



# Lobby Poll

Good

Morning/Afternoon

Please participate in an example  
of an activity the Connecting  
module does with caregivers !



Northwest (HHS Region 10)

PTTC

Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

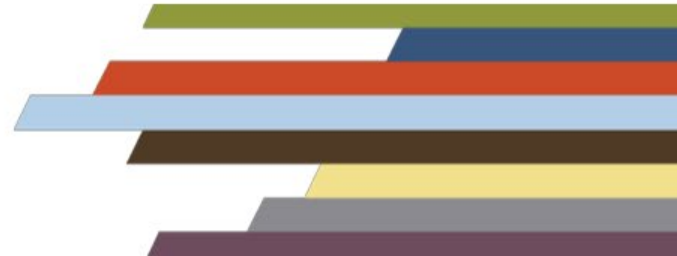


# Working to Promote Protection by Supporting LGBTQ+ Teens in Foster Care

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*Susan Barkan, PhD*

*Kevin Haggerty, MSW, PhD*





Northwest (HHS Region 10)

**PTTC**

Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



The Northwest PTTC is a partnership led by the Social Development Research Group (SDRG) at University of Washington (UW) School of Social Work in collaboration with the Prevention Science Graduate Program at Washington State University (WSU), and the Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies (CASAT) at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR).

Northwest partnering institutes share a vision to expand the impact of community-activated prevention by equipping the prevention workforce with the power of prevention science.



Prevention Science  
Graduate Program  
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



# Disclaimer

This webinar is supported by SAMHSA of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through SAMHSA Cooperative Agreement # H79SP080995. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by SAMHSA/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

This webinar is being recorded and archived, and it will be available for viewing after the webinar. Please contact the webinar facilitator if you have any concerns or questions.

# Upcoming Event

- Leveraging Systems Change for Substance Misuse Prevention, an Enhanced Prevention Learning Series
  - Tuesdays, January 10 – February 14, 2023
  - 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm Pacific Time

[Visit the PTTC Website to Learn More & Register](#)

We acknowledge that we are all on the traditional lands of different peoples. I live and work on the ancestral lands of the Costal Salish People. We have a responsibility to acknowledge our Indigenous connections and the histories of Indigenous land dispossession.

To identify the stewards of your land, type your location into <https://native-land.ca/>



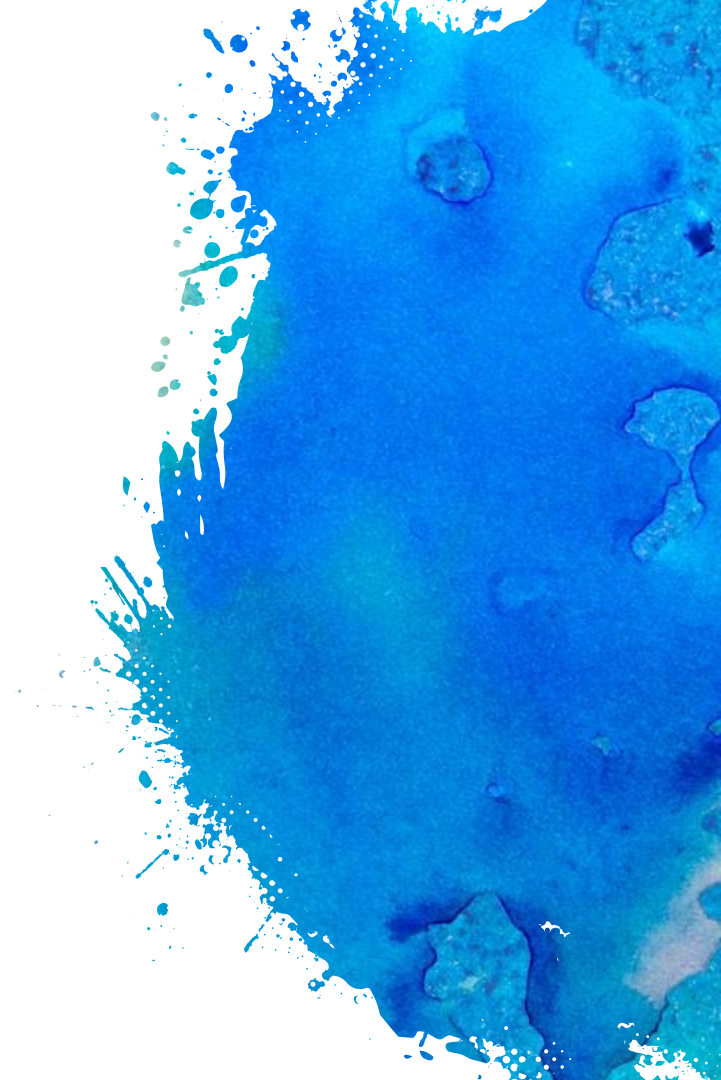


A bit about  
us...



# A bit about you

POLL Question—What  
Setting best reflects your  
work environment?





# Session Objectives

- ❖ Understand that LGBTQ+ youth in care are at high risk for depression, anxiety and substance use
- ❖ Learn about the Connecting Module resource to promote family acceptance and protection
- ❖ Share about other resources to promote acceptance and build substance resilience for this population.

# Chatterfall

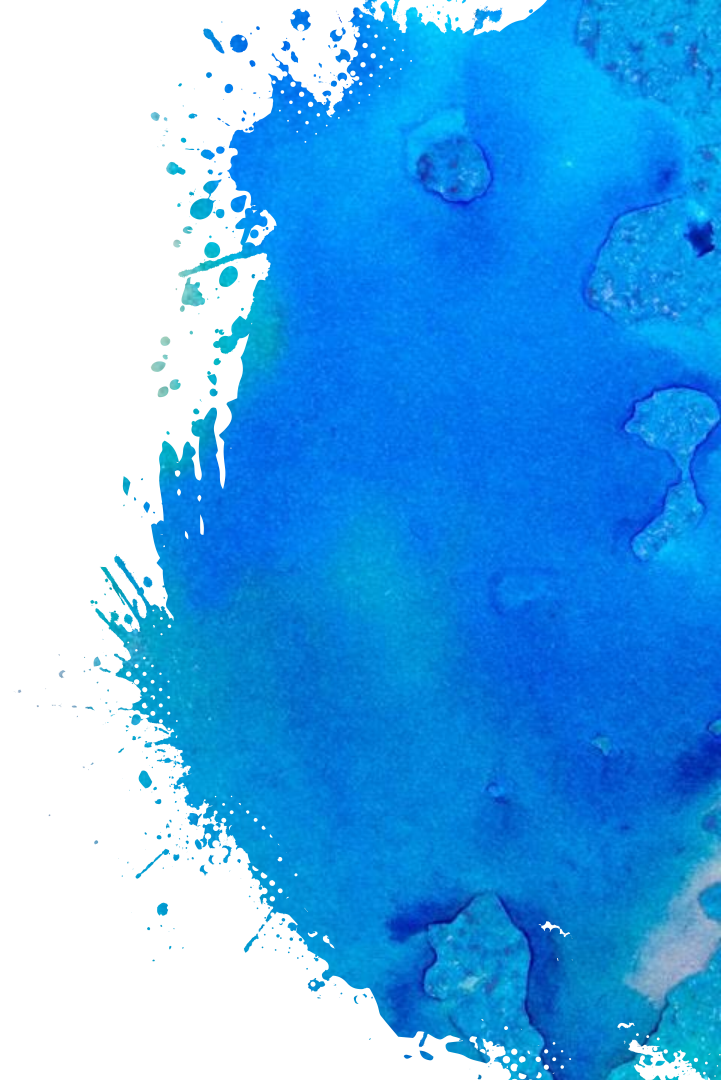


Why did you  
choose to come to  
this session  
today?

BREATHE  
DEEPLY



WHY THE  
CONCERN?



# Gender affirming care

- × Any social, psychological, behavioral, or medical supports that affirm a person's gender identity when it conflicts with their sex assigned at birth.
- × Multiple US health organizations support this care in pediatric patients (AAP, AMA AAMC, APA, SAHM to name a few)



## Social Gender Affirmation

- Preferred Name
- Preferred Pronoun



## Psychological Gender Affirmation

- Felt Gender is Respected and Validated
- Resist Internalized Stigma and Transphobia



## Medical Gender Affirmation

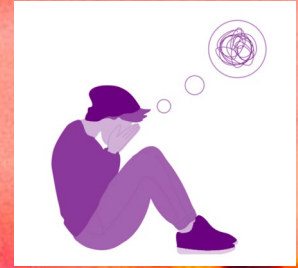
- Pubertal Blockers
- Hormone Therapy
- Gender Confirmation Surgery



## Legal Gender Affirmation

- Legal Name Change
- Legal Gender Marker Change

# The evidence



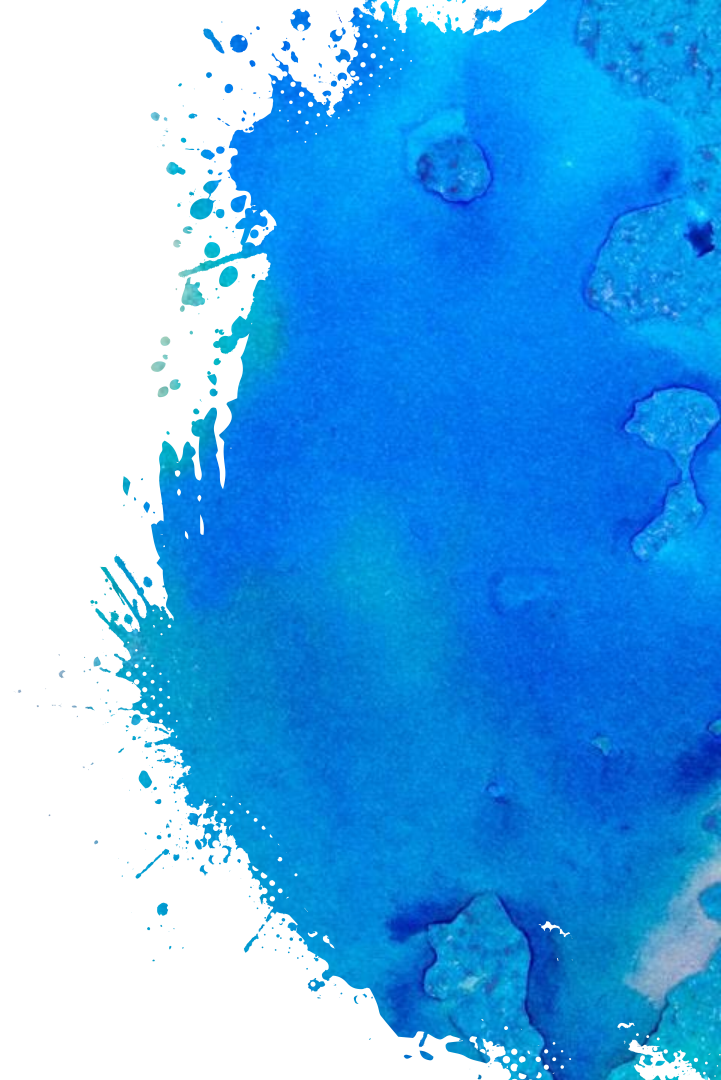
- × Strong evidence from multiple countries over decades suggest:
  - × Transgender and gender diverse youth are at high risk of anxiety, depression, and suicide
  - × Gender affirming care, including sociobehavioral supports and medical care, reduces these risks significantly in the short and long-term

→ **Gender affirming care is LIVESAVING CARE**

## Recent Studies

1. Tordoff et al. (2022)
2. Turban et al. (2022)
3. Green et al. (2021)
4. Hisle-Gorman et al. (2021)
5. Grannis et al. (2021)
5. Turban et al. (2020)
6. Kuper et al. (2020)
7. Achille et al. (2020)
8. van der Miesen et al. (2020)
9. de Lara et al. (2020)
10. Kaltiala et al. (2020)
11. Allen et al. (2019)
12. Costa et al. (2015)
13. de Vries et al. (2014)
14. de Vries et al. (2011)

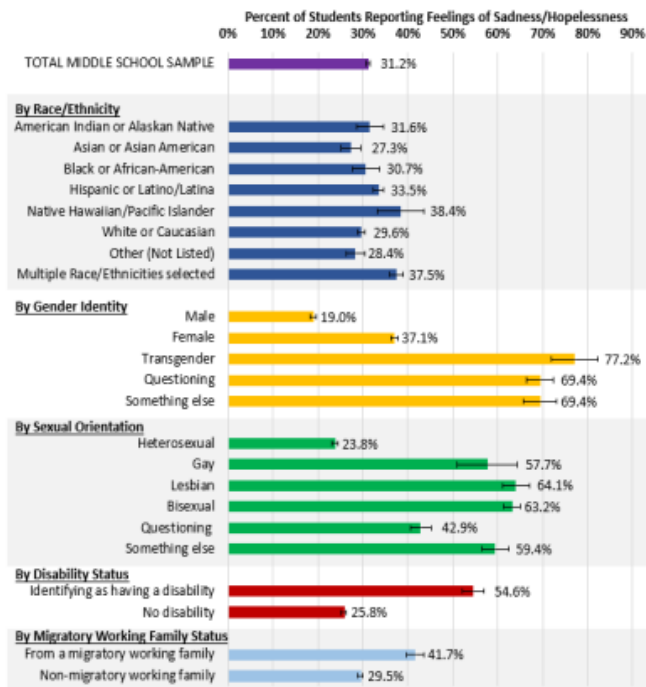
# Gender Affirming Care Matters



## Mental Health & Substance Use: Middle School Students

### Prolonged Feelings of Sadness/Hopelessness

**Question:** During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?



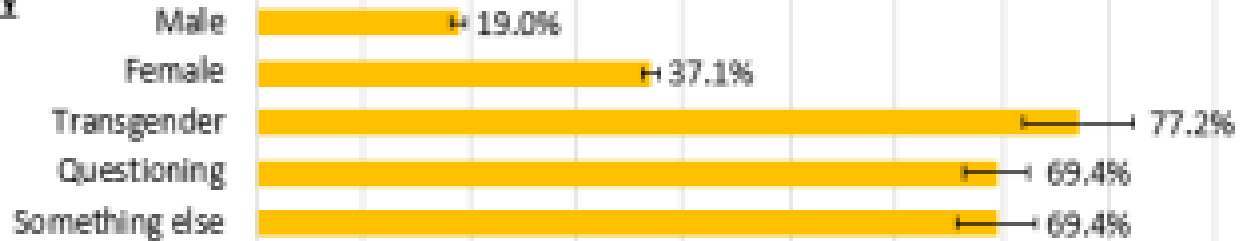
**NOTES:**

- Higher percentages indicate more students reported feelings of sadness/hopelessness.
- Prevalence is displayed with 95% confidence intervals shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included: 'NO!', 'No', 'Yes', and 'YES!'. Percentages shown above indicate those who selected 'YES!' or 'Yes'.
- For more information about the survey or to view other reports, please visit: <https://csswashington.org>.

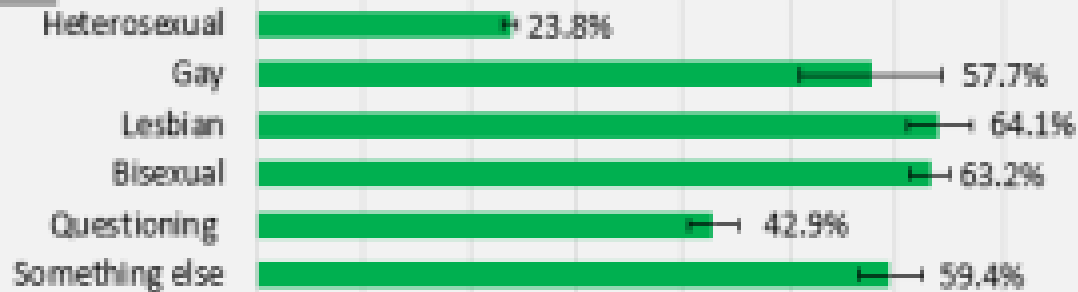


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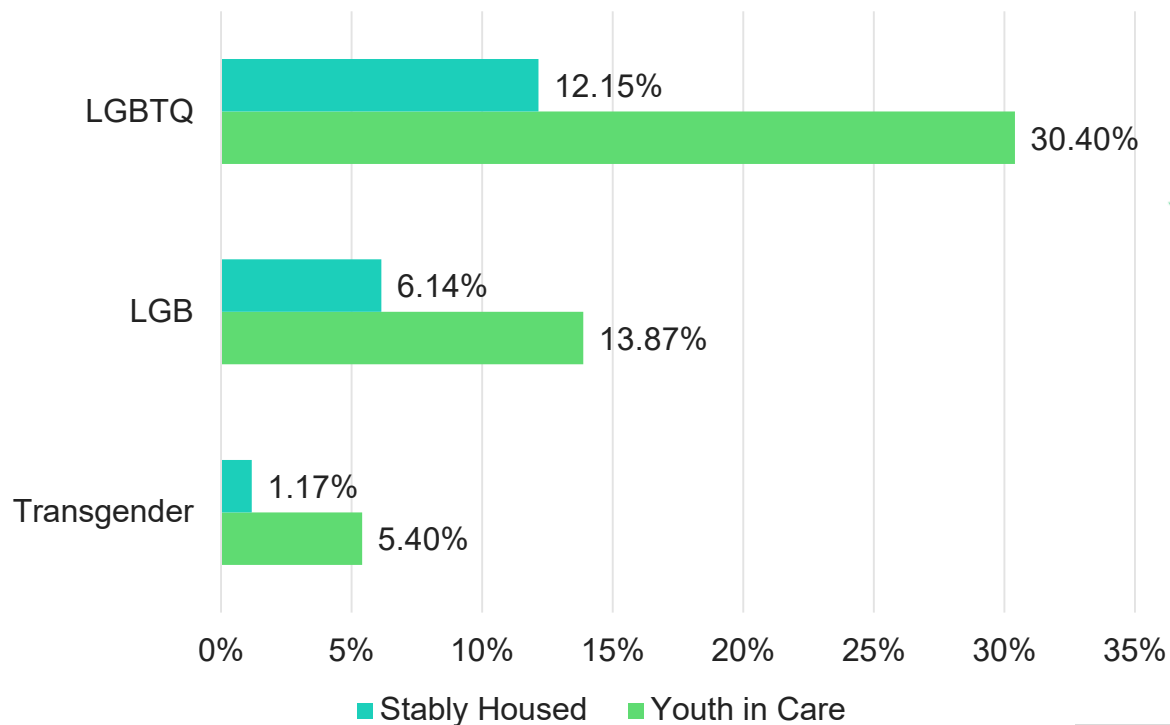
By Gender Identity



By Sexual Orientation



# Overrepresentation of LGBTQ+ youth in foster care





# Discrimination and Rejection in the Child Welfare System

## Challenges



Harassment from peers, staff, and caregivers



Rejection and exclusion



Double standards

## Outcomes

Permanency options



Risk for homelessness



“I was told that foster families didn’t want a gay kid in their home, so I grew up in group homes and residential centers where I was abused sexually, physically and emotionally.”

– **Kristopher Sharp**, eight years in foster care

# Discrimination and personal safety for LGBTQ+ individuals



Among those asked to describe the most important problem facing their lives right now:

LGBT youth identified

**1** Non-accepting families (26%)

**2** School/bullying problems (21%)

**3** Fear of being out or open (18%)

Non-LGBT youth identified

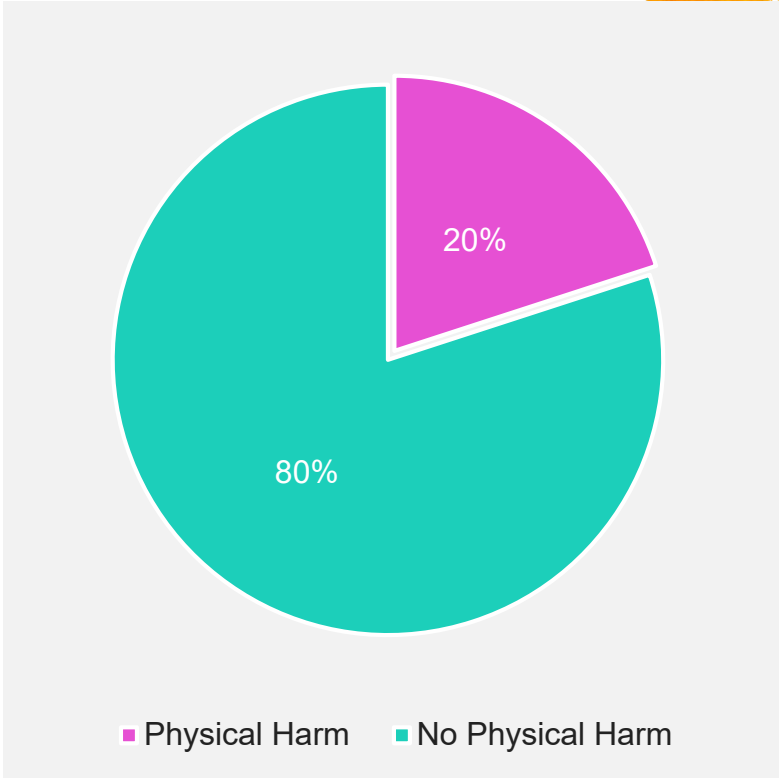
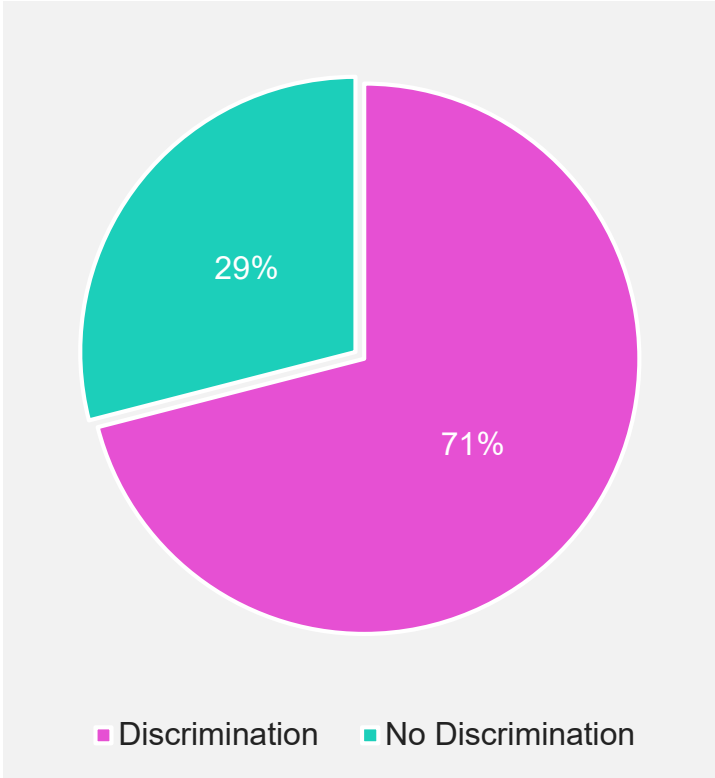
**1** Classes/exams/grades (25%)

**2** College/career (14%)

**3** Financial pressures related to college or job (11%)



# Discrimination and personal safety



# Substance use in LGBTQ+ youth

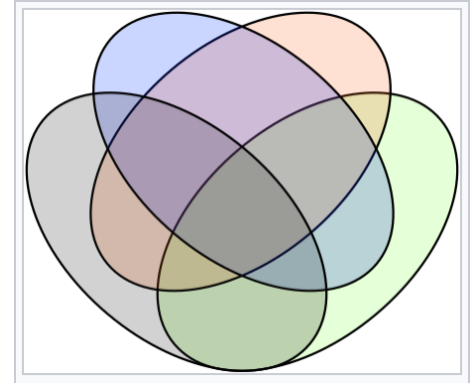
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual youth: 2-3 times general population
- Transgender and gender diverse youth: 2.5-4 times general population
- Main pathways thought to be related to internalized stigma, discrimination, bullying, trauma





# Intersectionality: LGBTQ+ in foster care

- No real data
- Out-of-home placement and gender/sexual minority stress are both risk factors
- LGBTQ+ foster youth are likely at uniquely high risk of substance use problems








# What can you do

- × Educate yourself (this presentation!)
- × Educate others around you
- × Honor a youth's chosen pronouns and name...even if you don't totally get it
- × Know the adolescent gender care experts in your area
- × Follow the guidance of medical professionals

# Background




**CONNECTING**

**Sexual Orientation and  
Gender Identity &  
Expression (SOGIE):  
A Guide for Foster Caregivers**

*A Connecting Workbook Supplement*

*Connecting is a prevention-focused program  
specifically for foster parents and relative  
caregivers and teens in foster care.*



This module was developed by Susan Barkan, Janice Cole, Jessica Colito, Madeline Furlong, Kevin Haggerty, Kristin McCowan, Bailey Noell, and Amy Salazar in collaboration with input from many caregivers and young people formerly in foster care. This work was done in collaboration with Washington State DCYF

The development was supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, grant 1R01DA038095-01A1.

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Washington State Department of  
**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**



# Development Procedures

1. **Reviewed scholarly literature, other existing resources, and researcher and practitioner expertise**
  - as starting place for developing content
2. **Conducted focus groups**
  - to explore target population's recommended strategies for building better relationships between LGBTQ+ youth and caregivers
3. **Conducted theater test on module draft**
  - to obtain content feedback, recommendations for improvement
4. **Developed online module** through the Alliance



# Findings from Focus Groups: What are the unique challenges and needs?

## **Three Areas of Challenge**

- × Societal Level
- × Family level
- × Individual level

## **Family level**

- × Demonstrating Acceptance
- × Resources
- × Communication Issues
- × Relationship Building
- × Discrimination
- × Safety





**Sexual Orientation and  
Gender Identity &  
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specifically for foster parents and relative  
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## Module Content Overview

Activity	Description
<b>Youth Stories</b>	Presents stories of two LGBTQ+ youth formerly in foster care
<b>Know, Heard, New</b>	Introduction to language around LGBTQ+ community
<b>Myths &amp; Realities</b>	Common incorrect beliefs about gender roles and the LGBTQ+ community and scientific evidence
<b>Roadblocks to Acceptance</b>	Introduces common problematic conversation habits, provides ideas for more helpful alternative responses.
<b>Conversations about Discrimination</b>	strategies to help LGBTQ+ youth stay safe
<b>Make a Plan</b>	planning with LGBTQ+ youth to prepare them to stay safe in potentially dangerous situations.
<b>Sensitive Conversation Strategies</b>	Lists unhealthy and healthy coping mechanisms that youth often rely on to deal with trauma along with tips for conversations with youth.
<b>Are You in Crisis?</b>	how to recognize and respond appropriately to a youth who might be in suicidal crisis
<b>Seeking Appropriate Healthcare</b>	Covers challenges to finding healthcare resources for LGBTQ+ youth



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## Features

Home  
Calendar  
Courses

# Connecting: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression Training for Caregivers and Kinship Providers (eLearning)

Overview

Accreditation

Take course

Available to anyone,  
free of charge, from  
Washington Alliance, at  
<https://cpe.socialwork.uw.edu/alliance-courses/content/connecting-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-and-expression-training-caregivers-and#group-tabs-node-course-default1>

# Youth Story

Story

This story was produced at  
the Center for Digital Storytelling  
[www.storycenter.org](http://www.storycenter.org)

by the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project,  
a program of the Bay Area Academy  
of San Francisco State University.

September, 2005



Kevin's story  
<https://vimeo.com/130559696>  
(21.06)

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# Skill Building



CONNECTING

**Sexual Orientation and  
Gender Identity &  
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# Know, Heard, New

*A LGBTQ+ Terminology Review*

Pg. 7

Biological Sex

LGBTQ+

Pansexual

Gender Expression

Heterosexual

Gender Non-Conforming

Asexual

Queer

Cisgender

Transgender

Gender Non-Binary

Gender Identity

Agender

Intersex

They/Them/Their

Two-Spirit

# Terminology Review

Key:  
 Know  
 Heard  
 New

Term	Caregiver	Teen
LGBTQ+		
Sexual Orientation		
Asexual		
Bisexual		
Heterosexual		
Gay		
Lesbian		
Pansexual		
Agender		
Biological Sex		
Cisgender		
Gender Expression		
Gender Identity		
Gender Non-Binary		
Gender Non-Conforming		
Intersex		
Two-Spirit		
Transgender		
Ally		
Affinity Group		
Queer		
Questioning		
Pronouns/Preferred Pronouns		
Safe Space		

## Roadblocks to Acceptance

### A Caregiver Activity

Sometimes you may do or say things unconsciously that get in the way of creating a welcoming and supportive home. It is important to be aware of the ways you might accidentally come off as unaccepting when you are trying to be supportive.

Because youth are sometimes feeling shame and isolation it is important to lead with love and convey both verbally and nonverbally that you accept, respect, care about, and are there for them. Show humility and be open to feedback and possibly getting it wrong. The following is a list of possible roadblocks to acceptance that some youth have heard from their parents, as well as some suggestions for strategies you could try that will convey love, respect, and commitment to your youth.

*Instructions: Take a look at these roadblocks and see if you have ever said these or heard them said by another caregiver. Are there any that sound familiar to you? If there are, write it down in the "my roadblock" section, and think about how you might approach things differently.*

#### Roadblock: Invalidating their experience

- Example: "It's just a phase" "You'll grow out of it" "You just haven't met the right guy/gal" "I knew it!"
- How this can block acceptance: You might accidentally assert your own perspective that this is a passing phase in your teen's development, or assert your need to be right, both of which may invalidate their experience of their identity.
- Instead try... Listen to how they are describing their experience finding their identity and reflect back to them what you hear them saying. To convey your love, respect, and support for them and their feelings you can try: "So you're feeling \_\_\_\_\_." What is important to focus on is that this disclosure is not a game, it is about your teen and their experience of their emerging identity. It's always important to remember not to speak for your youth.

#### Roadblock: Questioning

- Example: "But are you sure you're (\_\_\_\_\_)?" "You don't look (\_\_\_\_)."
- How this can block acceptance: Questioning someone's experience can belittle what they are experiencing and feeling.
- Instead try... Ask more questions to better understand the experience of the teen in your care. Lead with love and ask questions that start with words like *how*, *what*, *tell me about*, or *help me understand*.

# Roadblocks to Acceptance

Page 17

# Roadblocks to Acceptance

Questioning

Using the wrong terminology

Judging

Judging:

Instead try you can use this opportunity to remind them that you accept them for who they are. You can say something like *“I know that things might feel confusing right now, but I want you to know I’m here for you.”*

Providing Solutions:  
Instead you can ask them what they think they should do. You can try saying *“What options have you considered?”* or *“How can I be helpful in solving this problem with you?”*

Invalidating their experience:  
Instead try to listen to how they are describing their experience finding their identity and reflect back to them what you hear them saying. You can try saying something like: *“So you’re feeling \_\_\_\_\_.”*

## Conversations About Discrimination

### *A Caregiver Activity*

Here are some ideas for having a conversation with your teen about LGBTQ discrimination and personal safety.

- **Be informed** about the reality of discrimination and personal safety for LGBTQ+ individuals
  - LGBTQ people are targeted for violent hate crimes at even higher rates than Muslims, African Americans, Jews, and Latinos.<sup>10</sup> Youth who experience multiple minority identities, such as being both LGBTQ+ and being a person of color, are at even higher risk of experiencing hate crimes and discrimination.<sup>13</sup>
  - 42% of LGBT youth say the community they live in is not accepting of LGBTQ people.<sup>11</sup>
  - LGBT youth are twice as likely as their peers to say they have been physically assaulted, kicked, or shoved.<sup>14</sup>
  - There is no federal law banning employment discrimination for LGBT individuals. As of July 2015, 28 states still allow LGBT individuals to be fired solely based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>12</sup>
- **Build your teen's awareness** by making sure they know about discrimination and personal safety issues that LGBTQ individuals often have to face. **Make sure to emphasize that this is not their fault, nor is it a reason to hide who they are, but it is an unjust and all too common reality that they should be aware of and be as ready as possible to protect themselves if and when it happens.**
  - Again, this is especially true and important for LGBTQ+ youth of color.
- **Ask what their experiences have been like** related to discrimination and personal safety
  - What you hear may be very painful—be prepared to respond in a respectful, empathetic way. It may be helpful to review the trauma-informed principles discussed in the “Trauma-Informed Parenting” section of the workbook on page 8 to help prepare for this.
  - A refresher of the Roadblocks to Communication (pages 123-124) and Active Listening (pages 133-135) sections in the “Family Communication” chapter of the workbook may be helpful here as well.

# Conversations About Discrimination

Pg. 19



# Active Listening

*The Four Steps*

Pg. 24

# FOUR STEPS TO ACTIVE LISTENING:

Step 1: **Listen**

Step 2: **Asking Questions**

Step 3: **"I" Statements**

Step 4: **Paraphrasing**





Is the module  
useful?



850

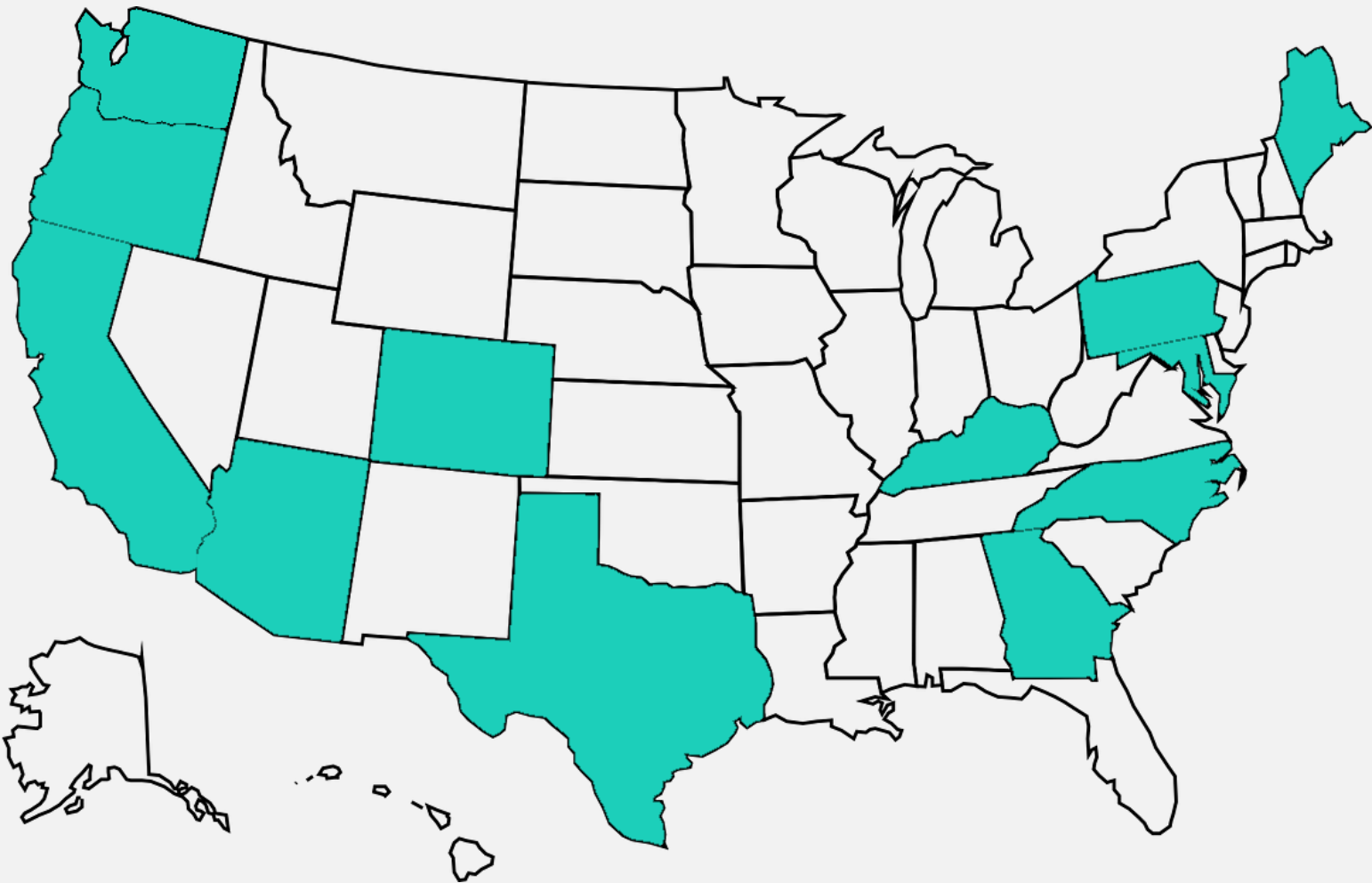
Completions

85%

Completion  
Rate

47

Out of State  
Completions





# Evaluation Questions

(1) Who chose to participate in an optional online training of this nature?

(2) Did participants experience growth as a result of this training?

(3) Which caregivers felt best prepared to care for/support LGBTQ+ youth?



# Who Chose to Participate

- 72% caregivers / 28% child welfare workers
- 72% of caregivers had 1 hour or less training in LGBTQ+ issues
- 61% of all participants had little or no experience interacting with LGBTQ+ youth
- 85% of participants heterosexual
- 98% of participants cisgender



# Participant Growth

Both caregivers and social workers showed growth across all indicators

## Caregivers (N=96)

- Recognizing the importance of learning strategies and skills to support LGBTQ+ youth  
[t(122.43)=10.46, p=0.00]
- Confidence in caring for an LGBTQ+ youth  
[t(160.95)=3.22, p=0.002]
- Willingness to bring an LGBTQ+ youth into their care  
[mean=4.17; stdev=0.91]


## Social Workers (N=35)

- Recognizing the importance of learning strategies and skills to support LGBTQ+ youth  
[mean improvement of 0.37 points – mean of 4.74]
- Confidence in caring for an LGBTQ+ youth  
[mean improvement of 0.71 points – mean of 4.37]
- Willingness to bring an LGBTQ+ youth into their care  
(mean=4.09; stdev=0.90)



# Which Caregivers Felt Best Prepared

Caregivers with more experience feeling more confident to care for an LGBTQ+ youth.



Share your expertise:  
Please share your  
resources in the chat

# For more information

Email: [haggerty@uw.edu](mailto:haggerty@uw.edu)

For more in-depth findings on this study:

- Salazar, A. M., Barkan, S. E., Rankin, L. F., Woo, C. B., Rozekova, I., Fowler, N. E., ... & Salzer, A. (2021). Evaluation of a Brief Foster Parent/Case Worker Training to Support Relationship Building Skills and Acceptance of LGBTQ+ Youth in Care. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 1-25.
- Salazar, A. M., McCowan, K. J., Cole, J. J., Skinner, M. L., Noell, B. R., Colito, J. M., Haggerty, K. P., Barkan, S. E. (2018). Developing relationship-building tools for foster families caring for teens who are LGBTQ2S. *Child welfare*, 96(2), 75–97.
- Salazar, A. M., Haggerty, K. P., Barkan, S. E., Peterson, R., Furlong, M. E., Kim, E., ... & Colito, J. M. (2020). Supporting LGBTQ+ Foster Teens: Development of a Relationship-Focused, Self-Guided Curriculum for Foster Families. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*.



The background is an abstract watercolor painting. It features a mix of vibrant green and deep blue colors, with some areas appearing lighter and more washed out, suggesting a sense of depth and movement. The colors are blended together, creating a textured, organic feel. At the top of the image, there is a thin horizontal bar composed of several small, solid-colored squares in shades of blue, red, grey, and yellow.

FINAL POLL

