


## LGBTQ+ Youth in Crisis: Best Practices

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### What? Now what? So what?

**What?**  
Alarming rates of health disparities and other experiences that can lead to negative outcomes

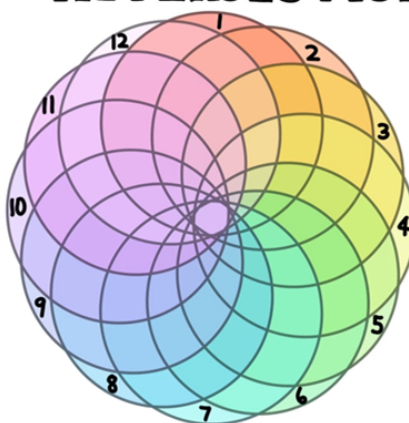
**Now what?**  
Importance of trusted, supportive adults

**So what?**  
Three best practices to support students and prevent suicide

### Sex, Gender, and Orientation 101



## INTERSECTIONALITY



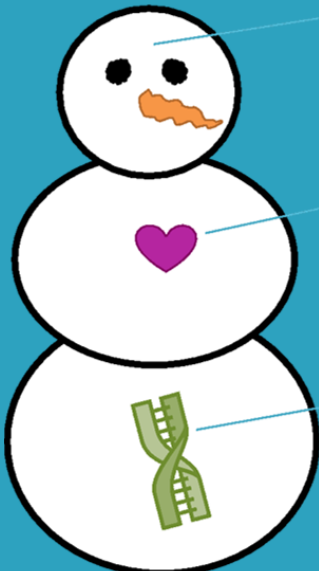
- 1 Race
- 2 Ethnicity
- 3 Gender identity
- 4 Class
- 5 Language
- 6 Religion
- 7 Ability
- 8 Sexuality
- 9 Mental health
- 10 Age
- 11 Education
- 12 Body size

(...and many more..)

Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it locks and intersects. It is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

- Kimberlé Crenshaw -

@stivraduckworth




**GENDER IDENTITY**  
A person's innermost concept of self as being male, female, neither, or both. Gender identity may or may not align with one's sex assigned at birth.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION**  
A person's experience of being romantically, physically, and emotionally attracted to men, women, both, or neither.

**Sex Assigned at Birth**  
The combination of anatomy, chromosomes, and hormones that are typically classified as male, female or intersex. Sex is usually assigned at birth based solely upon a person's visible external anatomy.

**GENDER EXPRESSION**  
How we express our gender to the world. This could include the clothes we wear, the way we style our hair, the way we talk, and the pronouns we use.



### What term should I use?

The best term to use is the one they provide (and approve).

**When you make a mistake**

- Correct yourself.
- Briefly apologize.
- Move on.

## What? DATA DROP



## Pre-Pandemic: LGBTQ Youth

- Less than half of LGBTQ youth were out to an adult at school.
- 2 in 3 LGBTQ youth report that someone tried to convince them to change their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 71% of LGBTQ youth report discrimination due to either their sexual orientation or their gender identity
- 78% of trans and non-binary youth report discrimination due to their sexual orientation.
- 85% of trans youth reported suicidal ideation during their lifetime, and more than half had a prior suicide attempt.

Source: National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2019, The Trevor Project.  
Source: Suicidality Disparities Between Transgender and Cisgender Adolescents

## WI YRBS - LGBTQ youth in school

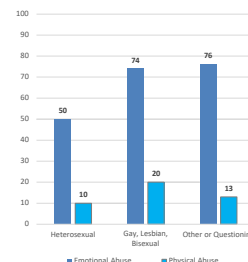
Wisconsin 2021 YRBS data

- Over **80%** of WI high school LGBTQ youth report **anxiety**-nearly twice the rate for their heterosexual peers.
- LGBTQ youth were more likely than heterosexual youth to experience depression too - 66% versus 25%.
- LGBTQ youth were more likely to be bullied at school - nearly 33% compared to about 14% of heterosexual youth.
- About 39% of LGBTQ high school students feel they belong at school, compared to about 68% of heterosexual students.
- **Nearly half** of high school LGBTQ youth **seriously considered attempting suicide during the pandemic**, more than four times the rate of hetero high school students. **Twenty-two (22) percent attempted suicide**, more than four times the rate of hetero kids.

## CDC ABES - Abuse in the Home

**75%** of high school LGBTQ kids experienced **emotional abuse at home**.

Gay, lesbian and bisexual kids were **twice as likely** as hetero kids to be **physically abused** in the home.



Source: Centers for Disease Control  
MMWR, April 1, 2022

## Intersectionality

- Among Black, female, sexual minority youth, only twenty-two percent (22%) feel connected at school - the least of any group.
- Black students were most likely to report hunger, with nearly a third reporting that there was not enough food in their home during the pandemic.
- More than one third of all U.S. high school students felt they had been treated badly or unfairly at school because of their race or ethnicity.

Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey (ABES), CDC, 2022

## LGBTQ Youth and Homelessness

**Up to 40%** of youth experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ. The most common cause of homelessness is being forced out or having run away.

Zhou, S.K., Wilson, B.S.M., Bhatia, J., & Gable, G. (2015). Seeking Out Youth: The Needs and Experiences of Youth, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Gendering Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute at the Urban Institute.



## Pause for reflection

What feeling are you experiencing after hearing the data?

What data was new for you?

What will stick with you from the data set?

## So what?

**“For parents and caregivers, a little change – being a little less rejecting and a little more accepting – can make an important difference in reducing a young person’s risk for serious health problems, including suicide and HIV.”**

Family Acceptance Project, *Supportive Families, Healthy Children*, C. Ryan, 2009.

## Now What: What Helps

### Pronouns Can Save Lives

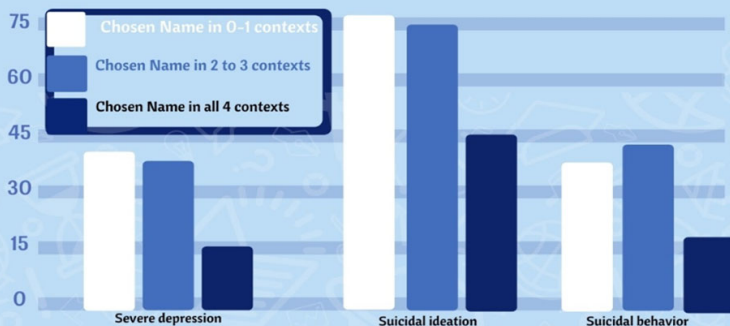
- Affirming LGBTQ youth’s gender by using pronouns that align with their gender identity has been shown to improve mental health.
- TGNB youth who did not have their pronouns respected attempted suicide twice as often as the kids who did have their pronouns respected.

Hello  
my name is

my pronouns are

Source: The Trevor Project’s 2020 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health

Transgender Youth Who Could Use Their Chosen Name at Home, School, Work, and with Friends Had the Lowest Levels of Mental Health Problems



Source: Population Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin (2018) Copyright 2020 Human Rights Campaign Foundation

## Now What: What Helps

### One Trusted Adult

- LGBTQ youth who have **just one** accepting adult in their life can reduce the risk of suicide attempt by 40%.



(And...the best practice is for youth to be supported in ALL parts of their lives!!)

Source: National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2019, The Trevor Project.

## What words do I actually say?



- ▶ What name or pronoun would you like me to use for you?
- ▶ Tell me about the people who live in your house.
- ▶ Who are the adults responsible for your care?
- ▶ Tell me more about your partner(s). How do they identify?
- ▶ I have not heard that term before. What do you want me to know about you?

## What words do I actually say?

- Good afternoon, learners/friends/superheroes/etc.
- When this activity is done you can find your family and get a snack.
- A kid left their backpack in my office today.



## Now What: What Helps

### School Connectedness

ABES data showed that youth who felt more connected to people at their schools had better mental health; however, young people who experienced racism were less likely to benefit from this protection. More must be done to ensure that schools provide a safe and supportive environment where all students feel connected to people who care, so that all students can fully benefit from the protections connectedness provides.

Source: Centers for Disease Control MMWR, April 1, 2022

## Protective Factors: What Health and Education Professionals Can Do

Positive youth development

Inclusive sexual health education

Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs)

Parent/caregiver engagement



[www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/disparities/lgbtprotectivefactors.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/disparities/lgbtprotectivefactors.htm)

## Pause for reflection

How can you use this learning in your role?

What additional information or resources do you need to make change?

## Resources

- GSAFE – Professional development, clubs, policy
- Welcoming Schools – Books, younger kid things
- Gender Spectrum – Transgender support plans
- Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network - School climate data, kits

## Resources

- WI Equality Map - [equalitymapwi.org](http://equalitymapwi.org) - Local policy and procedure
- Trevor Hotline - Help for youth now
- Amaze.org - Videos
- WI Department of Public Instruction - Data
- Transgender Student Education Resources (TSER) - Graphics, Gender Unicorn

## Next steps: One thing to do soon



## Questions and Close

