

Building LGBTQ Awareness and Acceptance: A Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Family Sensitivity Training



Helen McDonald

Fairfax County Department of Family
Services

Beth Spivack, MSW

Formed Families Forward

Part 1: February 22, 2021

Part 2: March 1, 2021

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Formed Families Forward - who we are...

- A family-led resource center in Northern Virginia supporting foster, adoptive and kinship families who are raising children, youth & young adults with special needs, and professionals who work with our families.
- We offer free training, consultations to families, events, resources, and systems navigation. Also - peer support groups; webinars; virtual trainings; child care program; videos and other resources.
- Participant in four No Va Trauma Informed Community Networks (TICNs)
- Family partner to Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS; a VDOE project)

www.FormedFamiliesForward.org

Helen.McDonald@fairfaxcounty.gov

Beth.Spivack@formedfamiliesforward.org

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Tonight's Plan

- Define the meaning of LGBTQ for the purposes of tonight's discussion
- Explain why families formed through adoption, kinship and foster care need to be aware of the challenges LGBTQ youth encounter
- Part 1 of Safe Zone Training
- Q&A

Poll

Which categories best describe you:

- Adoptive parent
- Kinship caregiver
- Foster parent
- Birth parent
- Professional
- Other

National Survey of LGBTQ Youth Mental Health

- 40% seriously considered attempting suicide in the last month
- 68% reported symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder
- 55% reported symptoms of major depressive
- 48% reported engaging in self-harm
- 29% experienced homelessness, been kicked out, or run away
- 46% report they wanted to see a mental health professional but were unable to do so in the past 12 months
- 1 in 3 reported they had been physically harmed or threatened in their lifetime due to their LGBTQ identity

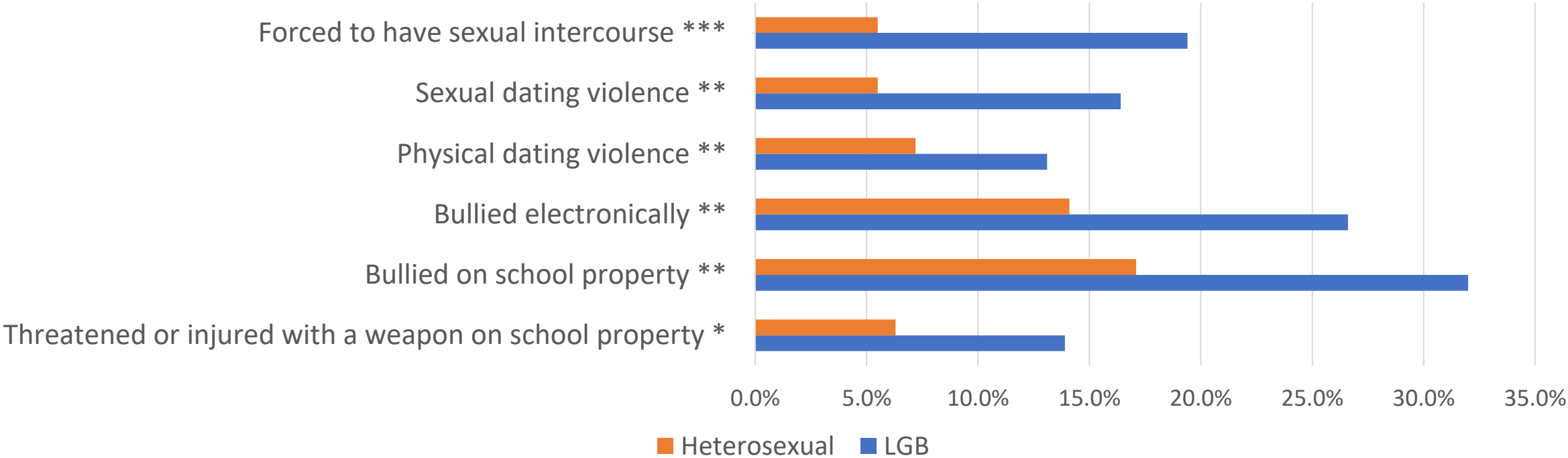
Source: The Trevor Project, 2020

Fairfax County Youth Survey Behavioral Health Data

- LGBTQ youth have twice the rate of depressive symptoms, more than 3 times the rate of suicidal ideation, and 3 times the rate of suicide attempts
- LGBTQ youth are more than 20% likely to be bullied
- LGBTQ youth are more likely to be victims of dating aggression
- LGBTQ youth feel less safe than others in their schools and in their communities

Source: Fairfax County, 2020

LGB Students Disproportionately Exposed to Violence



* Past 30 days
 ** Past 12 months
 *** Lifetime

• Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019

Educational Impact Exposure to Violence has on LGBTQ Youth

- According to a 2015 survey, LGB students were 140% more likely to not go to school in a 30 days period because of safety concerns compared to heterosexual students
- Absenteeism has been linked to low graduation rates, which can have lifelong consequences
- Additionally, those who do graduate have lower postsecondary education aspirations
- LGBTQ youth are at a higher risk of being put in school-to-prison pipeline

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth.gov and GLSEN

LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care

- 30.4% of youth in foster care identify as LGBTQ compared to 11.2% of youth not in foster care
- 5% of youth in foster care identify as transgender compared to 1.17% of youth not in foster care
- More disrupted placements and trauma than non-LGBTQ peers
- In New York, a study found 78% of LGBTQ youth were removed or ran away from foster homes due to the hostilities they faced
- 56% of the youth in the NY study chose to live on the street rather than in a foster care placement because they felt safer

Sources: Children's Rights and Human Rights Campaign

LGBTQ Youth in Kinship and Adoption

- Data for these groups are not comprehensive
- However, per the previous slide, 11.2% of youth in the general population identify as LGBTQ
- 1.17% of youth in the general population identify specifically as transgender
- The means that kinship and adoptive families will raise LGBTQ children

Sources: Children's Rights

How to Improve Outcomes for LGBTQ Youth?

- LGBTQ adolescents who are supported by their families grow up to be happier and healthier adults
- Be an ally, a straight person who supports and advocates for LGBTQ people - show support for LGBTQ friends, co-workers, classmates, neighbors, co-congregants, family members in a variety of ways
- Schools can implement evidence-based policies, procedures, and activities designed to promote a healthy environment for LGBTQ youth. Research shows support groups, such as gay-straight alliance (GSA) makes schools safer and boost academic performance, and mental health outcomes among LGBTQ students

Resources

- <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/lgbtq-identity>
-
- <https://maec.org/welcoming-schools-creating-lgbtq-awareness-for-educators>
- <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Four-Stages-of-Coming-Out.aspx>
- <https://smile.amazon.com/Safe-Not-Enough-Development-Education/dp/1612509428>
- <https://smile.amazon.com/Educators-Guide-LGBT-Inclusion-Administrators/dp/1787751082>

Resources, Continued

- <https://pflag.org/chapter/pflag-washington-dc-metropolitan-area>
- <https://www.thetrevorproject.org>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>
- <https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/family-videos>
- <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/lgbtq-youth/families>
- <https://www.glsen.org/professional-development>

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