



# Reach for the Rainbow: Meeting the Needs of Rural and Isolated LGBTQ Friends and Neighbors

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# Meet the Presenter



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# Key Terms & Concepts

# Terminology 101

- **LGBTQ**= Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer
- Q= Questioning when working with children and youth
- **Everyone** has a sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression -- **SOGIE**
- **Sexual orientation**: romantic/sexual attraction
- **Gender Identity**: internal sense of being male, female, both or neither
  - cisgender, transgender, non-binary
- **Gender Expression**: how we express our gender through clothing, accessories, hairstyles, body language, etc.



**GENDER  
SNOWPERSON**

**Gender  
Identity**

**Sexual Orientation**

**Sex Assigned at  
Birth**

# Understanding Non-Binary Gender Identities

*“Like so many genderqueer people, my transition has not been from one gender identity to “the other.” Rather, it has been from the well-understood categories of man and woman to **an identity outside traditional notions of gender**. Over the years, I’ve learned to embrace both my love of lipstick and my facial hair, my affinity for sequins and my broad shoulders. I’ve learned to love all parts of myself equally, **to hold my femininity and my masculinity in tandem** — understanding them not in opposition, but as compliments to one another.”*

– Jacob Tobia, Genderqueer Activist



# Remember!

- **Everyone** has a sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
- Gender and sex are NOT the same thing.
- Sexual orientation and gender identity are NOT the same thing.
- Avoid using outdated or derogatory language, including:
  - Transsexual
  - Transgendered
  - Homosexual
- Language related to SOGIE is diverse and evolving
- Use the language identified by the individual!
  - If you don't know, it is okay to ask
  - Do your best to keep up, but most importantly, keep open



# Who is LGBTQ

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# We are everywhere!

- **Pew Research Center:** 10 million/4% of population identify as LGBT (adults)
- **CDC YRBS Data of High Schools Students:** 8% ID as LGBTQ and 2% ID as Trans/Non-Binary
- **J. Walter Thompson Innovation Group:** only 48% of Gen Z's (8 to 21) identify as exclusively heterosexual (compared to 65% of millennials aged 21-34).

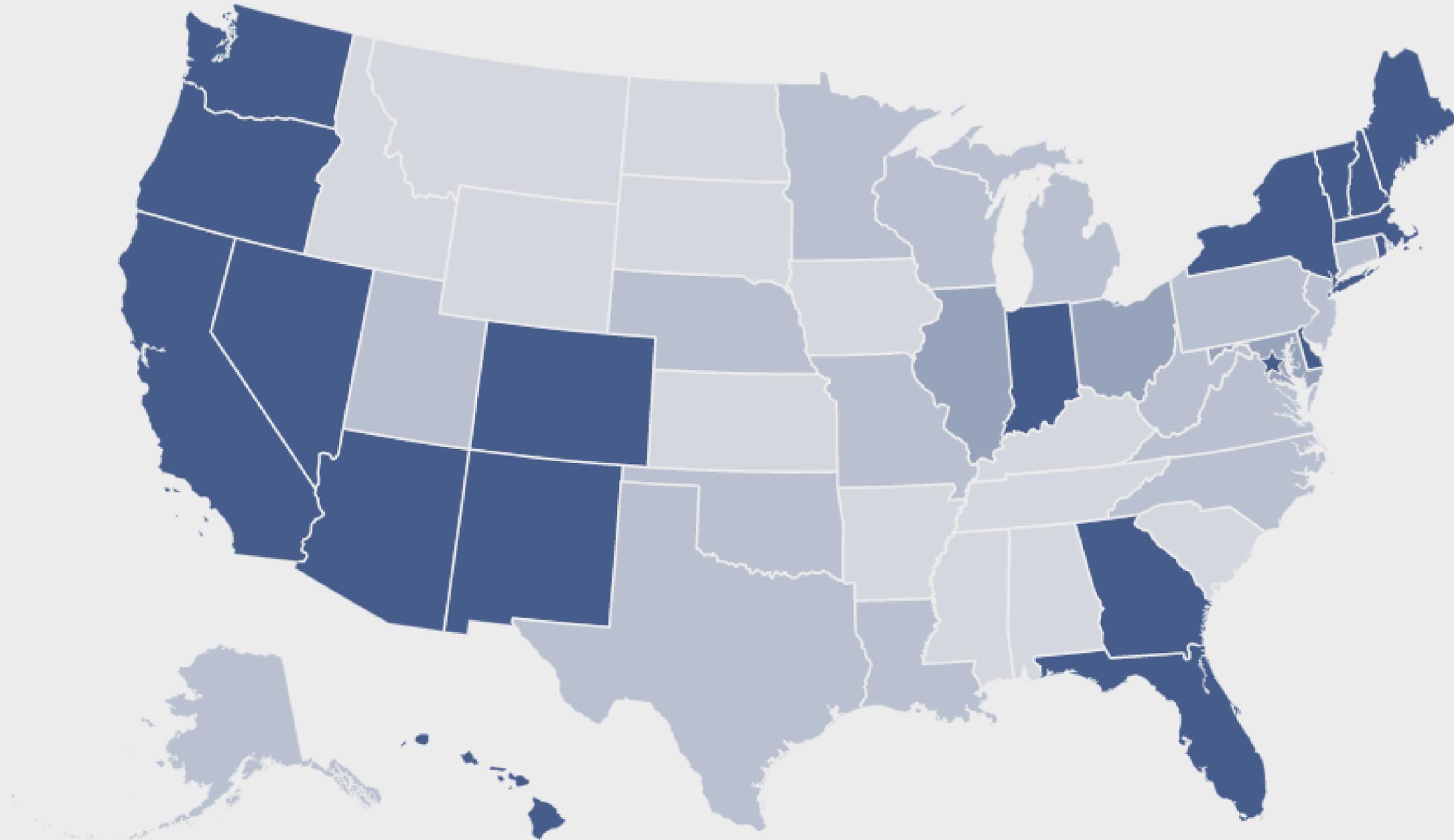


# Williams Institute Data &

LGBT Proportion of Population: United States

# Demographics

- Below 3.7%
- 3.7% - 4.1%
- 4.1% - 4.5%
- 4.5% and above

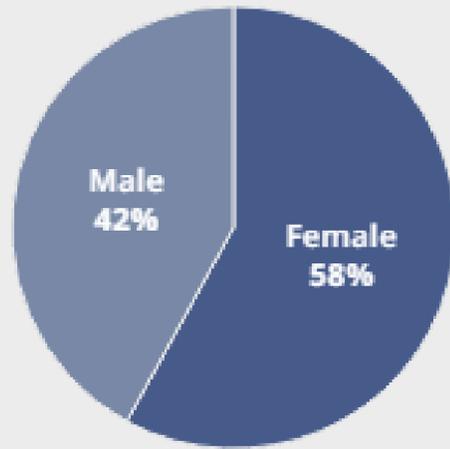


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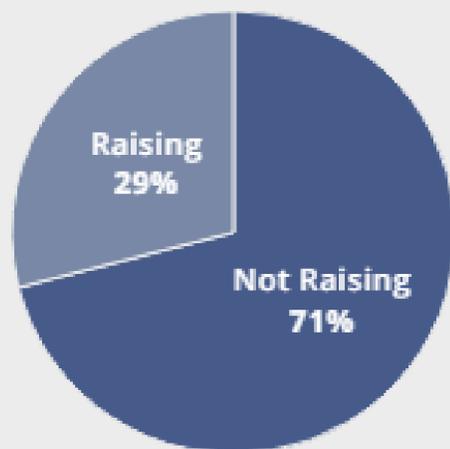
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# Williams Institute Data & Demographics

Characteristics of LGBT People: United States



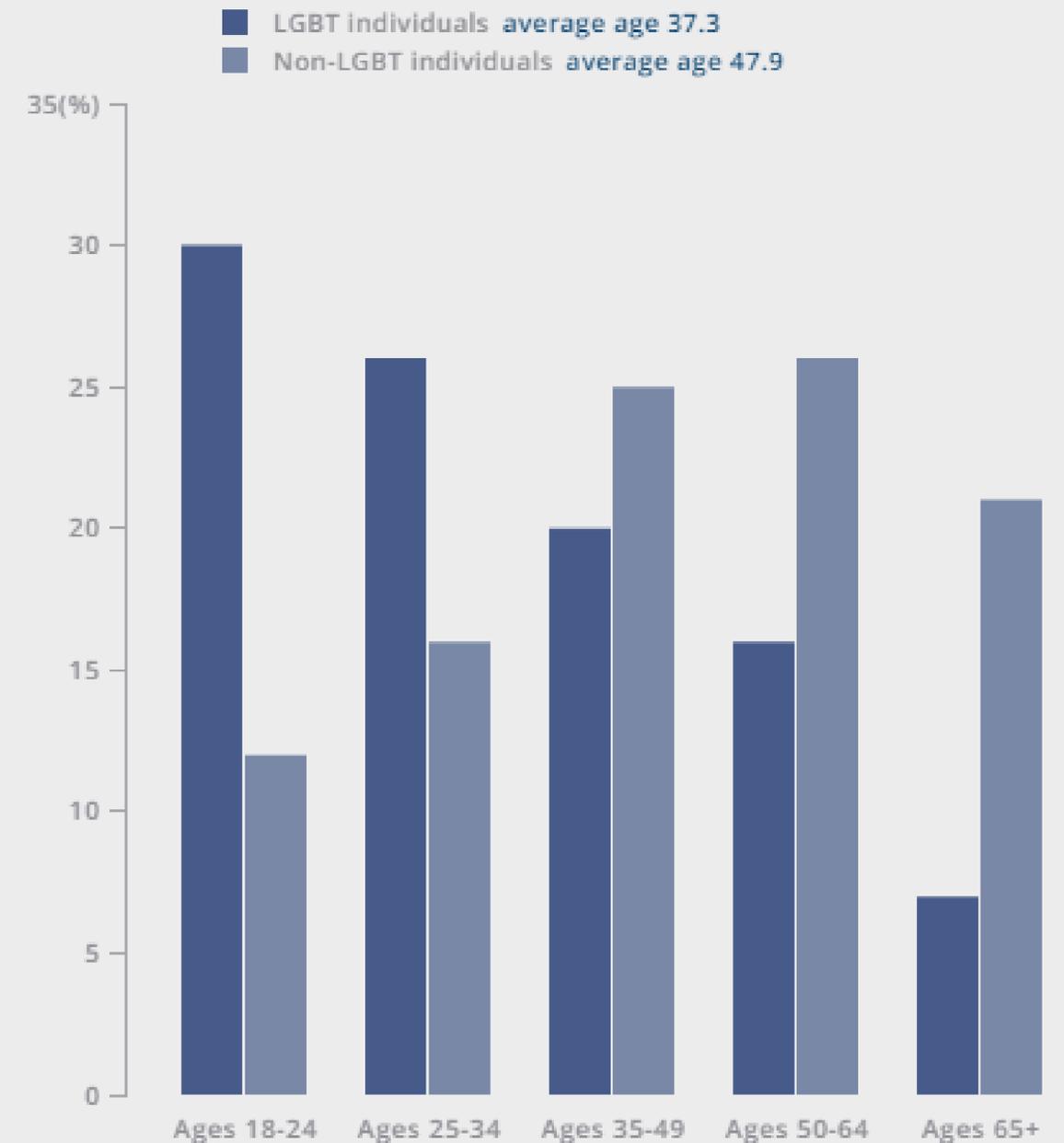
GENDER



% RAISING CHILDREN



RACE/ETHNICITY



AGE DISTRIBUTION



HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION



# Williams Institute Data & Demographics

## Socioeconomic Indicators: United States

Who Are Unemployed



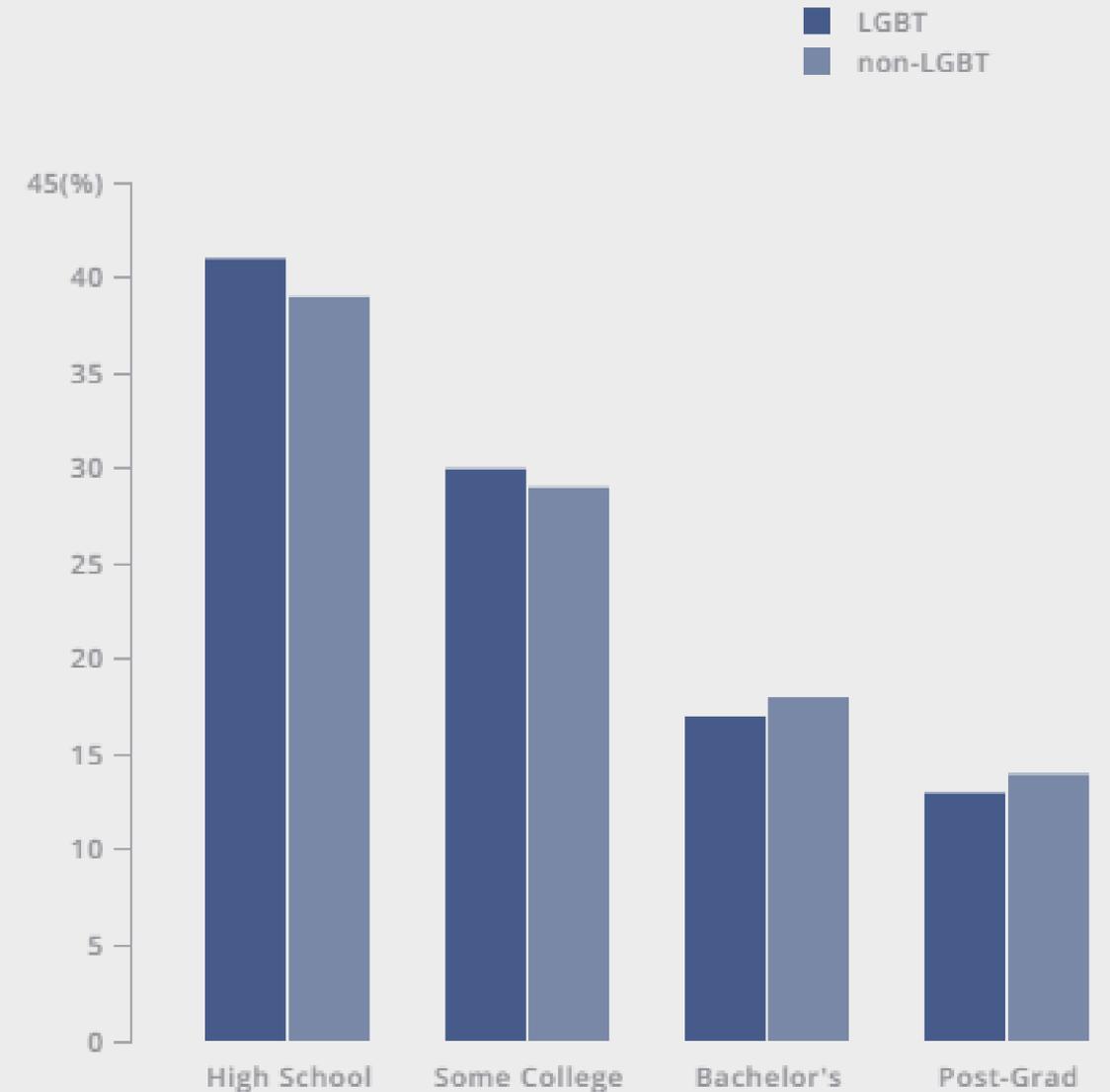
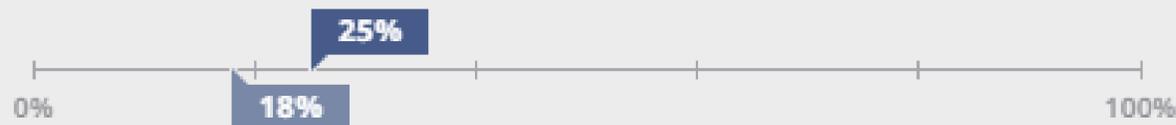
Who Are Uninsured



Who Are Food Insecure



Who Have Income <\$24K



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT





# Mental Health and the LGBTQ Community

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# History Lesson

- Homosexuality was classified as a psychiatric illness in the DSM until 1974
  - Older LGBTQ people carry the stigma and shame rooted in this history of being perceived as “mentally ill” based solely on their sexual orientation
- It was not unusual for LGBTQ people to stay closeted for their entire lives, or well into adulthood, in order to avoid loss of family, employment, and community standing
- 700,000 LGBTQ adults (18 to 59) have been exposed to the harmful practice of “conversion therapy”

# Minority Stress Model

Experiences of discrimination, rejection, threats, and violence are compounded and can lead to negative mental health outcomes.

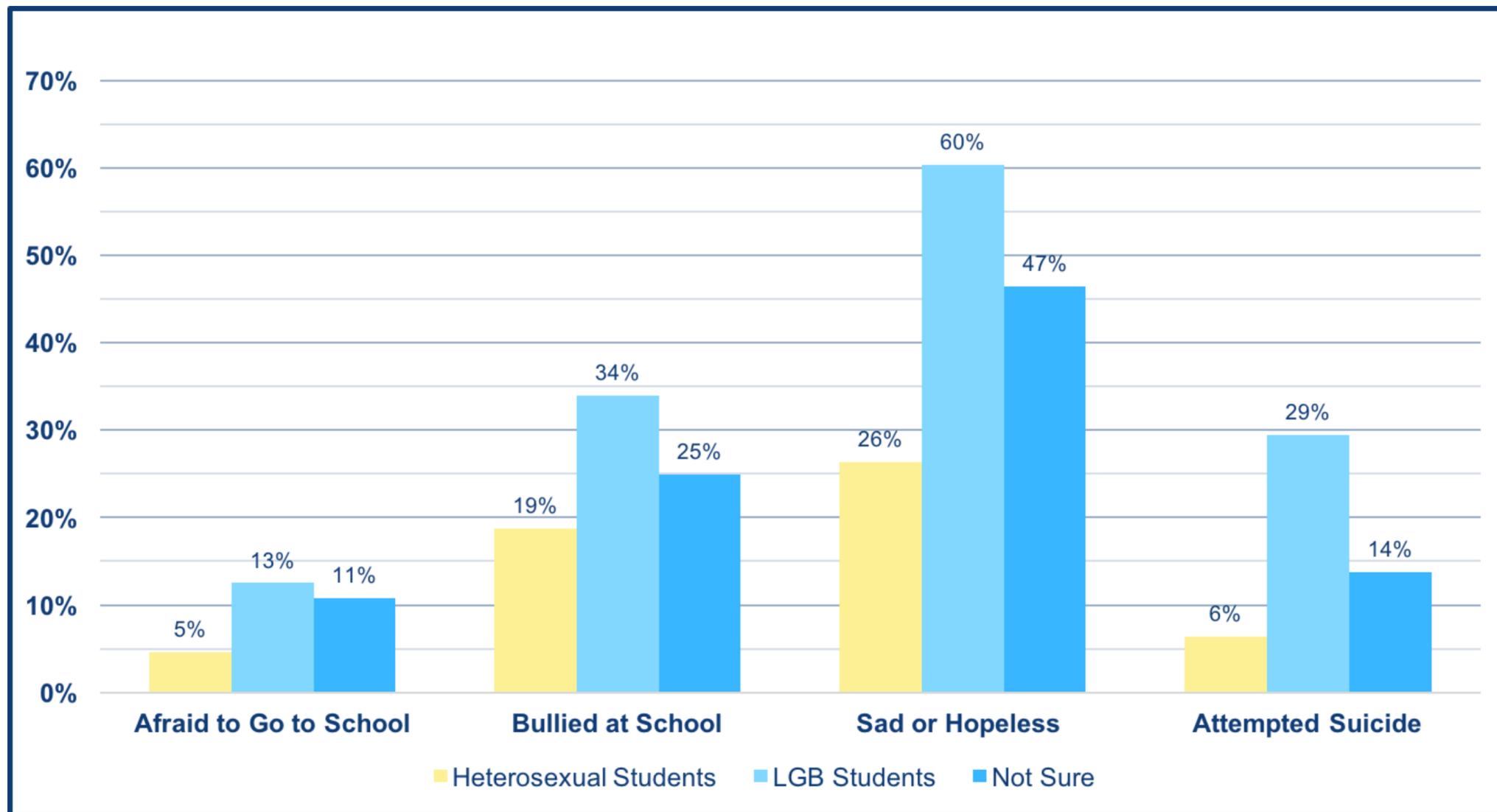
LGBTQ people of color, especially Black and Brown people, experience a double-burden of minority stress and are at greatest risk of compromised mental health.



# Data Tell the Story

- 36% of LGBTQ adults said they had periods of poor mental health sustaining from 1 to 4 weeks
  - 30% of Black or African American Adults LGBTQ adults
  - 26% of Native American/Alaskan Native LGBTQ adults
  - 31% of Asian LGBTQ adults
  - 24% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander LGBTQ adults
  - 38% of Latinx LGBTQ adults
- 56% of LGBTQ youth said they felt sad or hopeless for extended periods of time that stopped them from doing some of their usual activities
- 22% of LGBTQ youth had attempted suicide over the last year

# BULLYING & STUDENT WELL-BEING



Source: Centers for Disease Control analysis of Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2016)

# TO BE OR NOT TO BE...OUT

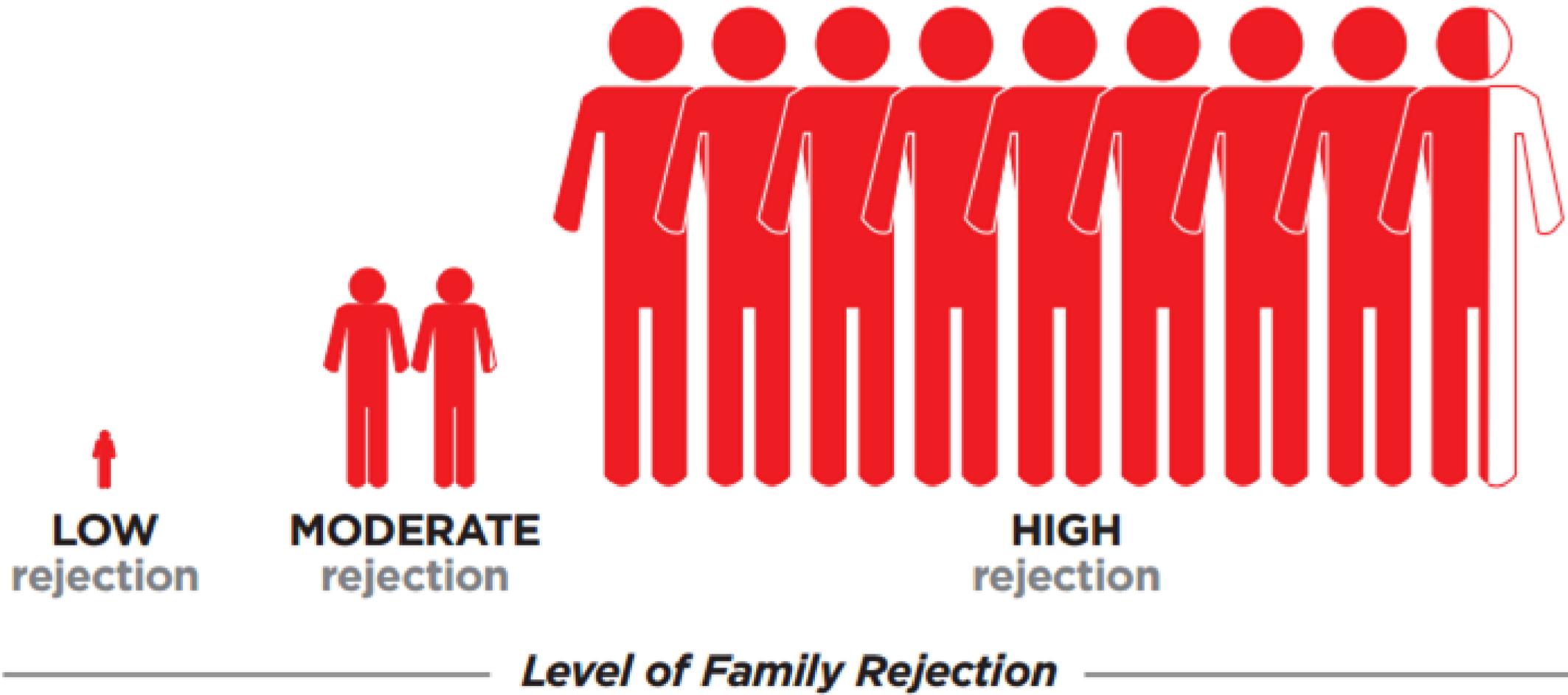
- 67% of LGBTQ youth are not out to any health care providers
- 60% of all trans youth are not out to any health care providers
- 30% of LGBTQ youth are not out to their parents or close family members
- 40% of trans youth are not out to their parents or close family members
- 35% of LGBTQ youth are not out to any adults at school
- 45% of trans youth are not out to any adults at school



# IMPACT OF FAMILY REJECTION

## Lifetime Suicide Attempts for Highly Rejected LGBT Young People

*(One or more times)*



Ryan, Family Acceptance Project, 2009

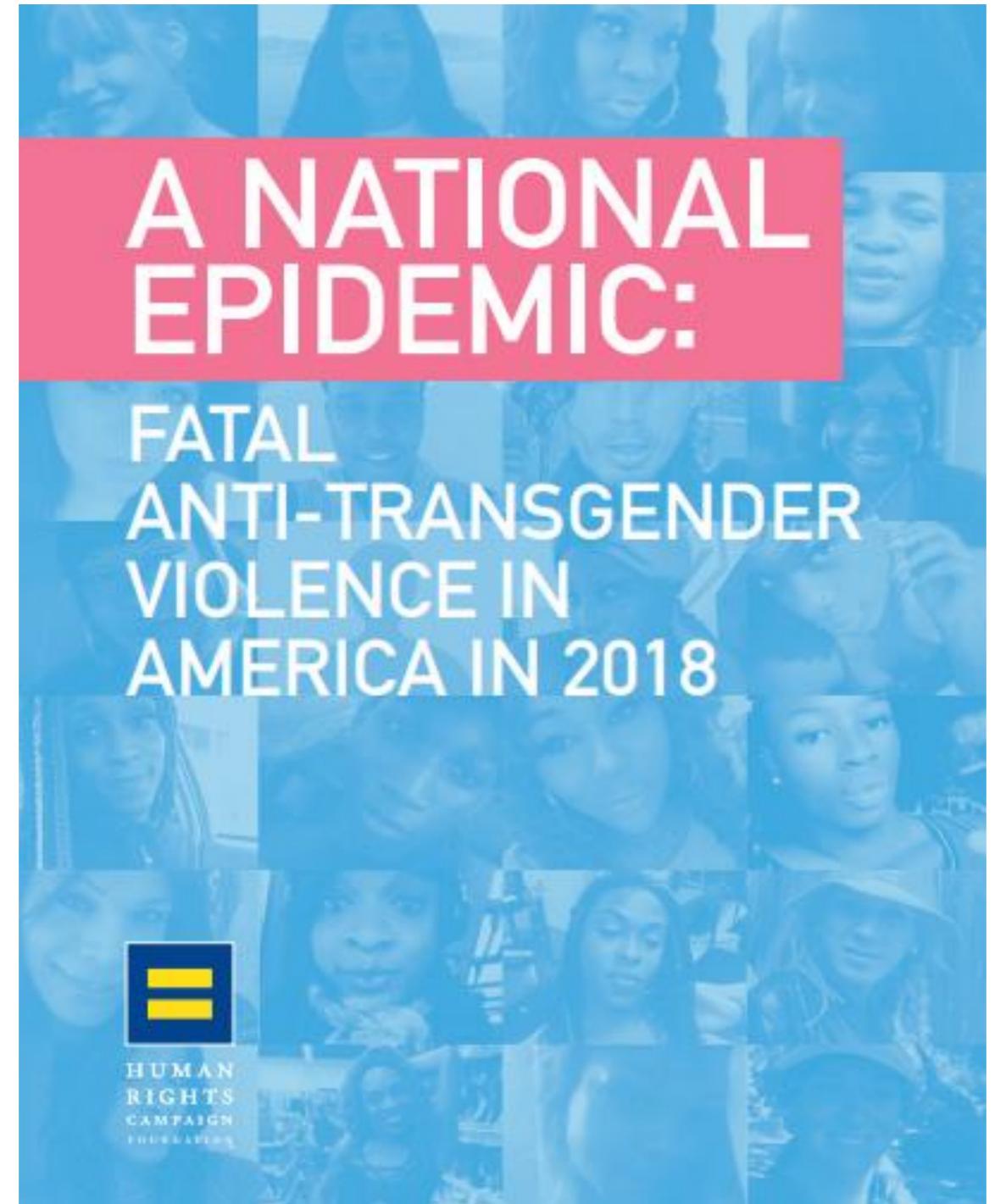
Source: *Supportive Families, Healthy Children (2009)*

# Added Burden on Transgender Community

According to the National Center for Transgender Equality's U.S. Transgender Survey, 40 percent of transgender adults reported serious psychological distress in the month before they took the survey, dramatically higher than the five percent of the US population who say the same (James 2016).

# Anti-Transgender Violence

- At least 22 transgender people were been killed in the U.S. in 2018
- **82%** of those killed were women of color
- **64%** of those were under the age of 35
- **55%** lived in the South



# Stigma Drives Higher Rates of MH Problems in LGBTQ Communities

\*A 2014 study found that LGBTQ people who live in communities with *more* stigmatizing attitudes about their sexual orientation die an average of 12 years earlier than LGBTQ people in the least-prejudiced communities (Hatzenbuehler 2014).

\*At the state level, transgender adults living in states with more LGBTQ-affirming environments are less likely to have attempted suicide

\*There are NO federal civil rights protections for LGBTQ people--a patchwork of state laws leave many folks vulnerable at work, in public accommodations, and in human services.

# SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CLIMATE

- Is the environment intolerant? Hostile?
- What is the impact of anti-LGBTQ rhetoric in the public square?
- Discriminatory laws or lack of legal protections?
- Tangible signs of support/inclusion?
  - ❖ Places of worship
  - ❖ Community centers
  - ❖ Recreational activities
  - ❖ Local business community



# School Policies and Negative Attitudes = Social Stigma and Shame

NEWS

## Lesbian high school student banned from graduation because she wore pants

*The school refused to even say her name at the ceremony because she violated the gendered dress code.*

By Alex Bollinger Thursday, June 4, 2020 6 Comments



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# Taking Steps to Support the LGBTQ Community

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# What Do LGBTQ Folks See?

Signs, posters, magazines, and brochures that reflect diverse SOGIE



# How Do You Talk *To* and *About* LGBTQ Folks?

## Use LGBTQ-Inclusive Language....

- Intake Forms and other data collection tools
  - SOGIE options
  - Household composition
- Interpersonal communications
  - Do not assume you know someone's SOGIE
  - Do not assign gender/pronouns to others
  - Do not use binary language (“Ladies and Gentlemen”)



# SUPPORT FAMILIES IN THEIR JOURNEY

- Educate parents/caregivers about SOGIE and the importance of creating an open, non-judgemental climate at home.
- Provide resources such as PFLAG, faith-based support groups, books, articles, etc., that can help families move toward greater understanding and acceptance.
- Assess whether safety at home is compromised due to SOGIE- does the child experience verbal/emotional abuse, exposure to “conversion therapy,” or other rejecting behaviors?



# CULTIVATE AND SHARE RESOURCES

- Local LGBTQ Community Centers and LGBTQ organizations
- Informal LGBTQ networks
- Welcoming and Affirming Congregations
- On-line chat forums and crisis intervention services
- Mentoring and peer support programs
- Identify LGBTQ Affirming Mental Health Providers and Programs



# Recognize and Address Your Own Bias and Beliefs

- Social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness
  - Messages about LGBTQ people start **early** and come from **many sources** (family, schools, religious communities, etc.)
  - These messages can be positive, negative or neutral and they **stay with us**
- Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups
- More prevalent than conscious prejudice and often incompatible with one's conscious values

• Unconscious Bias Can Impact our professional performance

Source: USCF Office of Diversity & Outreach (2016)

# Three Behaviors That Do Not Convey an Inclusive Environment

1. Overt and covert hostility
  - a. Overt hostility: *Obvious* homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, etc. Ex: Slurs, refusing to use the correct name/pronoun
  - b. Covert hostility: *Subtle* homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, etc. Ex: Preferential treatment for straight/cis people, naming LGBTQ community members “hard to work with”
2. Omission/silence
  - a. “As a gay person, I’m scanning that environment for safety, for a welcome mat. If I don’t see it, I’ll **assume I’m not welcome.**” - Gerald P. Mallon
3. Well-meaning but off-putting language...

# Ally---its a VERB!

- A term used to describe someone who does not identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ), but who is supportive of LGBTQ individuals and the community, either personally or as an advocate.
- Allies to the LGBTQ community typically identify as “straight.”
- Cisgender people, who may identify as straight or as LGBQ, can be allies to the transgender community
- Can be co-workers, parents, siblings, etc.

# Ten Tips for Allies

1. Be open
2. Educate yourself
3. Know the vocabulary
4. Challenge yourself
5. Be supportive
6. Use inclusive language
7. Mentor and sponsor LGBTQ employees and clients
8. Speak up
9. Advocate for change
10. Lead with your ally-ness; tell your ally story
  - a. Tell people why you're an ally
  - b. Tell people why the conversation is important to you
  - c. "I'm an ally because..."

# Language

## When greeting others

Avoid:

**ladies gentlemen ma'am sir girls guys** etc.

Consider using instead:

“Thanks, **friends**.  
Have a great  
night.”

“Good morning,  
**folks!**”

“Hi, **everyone!**”

“And for **you?**”

“Can I get  
you **all**  
something?”

**Why?**

Shifting to gender-inclusive language respects and acknowledges the gender identities of all people and removes assumption.

## Be mindful of language



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Source: Qmunity (2012)

# Pronoun Etiquette

- Use someone's chosen (preferred) name and pronouns unless asked not to for specific reasons (e.g., safety or privacy).
- When you don't know someone's pronouns:
  - If you don't know, ask.
  - You can (and should) avoid using pronouns for someone when you don't know them. Just use their name!
- If/when you make a mistake:
  - Apologize and move on.
  - Gently correct others who misgender someone.



# Other Kinds of Language

- Tone and body language matters!
- Messages about our feelings and attitudes are communicated:
  - Only 7% through spoken words
  - 38% through the way the words are spoken
  - 55% through facial expressions

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>MESSAGE</b>
Avoiding eye contact, looking away	Discomfort, dishonesty, disinterest
Crossing arms	Defensiveness
Lack of acknowledgement	Uneasiness, concern
Fidgeting, tapping	Boredom, nervousness, anxiety, impatience

# YOUR VOICE MATTERS:

school groups, boards of education,  
city councils

**Serve** on the board of an organization that supports  
community health

**Offer** medical expertise to schools, youth organizations  
or institutions, and senior centers

**Ask** parents, teachers, and other health care  
professionals and clinicians in your area to get involved in  
local efforts

**Write** letters to the editor

**Vote**



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# ADVOCATING LOCALLY & STATE-WIDE

- Find out how your city scores on **The Municipal Equality Index:**
  - <http://www.hrc.org/mei>
- Find out how your state scores on **The State Equality Index:**
  - <http://www.hrc.org/sei>
- Learn who represents you:
  - Mayor
  - City Council
  - County Council
  - School Board



# Contact Us



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**Questions?**

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