

**The Intersections of Trauma and Risk  
Factors related to LGBT Youth and Families**

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True Colors, Inc

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TRUE Colors

Sexual Minority Youth and Family Services

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**Our Programs include:**

- **Annual LGBTI and Ally Youth Issues Conference:** We produce the largest and most comprehensive LGBTI and ally conference in the country, bringing thousands of youth and youth serving professionals from across the country together for cutting edge workshops, training, entertainment and activities.  
March 2020
- **Youth Leadership Development** These programs include high school and college Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) summits and forums and other leadership opportunities for youth. In addition, we provide direct advocacy for youth dealing with harassment in school.
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI) Youth Mentoring:** True Colors provides CT's only mentoring program for sexual and gender minority youth with more than 60 youth currently in the program. Mentors of all orientations and genders are needed across the state.
- **Professional Consultation and Training:** True Colors provides values clarification and skill building training for more than 5,000 professionals annually.
- **Foster parent recruitment (especially for teenagers):** We recruit potential foster parents from all over CT specifically to support the needs of teenagers in out-of-home care.
- **The Safe Harbor Project:** This joint True Colors and DCF program focuses on policy and procedures for LGBTI youth in foster care, group homes, shelters and detention.  
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Working Agreements  
&  
Group Expectations

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Singular Stories

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODzwb90b5qE> Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xpvricekxU&t=27s>

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Introductions

Please share with the group:

- 5 words that describe you
- The name you want me to call you
- Your pronouns
- A Goal for today's session

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### Intersectionality

- Identity Impacts:
  - Access to resources
  - Experience within systems
  - Family/Cultural responses

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### Key Terms/Concepts

Internalized homophobia | When an individual starts to internalize and believe the messages they received/heard about their sexuality/Gender ss1

Bias | When are partial to our own beliefs and thoughts, which make hard to see a different thought or belief

Implicit Bias | When we have unconscious judgement and social behavior

Stigma | The negative beliefs or messages about a specific group of individuals, medical conditions, and many other things/people

Judgement | This is something that we all do, it's what we do with that judgement that matters

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Rates occur at same rates of straight couples, but there are a few barriers:

- Misconceptions and judgement about same-sex relationships
- Lack of legal recognition of same sex relationships
- Reported lack of interventions related to law enforcement
- Shortage of available resources (specific to this population)

### Intersections of domestic violence

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## Slide 8

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ss1 shane scott, 5/15/2019

**Sexual Orientation**

**Sexual Orientation** is defined as:

- The gender(s) to which one is romantically and erotically attracted
- Can include a single gender
  - Gay | Straight
- Multiple genders
  - Bisexual | Pansexual | Queer | Fluid
- No genders
  - Non-Binary | Gender-Queer | Asexual

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**When Sex and Identity Differ**

Gender Identity takes precedence over sex

Gender Fluid (non-binary) IS an identity

Best Practice is to provide bathrooms/ Facilities based on one's gender identity

Children can request a name and gender marker change with or without parental consent

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**Dimensions of Gender**

Gender Identity: How you see yourself

Gender Expression: What the world sees

Sex: Assigned at birth



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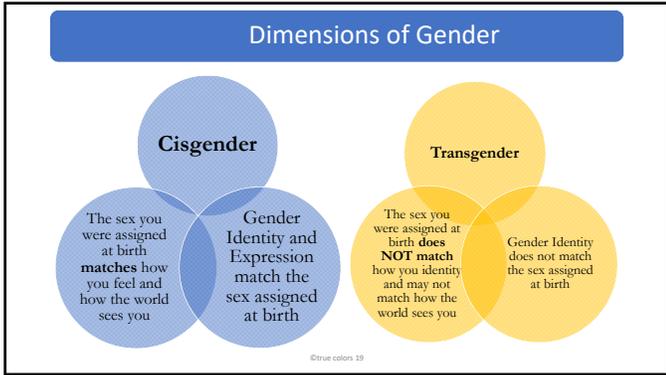
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**Self-Determined relationships**

Due to same relationships/partnerships being self-determined and less structured than hetero-normative relationships, there are many types of relationships

Non-monogamy  
Polyamory  
Open-non-committed

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**Relationship orientation**

One's relationship orientation may be fluid and two people in a same-sex relationship may self-identify in terms of their gender and/or sexual orientation

Remember: Sexuality is fluid and may change over time

Mary is in a relationship with Ann, however, Ann has historically been in a relationship with a man, and has not had a relationship or sexual experiences with someone of the same gender until she met Ann.

Darrell identifies as Bi-sexual but is currently in a monogamous, committed relationship with Eric, who self-identifies as Gay and has only had same-sex partners

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Relationship Trauma

Trauma occurs within relationships often, and is when an intimate connection has been lost, and an expected support system is instead dangerous.

Other factors include lack of trust and difficulty with feeling safe (emotionally, physically, mentally)

When traumatic experiences occur early in childhood, including domestic violence and/or abuse, trust and safety of the child is undermined and disrupts the attachment process for the child.

For instance when a child is sexually abused by a trusted family member, the most basic aspects of trust and safety within a primary relationship are undermined.

For some people, after childhood abuse or neglect, they may express the struggle to develop basic trust and create safe attachments.

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Relationship Trauma

**Trauma Bonding**

Bonding is a biological and emotional process that makes people more important to each other over time.

Bonding grows with shared experiences and circumstance

Bad times bond people as strongly as good times, perhaps more so.

Bonding is in part why it is harder to leave an abusive relationship the longer it continues.

Bonding makes setting boundaries very challenging

It is not always useful to judge the correctness of the decision by how hard it is, because it will always be hard.

<https://www.abuseprevention.org/trauma-bonding>

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Concerns related to LGBT Families [Cont.]

In same-sex relationships, it is common for extended family to acknowledge intimate relationships differently from heterosexual relationships

Extended family may see parenting as a necessary step in validating a relationship for same-sex couples or they may view parenting with similar biased and discriminatory views, even denying one parent's relationship to the children.

Explaining relationship status and family make-up to school professionals, medical professionals, children's friends/parents, and family members can be uniquely complex for same-sex parents.

<https://www.gamergatepress.com/Gamergate/2011/06/14/9850/domestic-violence-in-the-lgbt-community/>

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Gay or lesbian batterers will threaten "outing" their victims to work colleagues, family, and friends.

Lesbian and gay victims are more reluctant to report abuse to legal authorities for fear of their identity/orientation being revealed.

Gay and lesbian victims are also reluctant to seek help due to not wanting to shed light on same-sex domestic violence.

Gay and lesbian victims are more likely to fight back than heterosexual women.

In some states, adoption laws do not allow same-sex parents to adopt each other's children.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2011/06/14/9850/domestic-violence-in-the-lgbt-community/>

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## What differs

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**Children and Trauma**

Children are often the hidden or silent victims of IPV, and some are directly injured, while others are frightened witnesses.

Children with IPV exposure are more likely to have also experienced emotional abuse, neglect, physical abuse, and community violence.

Although the majority of victims of IPV are women, it is important to acknowledge that men can be victims too.

IPV disproportionately affects members of the LGBTQ community, who experience barriers to assistance from community resources such as shelters or police.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2011/06/14/9850/domestic-violence-in-the-lgbt-community/>

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**HRC Youth Survey (2012)**

<i>Non LGBTQ Students</i>	LGBTQ Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classes, exams, grades</li> <li>• College, career</li> <li>• Finances related to college/job</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-accepting families</li> <li>• School bullying</li> <li>• Fear of being out or open</li> </ul>

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**HRC Youth Survey (2012)**

2/3 OTHER

1/3 TRANSGENDER

- Nearly 10% of the survey sample did not choose "male" or "female" for their gender. Of those:

ANDROGYNOUS  
 GENDER QUEER  
 NONBINARY FEMALES  
 NEITHER  
 GENDER FLUID  
 GENDERLESS  
 NEUTRAL OR AGENDER  
 TRANSGENDER  
 NONGENDER  
 BOTH GENDERS  
 HUMAN  
 TWO SPIRIT  
 BIGENDER  
 FEMALE BOY  
 TOMBOY

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Potential of exposure to bullying, discrimination, and exclusion

Children are often bullied for being different

Exclusion of activities

The frustration of always having to explain their family

**Children and Trauma**

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In a 2010 a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Centers (CDC) study, reporting on domestic violence in the United States

26% of gay men said that they experienced physical violence, stalking, or rape

29% of heterosexual men reported similar violence in the same study

The CDC also stated that 40% of lesbian women reported physical violence by their partners

44% reported experiencing physical violence, stalking, or rape by their partners

In contrast, 35% of heterosexual women reported physical violence, stalking, or rape by their partners in the same study

In addition, in research done on psychological aggression of lesbian relationships, researchers found that internalized homophobia, and social constraints in talking with friends about sexual identity issues showed correlation with IPV

Walters, Mikal L., Jiers Chen, and Matthew J. Becking. "The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS)." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 28.12 (2013): 2603-2616. Web. 15 Oct. 2014.

**Statistics**

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Higher rates of suicide

Disproportionate rates of Substance Use/Abuse

Greater risk for Mental Health

Maladaptive use of secrecy & concealment strategies

Harassment & Assault

Employment, medical, and government discrimination

Homelessness/Lack of resources for housing

Sex Work and/or Survival Sex

[General] Risk Factors

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Citations

- Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/reports/2012/03/09/11228/why-the-gay-and-transgender-population-experiences-higher-rates-of-substance-use/>. "Why the Gay and Transgender Population Experiences Higher Rates of Substance Use." March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Hunt, Jerome
- <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2011/06/14/9850/domestic-violence-in-the-lgbt-community/>. "Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community." Fact Sheet, June 2012
- Walters, Mikel L., Jieru Chen, and Matthew J. Breiding. "The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 findings on victimization by sexual orientation." Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 648, no. 73 (2013): 6
- Samsel, Michael. [https://www.abuseandrelationships.org/Content/Survivors/trauma\\_bonding.html](https://www.abuseandrelationships.org/Content/Survivors/trauma_bonding.html). 2008
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