We are Family: Understanding the Experience of LGBTQ+ Youth

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MONTEREY COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
Avanzando Juntos
Forward Together

Hello and Welcome!

- This is a safe and accepting place designed to provide information to the community members of Salinas Union High School District who want to learn and explore more about their LGBTQ + family member.
- We strive to create a safe place for everyone and only use language that is positive and supportive to the experience of LGBTQ+ youth.

Who are we and why are we here?

Sarah Altman (She/Her)

MCBH Psychiatric Social Worker since ?

I provide MCBH services and supports to students at Harden Middle School

This offering serves to educate parents, caregivers and family members on how to support the mental health of their LGBTQ+ loved one

Who are we and why are we here?

- Andrea Rossi: (She/Her)
- MCBH Psychiatric Social Worker II since 20_
- I provide MCBH services and supports at Salinas High School
- MCBH partners school districts, MCOE and various community agencies to increase access to mental health services

LGBTQ+ Mental Health Risk Factors

- Coming Out
- Rejection
- Substance Use
- Homelessness
- Bullying and harassment
- Inadequate medical care
- Inadequate mental health care
- Lack of family or peer support
- Suicidal thoughts, feelings and behaviors

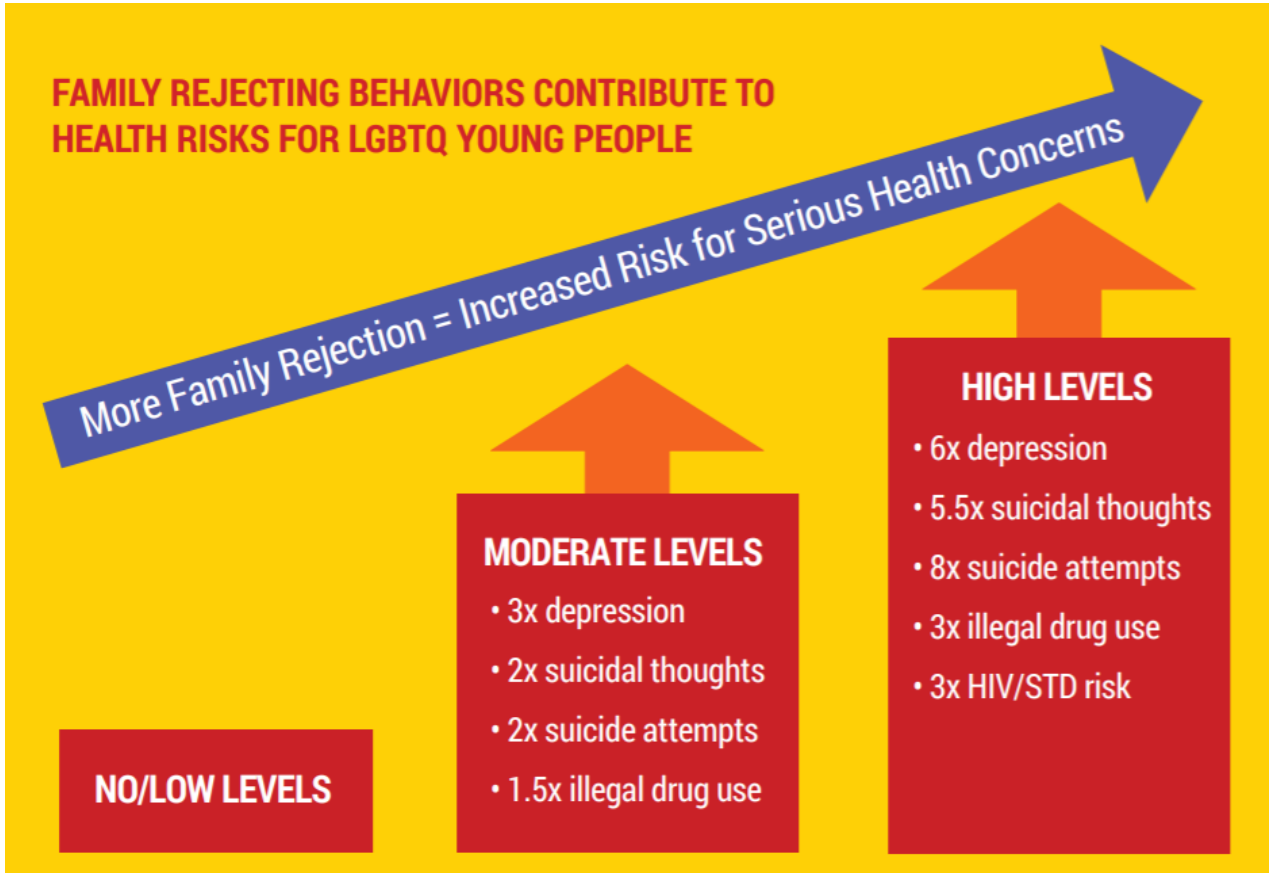
STATISTICS: SUICIDALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

- 39% of LGBT + respondents seriously considered attempting suicide in the past twelve months.
- More than half of transgender and non-binary youth have seriously considered suicide.
- 71% of respondents reported feeling sad or hopeless for at least two weeks in the past year

According to the Family Acceptance Project (FAP), SFSU

There is a serious impact of high levels of family rejection on gay or transgender youth whose parents or family members:

- Tried to change them
- Tried to prevent them from being gay or transgender
- Demonstrated shame about their identities to their relatives



CONVERSION THERAPY AND ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE

- 2 out of 3 young people in The Trevor Project (2019) study reported that someone tried to convince them to change their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 57% of transgender and non-binary youth who have undergone conversion therapy attempted suicide in the past year.

DISCRIMINATION AND PHYSICAL HARM

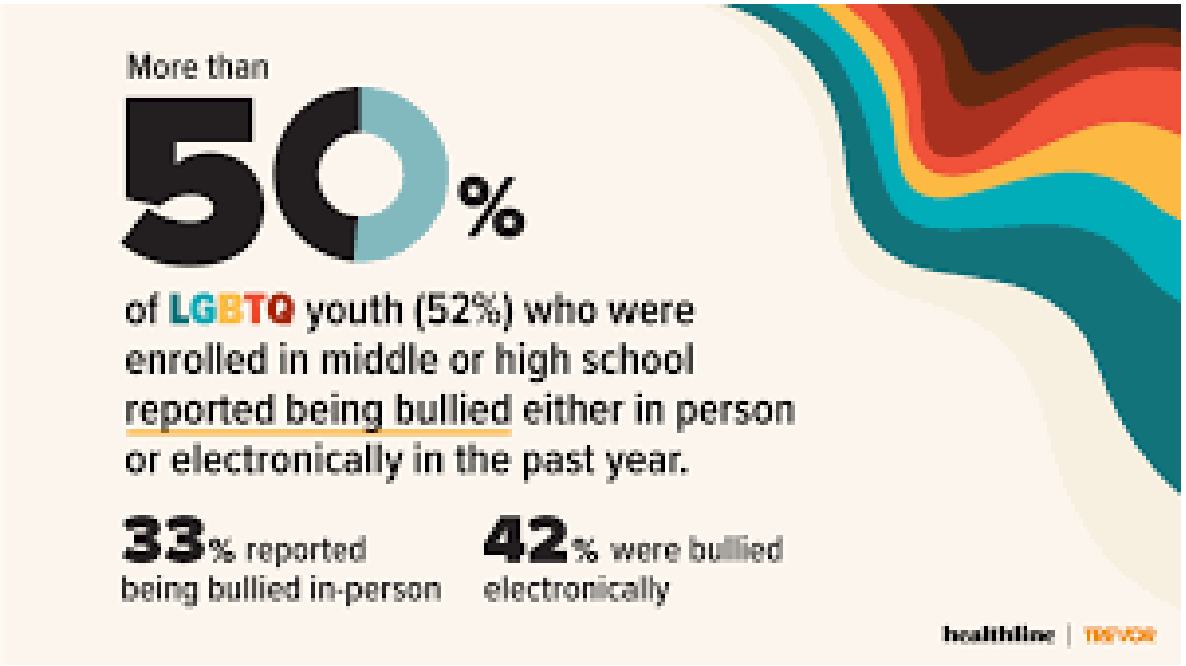
- 78% of transgender youth and non-binary youth reported being the subject of discrimination based on their gender identity
- 70% of LGBT + youth reported discrimination due to their sexual orientation.

LGBTQ+ Dating violence

At Risk of Homelessness

- LGBT + youth and young adults are estimated to have a 120% higher risk of homelessness, often as a result of family rejection or discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation.

And at school?



What can I do?

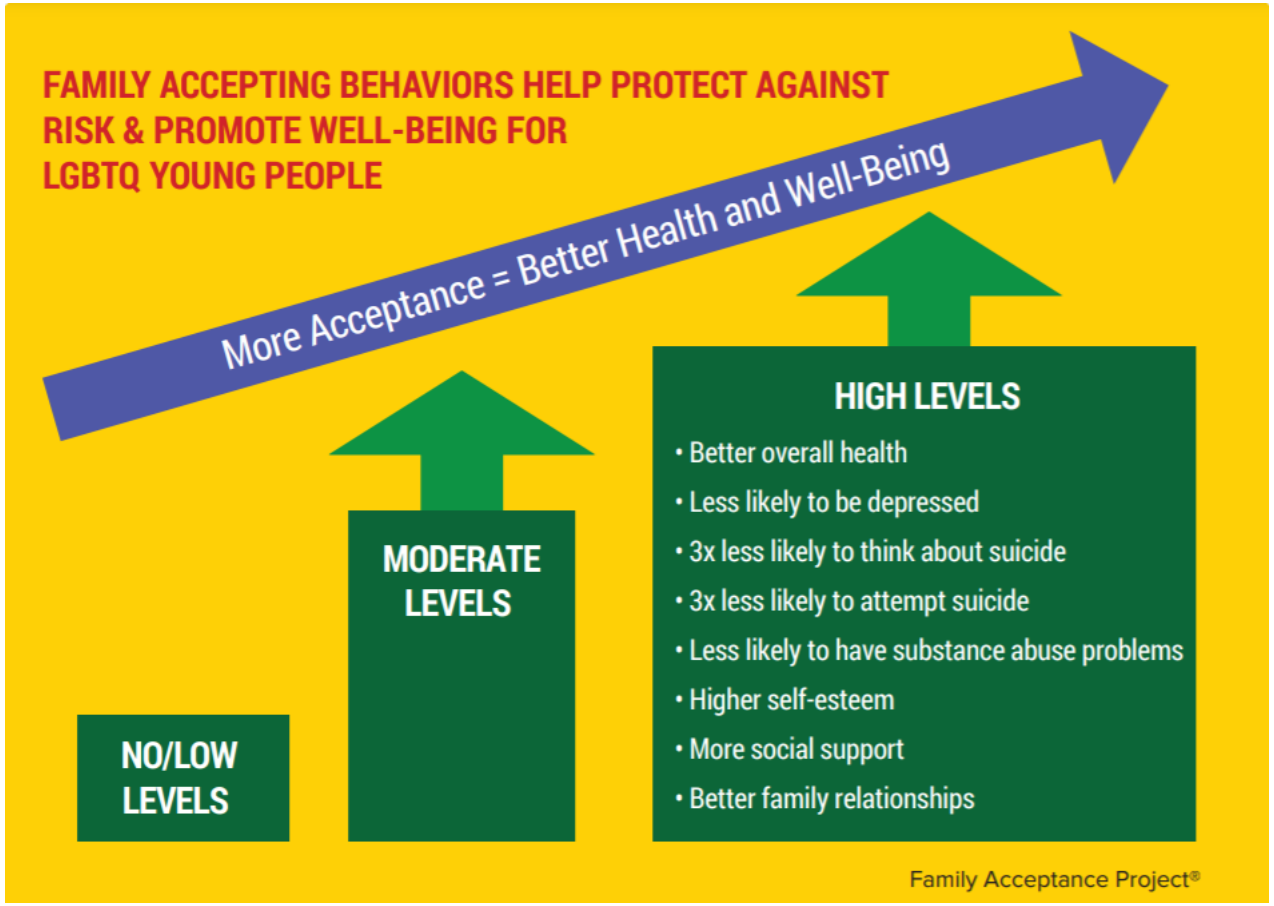
- THERE IS A WAY TO BECOME A MORE UNDERSTANDING PARENT, CAREGIVER OR FAMILY MEMBER OF YOUR LGBTQ+ LOVED ONE~ IT IS AN ONGOING PROCESS OF LEARNING AND GROWTH.

LGBTQ+ Mental Health Protective Factors

- Family acceptance
- Social connection and support
- Coping skills
- Good physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health
- Supportive environments (home, school, work)
- Affirmative medical care
- Positive attitudes, values and beliefs
- Conflict resolution skills

According to the Family Acceptance Project (FAP), SFSU

There is a significant positive impact on the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth when they experience family acceptance.



Advocating for LGBTQ + students at school

California is adding LGBTQ + History to school curriculums and is working to make legislative changes that require sexual / reproductive education that is inclusive of LGBTQ+ students and relationships.

SCHOOL *cont*...

- It is important to ensure that our schools provide a place where our students feel safe, accepted and welcome in their learning communities.
- Great efforts are being made by SUHSD to support LGBTQ+ students!

Please Remember ...

- Acceptance does not mean a full understanding of what your LGBTQ+ loved one is going through, but it is a step in the right direction.

Support your child's gender expression

Welcome your child's LGBTQ friends to your home

Talk with your child or foster child about their LGBTQ identity and listen respectfully – even when you feel uncomfortable or think that being gay or transgender is wrong

Stand up for your child when others mistreat them because of their LGBTQ identity or gender expression – at home, at school, in your congregation and in the community

Speak openly about your child's LGBTQ identity

Believe that your child can be a happy LGBTQ adult – and tell them they will have a good life

Bring your child to LGBTQ groups and events

Tell your LGBTQ / gender diverse child that you're proud of them

Get accurate information to educate your-self about your child's sexual orientation, gender identity and expression

According to the Human Rights Campaign

- Coping with the novelty and surprise that a loved one, acquaintance, or friend is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer can be uncomfortable and challenging as the process of understanding begins.

Accepting that they are the same person

- Assimilate that the sexual orientation and gender identity and expression of your LGBTQ+ loved one are basic parts of who they are, such as the color of their eyes, hair or skin.

- Understand that in order to have a genuine and open connection with your LGBTQ+ loved one, you will have to find a way to support them as they are.

Jokes

- CHOOSE NOT TO SHARE THE “HUMOR” THAT ATTACKS LGBTQ + PEOPLE WHEN SOMEONE TELLS A JOKE ABOUT THEM OR ANOTHER LGBTQ+ PERSON.

LET YOUR SUPPORT MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

- It's about working to develop a true understanding of what it means to be LGBTQ+ in America and finding ways to doing your part to help break down the barriers of discrimination and prejudice that still exist.

Everything is possible if we do it with love

Civil rights movements have been successful because people from every part of society supported them in fighting prejudice and discrimination.

Your VOTE Counts!

- Find out about the position of political candidates on issues that impact the LGBTQ+ community.

It's a lifetime of learning

- Part of being more supportive of your LGBTQ + loved one means developing a true understanding of how the world views and treats them.

We Are Family

- MCBH offers a **We are Family** support group where parents, caregivers, and any family member are provided a safe space to explore their feelings about the sexuality and gender expression of their loved one who identifies as LGBTQ + in Monterey County.

LGBTQ + Continuum of Affirmative Care for Learning Communities

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OUR GENTE

MCBH Program Contact Information

Please send questions, comments and feedback to:

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