



This Fact Sheet serves to provide an overview of LGBTQ mental health in Los Angeles County in order to inform policy makers, providers, and community members about health disparities in their community and ways to address them.

IMPORTANCE OF LGBTQ+ COMPETENCY AT THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health serves **250,000**¹ residents annually and requires its providers to attend **one** cultural competency training per year. This annual training taken by DMH employees **may not cover issues related to the more than 400,000 LGBTQ+** residents that live in Los Angeles County, which has the highest LGBTQ+ population density within a county in California.² The lack of a mandated LGBTQ+ cultural competency training fails to guarantee that DMH employees and contractors will have the tools and skills to prevent retraumatization and stigmatization of LGBTQ+ patients.

TRAUMA NEGATIVELY IMPACTS MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES IN VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Without LGBTQ+ competency trainings, LGBTQ+ patients can be **retraumatized** by providers who:

- Question the validity of patients' identities.
- Make inaccurate assumptions about patients' sexual orientations and gender identities.
- Invalidate LGBTQ+ patients' life experiences.
- Are blind to their own cultural biases surrounding gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Fail to create and maintain a safe space.
- Overly attribute patients' problems to their identities OR underemphasize the importance of a patient's identity.
- Engage with LGBTQ+ patients' family members without preserving patients' privacy.



"I received mental health services from the LA Department of Mental Health for seven years, which included working with several therapists who were well intentioned, but clearly not well informed on problems LGBTQ clients face in general (safety or stigma) and certainly not issues within our own community (ageism or inclusion)."

— Brian Gilad, LGBTQ+ DMH patient

¹ <https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/>

² <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/California-LGBT-Divide-Jan-2016.pdf>

WHY THIS TRAINING IS NEEDED IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

14,428

Los Angeles has the largest transgender population in the state — 14,428 residents.

6X

Transgender adults in California are nearly 6x more likely to report having attempted suicide.

28%

28% of Trans* and gender nonconforming people have experienced verbal harassment in a medical setting.³

LGBTQ+ YOUTH COMPRISE A LARGE NUMBER OF HOMELESS YOUTH

- Forty percent of runaway and homeless youth identify as LGBTQ.⁴
- Sixty-eight percent of LGBTQI2-S youth are homeless based on family rejection.⁵
- LGB young adults who reported higher levels of family rejection during adolescence were 8.4 times more likely to report having attempted suicide.⁶
- LGBTQ youth who report having at least one accepting adult were 40% less likely to report a suicide attempt in the past year.⁷

LA COUNTY LGBTQ FOSTER YOUTH DISPARITIES

8

	% LGBTQ	% NON-LGBTQ
Hospitalizations for emotional reasons at some point in their lives	13.47	4.25
Homeless at some point in their lives	21.09	13.90

³ https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/resources/NTDS_Exec_Summary.pdf

⁴ <https://californialgbtqhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/O4MH-Mapping-the-Road-to-Equity.pdf>

⁵ <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/press/40-percent-of-homeless-youth-are-lgbt-family-rejection-is-leading-cause/>

⁶ https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS_report_final-aug-2014.pdf

⁷ <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/2019/06/27/research-brief-accepting-adults-reduce-suicide-attempts-among-lgbtq-youth/>

⁸ https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS_report_final-aug-2014.pdf

QUEER WOMEN EXPERIENCE ALARMING RATES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

61% of bisexual and 44% of lesbian women experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime vs. 35% of heterosexual women.⁹

48% of bisexual women experienced their first rape between the ages of 11-17.¹⁰

LGBTQ+ SENIORS FACE STARTLING DISPARITIES

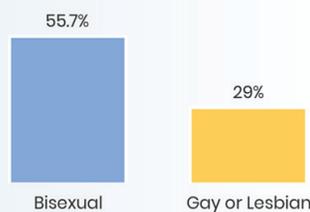
2X

LGBT seniors are twice as likely to be single and alone.¹¹

8X

Latino LGB middle-aged and older adults in California are nearly eight times more likely to experience psychological distress than Latino non-LGB counterparts.¹²

 Bisexual Californians, age 65 and older, are nearly twice as likely to live 200% below the poverty level than gays and lesbians.



⁹ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/2015data-brief508.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/2015data-brief508.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.sageusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/sageusa-the-facts-on-lgbt-aging.pdf>

¹² <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/1809-CHIS-Older-Adults-Report.pdf>

BI+ YOUTH EXPERIENCE SEVERE ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

- 52% of queer youth identify as Bi+.
- 82% of bi+ youth feel down or depressed compared to 71% of gay and lesbian youth.
- 85% of bi+ youth usually feel worried, nervous or panicked compared to 77% of gay and lesbian youth.¹³

Mental Health Risk for Transgender and Cisgender Adults in CA 14

	% TRANSGENDER	% CISGENDER
Lifetime Suicidal Thoughts	34	10
Lifetime Suicide Attempts	22	4
Serious Psychological Distress Past Year	33	9

7.9% of gays/lesbians and 9.9% of bisexuals suffer from housing instability vs. 4.7% of heterosexuals.¹⁵

¹³ <https://www.hrc.org/resources/bi-youth-report>

¹⁴ <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/CHIS-Transgender-Adults-Oct-2017.pdf>

¹⁵ http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/docs/2015LACHS/KeyIndicator/PH-KIH_2017-sec%20UPDATED.pdf

