

How Health Systems Can Better Serve the LGBTQ+ Community

Learning Collaborative - Zero Suicide



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Learning Objectives

- Increase understanding of the stigma and disparities the LGBTQ+ population faces.
- Introduce a training opportunity for behavioral health care systems.
- Outline behavioral health best practices and considerations for behavioral health systems working with LGBTQ+ clients.
- Expand knowledge on the impact suicide has on the LGBTQ+ community.

Did you know?

People in the LGBTQ+ community experience mental health challenges at higher rates.

55%

Have depression

50%

Have an anxiety disorder

45%

Have PTSD

LGBTQ+ individuals are more than twice as likely as their straight counterparts to have a mental health disorder in their lifetime.

LGBTQ+ individuals are at greater risk for substance use.

Substance Use Disorders (USA):

18.3% LGB Adults

7.7% General population

Cigarette Smoking (USA):

20.5% LGB Adults

15.3% General population

Opioid Misuse (USA):

9.6% LGB Adults

3.7% General population

Past-Month Cigarette Smoking (CO):

15.7% LGBTQ Youth

32.6% Trans Youth

5.9% Heterosexual youth

Sources: National Survey on Drug Use and Health. SAMHSA. 2019.
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons and Tobacco Use. CDC. 2016.
Healthy Kids Colorado Survey. 2017.

LGBTQ+ individuals also face higher rates of discrimination and mistreatment in healthcare settings.

8% of LGB individuals said that a healthcare practitioner refused to see them due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

23% of transgender individuals said that a healthcare practitioner intentionally misgendered them or used the wrong name.

8% of LGBTQ+ individuals avoided or postponed needed medical care, which increases to **14%** for those who have previously experienced discrimination due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Source: Discrimination Prevents LGBTQ People From Accessing Health Care. Mirza, Shabab Ahmed & Rooney, Caitlin. Center for American Progress. January 18, 2018.



Who We Are

Envision:You addresses the unique needs LGBTQ+ people have when considering and accessing behavioral healthcare. As members of an often misunderstood minority group, they frequently face discrimination, violence, and poor mental health outcomes. Although it requires great strength and courage, seeking support is one of the most important steps a person with a mental health and/or substance use disorder can take. Envision:You is here to support, educate, and empower LGBTQ+ people in taking that step.

What Makes Us Unique?

We are the only statewide initiative addressing the behavioral health concerns of Colorado's LGBTQ+ community.

We address the behavioral health concerns of LGBTQ+ Coloradans living in small, rural, mountain, and urban communities.

We actively engage in advocacy efforts to ensure that the mental health concerns of LGBTQ+ individuals are addressed in legislation and policy.

We routinely assess community needs to ensure that our programming addresses the specific concerns of local LGBTQ+ communities.

We develop programs that raise awareness about mental health concerns, help combat stigma, and connect struggling LGBTQ+ folks to supportive resources.



Programs Underway



How to Have the Talk

One of the most difficult challenges any of us face is confronting a person we care about who is suffering from an untreated behavioral health concern. We know that substance use and mental health issues do not get better when they are ignored—in fact, they are likely to get much worse. To support and advance these important conversations, the 'How to Have the Talk' campaign was launched to encourage conversations about mental health in the LGBTQ+ community.

Programs Underway

Finding Hope: A Community Peer Support Program



This program will allow LGBTQ+ Coloradans in Southeast and Southwest Colorado to: Address their mental health concerns with peers; develop positive relationships with their sexual orientation and gender identity; increase their social connections; and access clinical support if needed and when ready, leading to more equitable health outcomes for the LGBTQ+ community.

Other Programs Underway



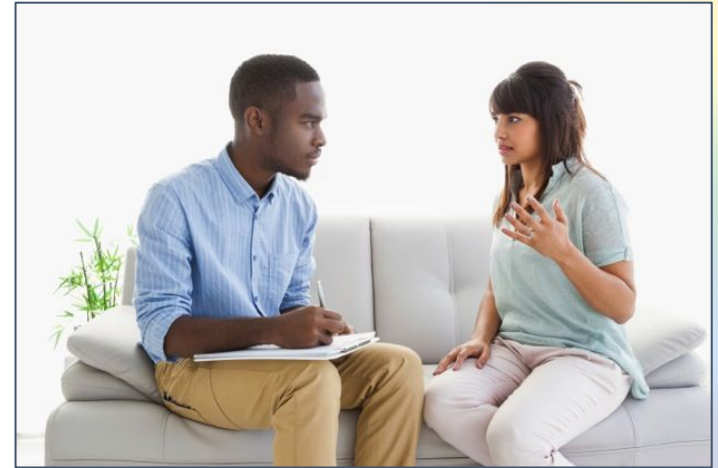
Envision:You LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Provider Training Program



This two-part training is designed to help registered and licensed mental health clinicians, addiction counselors, and certified peer specialists develop new skills and gain critical knowledge to enhance the delivery of quality, culturally relevant and affirming behavioral health interventions for members of the LGBTQ+ community. Level 1 is offered on-demand and Level 2 is currently being offered in a 2-day webinar format.

Learning Objectives

- **Increase understanding** of history, stigma, disparities, and the unique experiences and traumas of LGBTQ+ people.
- Develop an understanding of LGBTQ+ **affirming and inclusive language**.
- Develop a foundation that allows for deeper exploration of **best practices** for behavioral health providers.



Learning Objectives

- Increase understanding of the importance of a **trauma-informed and intersectional lens** in understanding LGBTQ+ clients.
- Enhance awareness of **personal and systemic biases**, how they influence institutional settings, and how to mitigate them.
- Expand knowledge on **the cultural role of substance use** for LGBTQ+.



Professional Benefits

- Providers can foster the therapeutic alliance by affirming a client's identity and learning more about where they come from.
- It shows a commitment to a client's recovery on the provider's part by learning how to promote practices that lead to better outcomes.
- Providers and wider systems of care get value from being able to market that they have done more than just checked a box.
- Continuing education opportunities are available to providers.

What makes an LGBTQ+ competent provider?

In a One Colorado survey of 1,200+ LGBTQ+ Coloradans, respondents were asked the above question.

- Someone who is **comfortable** with their clients sexual orientation and gender identity and **asks** about those identities.
- They ask about relationship status and use **gender neutral and inclusive language** when talking about this, as well as sexual and reproductive health matters.
 - Parents instead of mother/father
 - Partner(s) or spouse(s) rather than husband and wife
- Someone who has specific **knowledge or training** to deliver healthcare services to LGBTQ+ people.

Behavioral Health Practices

- All LGBTQ+ identities are unique per individual.
- Don't make assumptions on...
 - Gender
 - Pronouns or chosen name
 - Sexuality
- Make sure LGBTQ+ competencies are displayed at all levels of an organization or practice.



Administrative Inclusivity

- Forms: Sexual orientation, gender identity, correct name/pronouns, relationship status
- Inclusive signaling throughout organization
- LGBTQ+ staff hiring and staff training
- Consistency and enforcement, as well as a plan for reassessment



Minority Stress

The concept of minority stress refers to the “additional stress that members of marginalized groups experience because of the prejudice and discrimination they face.”



Source: Center for Community Practice: <https://www.urccp.org/article.cfm?ArticleNumber=69>

Intersectional Identities and Minority Stress

- Each individual will experience their identities and the intersections of their identities differently.
- Minority stress can be compounded: Holding multiple minority identities increases the likelihood of experiencing homophobia, stigma, isolation, and rejection.
- Coping and resilience factors can serve as protective factors against negative health outcomes.



Suicide and the LGBTQ+ Community

- LGBTQ people are at a higher risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.
- Actual suicide rates are hard to report due to lack of data.
- LGBTQ adults are 2x as likely to attempt suicide.
- At highest risk are queer youth and transgender individuals.



Suicidality in LGBTQ+ Youth

LGB youth **seriously contemplate suicide at almost 3x the rate** of heterosexual youth.

LGB youth are almost **five times as likely to have attempted suicide** compared to heterosexual youth.

LGB youth who come from highly rejecting families are **8.4 times as likely to have attempted suicide** as LGB peers who reported no or low levels of family rejection.

Each episode of LGBT victimization, such as physical or verbal harassment or abuse, **increases the likelihood of self-harming behavior by 2.5 times** on average.

Risk Factors for LGBTQ+ Youth

- Family and peer rejection on the basis of sexual or gender orientation can have an extreme impact.
- Higher prevalence of ACEs
- 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+, and as many as 60% of them are likely to attempt suicide.
- Generic policies in schools do not sufficiently protect LGBTQ+ students.



Sources: Youth Homelessness. The Trevor Project.
Suicide among youth in Colorado, 2013-2017: Ages 10-18. CDPHE.

Barriers to Care: Youth

Youth face many unique barriers to care.

- Parents/Caregivers are a gateway to care
- Restrictions around school-based care
- Age restrictions
- Difficulty navigating services or insurance
- Transportation and Money



LGBTQ+ Older Adults and Suicide

- Older adults (65 years and over) account for close to 17% of deaths by suicide but are often overlooked.
- LGBTQ+ older adults experience higher rates of poverty, **medical disparities**, and social isolation than their heterosexual peers.
- There is a need for LGBTQ older adult programming and safe spaces.



Working With Transgender Populations

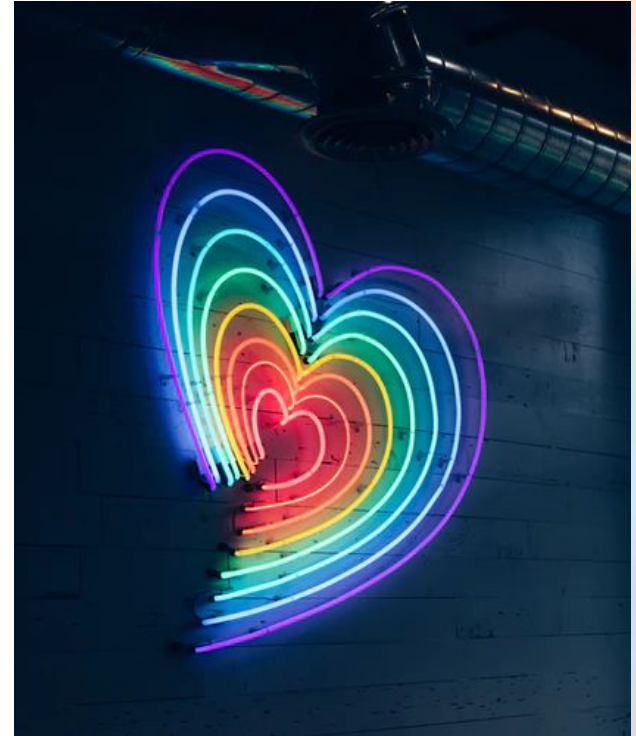
40% of transgender adults report having made a suicide attempt.
92% of those report having attempted suicide before the age of 25.

- LANGUAGE. Be intentional and respectful.
- Be aware of trans-specific health needs.
- Have gender neutral facilities that are easily accessible.



Collecting Data on Marginalized Populations

- There is a significant need for data and research that reflects representative diversity.
 - Sexual identities
 - Gender identities
 - Race
- If it becomes routine to always collect this data we will be able to create interventions that take intersecting and marginalized identities into account.



Behavioral Health Practices - Resources

- World Professional Association for Transgender Health www.wpath.org
- Impact of Polyvictimization on LGBTQ+ Youth and Adults - <http://learn.nctsn.org/course/view.php?id=211>
- Fenway Institute <https://fenwayhealth.org/the-fenway-institute/>
- Secular Therapy Project <https://www.seculartherapy.org>
- National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network – www.ngttcn.com
- Gender Affirmation Model [Diane Ehrensaft](#), [Colt Keo-Meier](#)
- The Trevor Project <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

