BE TRUE AND BE YOU

A Basic Mental Health Guide for LGBTQ+ Youth

THE UNFOLDING JOURNEY OF YOU

If you identify as or think you might be **LGBTQ+** (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning), you might be exploring who you are and who you want to be. Whether you're trying to figure out your own identity or want to learn how to talk to others, it can be helpful to know where to find support.

These pages can't give you all the answers, but this is just the beginning. Consider this a basic guide for how to talk and think about sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, and mental health, along with some ways to cope with stress and emotions and resources to get support for yourself or others.

Let's start with defining the terms we use to describe sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. Since words mean different things to different people, we need some common understanding before we get deeper.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation refers to who you are attracted to emotionally, physically, and romantically. Your sexual orientation may not be obvious in the way you speak, act, or dress. Sexual orientation is sometimes referred to simply as "orientation" and includes a combination of romantic, emotional, and/or physical attraction that shows up differently for everyone. It may even change over time.

People use dozens of different terms to describe their orientation. Some terms you may have heard are: gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, sexually-fluid, queer, asexual, two-spirit, same-gender-loving, and heterosexual or straight. These terms are constantly changing and evolving, and each person should choose (or create!) the words that feel most authentic to them.

Your orientation is very personal and something only you get to decide, including what words fit you best and what they mean to you. How you define and label your orientation may be different from how other people define theirs, and that's okay. And if you aren't yet sure how you identify, that's okay, too! There isn't a timeline or schedule to stick to when it comes to self-discovery. The point is: no one else gets to decide your orientation for you.

GENDER IDENTITY & EXPRESSION

Gender identity describes your own understanding and experience of your gender. Some people identify as being male or female. Some identify as both male and female, as something in between, or something that only that person can describe. Your gender identity can be the same or different than the sex you were assigned at birth (the sex that's listed on your birth certificate).

When thinking about gender identity, you may have heard terms like transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, intersex, agender, bigender, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, gender fluid, two-spirit, or cisgender. Just as with orientation, these terms change and evolve, and each of us gets to choose the words that feel most appropriate and authentic.

"There might be a time where I identify as trans...there might be a time where I identify as nonbinary and gender nonconforming my entire life. Or maybe there's a period of time when I get older that I identify as a woman."

– Demi Lovato

The term "transgender" refers to people whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth. Transgender people may change their name, pronouns, and/or physical appearance to better match their identity. Some people also choose to use hormones and/or have surgery to change their appearance. Other people may choose not to, or may not be able to make these changes for many reasons. If this is something you're interested in doing, it's important to find a medical provider experienced in transgender healthcare (see the resources at the end of this booklet).

Your gender identity is very personal and something only you get to decide, including what words fit you best and what they mean to you. How you define your gender identity may be different from how your peers, family members, friends, or other people define theirs, and that's okay." And if you're still figuring out how you identify: that's okay, too! Exploring your gender can happen at all ages and at any stage of life.

In addition to gender identity, we all have our own **gender expression**. While gender identity is our internal sense of self, gender expression refers to the ways we communicate our gender to the outside world. Gender expression can include our clothing, haircut, makeup, voice, body characteristics, or behavioral mannerisms. Gender expression does not always match up with gender identity—and that's okay. Some people have a consistent gender expression, while others have a more fluid gender expression and may present differently day-to-day.

Oftentimes, outward gender expression is described using terms like "masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous" (neither masculine nor feminine). But these terms only have as much meaning and power as we give them. Hairstyles, makeup, clothing, and behavior aren't inherently gendered.

Only you can decide what gender expression makes you feel most comfortable and genuinely yourself.

SHARING WHO YOU ARE

Some people may share their identity with a few trusted friends online, some may choose to share with a counselor or a trusted family member, and others may want everyone in their life to know about their identity. Some people talk about "coming out" or being "out," whereas others prefer to say "inviting in." This is often an ongoing process over time.

There may be certain people in our lives with whom you want to share your sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and there may be others with whom you do not feel comfortable or safe sharing. This is more than okay!

Each of us has the right to share or not share different aspects of ourselves with others. No one else is entitled to information around your identities if you do not want them to know—even parents or other family members. If you choose not to share parts of your identity with others, it does not make you any less valid than those who choose to share their identities. This decision is deeply personal and is different for everyone.

For a lot of people, sharing your identity doesn't just happen once. You might share who you are at different times to different people. Or you might choose to publicly show multiple identities, one of your identities, or none of your identities to your friends, family, and community. Some people choose not to share their identity for various reasons, including personal safety, fear of rejection by family or other loved ones, or to avoid being treated differently because of their identity. You can choose what's right for you. It can be a situation-by-situation or even day-by-day process rather than a one-time decision.

If you think you are ready to share who you are, you can increase the chances of having a positive—and even empowering—experience. Consider your emotional and physical safety when choosing who to tell. Start with someone who loves you and will support your choices, if you have that person in your life. Look for allies, or those who have shown that they support and affirm LGBTQ+ people. If you want to share with one person or a small group of people, make it clear that it will be up to you, not them, to share your identity with others.

There is no "right" order or process for who you choose to share your identity with. And just because you share with some people doesn't mean you need to share with others. In fact, if you are financially or otherwise dependent on your family and unsure if they will be supportive, this may be a consideration in deciding when, how, or if to share anything with them. Many people find that sharing their identities is overall a positive experience.

LGBTQ+ AND MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we feel, how we see ourselves, how we handle stress, how we make choices, and how we relate to others. It has a powerful influence on our quality of life. Good mental health means having positive, helpful ways to deal with thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It does NOT mean we have to be happy all the time. Negative emotions are natural, and recognizing them as they arise is a good way to grow.

LGBTQ+ people are often happy and thriving. As with any young person, this is especially true when we have caring and accepting parents and a school that creates a safe and supportive learning environment. However, some LGBTQ+ youth face additional hardships because of people who do not accept their orientation or gender identity. These may include rejection from friends, family, faith community, or other groups, bullying, harassment, discrimination, hate speech, or violence.

Being LGBTQ+ is likely not the only factor in your identity. Many also experience challenges related to their race/ethnicity, social class, culture, religion, age, disability, and more. These stressors and experiences can be traumatic and hurtful, and can affect mental health and well-being.

Developing healthy coping strategies helps us to deal with the stressors we face on a daily basis and are important in managing our overall mental health and well-being. This can be done with the help of the people in our life who care about us, a supportive mental health professional, peer support, alternative therapies, or through self-care methods.

The national support resources listed at the back of this booklet are a great place to start for finding mental health support near you.

The more we embrace our unique sexual orientation and gender expression, the more we will find it a source of strength, pride, and resiliency. Understanding and embracing all of who you are is good for your mental health!

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU SHOULD REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT?

Everyone experiences mental health challenges differently. By being aware of some of the signs and symptoms of common mental health challenges, we can seek help before they become a crisis.

Depression is common and can include deep feelings of sadness, apathy (lack of caring or enjoyment), and hopelessness that may not go away on their own. Depression can change the way we think, feel, and act, and can make our bodies feel sick as well. It's possible to feel depressed even if our life looks good "on the surface" or if we can't identify a specific reason for feeling down. Feelings of depression can make it difficult to work, go to school, or participate in other important areas of your life.

Anxiety is a feeling of fear that makes us feel uncomfortable and scared. In small doses or in certain situations, anxiety can be helpful, but some people feel anxious very often or very strongly. Strong, sudden feelings of fear and anxiety are called "panic attacks." Anxiety and panic attacks can cause restlessness, irritability, insomnia, racing thoughts, and poor concentration. Anxiety can make it difficult to manage everyday tasks and responsibilities.

Trauma or PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) can happen if you see or live through something very frightening or hurtful. It's normal to feel afraid sometimes, but those with PTSD or trauma-related mental health challenges may continue to feel scared for a long time after the event is over. Even if they are now very safe, the fear and danger can continue to feel quite real. Trauma can have long-lasting effects that may not go away on their own, and can affect everyday functioning.

These common mental health challenges can look different for each individual. If you think you may be experiencing these or other issues related to your mental health, help is available. See the section on finding mental health support and the last page of this booklet for a list of recommended resources.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Practicing self-care is a vital part of getting and staying well. Finding a healthy way to care for yourself can include talking to a friend, spending some time outside, going to the doctor, practicing mindfulness or meditation, listening to music, getting adequate sleep, cooking, exercising, or practicing a creative hobby. Spending time with loved ones may make us feel better, or we may need to take some time alone for ourselves. Whichever methods work best for you, make taking care of yourself a priority.

If you want to learn more about self-care for wellness, visit **takeaction4mh.com** and look for "Mental Health Self-Care Tips." You can also check out the Wellness Recovery Action Plan movement at **mentalhealthrecovery.com**.

REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

No matter what you're going through, it can be helpful to talk to a supportive friend, family member, school counselor, doctor, or other person whom you trust. If you don't have anybody to talk to, there are online communities and local organizations you can reach out to for help. Asking for help is a brave step and does not mean you are weak.

Where to go

Start by thinking about people you already know and trust: Do you have a spiritual leader to talk to? What about your doctor? If you're in school, is there a counselor or nurse you could talk with? If you're in college, is there a health center or counseling center on campus? What about a family member or friend? If at first you don't find a good fit, keep trying.

"There are so many people out there struggling with the same mental illness that we are. It is so important to reach out. If you're hurting, ask for help. If you can't find it, there's resources out there, I guarantee it. And there's people out there who are gonna relate, who are gonna want to help you any way they can. Even when it feels like no one would want to, or you feel like you don't deserve that help, it's out there. And it's meant just for you."

– Alexandra, Each Mind Matters Community Member

What to do

- ✓ Talk openly with someone you trust about what you are experiencing.
- ✓ Stay in touch with people who care about you. Give them specific things to do that can help.
- ✓ Consider connecting with others who are going through something similar by finding a support group, or asking your doctor or mental health professional about peer support.
- ✓ Seek help from a mental health professional, doctor, counselor, or clergy member.
- ✓ If you are in crisis, call the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or 1-800-273-8255 or another crisis line to talk with a trained counselor.
- ✓ **Take time right away to prioritize getting the help you need.**

Please see the back of this booklet for more resources and specific places to find support.

SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Opening up to someone you trust about what's on your mind can be a healthy and important way to get support. Allies can be good sources of support, and can listen to you and remind you that you're not alone. Think of someone you trust and feel safe around who has expressed love and acceptance in the past. If you're having trouble getting up the courage to say something, try writing a note or email or sending a text to let them know that you need a helping hand. If you don't feel comfortable talking to friends or family members, a trusted counselor, teacher, or youth leader may be able to offer support. You can also look for LGBTQ+ support groups, which you might find in your school community, at a local LGBTQ+ center, online, or through the national resources on the back of this booklet.

Sadly, it's possible that some people in your life may respond negatively instead of offering support. Many LGBTQ+ youth have problems with not being accepted or supported by their families and/or schools. Others may experience emotional or physical abuse from family and peers. If you are facing situations like this, remember that you are not alone, and help is available to you. If you need help right away, call the Trevor Project at 1-866-488-7386 or text 'START' to 678-678 to speak with a trained counselor.

If you feel unsafe at home, services like the National Runaway Safeline can help you find the resources and support you need. Call 1-800-RUNAWAY (1-800-786-2929) or visit **1800runaway.org** to live chat.

Is my relationship healthy?

Everyone has the right to safe and healthy relationships that are based on mutual honesty, trust, respect and open communication. That is true whether it is a friendship or a sexual or romantic relationship. Remember that you should always feel like an equal in the relationship and feel free to speak your mind. Disagreements are normal, but how we choose to resolve our disagreements is what really counts. At the end of the day you should feel happy, safe, and supported in your relationship.

Healthy relationships include:

- Supporting your gender identity and expression
- Supporting your sexual orientation
- Respecting your gender pronouns and chosen name
- Talking with you about and respecting your boundaries (physical, emotional, sexual)
- Giving you space to hang out with friends and family without thinking you're cheating
- Never trying to control or manipulate you
- Never threatening to out you to people
- Never telling you you're not a "real" lesbian, gay man, trans person, etc.
- Never calling you hurtful names or slurs

"A common thread among LGBTQ people is loneliness and fear that drives them away from social contact with other people. It makes us pull back from the thing that heals us—which is being in contact with others."

– First, Do No Harm: Reducing Disparities for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning Populations in California (2012)

How do I know if I'm in an abusive relationship?

Dating abuse is a pattern of abuse in which one person in a romantic and/or sexual relationship attempts to exercise power and maintain control over the other person. The abusive person may use many different actions and behaviors such as threats of or actual verbal, emotional, physical, sexual abuse, or online abuse to control the other person.

When the abuse is physical or sexual, it may be easier to identify as abuse. Emotional abuse can be much harder to recognize, but it is no less damaging. This can include attempts to insult, humiliate or instill fear to control someone. Relationship violence often starts as emotional or verbal abuse before escalating into physical or sexual violence.

My Relationship is Unhealthy or Abusive. What Can I Do?

LGBTQ+ people can experience dating and relationship abuse in the same ways as straight, cisgender people can. However, LGBTQ+ youth face the added stress of finding people who understand their relationships. This can create an additional unique obstacle to identifying abuse and seeking help.

- **The National Domestic Violence Hotline—1-800-799-SAFE (7233)** —provides highly trained advocates who are available 24/7 to talk confidentially with anyone experiencing relationship violence, seeking resources or information, or questioning unhealthy aspects of their relationship.
- **The Love is Respect hotline** is available 24/7 by calling **1-866-331-9474** or through online chat at loveisrespect.org.
  —You can call, text or chat with someone, and the website offers LGBTQ+ affirming information and resources.

If you're in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, you have many options – including obtaining a restraining order and/or meeting with a counselor. Whether you want to end the relationship or continue it, there is help available for you.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

We all experience varying levels of mental health throughout our lives. In fact, half of U.S. adults will experience some type of mental health challenge over their lifetime. Sometimes these challenges can become more serious and require more attention. However, recovery is also common and many forms of help are available.

Different approaches work for different people: for some talk therapy is their tool of choice, for others it may be medication, LGBTQ+ youth peer support groups, or a self-directed tool such as a "WRAP" plan (Wellness Recovery Action Planning). If you choose to seek counseling, a mental health professional can help you sort through your challenges and choices so you know what is available and can decide what works best for you.

"My recovery from depression helped me realize I shouldn't be ashamed of who I am. It was like a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. After so many years of rejection and shame, I finally learned to accept myself and surround myself with people who love me for who I am. I felt free."

– Excerpt from "Harry's Story"

YOUR RIGHTS

While some young people find their parents or guardians to be a source of support when they are struggling, others may experience rejection or negative consequences for sharing their orientation, gender identity, or mental health challenges. What can you do if you need support, and don't feel safe asking your parents or guardians for consent to see a mental health therapist? California has laws (Health and Safety Code § 124260 and Family Code § 6924) which allow minors age 12-17 to receive mental health services without their parent's or guardian's consent. Your privacy is also protected, and in the majority of cases the therapist cannot share information with an unsupportive parent or guardian.

For more information about your rights in California: **teenhealthlaw.org**

For more information about California law: **tinyurl.com/r999zwf5**

For legal information and assistance: **transgenderlawcenter.org**

HOW TO FIND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT WITH YOUR INSURANCE

1. First, find out if you have health insurance, who your insurance provider is, and what your insurance covers. In the United States, kids can stay on their parents' health insurance plan until age 26. Your health insurance card, which is typically the size of a credit card, will likely have one of your parents' names on it, with a policy number on the front and phone numbers on the back. Call your insurance provider, confirm that you are covered under the policy, and ask them what your mental health coverage is.

2. Check to see if your insurance network has therapists that specialize in working with the LGBTQ+ community and/or young people. Some insurance provider websites will allow you to search for mental health professionals that specialize in working with specific populations. If you're unsure about how to go about this, you may want to ask your doctor during a visit if they can recommend a therapist on your plan, or if they have any advice. As always, you may want to consider doing this without your parents present depending on their level of acceptance and support.

3. Search online for LGBTQ+ friendly therapists in your area. You can ask them directly if they accept your insurance, or if they offer low-cost services.

4. Call your local LGBTQ+ community center or organization for recommendations. Your friends or other people you trust may also know the names of good therapists in your area.

"(My experiences) really drove me to seek help – professional help, mental health – because I know that there's really no way that I could just resolve it on my own. I'm trying to find out: how do I deal with all these things? I had a psychotherapist who is Latino and he's gay. Working with him, it really helped me to understand that I can never put limitations on myself, that there are a lot of possibilities. I feel really thankful that I was able to work with psychotherapists that were gay-affirming."

– Dennis, Each Mind Matters Community Member

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER

Working with a mental health professional is a type of relationship, and, like all relationships, finding the right person can take time and often takes more than one try. If the first professional you contact or meet doesn't work for you, don't give up—keep trying until you find the right match.

An important note: Professional help is most likely to be effective if it is provided by a therapist or counselor who is well-versed in working with LGBTQ+ youth. Each sub-community under the LGBTQ+ umbrella faces their own mental health challenges, and they can't all be grouped together. In addition, other identity factors like race and economic status can affect whether or not someone is able to find mental health care that works for them.

Some questions you might want to ask during the phone interview or first meeting include:

- What experience do you have working with the types of problems I am experiencing?
- What experience do you have working with LGBTQ+ clients?
- What is your experience working with youth from my cultural background (such as race, ethnicity, religion or other)?
- What is your approach to doing therapy in a situation such as this one?
- What if I disagree with or question something you tell me?
- How do you handle the privacy of what I tell you? How much say do I get in what you tell my parent(s) or guardian(s)?

You can ask these questions during the first appointment, but you may save time and energy by asking from the start. If you're reluctant to make the initial call, you can ask a friend or family member to call for you.

It may take several calls to find the right provider for you. If the provider doesn't seem like a good fit for you, you can move on to the next provider and keep searching. **Keep in mind that YOU are the expert on you**.

AFFORDING THERAPY EVEN WITHOUT INSURANCE

Many types of insurance, including Medi-Cal, offer coverage for mental health services. In addition, there are community-based clinics that may offer free treatment, health care clinics on school/college campuses with free mental health services, and private practitioners who offer free or "sliding-scale" fees that are adjusted according to your ability to pay.

Here are a few places to look for affordable mental health care:

- Call 2-1-1 or go to 211.org for a referral to community mental health centers in your area
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) offers an online locator for mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities nationally. **findtreatment.samhsa.gov**
- The Trevor Project has online counselors who can provide free, immediate support 24/7 and help you find ongoing mental health support in your area. **thetrevorproject.org**
- Mental Health America has a network of affiliate organizations that may offer community-based services **arc.mhanational.org**
- If you have an LGBTQ+ center in your community, they may also have support groups, services, or information available to help you find services in your area.

HARMFUL AND INVALID FORMS OF "THERAPY"

Not everything called "therapy" is helpful, safe, or legal. "Conversion therapy" refers to any attempt to change someone's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. You might also hear it called by other names such as "reparative therapy," "ex-gay therapy," or even "sexuality counseling." This is not a legitimate form of therapy. Many leading medical and mental health organizations, including the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Counseling Association, say that conversion therapy is harmful and abusive. California has outlawed conversion therapy for anyone under the age of 18. If you are 18 or older, you also have the right to refuse services from any service provider who tries to change your sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, visit **hrc.org**.

"I was introverted and deeply depressed, I had virtually no friends at my school and the only other queer people I knew were in movies. I felt so alone, like no one could ever understand. I remember when I first came to the [Rainbow Community Center].... I felt like I had finally found a place."

– C.K., Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County

Get Help Now

If you are thinking about suicide, get immediate support. **You are not alone**.

The Trevor Project provides 24/7 crisis support services to LGBTQ+ young people. All conversations are confidential, and you can share as much or as little as you'd like. Connect to a crisis counselor trained to understand the issues LGBTQ+ young people face:

Call
1-866-488-7386

Text 'START'
to **678-678**

Visit the
trevorproject.org
to start a chat

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
(988 or 1-800-273-8255) offers 24/7 free and confidential assistance from trained counselors.

The Trans Lifeline
(1-877- 565-8860) is a 24/7 lifeline run by and for trans people, providing direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis.

The Crisis Text Line
(text HOME to 741-741) provides 24/7 high-quality text-based mental health support and crisis intervention.

If urgent medical attention is required, call 9-1-1 or go to the emergency room of the nearest hospital.

If you're worried about someone else:

1. Reach out to the person you are worried about. Let them know you are there for them and create a safe space for them to talk about what they're going through.
2. Talk to the person openly and directly about suicide. It's okay to ask someone "Are you thinking about suicide?" To learn more about what to say, visit the "Find the Words" section at **suicideispreventable.org**.
3. You are not alone in helping someone in crisis. It is okay to break a friend's trust and share your concerns with an adult if you think your friend might be thinking about harming themselves. Find a trusted adult to help you and learn more about resources available to you, as well as the person you are worried about at the "Reach Out" section at **suicideispreventable.org**.
4. If you think the person is suicidal, take it seriously. Don't leave them alone. Call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or call 911.
5. Encourage the person to seek help from a mental health professional, doctor, counselor, or clergy member

The warning signs for suicide to look out for are:

- Talking about wanting to die or suicide
- Seeking methods for self-harm, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
- Feeling hopeless, desperate, trapped, or having no reason to live
- Giving away possessions
- Putting affairs in order
- Reckless behavior
- Uncontrolled anger
- Increased drug or alcohol use
- Withdrawal
- Anxiety or agitation
- Changes in sleep
- Sudden mood changes

If someone shows one or more of these warning signs, seek help by calling the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline or the Trevor Lifeline right away—especially if the behavior is new, increased, or seems related to a painful event, loss or change.

CRISIS LINES, HOT LINES, AND OTHER SUPPORT LINES

CalHOPE Connect
Live online chat with trained, supportive peers, including specifically for the LGBTQ+ community in California. **calhopeconnect.org**

Crisis Text Line
Connect with a crisis counselor 24/7 to receive high-quality text-based mental health support and crisis intervention. Text HOME to 741-741. **crisistextline.org**

LGBTQ+ National Youth Talkline
Confidential, peer-support, information, local resources, and more, for callers through age 25. Call 1-800-246-PRIDE (7743). **glnh.org**

Love is Respect
Love is Respect offers 24/7 information, support, and advocacy to young people between the ages of 13 and 26 who have questions or concerns about their romantic relationships. Call 1-866-331-9474. Text LOVEIS to 22522. **loveisrespect.org**

National Domestic Violence Hotline
A 24/7, free, confidential support for anyone experiencing domestic violence, seeking resources or information, or questioning unhealthy aspects of their relationship. Call 1-800-799-7233. **thehotline.org**

National Runaway Safeline
Call 1-800-RUNAWAY if you are thinking of running from home, if you have a friend who has runaway, or if you are a runaway ready to go home. **1800runaway.org**

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (988 or 1-800-273-8255) offers 24/7 free and confidential assistance from trained counselors for yourself or to offer support if you are concerned about someone else. Call 988 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Trans Lifeline
A 24/7 lifeline run by and for trans people, providing direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis. Call 1-877-565-8860.

The Trevor Project
The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ+) young people ages 13-24. Visit the website and/or search for "The Coming Out Handbook." Call 1-866-488-7386. Text 'START' to 678-678. **thetrevorproject.org**

OTHER HELPFUL LGBTQ+ RESOURCES

Looking for more information about sexual orientation and gender identity, or need more support and guidance? Check out these resources:

American Psychological Association LGBTQ+ Resources
A variety of resources about sexual orientation and gender identity. **apa.org/topics/lgbtq**

Know the Signs
California's suicide prevention campaign that encourages individuals to know the signs of suicide, find the words to ask a loved one if they are thinking about suicide, and reach out to local resources; part of *Take Action for Mental Health*. **suicideispreventable.com**

It Gets Better Project
The It Gets Better Project is a nonprofit organization with a mission to uplift, empower, and connect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth around the globe. **itgetsbetter.org**

Mental Health America
The nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and promoting the overall mental health of all. **mhanational.org**

PFLAG
PFLAG is the first and largest organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people, their parents and families, and allies. **pflag.org**

GLSEN
GLSEN works to ensure that LGBTQ+ students are able to learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment. **glsen.org**

GSA Network
GSA Network is a next-generation LGBTQ+ racial and gender justice organization that empowers and trains queer, trans and allied youth leaders to advocate, organize, and mobilize an intersectional movement for safer schools and healthier communities. **gsanetwork.org**

Teen Health Rights
Information about laws impacting adolescent healthcare access in California; click on "Youth Legal Guide" and then select "Feeling Good/Mental Health." **teenhealthrights.org**

Transgender Law Center
Transgender Law Center changes law, policy, and attitudes so that all people can live safely, authentically, and free from discrimination regardless of their gender identity or expression. **transgenderlawcenter.com**

TrevorSpace
TrevorSpace is an affirming, online community for LGBTQ+ young people between the ages of 13-24 years old. With over 400,000 members across the globe, you can explore your identity, get advice, find support, and make friends in a moderated community. **trevorspace.org**

Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP)
WRAP is a wellness and recovery approach based on hope, personal responsibility, education, self-advocacy, and support. **mentalhealthrecovery.com**

Take Action
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

As part of California's ongoing mental health movement, the Take Action for Mental Health campaign is designed to help you **check in**, **learn more**, and **get support** for your own mental health or the mental health of someone you care about.

CHECK IN

on your own and others' mental health

LEARN MORE

about mental health needs

GET SUPPORT

for yourself or someone you care about

takeaction4mh.com

CalMHSA

Funded by counties through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63).