A close-up photograph of several hands holding two heart-shaped objects. The hearts are made of a soft material and feature the colors of the rainbow flag (red, orange, yellow, green, blue). The hands are positioned around the hearts, suggesting care and support.

Understanding Stress and Substance Use among LGBTQ+ Adolescents

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At the time of this publication, Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D, served as Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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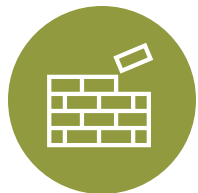
Learning Objectives



Establish common language to understand the LGBTQ+ youth experience



Examine research on LGBTQ+ youth stress to discover the reasons why they are at increased risk for substance misuse



Discuss evidence-based strategies for preventing substance use that are effective with LGBTQ+ youth



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Our Roadmap Today

- ✓ Introductions
- ✓ Overview
- ✓ Gender identity vs sexual orientation
- ✓ Coming out
- ✓ Minority stress research
- ✓ How to be an ally
- ✓ Evaluation



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Introductions / Pronouns

- She, her, hers and he, him, his
- They, them, theirs
- Ey ("ay"), Em ("em"), Eir ("air"), Eirself
- Ze ("zee"), Zir or Hir ("zee" or "here"), Zir(s) or Hir(s) Zirself or Hirself
- Just my name please
- Use the pronouns one uses for one-self. If you don't know, you can use their name or ask. "What pronouns do you use?"

Gender Identity

Gender Identity:

A person's innermost concept of self as male, female, both, neither or along the spectrum.



Sexual Orientation:

A person's physical, romantic, emotional, and/or spiritual attraction to others

Sexual Orientation

Understanding Gender

What do we think of when we hear “gender”?



Gender Assignment (Birth Sex)

The determination of an infant's sex at birth



Gender Identity (most important!)

A sense of one's self as a man, woman, or someone other or between



Gender Identity

Refers to how we self-identify our gender

- » Transgender
- » Cisgender
- » Bigender
- » Gender fluid
- » Non-binary
- » Agender

Many transgender or cisgender youth may not self-identify as such. Some will use identity labels such as girl/woman or boy/man. Many transgender youth may also identify outside the binary or as agender.

Gender Expression

How we present ourselves in terms of dress, posture, roles, and behavior. Different cultures have their own definitions of what is considered “normative”.

Some examples include:

- Masculine
- Feminine
- Androgynous
- Gender nonconforming (GNC)
- Gender Creative
- Gender Expansive



*Please note, there are many other ways to express gender.

Sexual Orientation and Sexuality

- » Lesbian
- » Gay
- » Pansexual
- » Heterosexual
- » Asexual
- » Demisexual

Again, without making assumptions based on common definitions, ask what their label means for them.



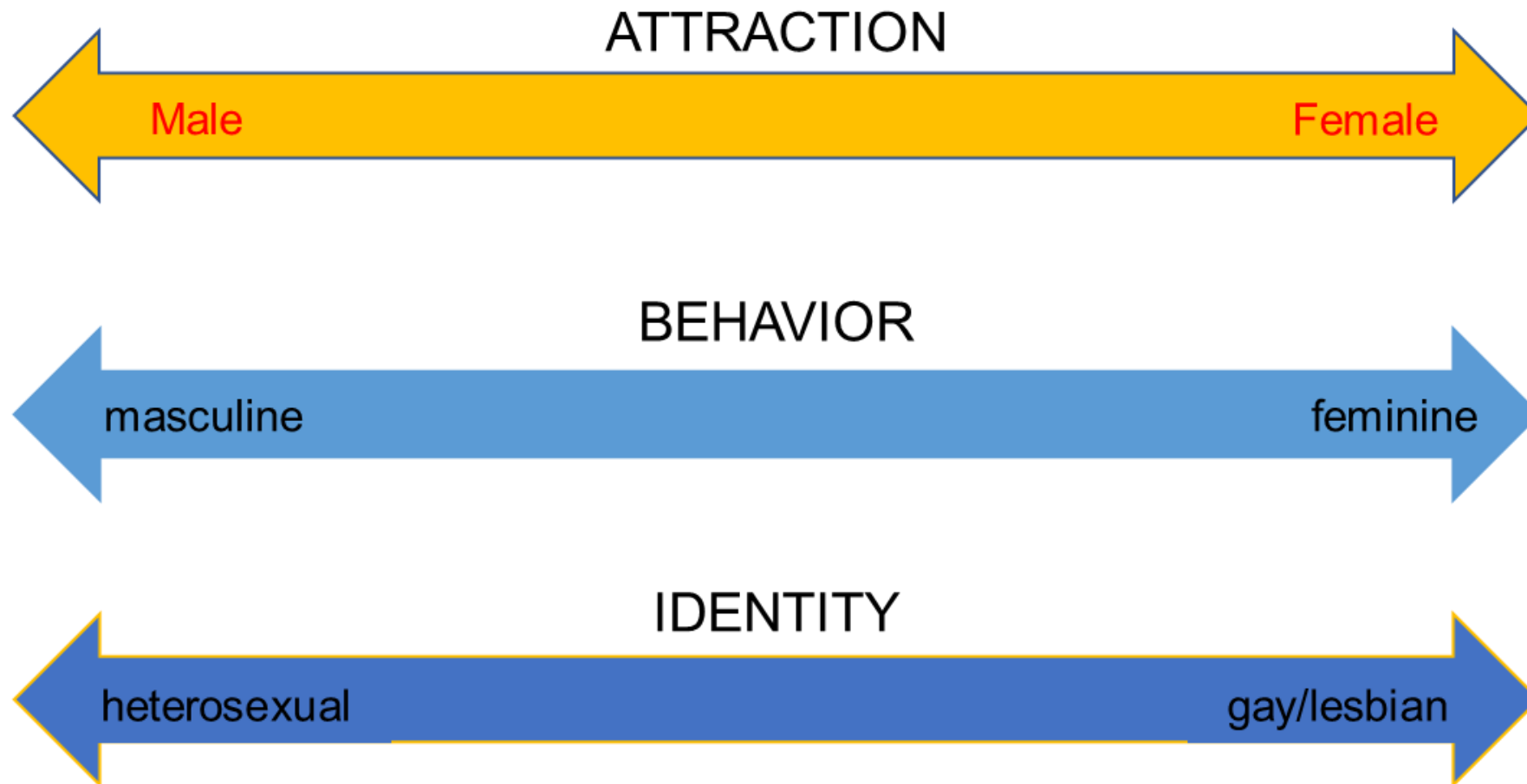
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Three Common Indices of Sexual Orientation



This is Personal

We all have a:

- Sex assigned at birth
- Sexual orientation
- Gender Identity



gasp

Substance Use Among LGBTQ+ Youth

National prevalence data on substance use indicates:

- LGBTQ+ high school students use substances at significantly higher rates than their heterosexual peers (Jones et al., 2020)
- About half (47%) of youth under age 21 have used alcohol in the last year, a third (29%) have used marijuana and one in ten (11%) have used a prescription drug not prescribed to them in the past year (The Trevor Project, 2022)

What do you believe
are the common
stressors for LGBT+
youth?



**NATIONAL
COMING OUT
DAY**
October 11

Coming Out:

- » NOT a one and done event;
- » is a PROCESS;
- » is NOT always safe;
- » looks and feels different for everyone

LGBT+ Minority Stress

LGBTQ related stressors are those which are above and beyond typical stress:

- » Violence and victimization across the life-span
- » Experiences of discrimination, stigma, and rejection
- » Anticipated rejection, stigma, discrimination, harassment, and bullying
- » Internalized homophobia/transphobia
- » Non-affirmation



Minority Stress and Substance Use

Our prior studies have shown that stress in these social domains are correlated with alcohol, tobacco, and other substance use:

- Identity Management
- Negative Expectancies
- Negative Disclosure Experiences
- Family Rejection
- Internalized Homonegativity
- Homonegative Communication
- Homonegative Climate
- Social Marginalization
- Intersectionality
- Religion



Family Rejection*

	Lifetime	30 Days
I have to lie to my family about being LGBTQ.	67%	28%
If I come out, it will cause problems within my family.	69%	29%
My family does not want to talk to me about being LGBTQ.	61%	45%
Someone who lives with me has told me they disapprove of me being LGBTQ.	40%	24%
I feel as though I am a disappointment to my family because I am LGBTQ.	56%	44%
My family has told me that being LGBTQ is just a phase.	54%	25%
My parents are uncomfortable with LGBTQ people.	58%	42%
My mother (or female caregiver) does not accept me as LGBTQ.	41%	32%
My father (or male caregiver) does not accept me as LGBTQ.	46%	30%

* Results drawn from grant 1R01MD012252 (PI: Goldbach; N = 2,522)

School Related Stress*

	Lifetime	30 Days
I have felt unsafe or threatened in school because I am LGBTQ.	38%	14%
I have felt isolated or alone at school because I am LGBTQ.	51%	24%
I have been physically assaulted by students at school because I am LGBTQ.	10%	1%
It's hard to be an LGBTQ person at my school.	38%	20%
My school does not protect LGBTQ students	31%	11%
A teacher or staff at my school is unsupportive of me because I am LGBTQ.	18%	7%
A teacher or staff at my school is unwilling to stand up for me.	19%	6%
In school, LGBTQ topics are not covered at all in classes.	65%	35%

* Results drawn from grant 1R01MD012252 (PI: Goldbach)

Religion*

	Lifetime	30 days
My family is part of a religion that has homophobic beliefs.	72%	55%
I would not be accepted as an LGBTQ person in my family's religion.	66%	45%
I believe it is wrong for me to be LGBTQ because of my religion.	12%	10%
A religious leader has encouraged me to reconsider my sexual orientation.	23%	8%
A religious leader tried to change my sexual orientation.	16%	5%

* Results drawn from grant 1R01MD012252 (PI: Goldbach)

Gender Dysphoria

"It's just a phase"
"Attention whore"
"Are you a boy or a girl?"



"Young lady"
"She's"
"She"
"Her"
"Miss"



"She's just doing it for attention"

"Women"

"Why do you try to be so different?"

"Your not a boy"

"What are you?"

"Why is your voice so high?"

"Can't you be..."





Interventions to Support the Prevention of Substance Use

Big Picture: Being an Ally

A person who works toward the inclusion, safety, and respect of folks who identify differently than they do.

It acknowledges difference of sexual/gender identity, in addition to intersections of other identities like race, class, ability, religion, citizenship status, and more.



Being an ally to any community requires more than simply saying “I am an ally”.

Ally is an **action**, not an idea

- Training
- Visual Cues in Offices
- Pronouns



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Intervening Variables

Being LGBTQ+ is not what places LGBTQ+ people at higher risk. These risk factors should be the focus for intervention

- Identity Management
- Negative Expectancies
- Negative Disclosure Experiences
- Family Rejection
- Internalized Homonegativity
- Homonegative communication
- Homonegative climate
- Social Marginalization
- Intersectionality
- Religion



LGBTQ+ Affirming Interventions

Individual & Small Group

- Proud & Empowered (Goldbach, et al, 2021)
- AFFIRM & AFFIRM Caregiver (Craig, et al, 2016)
- Family Acceptance Project (Ryan et al, 2010)

Environmental

- Policies to Protect
- Professional Development
- Access to Information
- Presence of Student-led clubs
- Make Space! (Goldbach, et al, 2021)

Remember

Youth want to:

- » Be able to do something well
- » Have something to contribute
- » Be part of a community
- » Have control over one's future
- » Have a sense of pride in identity

LGBT youth, like all youth, need support, guidance, and opportunities.



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National Resources

Family Equality Council - www.familyequality.org

All Children Matter: How Legal and Social Inequalities Hurt LGBT Families - <http://action.familyequality.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AllChildren>

VICE News Special on Transgender Kids and Families: https://video.vice.com/en_us/video/inside-the-lives-of-transgender-children/5a564a36177dd4404f7f2661

PFLAG Transgender Network: <http://community.pflag.org> and <http://community.pflag.org/transgender>

GLAAD: <https://www.glaad.org/resourcelist>

Lambda Legal: <http://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/trans-parents/transgender/transgenderaud1>

GLSEN 2009 National School Climate Report: <https://www.glsen.org/article/2015-national-school-climate-survey>

The Family Acceptance Project - <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu>

Proud & Empowered / Make Space: <http://www.proudandempowered.com>

AFFIRM: <https://www.projectyouthaffirm.org>



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