



**This is a Public Health
Issue**

What Do We Know?

- There are estimated to be 2.7 million school age GLBT youth in the US
- GLBTQ Youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to:
 - Experience depression
 - Attempt suicide
 - Be harassed at school and in the community
 - Experience verbal and physical violence
 - Abuse substances
 - Drop out of school
 - Become homeless

Getting the Lingo

- Gay- Homosexual men who partner with men (also an overarching term)
- Lesbian-Homosexual women who partner with women
- Bisexual-Individuals who partner with both genders
- Transgender-Gender identity different than birth assigned gender
- Questioning-Not yet certain

Coming Out

What Does it Mean?

- Revealing that a person is GLBT to others
- The average age that youth come out is now 16
- Is incredibly difficult and a huge personal risk
- Can happen in stages
- Personal timing is essential

What does it Mean for the Person?

- Can create fear
- The danger in “outing”
 - Over 30% of GLBT youth reported suffering physical violence at by a family member after coming out
- Creating support system—“family”
- Helps many to feel a sense of pride and understanding of who they are

Awareness

Where do we get our information about GLBTQ youth?

Education

- 31% percent of LGBTQ youth reported skipping school each month because of fear for their own safety (4.5xs more than peers)
- 28% of LGBTQ youth dropped out of school due to peer harassment (3xs the national average)
- 97% of all students report hearing anti-gay remarks in school
- 18.8% have heard anti-gay remarks from faculty
- 82.9% reported that staff never or only sometimes intervened
- In one study of GLBTQ adolescents, 1/2 said homosexuality was discussed in their classes. 50% of the females and 37% of the males said it was handled negatively

Violence/Bullying

- 84% had been verbally harassed at school
- 65.3% had been sexually harassed
- 55% of transgender youth reported physical attacks
- 100% of GLBTQ youth in New York City group homes reported verbal harassment while at their group home and 70% reported physical violence due to their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Over 39% of all gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth reported being punched, kicked, or injured with a weapon at school because of their sexual orientation
- 77.9% of GLBTQ youth reported sometimes or frequently hearing anti-gay remarks. They reported hearing slurs such as “homo”, “faggot” and “sissy” about 26 times a day or once every 14 minutes.

Substance Abuse

- **Youth who are harassed because of their real or perceived sexual orientation are more likely than non-harassed youth to use crack cocaine, cocaine, anabolic steroids, and inhalants**
- **68% of teen gay males and 83% of teen lesbians use alcohol**
- **46% of teen gay males and 56% of teen lesbians use other drugs**

Homelessness

- Between 20-40% of homeless youth are GLBTQ
- Homelessness increases likelihood of engaging in prostitution and alcohol and drug abuse, violence, suicide, and HIV and other STD's
- 26% of GLBT youth who 'come out' to their families are thrown out of their homes because of conflicts with moral and religious values
- 78% of the GLBTQ youth were removed or ran away from their foster placements as a result of hostility toward their sexual orientation or gender identity

Suicide

- 33% of GLBTQ high school students reported attempting suicide in the previous year, compared to 8% of their heterosexual peers
- GLBTQ youth are 4xs more likely to attempt suicide
- 16% required medical attention as a result of an attempt compared to 3% of heterosexual peers

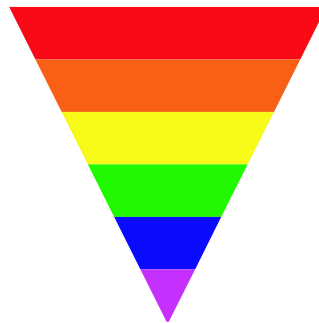
Youth of Color

- Stigma creates even greater risk for substance use, violence, and risky sexual behaviors
- Youth of color often don't identify as 'gay' which may mean they will not seek services or hear messages designed for the White GLBTQ community
- GLBTQ youth of color may not receive their community's support regarding sexual orientation or transgender identity
- GLBTQ Native American youth have increased risk for substance abuse, mental illness, and HIV infection due to racial/ethnic discrimination and to homophobia within native cultures

FACTS

It's NOT:

- **A result of bad parenting**
- **A choice**
- **A mental illness**
- **Because they haven't met the right man or woman**
- **Contagious**





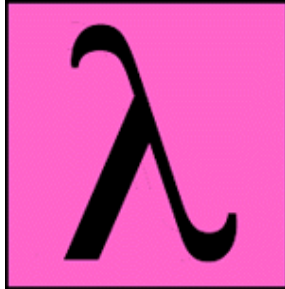
The Pride Flag

- Developed in 1978 for the San Francisco Pride Parade
- Red for life
- Orange for healing
- Yellow for the sun
- Green for nature
- Blue for art/Indigo for harmony
- Violet for spirit

Pink Triangle

This was reclaimed as a reminder of the treatment of gay men during the Holocaust. It is now a symbol of liberation

Lambda



Simply, the Greek letter "L" stands for "liberation." Also represents unity

Other Symbols



Gay Male



Pride Rings for Unity



Lesbian



Bisexual Symbol



Transgender--Represents the balance of the male and the female within the individual



GLBTQ Youth Suicide Prevention Ribbon

What you can do

- Take a stand
- Listen without judgment
- Let them know you care
- Prohibit anti-gay remarks
- Don't assume heterosexuality or gender
- Practice linguistic competence
- Acknowledge when culture and sexual orientation cause conflicts for GLBTQ youth
- Create a safe zone (Hang your flag!)

What You Can Do—The Big Picture

- Advocate for culturally competent services and supports for families
- Provide training in your family orgs and broader organizations
- Include GLBT protection in family organization policies
- Have GLBT resources in your offices and gay friendly magazines
- Help organize a GSA in your local school
- Advocate for anti-bullying legislation for schools to include GLBT youth

THANK YOU!