages. Is this what we truly think about them? Do we really only see this single aspect of their experiences? Do our messages instill hope in the receiver?

All youth experiencing homelessness face stigma, however this is compounded for LGBTQ youth and LGBTQ youth of color, who may encounter stigma not only for their housing status, but also their sexual/gender identity and race. The experience of stigma among youth experiencing homelessness has been associated with low self-esteem, feeling trapped, loneliness, and suicidality.[162]

Furthermore, when we talk about LGBTQ youth homelessness within the LGBTQ movement, we don't often talk about how this is an issue for us personally. We are not acknowledging that so many of our current LGBTQ movement leaders experienced homelessness, were kicked out of, pushed out of, or left their homes. Rather, we talk about "helping the kids" and, in so doing, create an us/them dynamic that distances the reality of many of our experiences and forecloses opportunities for connection between current movement leaders and LGBTQ youth who may be struggling with housing instability. This is not an us/them issue.

We know that LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness do face victimization, but we also know that they are bright, cre-

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162   Gattis, M. N., & Larson, A. (2016). Perceived racial, sexual identity, and homeless status-related discrimination among Black adolescents and young adults experiencing homelessness: Relations with depressive symptoms and suicidality. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *86*(1), 79. Retrieved at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26460699

ative, strong people who are so much more than their experience of homelessness.[163] It's time we start to talk about LGBTQ youth homelessness through an intersectional and multi-dimensional lens. It's not enough just to talk about risks and dangers. We must also talk about potential and opportunity. We shouldn't just talk about family rejection, but also about how segments of our society sanction it. We shouldn't just talk about putting more beds in homeless shelters, but also about how to prevent our young people from needing those beds to begin with. When we define a problem in the negative, the solutions that get funded and sustained are built to respond to that negative narrative. Messaging that focuses exclusively on family rejection, for example, will likely attract the most resources for family reunification programs even if young people are more in need of workforce training or financial services support. In contrast, when we address an issue by focusing on the needs of people who are most deeply impacted and by identifying opportunities for support, the solutions that will receive the most attention and resources will be more likely to meet the needs of young people in their current experience.

Let's change the narrative. Let's talk about how our systems often fail LGBTQ youth and youth of color. Let's talk about racial equity and poverty and about what we're doing to challenge the institutionalized oppression that makes it incredibly difficult for a young person of transgender experience to get a job, to move through Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs, to gain access to resources, and to have an equitable shot at the future they deserve.

When we shift the message to include more holistic portrayals of LGBTQ youth and their experiences of homelessness, we open up possibilities for their success in a number of ways. First, we demonstrate that we see them for all of who they are. We can hope that this counters some of the stigma they face in their daily lives. Second, we recognize and are subsequently able to focus on their strengths, rather than solely on the experiences we assume make them victims. Non-judgmental, strengths-based programming may better equip young people to move out of homelessness. Third, focusing on their strengths in public messaging alters public perception. Shifting from a message of victimhood to a message of resilience contributes to a fundamental change in how young people experience existing programs, in what services and supports are made available to young people, and in how the public engages with our community.

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163   Shelton, J., Wagaman, M. A., Small, L., & Abramovich, A. (2018). I'm more driven now: Resilience and resistance among transgender and gender-expansive youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, *19*(2), 144-157. Retrieved at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15532739.2017.1374226?journalCode=wijt20&

Takeaways

- Use language that does not reduce youth to one aspect of their existence: their housing status. Replace the phrase "homeless youth" with "youth experiencing homelessness."

- Be mindful that young people are hearing the messages you use when discussing them – in your local media, to recruit donors, to engage the community, and on your website.

- Craft intervention strategies that take into account the varied reasons LGBTQ youth experience homelessness.

- Find ways to build upon the strengths of LGBTQ youth in programs and in public facing campaigns.

- Recognize that race silent is not race neutral. Name youth of color as the most impacted when talking about LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness.

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"Framing our messages to include holistic portrayals of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness opens up possibilities for their success."

Redefining Families

The role of chosen families and peer support networks in communities of youth experiencing homelessness

The Basics

LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness are incredibly resilient. One common manifestation of that resilience is the structured ways they care for themselves and each other through the creation of queer families. These created families often pick up where their biological families have failed or haven't been present– providing consistency, care and support. Beyond meeting the immediate presenting needs of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, one of the most important things advocates and providers can do is to listen and respect the ways that LGBTQ youth build and define what family means to them.

The queer kinship networks many LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness construct, often with other LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, take over the caretaking and supportive roles. These families provide social and emotional support, safety, and a sense of belonging that youth need to survive and thrive amidst challenging and unstable circumstances. The families that LGBTQ youth build take many forms. Informal connections, tightly bonded street families, and house/ballroom families whose connection and responsibility go far beyond voguing are all common examples.

Often, queer families built by youth mirror "traditional" family structures with youth considering one another (regardless of age) mother or father, brother, sister etc., though this isn't true in all cases. While some created families have a clear hierarchy that mirrors a "traditional" nuclear family, others are more egalitarian. In order to best meet the needs of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, it is essential that service providers and advocates respect the families as defined by the youth they are working with, in the same way that they would respect a youth's chosen name or pronouns.

For many LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, the families that they construct are the first time they have experienced healthy and affirming family dynamics. These created families can play intricate roles in a youth's social and emotional welfare and development, and be key allies in ensuring they remain connected to agency supports, care and other services.

Case Study

My queer family is the best thing to have happened to me. They've been supporting me since day one and are so loving and caring for me. I love each and every one one of them with so much of my heart and I am here today because of them. When

I lived in the tent in my grandma's front yard, my queer dad was checking in on me making sure my needs were met and always bought me things I needed. He also got me involved in community mental health work by taking me to monthly meetings. In February when I was living in the motel with my family, my queer family helped me and my best friend (another queer youth adopted into the community who I met at the youth shelter) fundraise money to attend the national Creating Change conference with the gender health center. It was and will be one of the best weeks of my life. I learned and experienced so much and got exposed to so much queer radicalism. When I was living outside, my queer family helped me get a sleeping bag and made sure my needs were still being met. One time, one of my queer family members even bought dessert cakes for me and the youth I was camping with. They've been there for me since I first came out as a baby queer four years ago and have been even more supporting of me the past year. I honestly would've given up and killed myself if it wasn't for them. They've helped me grow into such a great community leader and radical queer youth. If you haven't tried to pull in a homeless queer youth into your life or community, now is the time. We need everybody to help get us support and to allow us to grow. It takes a whole tribe to raise a kid, especially for queer youth. Pull us in and give us love and support and we will flourish.

One of the most important things advocates and providers can do is listen to & respect ways LGBTQ youth build & define family."

Takeaways

- LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness are incredibly resilient. An embodiment of that resilience is through the creation of their own families.

- Respect youths' definitions of family and who they consider family in the same ways you would respect the chosen names and pronouns of any youth.

- Queer kinship networks and created families in all of their diverse forms are frequently a primary source of support for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness.

- Queer families take many forms. Some, but not all, mirror "traditional" family structures. Talk with youth about what their queer families mean to them.

Data

32 percent of people in the United States report having taken time off work to care for a friend or chosen family member with a health-related need.[164]
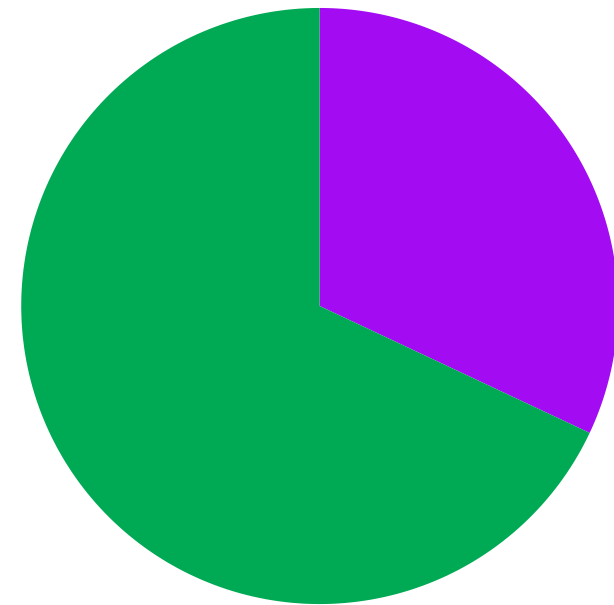
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Twiggy Pucci-Garcon, Program Director, True Colors United

■ Have Taken Time Off Work (32%)   ■ Have Not Taken Time Off Work (68%)

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164   Robbins, K. G., Durso, L. E., Bewkes, F. J., & Schultz, E. (n.d.). People Need Paid Leave Policies That Cover Chosen Family. Retrieved from https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/reports/2017/10/30/441392/people-need-paid-leave-policies-that-cover-chosen-family/

Prevention and Early Intervention

Preventing experiences of homelessness for LGBTQ youth before it occurs

The Basics

A critical component in ending LGBTQ youth homelessness is putting resources in place to prevent it in the first place. A myriad of approaches to prevention and early intervention exist across the country. Practices such as raising youth awareness of, and ability to access, community resources and providing immediate access to appropriate housing supports have shown to prevent or minimize time youth are on the street. Additionally, family counseling and case management can help mitigate the challenges causing a young person's housing instability. For many young people, the pathway to homelessness involves intersections with child welfare, juvenile justice, and other service systems. These systems disproportionately impact LGBTQ youth, and particularly youth of color. As a result, prevention also involves advocates, direct service providers, young people with lived experience, funders, and other stakeholders working collaboratively to address systemic issues that contribute to youth homelessness. Research and practice-informed strategies include:

- Collaborating with LGBTQ youth with lived experience in designing, implementing, and continually improving programs that support their journey forward.

    - Young people who have experienced homelessness are acutely aware of the challenges they face on the street and within programs. They are uniquely positioned to inform strategies to prevent and address housing instability, and should have decision-making roles at the table. Authentic collaboration involves preparing and positioning young people for success, support in logistics planning, and payment and/or incentives, as well as consistently reflecting back the real impact of the youth's engagement.

- Strengthening families through therapeutic and case management services.

    - Family acceptance is a known protective factor for LGBTQ youth, making family engagement an important aspect of preventing and ending homelessness. "Most LGBTQ youth first experience homelessness not in the immediate aftermath of 'coming out' but in large part as the result of family instability and frayed relationships over time. Young people's sense of whether service agencies were safe and affirming spaces for LGBTQ youth often informed their decisions about whether to engage with them. These findings signal opportunities for prevent-

ing homelessness and underscore the importance of services that help young people re-establish positive and reliable connections in their lives."[165] Positive and reliable connections may include a youth's family of origin and/or other individuals that the young person identifies as family.

- Assisting youth in expanding their support network. LGBTQ young people thrive when they have people and resources in their lives that affirm and support their identity.

  - Programs can connect youth with LGBTQ friendly employers, community supports, and social groups. In addition, mentoring has been shown to increase protective factors, promote educational attainment, and reduce risks associated with stigma and victimization for LGBTQ youth – who are less likely to have a mentor in their life.[166] A strong support network increases housing stability for young people, and can provide a safety net outside of traditional service systems.

- Utilizing street outreach, drop-in centers, and case management to engage youth.

  - Going where young people are, partnering with those already connected, and being a supportive presence in their community can increase the likelihood that youth will reach out when needed (i.e. kikis, balls, queer-centric community events, LGBT centers, and street locations frequented). Drop-in centers that are safe and affirming can

"Prevention involves advocates, direct service providers, young people with lived experience, funders, and other stakeholders working collaboratively to address systemic issues that contribute to youth homelessness."

165   Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018). Missed opportunities: LGBTQ youth homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved at: https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/lgbtq-youth-homelessness/

166   Rummell, C. National Mentoring Resource Center (2016). Mentoring Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, and Gender Non-conforming Youth. Retrieved at: http://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/images/PDF/LGBTQ_Population_Review.pdf

also provide a gathering place for LGBTQ youth to find social support, meet their basic needs, and access case management and other services. Assistance in obtaining identification and other documents, accessing, public benefits, mental and physical healthcare, and legal assistance can address challenges that may otherwise lead to a young person experiencing homelessness. LGBTQ youth may also benefit from support in sharing information, introducing their pronouns, disclosing trauma, or connecting to the queer community. For Latinx and Black youth, this may also include discussing intersectional hurdles that impact their lives.

- **Meeting the specific needs of transgender and gender-expansive youth.**

  - Homelessness impacts transgender and gender-expansive youth at disproportionately high rates. When experiencing homelessness, transgender and gender-expansive youth (particularly trans women of color) frequently experience violence on the street and sex trafficking. Prevention and early intervention specific to the needs of transgender youth may include advocacy and support in changing name/gender on identification and legal documents, as well as help navigating housing, education, employment, healthcare, public restrooms, and other spaces.

- **Providing immediate access to safe housing, particularly for those most vulnerable.**

  - There are many considerations in safe, stable housing for LGBTQ young people. Ultimately, the priority is to help youth exit the street or other unsafe situation using the best available resources, and to secure a youth directed housing option. A groundbreaking new study found that every additional day of waiting for housing increased young people's odds of returning to the homelessness system after exiting into a housing program by 2%.[167] Vulnerability indicators such as the transition age youth (TAY) triage tool can be used to guide service matching, and often work within coordinated entry systems. Pairing formal assessments with case conferencing can help ensure that the holistic needs, individual identities, and preferences of young people are considered. Overall, strategies should focus on young people finding their next, most stable housing option. This is rarely a linear process, so it is important to have multiple backup plans.

- **Addressing inequities in upstream systems.**

  - Inequities in education, employment, child welfare, juvenile justice, affordable housing, and neighborhood investment, among others, contribute to the overrepresentation of LGBTQ youth and youth of color in homelessness systems. Collecting and analyzing racial, ethnic, and LGBTQ+ identity data can help organizations assess disparities and identify service gaps and ensure referrals to appropriate existing services such as housing or counseling. Collaborating with other service systems and community stakeholders, hosting staff training across systems to increase knowledge and address biases, and advocating for policy change are all promising strategies.

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167   Morton, M.H, Rice, E., Blondin, M., Hsu, H., & Kull, M. (2018). Toward a System Response to Ending Youth Homelessness: New Evidence to Help Communities Strengthen Coordinated Entry, Assessment, and Support for Youth. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved at: https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Chapin-Hall-Youth-Collaboratory-Toward-A-System-Response-To-Youth-Homele....pdf
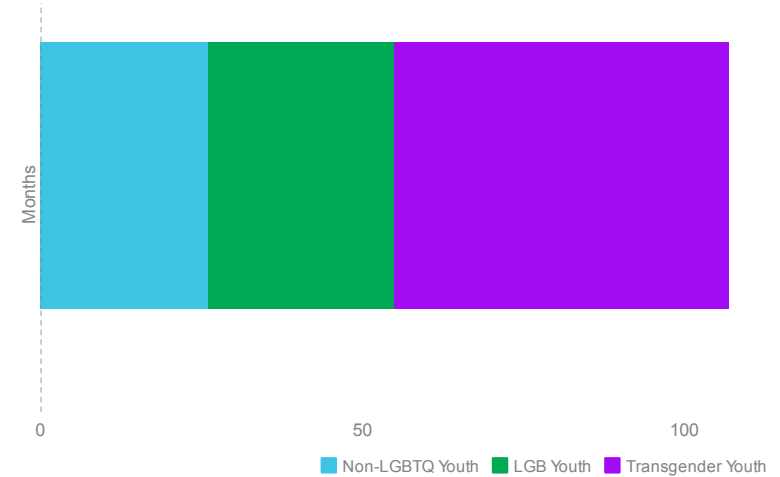
Takeaways:

- Young people who have experienced homelessness are uniquely positioned to inform strategies to prevent and address housing instability, and should have decision-making roles at the table.

- Positive and reliable connections may include a youth's family of origin and/or other individuals that the young person identifies as family. This means that preventing homelessness among LGBTQ youth also includes engaging family of origin.

- LGBTQ+ young people thrive when they have people and resources in their lives that affirm and support their identity.

- Going where young people are, partnering with those already connected, and being a supportive presence in their community can increase the likelihood that youth will reach out when needed (i.e. kikis, balls, queer-centric community events, LGBT centers, and street locations frequented).

- Prevention and early intervention specific to the needs of transgender youth may include advocacy and support in changing name/gender on identification and legal documents, as well as help navigating housing, education, employment, healthcare, public restrooms, and other spaces.

- A groundbreaking new study found that every additional day of waiting for housing increased young people's odds of returning to the homelessness system after exiting into a housing program by 2%.[168]

- Inequities in education, employment, child welfare, juvenile justice, affordable housing, and neighborhood investment, among others, contribute to overrepresentation of LGBTQ+ youth and youth of color in homelessness systems.

168   Morton, M.H, Rice, E., Blondin, M., Hsu, H., & Kull, M. (2018). Toward a System Response to Ending Youth Homelessness: New Evidence to Help Communities Strengthen Coordinated Entry, Assessment, and Support for Youth. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved at: https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Chapin-Hall-Youth-Collaboratory-Toward-A-System-Response-To-Youth-Homele....pdf

Data

- Every additional day of waiting for housing increased young people's odds of returning to the homelessness system after exiting into a housing program by 2%.[169]

- Transgender youth tend to experience longer periods of homelessness than their straight, gay, lesbian, or bisexual peers. Data from New York City shows that the average period away from family for youth is 26 months, and the average period is slightly higher for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth at 29 months. However, for transgender youth, it jumps dramatically to an average period of separation from family of 52 months, with a median separation period of 30 months.[170]

Non-LGBTQ Youth   LGB Youth   Transgender Youth

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169   Ibid.

170   Cray, Andrew; Miller, Katie; and Durso, Laura E. (2013). Seeking Shelter: The Experiences and Unmet Needs of LGBT Homeless Youth. Washington DC: Center for American Progress. Retrieved at: https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/LGBTHomelessYouth.pdf

Safe and Affirming Care

Promoting inclusion in any type of program

The Basics

LGBTQ youth who face rejection, harassment, and violence related to stigma face grave disparities in physical and mental health outcomes.[171] [172] Providers and advocates thus must go beyond providing routine care for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, and work with intention to develop programs, procedures, and policies designed to support LGBTQ youth and challenge the systems of oppression conditioning their lives. Unfortunately, this will take effort, and there's no magical recipe. We must lean into discomfort, mandate an intersectional lens,[173] and commit to changing ourselves and our systems. Below are some introductory recommendations.

Individual Self-Work

- Before we work with others, we've got to work with ourselves. Explore your own story of gender and sexuality, the messages you've received, and how gender and sexuality inform your world.

- Seek new information and language driven by the insights of young people (check out <u>GSA Network</u>, <u>Trans Student Educational Resources</u>, and <u>Black Youth Project</u>).

- Work to name and unlearn the biases blocking your receptivity to new information. These biases may include hetero-sexism and cissexism,[174] but also biases related to race, class, age, immigration, and other aspects of identity. Stay open to feedback!

Interactions with Youth

- A fundamental indicator of safety and affirmation is respect for youths' names and pronouns. This means asking youth (and everyone) their pronouns, and remaining diligent about using them.

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171   Balsam, K. F., Molina, Y., Beadnell, B., Simoni, J., & Walters, K. (2011). Measuring multiple minority stress: the LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 17(2), 163. Retrieved from: <u>https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4059824/</u>

172   Reisner, S. L., Greytak, E. A., Parsons, J. T., & Ybarra, M. L. (2015). Gender minority social stress in adolescence: disparities in adolescent bullying and substance use by gender identity. The Journal of Sex Research, 52(3), 243-256. Retrieved from: <u>https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4201643/pdf/nihms586722.pdf</u>

173   Laverne Cox Talks about Intersectionality at Harvard. (2014, March 11). Retrieved from: <u>https://youtu.be/jY3F1pIxHMA</u>

174   Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack II. (2016, August 30). Retrieved from <u>http://lgbtq2stoolkit.learningcommunity.ca/training/unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack-ii/</u>

- Respect youth expertise and refrain from policing their identities and experiences.[175] Create space for youth to make choices you may disagree with (such as how they make money, or whom they date), and provide resources that support their agency.

- Respect confidentiality – always! If a youth shares their gender and/or sexuality with you, thank them for telling you and ask them about their boundaries and desires for confidentiality.

Institutional Programming

- Ensure your programming is responsive to the needs of LGBTQ youth. Ask yourself:

    - Do we have <u>gender integrated</u> support groups available?

    - Do our <u>sexual health programs</u> reflect diverse bodies and relationships?

    - Does our art programming highlight the <u>work</u> of <u>LGBTQ people of color</u>?

- Create safe(r) spaces for LGBTQ youth to build community with one another. This includes support groups around family, relationships, and identity, as well as groups based in shared interests – voguing, anime, poetry – anything!

- Make programming intersectional. LGBTQ youth of color, trans youth, undocumented youth, and other subcommunities deserve safe(r) spaces to build solidarity and community with others who share some of their experiences.

Administrative

- Ensure all <u>forms</u> reflect a difference between assigned sex, gender identity, and sexuality, and adjust any materials that make assumptions about bodies, histories, relationships, or families. The more open-ended the better!

- Training should be routine, include content on gender and sexuality, and cover the impact of heterosexism, cissexism, racism, ageism, and other systems of oppression on the conditions of LGBTQ youth's lives. Training should not only be outside-facing but also engage staff and advocates in self-reflection.

- Vet your referrals! Not doing so runs the risk of referring a nonbinary youth to an organization without a neutral bathroom, or referring a gay young person to an organization that condemns their sexuality.

- Employing LGBTQ folks (specifically LGBTQ folks of color and those who have experienced homelessness) communicates an organizational belief in the value of LGBTQ people in general. Prioritize LGBTQ staff, specifically LGBTQ staff of color, for leadership positions of influence and impact.

- Physical spaces must be designed to communicate safety and care to LGBTQ youth. Beyond <u>signage</u>, consider ways in

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175   Youth Collaboration Toolkit. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://network.truecolorsfund.org/youth-collaboration-toolkit/

which your space is gendered. If a gendered space is unnecessary (as in the case of a single-stall restroom), <u>make it available</u> to all youth.

■ All policies, including nondiscrimination policies, must reflect gender identity and sexuality and staff and youth must be aware of such policies. Avoid policies that may criminalize youth.[176]

Advocacy

Our efforts to create safe and affirming environments are futile if we don't engage in broader advocacy. Between anti-transgender high school bills, immigration policy, and the school-to-prison pipeline, the social and political context for LGBTQ youth remains stacked against their success. Providing safe and affirming care for LGBTQ youth doesn't stop at your place of work – it must continue in public, in daily conversations, and at the ballot box.

Celebration

Finally, don't forget to celebrate! We often get steeped in a risk mentality that casts a shadow over the beauty of LGBTQ communities. Show your enthusiasm for a world where we're free to be ourselves, and celebrate youth for leading that charge!

"We must go beyond providing routine care and work to develop programs, procedures, and policies designed to support LGBTQ youth and challenge the systems of oppression conditioning their lives."

176 Hunt, J., & Moodie-Mills, A. C. (n.d.). The Unfair Criminalization of Gay and Transgender Youth. Retrieved from https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/reports/2012/06/29/11730/the-unfair-criminalization-of-gay-and-transgender-youth/

Case Study:

The goal of the 3/40 Blueprint is to build the capacity of Transitional Living Programs (TLPs) to serve LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness by strengthening their efforts to better understand and address the needs of this population. Activities include a systematic review of existing literature on outcomes and interventions for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness; a comprehensive needs assessment of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness who access services from TLPs; and an identification and analysis of screening and assessment tools used with LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, existing and emerging practices used by TLPs, and trainings for providers. This project was funded as a collaborative agreement by the Family and Youth Services Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families. Partners include the University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Houston, Center for the Study of Social Policy, and the Human Rights Campaign Foundation.

When we talk about youth homelessness, we often talk about the need for safe and affirming spaces for LGBTQ youth. However, we often don't talk about what it means to be safe and affirming or how to create those spaces. As part of a national effort to build the capacity of TLPs, a team of researchers led by the University of Illinois at Chicago conducted a national needs assessment to develop a comprehensive understanding of the needs of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, and the resources, services, and strategies that respond to those needs. Of critical importance in this needs assessment was identifying how youth define safe and affirming care and the strategies that TLPs can use to achieve this.

Youth were interviewed at 10 TLPs across the country to describe their perceptions of safe and affirming care. Physical safety and protection from violence were the most frequent attributes that youth discussed. However, youths' descriptions of physical safety were very closely tied to the physical and material environment and organizational policies. Two types of policies were commonly discussed: confidentiality and anti-violence policies. While these policies were important to youth, youth also discussed the importance of staff enforcing them. Having transparent and universally enforced policies helped provide youth security and stability. In terms of the physical environment, youth discussed the importance of visible indicators of safety, inclusion (such as posters, signs, and pamphlets), and respect throughout the agency to explicitly and implicitly support the enforcement of these policies.

In addition to physical safety, youth described the importance of emotional safety. Youth stated they feel emotionally safe when they have access to staff members who truly care about them, share similar identities with them , are knowledgeable and use affirming and supportive language, and don't pathologize or stigmatize their identities. Youth further described safety by referencing an "open space" for them to be themselves. Youth described feeling safe and affirmed at agencies that allowed them to be themselves without condescension or judgment of any aspect of their identities.

Takeaways:

- Providing safe and affirming care for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness requires intentionality and work.

- Self-work is the first step, and requires a mix of learning and unlearning.

- Center LGBTQ youth, honor their insights, and support their decisions.

- Build safe and affirming organizational scaffolding that spans programs, procedure, and policy.

- Change the world!

Data

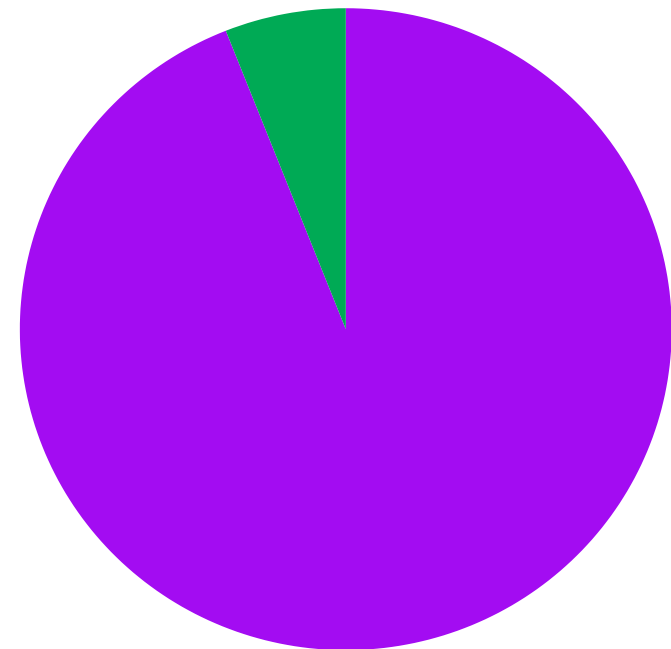94% of providers serving youth experiencing homelessness report working with LGBTQ youth.[177]

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177   Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund. Retrieved at: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf

Rural

Unique challenges and barriers exist for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness in a rural setting

The Basics

As a nation, we have long lacked basic evidence on experiences of youth homelessness in rural America. There are a number of added obstacles to studying issues like homelessness in general in rural America, much less homelessness among rural LGBTQ people.

Conducting research with adequate sample size and representation across vast lands with low population density takes serious creativity, capacity, and funding. Shelters and public places where people experiencing homelessness congregate in cities are scarce or non-existent in rural communities. Yet these are the types of places that homelessness counts and surveys largely rely on for identifying participants. Further, researchers themselves are often based in urban areas and commonly focus on their surroundings. Given these challenges, the limited research on youth homelessness has generally taken place in cities.

This is starting to change. New data from Voices of Youth Count (VoYC), a national research initiative on homelessness among youth and young adults, ages 13 to 25, led by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago has contributed to a better understanding of youth homelessness, including in the vast rural areas of the United States. The VoYC national survey results indicate that, despite more visible signs of homelessness in cities, youth in rural, suburban, and urban counties experience very similar prevalence rates of homelessness. In predominantly rural counties, 9.2% of young adults reported any homelessness during a one-year period while, in predominantly urban counties, the prevalence rate was 9.6%. Household prevalence of any homelessness among adolescents ages 13-17 was 4.4% in predominantly rural counties and 4.2% in mainly urban counties.[178]

Said differently, this means that, as a share of the population size, youth homelessness is just as much of a challenge in rural communities as it is in urban communities. That said, the number of youth experiencing homelessness in urban and suburban areas is much larger than the number in rural areas because a larger share of the U.S. population lives in urban and suburban areas.

Determining exactly how much of the population of youth experiencing homelessness lives in rural areas is tricky, because this depends on how one defines a "rural area" — and there are many ways to do this. For instance, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's definition of a rural county, about 9% of young adults who reported homelessness resided in a rural county at the time of their interview (about the same share of the young adult population overall that resides in Census-defined rural counties). Using the broader U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Youth

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178   Morton, M. H., Dworksy, A., & Samuels, G. M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National Estimates. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Homelessness Demonstration Program criteria for a rural county, this share increases to 17% of young adults reporting homelessness (about 1 in 6).[179]

Both the VoYC national survey, which involved a nationally-representative phone-based survey, and the VoYC Youth Counts, which utilized local point-in-time counts and brief surveys of youth experiencing homelessness across 22 diverse counties, showed smaller shares of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness in rural communities, compared to urban communities. We don't know exactly why this is, but several explanations are possible. Young people in rural communities might be less inclined to identify as LGBTQ or further delay "coming out" when social norms in those communities are less safe or affirming of such identification. LGBTQ young people might be more inclined to leave rural communities for cities.[180] Still, while the degree varies, LGBTQ-identifying young people remain disproportionately affected by homelessness in rural and urban communities alike.

While sample sizes generally are too small to compare the characteristics and experiences of LGBTQ youth specifically between rural and urban communities, VoYC has yielded some important insights on how youth homelessness requires more unique considerations in rural contexts. For one thing, it is especially hidden. VoYC Youth counts showed that youth experiencing homelessness in the counties with the smallest populations were about half as likely to be staying in shelters and about twice as likely to be staying with others (e.g., couch surfing), as their peers in counties with the largest populations. This suggests more innovative identification strategies are needed to reach and count youth experiencing homelessness in rural communities.[181] Additionally, these communities tend to lack youth-specific shelters and runaway or homelessness services. Consequently, creative collaborations between broader institutions, such as schools, colleges, community service organizations, faith-based organizations, and others, are especially important to weave an effective safety net for youth experiencing homelessness in these communities.

LGBTQ-identifying young people are disproportionately affected by homelessness in rural and urban communities alike."

179   Morton, M. H., Dworsky, A., Matjasko, J. L., Curry, S. R., Schlueter, D., Chávez, R., & Farrell, A. F. (2018). Prevalence and Correlates of Youth Homelessness in the United States. Journal of Adolescent Health, 62(1), 14-21. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2017.10.006

180   Morton, M. H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G. M. (Forthcoming). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in Rural America. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

181   Ibid.

Takeaways:

- Youth homelessness is similarly prevalent in rural and urban communities.

- Youth experiencing homelessness in rural communities identify as LGBTQ at lower rates, and LGBTQ youth remain disproportionately represented among those experiencing homelessness in rural areas.

- Youth homelessness is especially hidden in rural communities. Compared to youth experiencing homelessness in urban communities, rural youth are half as likely to be staying in shelters and twice as likely to be staying with others while unstably housed. Youth-specific shelters and homelessness services are rare in rural communities, requiring more creative collaboration between broader public systems and community organizations to weave a safety net for these young people.

- Overall, we have much too little national evidence on youth homelessness – much less LGBTQ youth homelessness – in rural America, including which intervention models work best in rural contexts.

Data

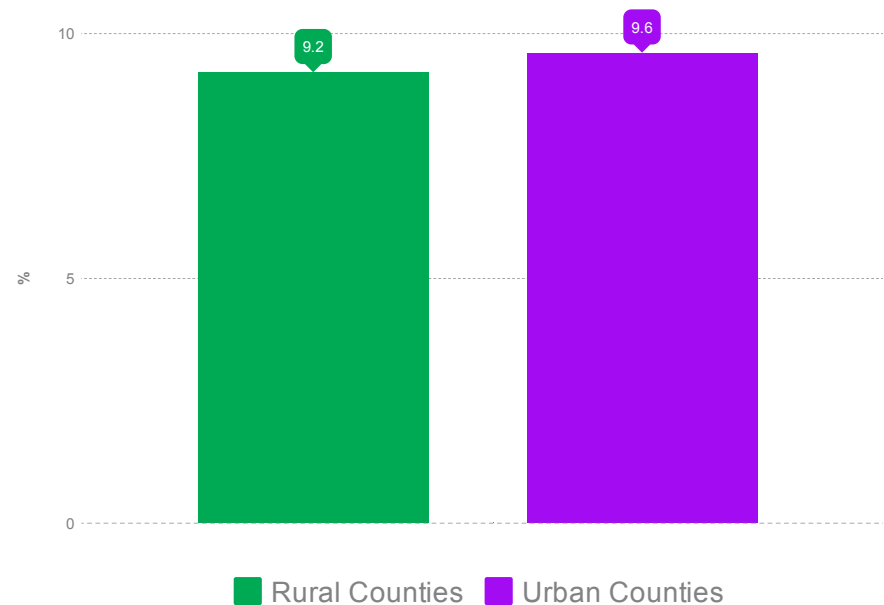Rates of youth experiencing homelessness (18-24) were similar in rural and non-rural areas.[182]

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Legend: ■ Rural Counties (9.2) ■ Urban Counties (9.6)

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182   Morton, M. H., Dworksy, A., & Samuels, G. M. (Forthcoming). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in Rural America. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Bisexual Youth

The unique experiences of bisexual youth experiencing homelessness.

The Basics

The largest proportion of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth experiencing homelessness identify as bisexual. Bisexual is an umbrella term for people who are attracted to people of more than one gender. In a study of street outreach programs by the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, 20.0% of youth identified as bisexual, compared to 9.9% of youth who identified as gay or lesbian, and 4.1% as "something else."[183] 6.8% of youth in this survey identified as transgender. In a recent 2018 report, 23% of bisexual students attending a two-year program and 16% of those attending a four-year program reported experiencing homelessness in the past year (compared to 18% and 16% of gay and lesbian students and 11% and 7% of heterosexual students respectively).[184]

Despite bisexual youth comprising the largest proportion of LGB youth, bisexual youth have little access to targeted services. A growing body of research shows that bisexual youth face unique challenges and barriers that put them at an increased risk of experiencing homelessness.

For example, some bisexual youth lack support at school and from peers and families. In the 2016 Report, *Invisible Majority: The Disparities Facing Bisexual People and How to Remedy Them* bisexual youth reported experiencing more challenges to success in school than gay, lesbian, and questioning youth, stemming from issues like mental distress and family violence. Bisexual youth also experienced lower levels of protective factors, such as having a positive view of their identity, having teacher/school support, feeling generally supported, feeling empowered, and having a commitment to learning.[185] Additionally, bisexual youth report high rates of suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Research published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in December 2017 found that bisexual-identified youth are the most likely among sexual minority youth to report suicide risk behaviors, including seriously considering, planning, and attempting suicide.[186]

Bisexual youth were also less likely to know about school support systems, including Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs), or to know a supportive adult in their school com-

183   Whitbeck, Lazoritz, Crawford, & Hautala. (2014). Administration for Children and Families: Family and Youth Services Bureau: Street Outreach Program: Data Collection Survey, FInal Report. University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Retrieved at: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/data_collection_study_final_report_street_outreach_program.pdf

184   Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., Schneider, J., Hernandez, A., & Cady, C. (2018). *Still Hungry and Homeless in College.* Wisconsin HOPE Lab. Retrieved from: https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Wisconsin-HOPE-Lab-Still-Hungry-and-Homeless.pdf

185   Movement Advancement Project (MAP), (2016). Invisible Majority: The Disparities Facing Bisexual People and How to Remedy Them. Retrieved from: https://www.lgbtmap.org/file/invisible-majority.pdf

186   Caputi, T. L., Smith, D., & Ayers, J. W. (2017). Suicide risk behaviors among sexual minority adolescents in the United States, 2015. *Jama*, *318*(23), 2349-2351. Retrieved from: https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2666491?redirect=true

pared to gay and lesbian youth.[187] Bisexual youth were less likely to be out to their families, friends, peers, and school than gay and lesbian youth, mirroring the experiences of bisexual adults.[188] Without targeted supports for mental health, help in managing risk behaviors, and family acceptance, and with decreased access to positive school supports, bisexual youth are at an increased risk of experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Bisexual youth face such challenges with unique strengths, including strong self-advocacy and assertive communication skills.[189] This is important to keep in mind when working with and designing targeted programs and support for the bisexual community.

The disparities experienced by bisexual youth underscore the need for targeted services and support for bisexual youth experiencing homelessness and bisexual youth at risk of homelessness. Additionally, surveys of LGB youth must be sure to disaggregate data between bisexual and gay and lesbian youth. When data are disaggregated, the unique experiences of bisexual youth are made clear and can drive changes to policy and practice to reduce the disparities and homelessness among bisexual youth.

> **Bisexual youth experiencing homelessness have unique experiences and deserve more targeted services.”**

Case Study

“My father didn't respect me for who I am because he don't like bisexual people or gay people, so from there I came out to him and I told him and then he just kicked me out, because he couldn't take it.” – 19 years old, Latino, bisexual, male[190].

> “Talking specifically about her bisexuality, Rosario said that her adoptive mom “kind of freaked out” when Rosario disclosed her attraction to women. Rosario stated that her adoptive parents “didn't like it at all. They're real, ‘we'll kick you out.’ But I went behind their back.” Rosario told me that her adoptive parents “supported me, but not the support that

187   Andre, A., Brown, J., Delpercio, A., Kahn, E., Nicoll, A., Sherouse, B. (2014). Supporting and Caring for Our Bisexual Youth. D.C.: The Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Retrieved from: https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Supporting_and_Caring_for_Bisexual_Youth.pdf?_ga=2.257237768.24644709.1546888391-1438832707.1546888391

188   Ibid.

189   Rew, L., Whittaker, T. A., Taylor-Seehafer, M. A., & Smith, L. R. (2005). Sexual health risks and protective resources in gay, lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual homeless youth. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, *10*(1), 11-19. Retrieved from: http://www.academia.edu/11724204/Sexual_health_risks_and_protective_resources_in_gay_lesbian_bisexual_and_heterosexual_homeless_youth

190   Dank, M. (2015). Surviving the streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ youth, YMSM, and YWSW engaged in survival sex. Retrieved from: https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/42186/2000119-Surviving-the-Streets-of-New-York.pdf

I need." She went on to explain, "'Cause at one point, it's like, they love you. And then, the next point, it's like, you're going to hell 'cause you don't believe in God. … One minute, they love you; next minute, you're just a disgrace."

For Rosario, race is a dominant framework and marker for how she understood her never belonging within a family. Later in the interview, Rosario described her early childhood as a "ghetto life." Being a child of drug users seemed to make Rosario want "to be a normal person," which for her entailed not having things handed to her. Rosario said she could not perform or embody being "preppy," whereby preppy is often racialized as a White form of embodiment and is seen as the opposite of being "ghetto". This almost impossible juxtaposition of trying to be a "rich, preppy Black girl" created conflict within her adoptive home. Furthermore, on top of these already strained ties around race, Rosario's adoptive parents' negative reactions toward her sexuality was a point of contention as well. Rosario experienced ambivalence through her family loving her, but this love only being based on certain conditions—when she was not a "disgrace."[191]

Takeaways

- The largest proportion of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth experiencing homelessness is bisexual.

- Bisexual youth report high rates of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

- Youth who identify as bisexual are more likely to engage in risk behaviors.

- Compared to gay and lesbian youth, bisexual youth are less likely to know about school support systems, including Gender and Sexuality Alliances, or to know a supportive adult.[192]

- Surveys of LGB youth must be sure to disaggregate data between bisexual and gay and lesbian youth.

191   Robinson, B. A. (2018). Conditional families and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth homelessness: Gender, sexuality, family instability, and rejection. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *80*(2), 383-396.

192   Andre, A., Brown, J., Delpercio, A., Kahn, E., Nicoll, A., Sherouse, B. (2014). Supporting and Caring for Our Bisexual Youth. D.C.: The Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Retrieved from: https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Supporting_and_Caring_for_Bisexual_Youth.pdf?_ga=2.257237768.24644709.1546888391-1438832707.1546888391

Data

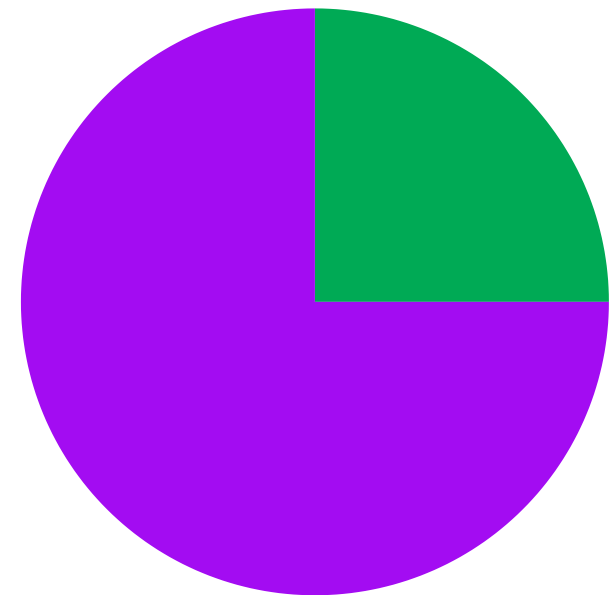In a recent study of Street Outreach Programs 20% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as bisexual.[193]

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193   Whitbeck, Lazoritz, Crawford, & Hautala. (2014). Administration for Children and Families: Family and Youth Services Bureau: Street Outreach Program: Data Collection Survey, FInal Report. University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Retrieved at: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/data_collection_study_final_report_street_outreach_program.pdf

Innovative Approaches

The needs and wants of each young person who is experiencing homelessness differ greatly. In aggregate, those needs and wants also differ across the country. In some cities, there may be a relatively large amount of shelter space for young people, but significant gaps in access to physical and mental health care. In other cities, there may be a more robust system of care, but a higher likelihood of justice system involvement. Providers must respond to both the individual needs of young people and the systemic gaps they have identified locally.

Programs across the country have responded to this challenge with remarkable ingenuity. In this section, we high-light just a few of the programs that are meeting the particular needs of the individuals in their communities using approaches that respond to the contexts presented by the local landscape of services and supports. While all of these programs may not be appropriate in your area, many of them include aspects that are replicable and can serve as models for providers who are looking to introduce or expand services.

Provider A: DIAL/SELF

Housing First program for LGBTQ youth

The Basics

In 2013, due to the disproportionate representation of LGBTQ youth among young people experiencing homelessness, the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance received funding to run an LGBTQ Housing First Pilot Program and DIAL/SELF was one of three funded agencies. Traditionally, Housing First has had great success being used to support chronically homeless older adults – resulting in higher rates of housing retention and stability, as well as reductions in public costs. More recently, programs are trying this model with youth and are beginning to see some positive outcomes.

" **Youth with disabilities experiencing homelessness need the extra supports and lower barriers of Housing First.**"

The DIAL/SELF LGBTQ Housing First Program focuses on quickly placing chronically homeless LGBTQ young people, ages 18-24, into permanent housing and providing supportive services and connections to community resources needed in order to maintain housing. The program houses youth in private apartments or public housing and provides subsidies for rent, utilities, and other needs. The program's case managers support the youth with finding housing, making/following through on goals, teaching life skills, advocating with landlords and other providers, and general support/crisis intervention. The program was created with the unique needs of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness in mind and the principles of this model are tailored around those unique needs. The program considers where people are in their development and utilizes the concepts of positive youth development, trauma-informed care, and harm reduction. The creation of trusting, non-judgmental relationships and youth choice are key to successful engagement with youth. Meaningful engagement in the community is also stressed. With the focus on LGBTQ youth, we have worked to create an accepting environment and gain increased awareness of the unique needs of this population. This includes how their homelessness is related to their identities, how their identities interact with their experiences of trauma and their mental health, and the marginalization they face, which all affect their ability to move forward into independence.

Case Study

Sylvan Knight is one of our newest Housing First participants and, since they have entered the DIAL/SELF program, has made great strides towards stability. We first met Sylvan through our RHY (Runaway and Homeless Youth funded through US HHS) program. In June of 2016, Sylvan came to the RHY drop-in center after losing their job, in fear of then losing their housing. In the journey between that day and their entry into this program, they continued to encounter housing instability, moving from town to town and eventually staying in hotels. They were able to access our case management, gaining them many of the resources they sought during that period. They were able to get steady income with SSI, food assistance, and mental health support from their service dog. In March 2018, Sylvan was housed with the help of Housing First, allowing them to finally focus on many of the things they were unable to address due to their housing and financial instability. Since entering the program, Sylvan has been putting in a lot of work into having surgery to be more aligned with their gender identity and has been forward thinking in accessing adult services and maintaining stability throughout their life. Sylvan has noted their appreciation for Housing First, especially in regards to its accessibility for handicapped folks, noting it would have been more difficult for them to receive the services they needed if Housing First was not able to meet them where they were at.

Takeaways

- Youth Housing First programs need to be based on the developmental and other unique needs of youth, such as education, employment, or life skills.

- Youth do not experience homelessness like adults. They are more likely to "couch surf," staying with friends and family than entering into shelters, so they often do not meet the traditional definition of "chronically homeless."

- LGBTQ-specific programs need to consider how identities affect people's experiences and need to gain knowledge on how to best support people based on these unique experiences.

- Lack of affordable housing options or access may prevent youth from quickly stabilizing in housing.

- Programs must develop/maintain positive relationships with landlords, teach youth life skills around tenancy and housing rights and responsibilities while acting as a bridge between the two. Landlords may be hesitant to rent to young people, especially if they have no income or rental history, and youth may lack experience with obtaining/maintaining housing or developing relationships with landlords.

- There is a need for more employment options for youth. Many youth lack the education and experience to find employment. Furthermore, they may face additional challenges if they're LGBTQ, and may face roadblocks to obtaining and maintaining employment if they are struggling with mental health and/or substance use issues.

- Youth do best with a range of housing options. Some flourish in independent settings, while others need more supportive or group settings to succeed. Housing First should be one option within a continuum.

Contributors

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Provider B: ConneQT Host Home Program

The power of short-term community-based housing as a resource for young queers experiencing homelessness

The Basics

Avenues for Homeless Youth (Avenues) is an organization in Minnesota that provides shelter and transitional housing for 300+ youth per year. In addition to the shelter and Transitional Housing Program (THP) in North Minneapolis and Brooklyn Park, and a scattered site apartment program for young parenting youth, Avenues runs two Host Home Programs (HHP), the GLBT Host Home Program and the ConneQT Host Home Program– which center the most marginalized youth experiencing homelessness: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and queer/trans/gender-expansive youth.

The GLBT HHP is the oldest of the three with over 20 years of history. ConneQT is the newest HHP, a pilot program that started in 2016 with the goal of providing short-term host homes for queer and trans youth experiencing homelessness. Unlike the GLBT HHP, which is more of a transitional housing model where youth typically live with hosts for up to two years, ConneQT is more emergency based. Both programs are informed by a philosophy of solidarity, not charity. Avenues believes that communities can thrive when they share resources from the perspective of 'us and us' and not 'us and them', which is why the Avenues Host Home Programs are small, non-institutional, and community-based. With ConneQT volunteers share their homes for up to three months with young LGBTQ folks in need of urgent housing and stabilization. The ages of the youth participants are 16 to 24, though exceptions are made when needed. The program typically has around 10 youth in host homes every year and never has more than 10 youth in any of the HHPs at any given time. Many youth also remain connected to family of origin with whom they are unable to live due to a variety of reasons.

There are many unknowns when it comes to hosting/being hosted and building community. It requires trust, hope, humility, vulnerability, commitment, communication, boundaries, and flexibility. This is a messy process, but often magical. Young people take risks every day and communities and organizations need to do the same.

Case Study

After staying in the ConneQT HHP for a few months, the youth had built a trusting relationship with their host and Avenues' staff. The youth and host were honest with one another and established clear boundaries, but at times life together could be challenging. Like all relationships they shared moments both magical and messy. About three months into their time in host home, the youth's name came up for a rapid rehousing apartment through a partnering agency. They moved out of the host home and into the rapid rehousing apartment. Shortly after, it became clear the youth needed more intensive case management and support. They reported that living on their own was much harder than they had envisioned. Their depression worsened and they were struggling with basic self-care. They voiced that they needed additional support. Soon after, they were asked by their landlord to terminate their lease due to a series of infractions. Not knowing where to go, the youth contacted their previous host about their situation. They talked through the struggles and the youth's fear of returning to homelessness. With the support of the ConneQT Host Home Program the youth returned to the host's home. They talked with their ConneQT case manager about their own personal goals, and applied for permanent supportive housing. Because of the relationships built with their host and the host home staff, the youth was able to communicate their need for community support. The youth reported this was a life-changing experience for them, to know they could rely on their new community to adapt to their needs and be present for them. The youth moved into permanent supportive housing within a few weeks where they received more intensive support. They continue to meet regularly with their host: cooking dinners together, going to movies, dog-sitting when the host is out of town. They continue to foster and grow vital community connections.

> "We must work harder on highlighting complex racial and economic disparities when discussing LGBTQ youth homelessness."

Takeaways

- As a national movement, we must work harder on highlighting the complexities of racial and economic disparities when talking about LGBTQ youth homelessness, and not only focus on family rejection as the reason for housing insecurity.

- Having an advisory council with folks who have different connections to our many communities, including past youth participants, is key, especially for recruiting hosts.

- Being unlicensed and outside of the 'system' allows for greater community ownership, accountability, and flexibility regarding program changes and structure.

- White staff and volunteer hosts must have awareness of, and training on, power and privilege.

- We must be creative about how to support hosts who are poor and working class (i.e., stipends and gift cards for groceries).

- Because BIPOC/LGBTQ youth are much less likely to use shelter e-beds compared to their straight and cis peers, ConneQT could be the e-bed version of HHP.

- When youth move in to ConneQT, they will know when the move out date is, and what the options are for other housing. Youth will transition out of ConneQT into GLBT HHP, or Minneapolis Avenues or Brooklyn Avenues, or other housing. We are considering reserving a certain number of GLBT HHPs hosts for ConneQT youth who decide to apply for longer term.

- Having a seasoned case manager who works with the youth while the program manager works with the hosts is a game-changer.

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Provider C: Nashville Launch Pad

Volunteer-based "Street Free Sleep" Initiative for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness in the South.

Nashville Launch Pad is a 'street free sleep' initiative run by a collective of concerned citizens within the LGBTQ and allied communities. Launch Pad is organized around the mission of providing open and affirming safer sleeping shelters for young people experiencing homelessness ages 18-24, especially those that identify as LGBTQ. The program is in the midst the 5th season of providing shelter in the winter months (November 2018 to March 2019). Nashville Launch Pad is the only youth-specific shelter in Nashville, and youth find it difficult to access or feel safe at the traditional adult shelters. The young people served have expressed that they prefer youth-specific shelters because they are smaller, feel safer, help them build a peer community, are flexible to their unique developmental needs, and help them remain hopeful for their futures. In the 2018-2019 winter season, Launch Pad has so far provided 1,128 beds.

One of the major innovations in Launch Pad's approach, and a key difference from other area shelters, is the lack of gender-segregated sleeping spaces. This model does not force LGBTQ guests into a binary choice that does not fit their gender which, in traditional shelters, often leaves these most marginalized guests at risk of violence. As the rates of violence against trans women are significantly higher than most other demographics, sex-segregated sleeping shelters are often too dangerous for them, and they often will avoid shelters altogether. Launch Pad, by contrast, offers an affirming space that is setting the standard in Nashville. We have also found that this approach has been one of the reasons that non-LGBTQ guests prefer coming to Launch Pad, as it does not require them to be separated from a partner.

A focus on serving youth continues to make Launch Pad a safe and welcoming space for guests. Guests report feeling safer and more comfortable in the smaller, youth-specific shelter Launch Pad offers. Guests have been able to develop a close-knit peer community, build healthy relationships with supportive adults, and utilize the flexibility of a shelter model designed for their developmental needs. Young people have also often expressed that a youth-only shelter gives them hope and optimism as they work towards a future with housing. Launch Pad works to make the space collaborative, where volunteers work alongside guests to setup and breakdown the space together. Guest feedback and opinions were integral to the formation of the shelter and continue to be integral as it develops and grows.

The program began in 2014 by providing one to two nights of shelter for youth per week. In 2017 the program expanded exponentially, offering four nights a week. In 2018, Launch Pad finally achieved a full week of shelter aimed at youth through partnerships with other organizations in the community (Oasis Center and Room in the Inn). For the 2018-2019 season, Launch Pad is providing shelter 5 nights a week while partner agency Room In the Inn ensures youth have access to their shelter program the other 2 nights.

Launch Pad continues to use the model of host sites throughout Nashville. We have partnerships this season with West End United Methodist Church, the Boys & Girls Club, City Road United Methodist Church, and Andrew Price United Methodist Church to utilize their space to provide shelter. The program starts at 7:30 with a small amount of set up and volunteer training and the youth arrive at 8:00. A hot dinner and shower facilities are available with lights out around 10:30. The host site model gives Launch Pad the ability to have no overhead in renting or maintaining a space, allowing the focus to remain on providing safer shelter for young people.

Launch Pad has maintained a primarily volunteer-driven model, on which it was founded. Over the past two years, in order to ensure consistent service to guests, the program has employed part-time seasonal workers to staff the shelter overnight. Having consistency in this staffing has helped the program maintain a calm atmosphere and increased accountability. It has led to better outcomes for problems that formerly occurred during overnight and morning hours.

The program works with over 120 individual volunteers each season, who staff the shelter in the evenings, provide meals, and do laundry. This season about 75% of our volunteers have worked with us more than once and over one third have volunteered at least 5 times. This has accounted for over 1,800 volunteers hours since November 1 of 2018. It has been amazing to see how much a community can come together to focus on the needs of youth and support the work Launch Pad is doing.

"This model does not force LGBTQ guests into a binary choice that does not fit their gender which, in traditional shelters, often leaves the most marginalized guests at risk of violence."

Case Study

Launch Pad has known a young trans woman of color who is an immigrant for about 4 years. She was no longer welcome to live with her family as a teenager because of her gender identity. This guest additionally has several health problems that often require hospitalization. She was a regular Launch Pad guest for the first several years of the program, until she got housing in her own apartment in 2018. Life was often a struggle for this young woman when she was unhoused due to her health problems and the trauma she had experienced living on the street. Since she has moved into housing her mental health has improved and she has been able to truly experience the joy of living as her authentic self. She has also been able to join a local community group of young people working to end youth homelessness and to volunteer at different organizations in Nashville that provide food and shelter to folks experiencing homelessness. We are so happy to see the growth this former guest has been able to experience and to witness her advocating in the community.

Takeaways

- Communities want to be helpful and involved. The program continues to have volunteers who have been around since the beginning, and brings on new volunteers each year.

- In a focus group of Launch Pad participants, respondents identified being able to imagine a way out of unstable housing situations as a crucial need for success. Youth responded that being in youth-oriented spaces leaves youth feeling they still have a chance to reintegrate and get into stable housing.

- Non sex-segregated sleeping arrangements offer safer sleeping options for transgender and gender-expansive people of all ages.

- Working to maintain contact and offering positive reinforcement helps volunteers maintain an interest in the program.

Contributors

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Provider D: Pride Program at Valley Youth House

A Rapid Rehousing Program for LGBTQ youth

The Basics

The Pride program (Pride) at Valley Youth House, founded in 2009, is the longest running housing program for LGBTQ youth in Philadelphia. The mission of Pride is to transition LGBTQ youth ages 18-24 from homelessness to stable housing. By providing start-up funds (first and last month's rent and a security deposit), the program offers a practical approach for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, who often lack access to family resources. The Pride coordinator guides and supports youth as they find, apply for, and maintain employment and complete their education at either a high school or post-secondary level, depending on the needs and goals of the youth.

To best meet the needs of our youth, the Pride program is focused on several key areas:

<u>Case Planning:</u> The coordinator and the youth develop an Individualized Service Plan to achieve housing stability, complete their education, and find and maintain employment.

<u>Housing Education:</u> Life skills instruction includes budgeting, searching for roommates, lease negotiations, weatherization, and household safety.

<u>Financial Assistance:</u> Once the coordinator and youth determine that the youth is prepared to enter housing, participants receive a security deposit and the first and last month's rent.

<u>Housing Identification:</u> The coordinator helps youth identify appropriate housing in proximity to employment, education, and other resources.

<u>Stabilization Services:</u> Case management includes bi-weekly face-to-face meetings with the coordinator for three to six months.

<u>Follow-up:</u> The coordinator conducts monthly outreach for one year after discharge to ensure stability. Discharged youth may visit the coordinator any time during office hours and join monthly alumni meetings for ongoing peer support, community service, and recreation.

Committed to providing youth the opportunity to embrace their identity and overcome the obstacles presented by homelessness, Pride collaborates with a variety of community resources to achieve program goals. If youth need behavioral health counseling, they are referred to partner agencies such as the <u>Mazzoni Center</u> or the <u>Attic Youth Center</u>, which both special-

ize in services to LGBTQ youth. The coordinator facilitates these services and monitors the youth's progress. Youth are connected to the Homeless Advocacy Project's SOAR program to apply for and receive SSI benefits if appropriate. Y-HEP provides testing for sexually transmitted infections, sex education, support groups, and employment assistance. The local CareerLink office provides connection to employment opportunities and training. Site visits may be conducted to visit community resources that relate to the housing instruction curriculum topics, such as the Tenant's Union Rights Network, Community Legal Services, local utility companies' offices, and banks.

Valley Youth House is committed to the expansion of the Pride program in order to meet the increasing needs of homeless LGBTQ youth in Philadelphia and seamlessly integrate housing programs with supportive services for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. This integrative model enables Valley Youth House to remain at the forefront of understanding and addressing the numerous barriers homeless LGBTQ youth face in acquiring stable housing.

"Committed to providing youth the opportunity to embrace their identity and overcome the obstacles presented by homelessness, Pride collaborates with a variety of community resources to achieve program goals."

Takeaways

- Young people ages 18-24 that identify as LGBTQ, particularly transgender youth, are especially vulnerable to housing discrimination and becoming homeless or housing insecure.

- Only 22 states prohibit housing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. In Pennsylvania, it is legal to deny someone housing for being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Even if it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, not all landlords will comply.

- As noted by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC 2015), LGBTQ youth often face similar trauma and maltreatment in their foster care placements as they did in their biological family home. This causes youth to experience a high number of placements and, often, homelessness.

Contributors

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Solution Strategies

In the other sections of *At the Intersections*, we've explored the risk factors and unique needs of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. Familiarizing ourselves with these intersections of identity is crucial in understanding the context of how such a disproportionate number of LGBTQ youth have experienced housing instability. Now that we have this framework of understanding, how do we move forward? Ending experiences of homelessness for LGBTQ youth will be challenging, but it is not impossible. From shifting the public narrative to strategizing systematically, contributors in this section provide concrete solutions to address LGBTQ youth homelessness.

Systems Planning

Creating adequate and effective systems to serve LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness

The Basics

Imagine if each bus in your city made up its own schedule, set its own routes and prices, and decided who it would – and wouldn't – pick up. You might get to your destination, but it would be an inefficient and frustrating process. Having a coordinated community-wide transportation system makes getting around town a lot easier.

For LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, a coordinated community-wide system of services could assist in the effort to end homelessness and housing instability. This means that everyone who serves youth through social services agencies, the education system, the juvenile justice system, and the child welfare system are working together to make sure that the right kind of help available, and that youth are able to access the available services.

Right now, most localities are in the beginning stages of developing such systems for people experiencing homelessness in general – in some places specialized systems are also being organized for youth. Three things are necessary to ensure that these systems work for LGBTQ youth. First, all programs in the system should have the competencies needed to serve LGBTQ youth. Second, there should be enough assistance for everyone. Third, the system should be easily understandable and accessible by LGBTQ youth.

LGBTQ Competency

LGBTQ youth often face specific challenges not encountered by their non-LGBTQ peers. They may also experience discrimination in many homeless programs. A homeless system that serves their needs will ensure that its programs have competency in three key areas: programming, staff training, and organizational policies and culture.

Scale

Help must be available to every LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness who needs it. An accurate assessment of the number of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, including their particular needs, will help ensure that adequate services are available. An accurate estimate will ensure that there is the proper variety and scale of programs to meet the needs of all LGBTQ youth.

Accessibility

A key feature of homeless systems is coordinated entry, which is designed to ensure that everyone receives appropriate help. Whether the system is only for youth, or for all people experiencing homelessness, it must be responsive to the particular needs of LGBTQ youth. This means that those responsible for assessment and referral must have a thorough understanding of the particular needs of LGBTQ youth, how individual programs can meet those needs, and how to refer appropriately. In the likely event that there are more youth experiencing homelessness than can be served, the thorough intake information that is being collected through coordinated entry can be used to inform the creation of targeted programs to adequately meet the need.

> **"Help must be available to every LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness who needs it."**

Case Study

The NEST collaborative was developed to prevent and end LGBTQ youth homelessness in the greater Houston, TX area as part of a pilot project guided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The collaborative is led by the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County (the lead agency for the local Continuum of Care (CoC)) and the Montrose Center, a Houston-based LGBTQ center and youth service provider.

The collaborative includes over 60 youth-serving agencies and providers that are working together to develop and implement a community-wide strategy to prevent homelessness among LGBTQ young people.

Part of that strategy includes inviting everyone to the table, including representatives from the education, child welfare, juvenile justice, and youth and adult homelessness systems. All of these partners have been engaged since the beginning to ensure that LGBTQ-affirming and responsive policies and competencies are embedded throughout the entire system of care. For example, within the larger homelessness system the CoC took the following steps to promote LGBTQ competencies:

- Adopt case manager training that includes standards of care for LGBTQ youth.

- Create new project priorities to include Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) with priorities for LGBTQ households

and developmentally appropriate, LGBTQ-affirming Rapid Re-Housing (RRH).

- Create "safe shelter" beds for transgender people experiencing homelessness to be used as needed while they are navigating into permanent housing.

- Ensure a leader from the youth system of care has a seat on the CoC Steering Committee.

- Create trainings for all providers within the CoC on the Equal Access Rule and housing guidelines for transgender individuals.

- Include non-discrimination based on LGBTQ status in MOU's with all system partners (adult and youth).

Additionally, and in recognition that LGBTQ youth homelessness prevention involves more than just the homelessness system, the Safe Space sticker program was adopted in all school districts and LGBTQ-specific slides were added to the mandatory trainings of the education, child welfare, and juvenile justice systems.

Takeaways

- An adequate systemic response to LGBTQ youth homelessness requires a sufficient understanding of their needs and the skills necessary to meet those needs.

- Best practices for providing safe, responsive, respectful, and affirming services to LGBTQ youth should be incorporated throughout the entire homelessness system.

- A coordinated, community-wide homelessness system is necessary to end all forms of homelessness – especially LGBTQ homelessness.

- An adequate systemic response to LGBTQ youth homelessness requires an accurate count of LGBTQ youth who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Contributors

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Funder Fueled Impact

The unique roles foundation partners can play in your community to make youth homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time experience

The Basics

The experience of homelessness is a reality for many youth and young adults all across the country, but especially for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth and youth of color. If we truly want to make youth homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time experience, leaders from federal, state, and local government; funders; service providers; advocates; researchers; and youth will need to come together to strategize. Though foundation partners represent just one sector, they can play a critical role in these efforts. Specifically, philanthropy is uniquely positioned to strategically invest in good ideas that address gaps in the community not typically supported by government funds foundation partners also provide risk capital for new or untested promising practices.

Examples include:

Systems capacity

Preventing and ending youth homelessness requires a systemic approach. Unfortunately, in many communities, it isn't anybody's job to coordinate or identify how different actors in multiple systems need to connect to one another and support LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. Philanthropy can help promote a systems approach by funding a systems owner—a person or entity whose job it is to identify how a community can prevent and end youth homelessness.

Efforts to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion

Foundation partners can and should support grantees' and government partners' internal diversity, equity and inclusion work. Achieving equity in our systems and institutions requires that change agents have a firm understanding of how systemic oppression and inherent bias impact issues like health and mental health, criminal justice, housing and homelessness, and education and employment. Funders can also make intentional investments in strategies that address how inequities are produced and maintained by individuals, institutions, and structural barriers.

Promising, cost-effective ideas that improve outcomes

Philanthropy is still learning about effective models for prevention and what types of housing, education, and employment interventions can lead to improved, sustained outcomes for the most vulnerable youth experiencing homelessness. They can play a unique role in supporting good but often "unproven" ideas that, if shown to have positive results, can be sustained and supported with public funding. This is especially true if the intervention is shown to be more cost-effective than current practice.

Youth voices

It's important that youth with lived experience of homelessness are at the table to inform all community-based and policy efforts. Engaging and empowering youth to share their stories, especially youth who are LGBTQ and/or youth of color, helps identify real solutions that make a difference. Engagement and empowerment of youth should always include compensating youth for their time, as well as skill-building that allows them to understand systems, mainstream meeting practices, and how public policy is developed.

Communications and public education

Investing in communications — especially by amplifying the voices of non-traditional allies like businesses and faith communities — can be critical to raising awareness of, and bringing attention to, the disproportionate number of LGBTQ youth who experience homelessness. Strengthening the capacity of communications and public education is an area philanthropy can uniquely support, given that government funds typically do not support these efforts.

Public advocacy

Foundation partners can support engagement in the public policy process, ensuring that the voices and experiences of youth and homeless advocates inform the legislation and regulations that will most directly impact their lives. While foundations face some restrictions for how they can engage in public policy debates, many have far more opportunities to advocate than they pursue. It is important for foundations to be educated about the range of advocacy and then be prepared to weigh in on issues that affect the people they aim to serve.

Research, data-collection, and evaluation

We're still learning about promising models in this area, especially for disproportionately affected groups such as LGBTQ youth and youth of color. Many communities are trying to identify how best to "count" youth experiencing homelessness and how to gain an accurate picture of the "scope" of the problem (such as inflow, outflow, and estimates on how many people are currently experiencing homelessness). Foundation partners can play a unique role to support local communities' data collection, research, and evaluation efforts so that communities can get smarter about the scope of the problem and what interventions work and for whom.

Although funders can play a critical role in strategic investments, no one sector can solve this problem. It is important to note that, in addition to funding, they can also help facilitate the following:

Convening and bringing other partners to the table

Foundation partners can use their convening power to bring diverse stakeholders together to raise awareness and engage key actors, who may have distinct but complementary roles, in order to ensure there is a more coordinated approach on their efforts.

Aligning multiple funders to pursue joint outcomes and priorities

It is important that both public and private funders are aligned, with their individual strategies informed by the same research and evaluation outcomes – and that they are using their voices and resources in a concerted and coordinated fashion.

Using institutional leadership to elevate an issue

Beyond the power of their dollars, foundation partners can use their stature, reputation, and voice to leverage new players from different sectors to take notice, to engage, and to invest in existing efforts. This role can take multiple forms including educating locally elected officials, writing op-eds, or posting articles and blogs in philanthropic publications. Strong, visible leadership can enhance credibility, concern, and awareness about the experience's LGBTQ youth have with homelessness and housing instability.

Sharing and disseminating knowledge and lessons learned

Communities everywhere are trying to learn about what works and for whom on these efforts. Foundation partners can play a critical role in sharing lessons learned – both what's worked and what hasn't.

> **If we truly want to end youth homelessness, government, funders, providers, and youth will need to come together."**

Takeaways

Foundation partners can play a unique role in strategically investing in efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness. As much as possible, foundation dollars should be used to fund gaps and areas in which public funders are less likely to invest. This includes:

- System capacity;

- Promising, cost-effective, ideas;

- Youth voices and engagement;

- Communications and public education;

- Policy advocacy and;

- Research, data-collection, and evaluation.

In addition to bringing money to the table, foundation partners can also:

- Convene and bring diverse stakeholders together;

- Align multiple funders (both public and private) to pursue joint outcomes and priorities;

- Use their institutional leadership to raise awareness; and

- Share and disseminate knowledge and lessons learned.

Data

Service Providers identify organizational barriers to serving LGBTQ youth.[194]

Contributors

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Funding (38.38%) Community Support (25.25%)

Connections to Similar Orgs (21.21%) Information & Training (15.15%)

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194   Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund. Retrieved at: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf

Policy Considerations

Federal and State policy solutions to LGBTQ youth homelessness

The Basics

Policy changes – passing legislation and shifting the work of federal, state, and local government programs – play a critical role in our efforts to make a real and lasting impact on the lives of young people experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Of course, creating changes to a system can also have long-term negative consequences. At their core, all policy solutions should be responsive to the needs of the communities that are most impacted. LGBTQ youth – and especially LGBTQ youth of color – must be given a voice and a choice in setting the strategies for addressing homelessness and housing instability among young people.

A first step in any policy advocacy campaign must be to engage in leadership development training with young people so that they have the skills and resources they need to take on the task of leading strategic policy engagement. Policy advocacy may seem daunting, but learning to design and implement a policy strategy is a tool like any other.

In addition to advocacy skills training, leadership development should include a thorough understanding of the systems of the policy tools currently being used to help meet the needs of young people experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Those tools include legislation, regulations, and programs that address:

Civil Rights and Nondiscrimination

Advocates at the federal and state levels have fought to include nondiscrimination protections in legislation, regulations, and individual programs that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE), and well as on the basis of source of income. Currently, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) prohibits discrimination in any HUD-funding programs, but the same does not apply to programs funded through the Administration on Children and Families (ACF). ACF funds most youth-focused programs, though some do receive funding from HUD as well. Nondiscrimination protections like these are most effective when they are coupled with strong training programs and evaluation mechanisms, so that shelters and other homelessness services are safe in practice and not just in principle.

In a broader approach, some cities and states have introduced or passed legislation that includes a Homeless Bill of Rights. These documents help create a baseline of rights upon which all people experiencing homelessness – including young people, people of color, and LGBTQ people – can rely. In addition to prohibiting SOGIE and source of income discrimina-

tion, these measures are intended to prevent the criminalization of homelessness, ensure privacy and property protections, allow for civic engagement through voting, and provide broader access to shelter and social services.

Existing Homelessness Services

At the federal level, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) creates a system of services for young people experiencing homelessness, and provides funding for shelters, transitional living programs, and street outreach programs. Advocates continue to press for improvements to RHYA, like specific protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in the reauthorization and an increase in the length of stay in short-term housing programs for minors from 21 to 30 days. Increasing the length of stay to 30 days would allow young people more time to find employment, reconnect with family when safe and appropriate, obtain identification documents, enroll in public assistance programs, and, if necessary, secure longer-term housing. In some states, advocates have secured even stronger legislation supporting existing housing and homelessness services, in part by working to fill the gaps left by RHYA.

Access to Housing

Resources such as public housing, Section 8 vouchers, and subsidized housing are in short supply – in some states people applying for subsidized housing and vouchers may stay on waiting lists for years. Still, removing barriers to entry for young LGBTQ people and young people of color can provide an additional pathway to permanent housing. Strategies advocates have used to increase access to housing programs include reducing the amount of documentation required for applications, eliminating identification requirements, and eliminating bans on access for people with criminal records.

LGBTQ youth – and especially LGBTQ youth of color – must be given a voice and a choice in setting the strategies for addressing homelessness and housing instability among young people."

Improving access to public housing can be part of a Housing First model – an approach to assisting people experiencing homelessness by providing permanent housing without requiring participation in services like mental and behavioral health programs prior to entry. Housing First programs have been amongst the most successful interventions – studies show that between 75% and 91% of households remain in housing after a year.

Alternative Housing Models

In addition to the more traditional housing models addressed above, people experiencing homelessness are increasingly advocating for support for alternative housing models like host homes, cooperative housing, damp houses, and LGBTQ housing. These models are generally considered "outside" the traditional systems, which has both positive and negative consequences. Being outside the system means that programs like these aren't subject to the sometimes onerous and restrictive requirements set by agencies like HUD and ACF. At the same time, they aren't eligible to access the vast financial resources of the federal or state government, and so must rely on support from individual or foundational donors.

As young LGBTQ people and people of color who have experienced homelessness take on leadership of homelessness policy advocacy, they may find innovative ways for these types of alternative models to access government resources without losing the freedom that makes them work well for young people.

Takeaways

- A first step in any policy advocacy campaign must be to engage in leadership development training with young people so that they have the skills and resources they need to take on the task of leading strategic policy engagement.

- Nondiscrimination protections are most effective when they are coupled with strong training programs and evaluation mechanisms, so that shelters and other homelessness services are safe in practice and not just in principle.

- Advocates continue to press for improvements to RHYA, like specific protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in the reauthorization.

- Removing barriers to entry into affordable housing (section 8 vouchers and subsidized housing) for young LGBTQ people and young people of color can provide an additional pathway to permanent housing.

- People experiencing homelessness are increasingly advocating for support for alternative housing models like host homes, cooperative housing, damp houses, and LGBTQ housing.

Data

The State Index on Homelessness evaluates 61 metrics on states' laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth homelessness in all 50 states and District of Columbia. According to the State Index, no states scored a 66 or above, 46 states and District of Columbia scored between a 33 and 65, and 4 states scored a 32 or below.
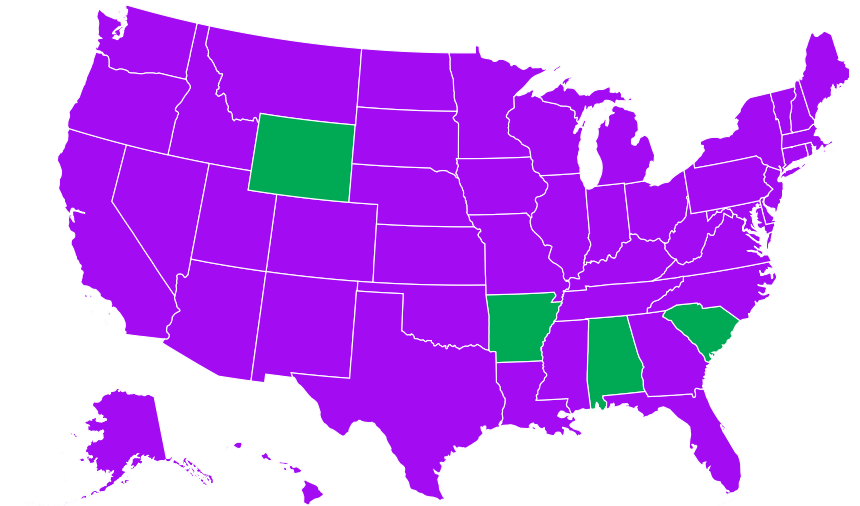
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■ Scored a 32/100 or Below

Data Collection

Research is a critical part of the effort to address LGBTQ youth homelessness

The Basics

The more we know about an issue, the better equipped we are to fix it. That is why research is a critical part of the effort to address LGBTQ youth homelessness.

We must also remember that LGBTQ youth are the experts of their own experiences. While traditional research methods may not think about LGBTQ youth as researchers, collaborating with LGBTQ youth on research design and data collection can go a long way to help ensure that the questions asked are relevant to their experiences, address their actual lived realities and needs, are presented in a linguistically competent manner, and may also help ensure that young people participate in the surveys or interviews. Additional ways to gather data about LGBTQ youth homelessness include accessing administrative data, such as the information collected by service providers during intake and/or accessing existing HMIS or RHYMIS data. One limitation of these data sources is that not all programs ask questions about sexual orientation and gender identity, and even if questions about sexual orientation and gender identity are asked at intake, some young people may not disclose this information.

Historically, when the expreinces of LGBTQ youth have been studied, they have often been lumped together as one group. This is beginning to change, and this is an important and welcome change. Why? Because LGBTQ youth are not a homogenous group. The needs and experiences of one subgroup within the population of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness do not necessarily reflect the needs and experiences of another subgroup. For example, cisgender youth who identify as LGBQ may have vastly different experiences than transgender youth of any sexual orientation. Likewise, the experiences of Black LGBTQ youth are different than those of white LGBTQ youth; the needs of LGBTQ youth who are undocumented are different than the needs of LGBTQ youth who are recognized as U.S. citizens. Although transgender youth can also possess a minority sexual orientation, conflating their experiences with LGBQ people ignores a salient dimension of their identity. Therefore, including transgender youth in research on sexual minorities, rather than as a distinct category of inquiry, renders their gender identity-related experiences invisible. Further, examining the experiences of LGBTQ youth without including a race/ethnicity-based analysis can erase the experiences of LGBTQ youth of color.

In addition to partnering with youth, researchers can also partner with community based organizations in the development and design of research projects. This will ensure that the questions asked are also relevant to service providers and the data collected can be used in concrete ways to inform policy and program development. Two recent collaborative youth homelessness research projects are good examples of such collaborations – Voices of Youth Count and the Homeless Youth Risk and Resilience Study.

Case Study

Researchers interested in understanding the needs and strengths of young people experiencing homelessness typically rely, out of necessity, on small localized samples. This limits their ability to understand the full range of experiences of young people across the country. What's more, very little is understood about the actual lives and experiences of these young people. To fully address youth homelessness, a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the demographics, experiences, behaviors, and sources of resiliency is required. To address this need, the REALYST collaborative developed the Homeless Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (HYRRS). HYRRS is an assessment tool that collects in-depth detail on the experiences of young people and is designed to provide insight into differences and similarities across cities and communities.

REALYST is a collaboration between academics and community partners. Community partners help administer the HYRRS survey and provide essential resources to youth experiencing homelessness. In turn, researchers provide relevant data to community partners to inform policy advocacy and practice.

"Cisgender youth who identify as LGBQ may have vastly different experiences than transgender youth of any sexual orientation, it's up to researchers to ensure those distinctions are highlighted within their work."

Takeaways

- While traditional research methods may not think about LGBTQ youth as researchers, collaborating with LGBTQ youth on research design and data collection can go a long way to help ensure that the questions asked are relevant to their experiences, address their actual lived realities and needs, are presented in a linguistically competent manner, and may also help ensure that young people participate in the surveys or interviews.

- Including transgender youth in research on sexual minorities, rather than as a distinct category of inquiry, renders their gender identity-related experiences invisible.

- Examining the experiences of LGBTQ youth without including a race/ethnicity-based analysis can erase the experiences of LGBTQ youth of color.

- Researchers can partner with community based organizations in the development and design of research projects.

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Public Awareness and Engagement

The effects of creative and positive messaging when talking about LGBTQ youth homelessness

The Basics

Audience and Language

Before crafting messaging around LGBTQ youth homelessness, it is important to take the time to understand the audience(s). Who are they? What modes of communication do they use? When is the best time to reach them? Where do they congregate (both online and offline)? How invested are they in the issue being addressed?

Answering these questions will help determine how to most appropriately and effectively frame the message. For instance, it's important to consider the use of acronyms in communications. Research shows[195] that the use of acronyms can be confusing to audiences who are not already engaged in LGBTQ-focused work. In this case, the audience member may spend more time trying to figure out the meaning behind each of the letters in the acronym than processing the overall message. Therefore, if you're going to use an acronym, it's always a good idea to spell it out upon first mention – like we did in the beginning of this report. Then there's the question of which acronym to use. Many variations of the LGBTQ acronym exist – including LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTQQ, LGBTTIQQ2SA, etc. For audiences who are actively engaged in LGBTQ-specific work, one of these options may work better. It's important to note that there are a variety of acronyms to choose from, and there is no consensus over which is best. The choice should be made based on the audience.

Another key consideration regarding language is around the use of the word "homeless." Many young people who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability do not identify as "homeless" because of the many connotations associated with the word. For that reason, folks are using terms such as, "youth experiencing homelessness" or "youth experiencing housing instability," which refer to homelessness as a temporary experience rather than a fixed identity. On the other hand, many folks do identify as "homeless," viewing it as a critical part of who they are. One should never re-

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195   Movement Advancement Project and GLADD. An Ally's Guide to Terminology. Retrieved at: http://www.glaad.org/sites/default/files/allys-guide-to-terminology_1.pdf

fer to people as "the homeless" – a phrase that erases their humanity completely. Remember, people are individuals, not conditions. Similarly, referring to youth using words like "kids" can undermine and patronize young people. Framing such as this is an important way to respect the power and capability young people bring to their lives and work.

In communications, it's important to recognize and explain why LGBTQ youth homelessness requires specficic attention, since homelessness affects all types of young people. Often, statistics can be a great way to put an issue into perspective. According to one study, LGBTQ young people are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than non-LGBTQ youth. Right off the bat, these young people are presented with an uneven playing field. Furthermore, LGBTQ youth experience homelessness for unique reasons and have unique needs – as demonstrated in this resource. Highlighting this disparity opens the door to conversations around causes, prevalence, unique experiences, and solutions.

A key factor in crafting responsible messaging is considering who is the most appropriate messenger. Often times, it is the subject matter experts who can deliver the message with the most authority and authenticity. By creating space for LGBTQ youth with experiences of homelessness to speak for themselves, we can ensure that their stories are delivered powerfully, authentically, and respectfully. It is also important to prevent the tokenization of young people. When youth are involved in messaging, it should be a collaboration based on equity. Young people should be compensated for their time and energy and never used for their stories. If a young person elects to share their experience of homelessness, they should never be defined or re-traumatized by their experiences.

Lastly, and most importantly, if we want to change the narrative around LGBTQ youth homelessness, it's the responsibility of the communicator to be purposeful when selecting subject matter. By focusing on stories of resilience rather than tragedy,

"By focusing on stories of resilience rather than tragedy, the conversation shifts towards action-oriented solutions and avoids further victimization and exploitation of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness."

the conversation shifts towards action-oriented solutions and avoids further victimization and exploitation of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. When crafting communications, it's equally important to recognize that there are multiple narratives of homelessness. While rejection is the most frequently cited reason LGBTQ youth experience homelessness, it's not the only one. According to service providers, additional reasons include aging out of the foster care system, poverty, and abuse in the home. Often, it's not one thing that causes homelessness, but a combination of many. It's important to give credence to the array of experiences young people have.

Key Takeaways

- There any many versions of the LGBTQ acronym and some may be more common than others, so it's important to choose one based on the specific audience you are addressing and write it out upon first mention.

- Use language that affirms a person's humanity, rather than focusing on their temporary conditions or experiences. When referring to young people, avoid language that patronizes, undermines their authority, or leads to revictimization.

- Statistics can help audiences understand why LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness require special attention, which in turn leads to deeper conversations around causes, prevalence, and solutions.

- Consider the most effective messenger for your communications. If it's a young person with lived experience, make sure collaborations are based on equity. Young people should never be tokenized and should always be compensated fairly for their time and energy.

- Challenge existing narratives around LGBTQ youth homelessness by emphasizing stories of resilience and strength. Communications should reflect the complexity of the issue rather than perpetuate overly simplistic narratives.

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