

## A CALL TO ACTION IN RESPONSE TO THE CDC'S 2019 YRBS DATA

We, the current members and supporters of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Project THRIVE campaign, representing over 5 million youth-serving professionals across the country, are deeply troubled by the public health disparities among LGBTQ youth as reported in HRC Foundation's analysis of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) biannual Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS) released in August of 2020. Nearly 2.5 million youth identify as LGBTQ in the United States with tens of thousands more saying they are questioning their identity. We continue to see stark differences in the experiences of LGBTQ youth compared to their non-LGBTQ peers, including an increased risk of violence, substance use and suicidality.

The following are several issues that call for urgent action:

- + **31% of LGBTQ youth, 43% of transgender youth** and **40% of questioning youth** have been bullied at school, compared to 16% of their non-LGBTQ peers
- + **24% of LGBTQ youth, 35% of transgender youth** and **41% of questioning youth** have skipped school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to school, compared to 8% of non-LGBTQ youth.
- + **54% of LGBTQ youth, 61% of transgender youth** and **61% of questioning youth** are battling symptoms of depression, compared to 29% of non-LGBTQ youth.
- + **35% of LGBTQ youth, 45% of transgender youth** and **40% of questioning youth** have seriously considered attempting suicide, compared to 13% of non-LGBTQ youth.

The compounding effects of anti-LGBTQ stigma — family rejection, bullying and harassment at school and a lack of affirming systems of care — are taking a toll on the well-being of these young people. These are our children, our students, our neighbors and our patients, and we are failing them. It is a problem we must solve immediately, and we must solve it together.

We call upon leaders in education, health and human services and parents and guardians to engage with us in promoting safety, health and well-being for LGBTQ youth, with an emphasis on youth of color and transgender and non-binary youth who are carrying the greatest burdens.

We implore all youth-serving-professionals to increase your knowledge and understanding and improve your skills to better meet the needs of LGBTQ youth. We have developed an [executive summary of the data](#) as they relate to LGBTQ youth and a [checklist](#) providing a framework of the key areas for practice improvement that can serve as a roadmap for the work ahead. We encourage you to learn with and from your peers, to stretch out of your comfort zone and to make a long term commitment to LGBTQ inclusive and affirming practices. By doing so, you will help to create the conditions in which LGBTQ youth can thrive at home, at school and in their communities. **The time is now.**

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Thank you to our partner organizations

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