Community Support for LGBTQIA+ Youth

LGBTQIA+ youth are some of our most vulnerable individuals who are at increased risk for health and mental health concerns, bullying, and suicide. One of the best ways to help youth overcome these challenges is to ensure they are welcomed and supported by their families, schools, and communities. Yet, at a time when these supports are most needed, we are seeing decreased access to critically needed services and social supports. LGBTQIA+ youth rights are under attack (e.g., health and mental health care access, banning books, sports, and access to bathrooms for transgender youth).

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

LGBTQIA+ youth in our community are losing the opportunity to engage in needed conversations about gender identity, sexuality, and even mental health. Fortunately, we know that LGBTQIA+ youth who live in a community where they feel accepted reported significantly lower rates of attempting suicide than those who do not. It is critical that we come together to support the approximately 2,000,000 LGBTQIA+ youth between 13-17 in the US and in our communities. This is a social justice and access to services issue and communities can support our LGBTQIA+ youth by ensuring:

- Space for LGBTQIA+ youth to be heard, speak out, and seek support
- Access to services is available to all youth

IMPACT

Consider the risks for unsupported LGBTQIA+ youth:

- 45% seriously considered suicide
- 60% were unable to access wanted mental health care
- 73% reported anxiety

- 68% reported depression
- More likely to be sex-trafficked or expierence homelessness
- Transgender youth are 3x more likely to be threatened with a weapon at school.

TAKE ACTION

You can support LGBTQIA+ youth by:

- Using inclusive language in policies and practices
- Selecting representative artwork, books, and materials
- Including LGBTQIA+ youth in relevant conversations
- Encouraging LGBTQIA+ youth engagement in events and activities

FOR MORE INFORMATION & RESOURCES

School Social Work Association of America

Scan the QR code to find additional resources