

**It's
UP[®]
to US**

It's Up to Us[®]

to create a healthy & supportive San Diego

We're here to help San Diegans understand the unique challenges that affect the mental health of the LGBTQ+ community. This bulletin will help you learn how you can support LGBTQ+ friends and family and give you resources to share if your loved one is struggling.



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.

60% of LGBTQ+ youth who wanted mental health care in the past year were **not able to get it**.

4X LGBTQ+ youth are **4x more likely to attempt suicide** than their peers.

Discriminatory legislation is **worsening mental health issues** for LGBTQ+ youth.

LGBTQ+ individuals are at higher risk for substance misuse

which individuals may be using as a coping mechanism.

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?”

About *It’s Up to Us*

This bulletin is part of the *It’s Up to Us* campaign, developed through the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, and supports the County’s *Live Well San Diego* vision to promote a community that is healthy, safe, and thriving. By raising awareness, encouraging dialogue, and providing access to local resources, we aim to inspire wellness, reduce stigma, and prevent suicide in all San Diegans, particularly focusing on San Diego’s hardest hit and most at-risk populations.

Sources

LGBTQ+ Communities and Mental Health. (2018) Mental Health America. bit.ly/3P6yt00

LGBTQI | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness. (2013) Nami.org. bit.ly/3Cs2dgp

CDC report shows concerning increases in sadness and exposure to violence among teen girls and LGBQ+ youth. (2023) bit.ly/3oZYZgV

Facts About LGBTQ Youth Suicide. (2022) The Trevor Project. bit.ly/3JaKGwO

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/LGBTQsupport. 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

The San Diego Access & 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

