



It's Up to Us to Create a Healthy and Supportive San Diego

Shine a Light On: Understanding Mental Health Challenges for LGBTQ+ Individuals

Our LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus other identities) friends and family face unique challenges that may affect their mental health. In San Diego and around the world, belonging to the LGBTQ+ community can be a source of pride and strength. However, it can also come with experiences of discrimination, harassment, violence, and rejection. As friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers, it's important that we understand how these experiences impact the LGBTQ+ community—and our loved ones' mental health. If we understand the challenges they face and learn ways to support them, we'll be able to help our loved ones feel safe, valued, and well.

The State of Mental Health for LGBTQ+ Youth

- In 2021, LGBTQ+ youth were substantially more likely to have experienced **all forms of violence** and had **worse mental health** outcomes than their heterosexual peers.
- Discriminatory legislation is **worsening mental health issues** for LGBTQ+ youth.
- **60%** of LGBTQ+ youth who wanted mental health care in the past year **were not able to get it.**
- LGBTQ+ youth are **4x more likely** to attempt suicide than their peers.

Resources exist in San Diego County and nationally to help support LGBTQ+ individuals' mental health and substance use needs. However, accessing these resources can sometimes be challenging. Many people say the fear of discrimination or harassment keeps them from accessing care. Younger adults and teens also list concerns about getting parent or caregiver consent and face a lack of transportation options.

The good news is there are many resources available to help our LGBTQ+ friends and family (see next page). Plus, we can always help support our loved ones' mental health by providing safe spaces where they can be their true selves.

Read Up: How You Can Support Your LGBTQ+ Loved Ones

As the people closest to them, we can help support the wellness of our LGBTQ+ loved ones. That can have a huge impact: LGBTQ+ youth who felt supported from family and friends reported significantly lower rates of attempting suicide.

Here are some ways to support the LGBTQ+ people in your life:

- Check in regularly, especially when there are emotionally heavy events in the news.
- Use the pronouns and names they prefer.
- If someone is using incorrect pronouns or being disrespectful, speak up.
- Use inclusive language.



Quick Guide to Inclusive Language

Avoid saying ...

- You guys
- Ladies and gentlemen, guys and gals
- Maternal or paternal leave
- Husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend
- Ms., Mrs., Mr.
- Chairman, mailman, etc.
- Sexual preference
- “What are your preferred pronouns?”

Say this instead ...

- Everyone, y’all, folks
- Colleagues, team, people
- Parental leave
- Partner, spouse
- First names or Mx. (pronounced “Mix”)
- Chairperson, mail carrier, etc.
- Sexual orientation
- “What pronouns do you use?”

LGBTQ+ Resources

These national resources can help LGBTQ+ people find the assistance they need. For more resources and local support specifically tailored to San Diego County, visit [UP2sd.org](https://up2sd.org). Resources on the website provide services for youth, transgender individuals, and BIPOC individuals.

- **National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**
Call 988
Free, confidential support for people in crisis, available 24/7
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline**
(800) 662-HELP (4357)
24/7, 365-days-a-year treatment referral and information for mental health and substance use
- **San Diego Access and Crisis Line**
(888) 724-7240
24/7 support for mental health and substance use
- **The Trevor Project**
(866) 488-7386 or text **START** to 678-678
Confidential, 24/7 support for LGBTQ+ youth in crisis
- **Trans Lifeline**
(877) 565-8860
A confidential 24/7 hotline staffed by transgender people for transgender people

Sources

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