

CALL TO ACTION:



LGBTQ+ Children Need Our Support

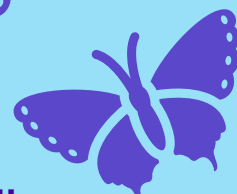
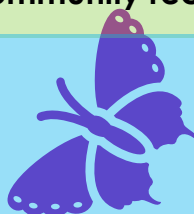
In recent years sexual identity and preference has been a hot topic. Not only has sexual orientation become a more open topic we can discuss freely with our peers, but it has opened many doors as to what makes up a family. As a society we have become more accepting of individuals to identify as a different gender or sexual preference. It's important that family members support their children when talking about their identity, as this can be a very sensitive topic for an individual. Society has increasingly opposed sexual orientation discrimination. However, expressions of hostility toward lesbians and gay men remain common in contemporary in our American society. Prejudice against bisexuals appears to exist at comparable levels. Bisexual individuals may face discrimination from some lesbian and gay people as well as from heterosexual people. Discrimination takes many forms. As we have been used to in recent news events, severe antigay prejudice is reflected in the high rate of harassment and violence directed toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals in society. In addition, social media has brought a new form of harassment for individuals to hide behind a screen and bully LGBTQ+ members within seconds just by using their fingertips and smartphones. While with the help of these movements and positivity surrounding the LGBTQ+ community, there have been many improvements in spreading correct and reliable information for our society to learn from.

What can I do?

No matter who you are, a parent, sibling, and/or friend the best way to support anyone is to be there and hear them out. Listen to what they have to say and why. Keeping it a judgment free conversation allows for an individual to be comfortable and shows them you care. Shutting someone out for being themselves isn't healthy nor provide a trusting relationship. Do your research and/or even asking questions about what that individual wants to do next. Overall, being supportive and loving is the best thing you can do.

For more information visit <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
Or call/text [1-866-488-7386](tel:1-866-488-7386) and talk to someone who can help

Local to STL:
Visit <https://www.pridestl.org/> for community recourses and more



The LGBTQ+ movement is growing faster and bigger than ever, together we can create a more loving space for LGBTQ+ members to live in pride and confidence.

"If I wait for someone else to validate my existence

, it will mean that I'm shortchanging myself." – Zanele Muholi "It is absolutely imperative that every human being's freedom and human rights are respected, all over the world." – Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir

"The Lord is my Shepherd and he knows I'm gay." – Troy Perry vulnerability." – Anthony Venn Brown

"It takes no compromise to give people the rights.. it takes no money to respect the individual." –Harvey Milk

Quick Facts



90% of teens who are LGBT come out to their close friends.

Family acceptance has been found to have a positive Association that with self-esteem and general health. For LGBT youth, family and friend support also promotes mental health and well-being and protects against psychological distress and depression.



Positive school climates significantly reduced suicidal radiation among sexual minority youth, research suggests that the mere presents of gay-straight alliances (GSA) has strong links with the well-being of LGBTQ youth when they enter early adulthood. in fact, the presence of GSA is associated with positive health outcomes for students, LGBTQ and otherwise.



Never assume! Always ask questions when referring to pronouns, sexuality, or if you're unsure about a topic.



"The beauty of it standing up for your rights is others see you standing and stand up as well" - Advice columnist Cassandra Duffy "Being gay is like glitter, it never goes away."- Lady Gaga "Every gay and lesbian person who has been lucky enough to survive the turmoil of growing up as a survivor. survivors always have an obligation to those who will face the same challenges." -Bob Paris

Support Your LGBTQ+ Family

Common Term & Definitions used by the LGBTQ+ Community

Cisgender: a person whose sense of personal identity & gender corresponds with their birth sex. The prefix "cis" means "on this side of."

"More than 30 years of rigorous social science research shows that children raised by LGBT parents are just as happy, healthy and well-adjusted as children raised by heterosexual parents." -*Movement Advancement Project*

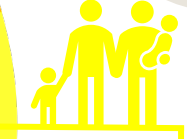
"Every major authority on child health and welfare has determined that sexual orientation has nothing to do with the ability to be a good, effective parent."



Gender Expression: how we "present" or express our gender externally, in and to the world.

Gender Identity: our deeply held, internal sense of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither; who we know ourselves to be internally.

As with gender expression, this can – but often does not – align with how we present ourselves externally to the world.



"Between 2 million and 3.7 million children under the age of 18 have an LGBTQ parent in the U.S., and approximately 200,000 of them are being raised by a same-sex couple. Many of these children are being raised by a single LGBTQ parent or by a different-sex couple where one parents is bisexual (Gates, Marriage and Family 2015)."

LGBT youth who are accepted by their families are much more likely to believe they will have a good life and will become a happy, productive adult. In families that are not at all accepting of their adolescent's gay or transgender identity, only about 1 in 3 young people believes they will have a good life as a gay adult.

Transgender: a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex. The prefix "trans" means "across, beyond, or on the other side of."

LGBTQ+: an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and/or plus.

 
TrevorLifeline 1-866-488-



Supporting Your LGBTQ+ Family with Pride

Kelly Herr

Fontbonne University

In recent years sexual identity and preference has been a hot topic. Not only has sexual orientation become a more open topic we can discuss freely with our peers, but it has opened many doors as to what makes up a family. As a society we have become more accepting of individuals to identify as a different gender or sexual preference. People at young are voicing their thoughts about themselves and their identity. Adults are finally working up the courage to be and act how they were meant to. It's a beautiful thing to witness a close friend or family member finally accepting themselves and sharing a secret, one that can change an individual life. It's important that family members support their children when talking about their identity, as this can be a very sensitive topic for an individual. The LGBTQ+ movement is growing faster and bigger than ever, we should not hide our judgment within a closet but provide supportive outlets for those who seek it as well as those who may need help understanding it. Together we can create a more loving space for LGBTQ+ member to live with pride.

Most often times this idea is put into the young minds of children that a family has a mommy and a daddy. Often times this is true, most families are made up of a male and a female, but this isn't always the case. In recent years, the idea of a family has been redefined in a way that isn't just based of genetics or who the parents are. A family is a support system that provides each member with the love, guidance, and encouragement needed regardless of race, gender, or other factors that make up this group of people. A family is a family and should not be limited by gender. Members of the LGBTQ+ community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Question, and Plus) can understand that family isn't just biological. The members of this community are known as a family of choice. This phrased is defined as, "kin networks

that LGBT individuals developed out of necessity when they were estranged from their biological families and-or if their biological families did not provide needed support and care,” (Orel, 2016). These individuals and those who support it have redefined the meaning of family and have made it a more open-minded concept for everyone. Families of choice provide individual with the support and courage they need to become themselves. This isn't a legal matter; it's simply giving a name to those who support and care for someone who is a part of the LGBTQ+ community.

More recently, society has increasingly opposed sexual orientation discrimination. However, expressions of hostility toward lesbians and gay men remain common in contemporary in our American society. Prejudice against bisexuals appears to exist at comparable levels. Bisexual individuals may face discrimination from some lesbian and gay people as well as from heterosexual people. Discrimination takes many forms. As we have been used to in recent news events, severe antigay prejudice is reflected in the high rate of harassment and violence directed toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals in society. In addition, social media has brought a new form of harassment for individuals to hide behind a screen and bully LGBTQ+ members within seconds just by using their fingertips and smartphones. While with the help of these movements and positivity surrounding the LGBTQ+ community, there have been many improvements in spreading correct and reliable information for our society to learn from. Although, everyone may not support this movement it will take some time for people to understand, learn, and accept. With proper knowledge and support we as a society will become more open-minded and less hateful to new idea or concepts that might be labeled as non-traditional or not as accepting to the majority.

For many, the concept of LGBTQ+ can sound intimidating and scary. A lot of people still, in 2020, don't know what LGBTQ+ stands for as well as all the other genders and preferences within the community. It can be very confusing and intimidating for someone who isn't involved. It's important for people to understand the difference between sexual identity and sexual orientation. A lot of times they are used interchangeably or misunderstood by people. Sexual orientation is often times defined as, to an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes. This also refers to a person's sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions, (APA,2008). Sexual identity is what we define ourselves as when referring to gender, male, female, nonbinary, etc. It is common these terms are used interchangeably and are often confused. Both are very similar as well as intertwine with each other's meanings when relating to sexual preference. When talking or addressing someone of the LGBTQ+ community, asking pronoun preferences or what they'd like to be called is a simple fix we can all make to become a more accepting society.

However, at times we see an individual come out to their family and are rejected for speaking their mind. Not only can this put a lot of mental and emotional stress on an individual but can cause a lot of thoughts and feelings to be repressed. This individual may experience doubt in how their feeling about their sexual preference or identity. Young children who may identify as LGBTQ can face more barriers within life due to their sexual identity. These children are at increased risk for negative health effects, such as high levels of depression, substance abuse, unprotected sexual contact, and attempted suicide, (Lorthridge, 2018). Rejection from a

parent can be detrimental to a child as well as create mental and psychological issues for the child that can have a long-term effect on their future relationships. In addition, children often times can experience neglect at school from peers. This can be a result of having parents of the same gender or the student themselves identify themselves as something that may be nontraditional. Changing your sexual identity may not only be difficult for the individual themselves but confusing for their peers. Within the elementary school system, “students who do not conform to traditional gender norms are almost twice as likely to be made fun of or bullied at school as other students, and one third of elementary school teachers report feeling uncomfortable responding to student questions about transgender people,” (Mackenzie, 2018). Students are being bullied due to their beliefs and are receiving no guidance or support from their school. On the other hand, it’s a topic that we don’t open up for discussion with young children. Sexual identity might be a complex topic but that is why we simplify it as well as normalize it. Normalizing sexual identity within schools will create a bigger impact as well as allow for those who many have never heard of the term better understand and accept.

Many schools have created clubs and support groups for LGBTQ+ students as a way to provide guidance and support for those who need it. GSAs is a term most often used within schools known as Gay-Straight Alliances. These are small groups within school that support and stand up for LGBTQ+ rights and students within these groups, gay and straight. The main goal of these groups is to, “both support and advocate, they provide a platform for students to strengthen their internal resources and networks, as well as work collaboratively with their peers to empower themselves,” (McCormick, 2015). We are normalizing the idea of different sexual identities as well as preferences within schools for students to understand, learn, and accept their

peers and loved ones. It creates a sense of family for people for some, providing them the ability to ask questions and express their feelings, find guidance, and build friendships. Students' academic and social outcomes in school will improve when feeling connected to peers and staff in positive ways. Students who feel marginalized because of their sexual orientation or gender identity may find in GSA groups social acceptance and positive peer role models.

Creating a supportive school environment includes safe, caring educators who treat students fairly and the presence of school support groups as well as inclusive curricula, educators willing to support LGBT youth, and comprehensive policies designed to protect these students from harassment. LGBTQ students and other sexual minority students attending these supportive schools are less likely to have depressive/suicidal feelings, skip school, or use substances, (Dragowski, 2016).

Within another article I came across from my social media about a male teacher coming out to his faculty and young students. The article had talked about the experience through a gay high school teachers' perspective of how he created a safe space for his students, LGBTQ+ and supporters. This teacher made his classroom a safe space for everyone to come and seek support for individuals. His colleagues were aware of this and sent out a notice to everyone about his 'safe space', (Knowles, 2018). This was just an article I stumbled across that just made me have hope for students within public schools. It's critical for schools to normalize the idea of different sexualities and identities. More importantly create an atmosphere where students' thoughts and emotions can be expressed and shared amongst their peers. As well as find guidance for these students to talk to their families about what they're experiencing or better understand the relationship between their same sex parents.

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