

Homelessness and the LGBTQIA+ Youth/Young Adult Community: Implications for

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Bio: DJ Ralston – Pronouns: they/them/theirs

- Non-Binary/Trans-Masc, Queer, Geriatric Millennial, Foodie and Muppet Enthusiast
- Professional Background
 - Vocational Rehabilitation
 - Public Workforce Development
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 - Certified (Partner) Work Incentive Coordinator
 - Masters Degree – Rehabilitation Counseling
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- Areas of Expertise
 - Supporting LGBTQIA+ Populations including LGBTQIA+ Students & Youth
 - Disability and Poverty, Social Social Security Work Incentives and Financial Empowerment
 - Relationship Building, Partnership Development, and Training and Professional Development



Session Objectives

- Increased knowledge and understanding of issues and challenges facing LGBTQIA+ populations.
- Increased knowledge of the intersection of LGBTQIA+ populations and housing instability and/or homelessness.
- Increased knowledge of context and impact of Housing Instability and Homelessness for both general and LGBTQIA+ populations.
- Increased knowledge of considerations, strategies, and resources to support LGBTQIA+ populations who experience homelessness and/or housing instability.

The Current State of Affairs - LGBTQIA+ Population



LGBTQ+ or LGBTQIA: Acronyms and Definitions

- **Lesbian** - A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women.
- **Gay** - A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.
- **Bisexual** - A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.
- **Transgender** - Umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.
- **Queer** - Umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities who are not heterosexual and cisgender.
- **Intersex** - Umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, these traits are visible at birth, and in others, they are not apparent until puberty. Some chromosomal variations of this type may not be physically apparent at all.
- **Asexual** - The lack of a sexual attraction or desire for other people.
- **Cisgender**: Used to describe an individual whose gender identity and gender expression align with sex assigned at birth.

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Sexual/Affectual Orientation

- An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people.
 - Gay
 - Lesbian
 - Homosexual
 - Bisexual
 - Pansexual
 - Polysexual
 - Asexual

Gender Identity

- One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
 - Transgender
 - Non-Binary
 - Intersex
 - Genderqueer/Gender-Fluid
 - Gender Expansive/Gender Non-Conforming
 - Cisgender

➔ [Human Rights Campaign – Glossary of Terms](#)

The Current State of Affairs...

- According to the Human Rights Campaign, **more than 400 Anti-LGBTQ+ Bills** have been introduced in states across the country in thus far in 2023. The **majority of bills specifically target transgender and nonbinary youth.**
- Nearly a third of LGBTQ young people said their mental health was poor most of the time or always due to anti-LGBTQ policies and legislation.
- Nearly two thirds of LGBTQ young people said hearing about potential state and local laws banning people from discussing LGBTQ people at school made their mental health significantly worse.

Anti-LGBTQ Policies

A record number of anti-LGBTQ policies have been introduced and implemented in the last year – and they're having a negative impact on LGBTQ young people's mental health. However, laws that protect LGBTQ young people from the dangerous and discredited practice of conversion therapy made them feel better.



Nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ young people said their mental health was poor most of the time or always due to anti-LGBTQ policies and legislation.

Nearly 2 in 3 LGBTQ young people said that hearing about potential state or local laws banning people from discussing LGBTQ people at school made their mental health a lot worse.

Conversely, 79% of LGBTQ young people said hearing about potential state and local laws trying to ban conversion therapy made them feel a little or a lot better.

To what extent do you pay attention to media reports about rights for people who are LGBTQ?

85% Somewhat or a lot 15% Not at all or a little bit



The Trevor Project 2023 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health (Ages 13 – 24)

Surveyed nearly 28,000 LGBTQ Youth

41% of LGBTQ Youth seriously considered suicide in the last year – and 14% of LGBTQ youth attempted suicide in the past year including nearly 1 in 5 transgender youth.

- <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023/#suicide-by-gender>

	Considered Suicide in the Last Year	Attempted Suicide in the Last Year
Transgender Boy/Man	56%	23%
Transgender Girl/Woman	48%	16%
Non-Binary/Gender-Queer	48%	17%

The Current State of Affairs LGBTQIA+ Population and Homelessness or Housing Instability



Homelessness and Housing Instability Among LGBTQ+ Individuals (Ages 13-24)

- **28%** of LGBTQ Youth reported experiencing **homelessness or housing instability** at some point in their lives.
- Nearly half (44%) of Native/Indigenous LGBTQ youth have experienced homelessness or housing instability at some point in their life, compared to 16% of Asian American/Pacific Islander youth, 27% of White LGBTQ youth, 27% of Latinx LGBTQ youth, 26% of Black LGBTQ youth, and 36% of multiracial LGBTQ youth.
- **Homelessness and housing instability** were reported at **higher rates among transgender and nonbinary youth**, including 38% of transgender girls/women, 39% of transgender boys/men, and 35% of nonbinary youth, compared to 23% of cisgender LGBTQ youth.
- 16% of LGBTQ youth reported that they had slept away from parents or caregivers because they ran away from home, with more than half (55%) reporting that they ran away from home because of mistreatment or **fear of mistreatment due to their LGBTQ identity**.
- **14% of LGBTQ youth** reported that they had slept away from parents or caregivers because they were **kicked out or abandoned**, with **40% reporting** that they were **kicked out or abandoned due to their LGBTQ identity**.

Homelessness and Housing Instability Among LGBTQIA+ Individuals (Ages 13-24)

- LGBTQ youth in our sample who reported housing instability or homelessness had **nearly two to four times the odds of reporting depression, anxiety, self-harm, considering suicide, and attempting suicide** compared to those who did not report any housing instability.
- LGBTQ youth who reported past housing instability or current homelessness had **nearly 6x greater odds** of reporting that they had **been in foster care** at any point in their life.
- According to HUD, **20% - 40% of all homeless youth identify as members of the LGBTQ community**, and for them, homelessness or the threat of homelessness frequently forces youth into survival behaviors that jeopardize their wellbeing and safety.

Your Support Matters.

Homelessness and Housing Instability Among LGBTQ+ Individuals (Adults)

- Sexual minority adults are **twice as likely** as the general population **to have experienced homelessness** in their lifetime.
- A **higher proportion of transgender** people report recent homelessness than sexual minority and cisgender straight people.
 - Within the last 12 months:
 - **8%** of Transgender Adults (of varying sexual orientations) experienced homelessness.
 - **1%** of cisgender straight adults experienced homelessness.

Homelessness and Housing Instability Among Transgender Individuals

- 1 in 5 Transgender individuals has been discriminated against when seeking a home.
- 1 in 10 Transgender individuals has been evicted as a result of their gender identity.
- 1 in 5 transgender individuals has experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.
- Familial rejection, discrimination, and violence have contributed to a large number of transgender youth being homeless.
 - Unfortunately, social service and homeless shelters that work with this population often fail to culturally and appropriately serve transgender homeless people, including denying them shelter based on their gender identity; inappropriately housing them in a gendered space they do not identify with; and/or failing to address co-occurring issues facing transgender homeless adults and youth.

Context and Impact(s) of Housing Instability and/or Homelessness



Research Tells Us...

- Financial stress is linked to poor health
American Psychological Association (2015)
- Mental health and debt are associated
Metzler et al., 2012; Fitch et al., 2007
- Hardship experiences themselves can lead poor health and disability
Yoo et al., 2009
- Housing instability and/or homelessness is typically accompanied by high levels of financial worry/distress, and increased likelihood of a history of experiencing poverty, including childhood poverty and other social disadvantages.
Sullivan et al., (2000)

Research Tells Us... Scarcity and Chronic Instability

The Science of Scarcity – A Behavioral economist's fresh perspectives on poverty (May-June 2015)

- [Sendhil Mullainathan](#) (Harvard Economist) and Eldar Shafir (Professor of Psychology and Public Affairs at Princeton)
- In their 2013 book *Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much*, laid out years of findings from the fields of psychology and economics, as well as their own new empirical research.
- Based on their analysis of the data, they demonstrated how scarcity steals mental capacity wherever it occurs whether a result of hunger, loneliness, lacking the time necessary to complete tasks or experiencing a chronic lack of stability, such as is **consistent with the experience of housing instability/homelessness.**

Impact of Poverty (i.e., Chronic Instability and Scarcity)

Findings from their study (May-June 2015) on scarcity indicate:

- Poverty depletes cognitive resources therefore leaving little space for making everyday decisions.
- When coupled with having low income, there is an increased risk for depression and anxiety.
- Impulsive behavior, poor performance in school, poor financial decision-making may be products of a feeling of scarcity.
- Just thinking about scarcity taxes the mind and increases stress.
- Policies and programs need to consider scarcity-induced behavior in their design. Look at the “cockpit” rather than the “pilot”.

Impacts of Scarcity – Homelessness and Housing Instability

- **Scarcity is distracting.** It leads to seeing most experiences, including everyday mundane experiences, through an economic lens that is difficult to ignore, often altering mental associations and impacting other experiences.
 - (Shafir, 2017; Shah et al., 2018)
- **Depletion is associated with poor decision making.** Depletion, often induced as a result of persistent scarcity results in a focus on the current, here-and-now problem which most often results in a short-term fix as opposed to foreseeing and avoid long term issues.
 - (Kalil et al., 2022; Shafir, 2017; Shah et al., 2018)

Considerations, Strategies, and Resources for LGBTQ+ Individuals Experiencing Housing Instability and/or Homelessness

What Can We Do?

→ Considerations

- Influence Oppression
 - How LGBTQIA+ identity can compound the oppression of experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

→ Strategies

- Centering an Ethic of Care and Compassionate Assistance
 - Relationship-based, contextual, compassion, benevolence, responsibility to others
 - Understanding Power and Critical Self-Reflection
 - Rapport, Safety, Advocacy
 - Humble Inquiry and Trauma-Informed Approach

→ Resources

Consideration: Influence of Oppression

- According to Adams, Bell, & Griffin (2007) oppression exists in several forms (i.e., racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, ableism, etc.) and is experienced at both individual and systemic levels.
 - Individual – Microaggressions (i.e., being misgendered)
 - Systems – Policies, Rules, Laws & Institutions (i.e., sub-minimum wage)
- Regardless of whether intentional or unintentional, oppression has destructive ramifications on the mental health and well-being of systematically and historically marginalized and excluded individuals, populations, and communities.
 - Minority Stress
 - Transgender Suicide Rate
 - Poverty
- Oppression has a biopsychosocial impact



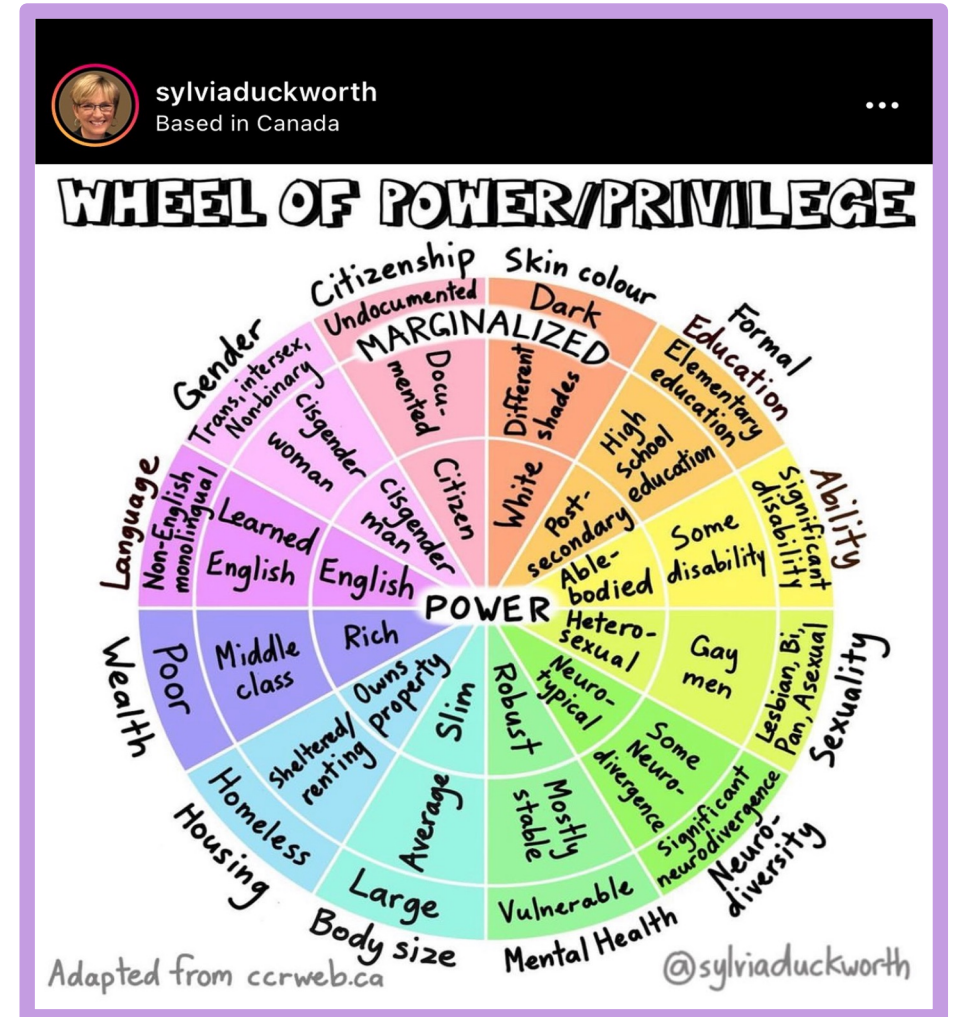
Consideration: The Intersection of LGBTQIA+ Identity and Homelessness and/or Housing Instability

- Understand how and why the trauma of homelessness and housing instability may be compounded for LGBTQIA+ individuals.
 - Homelessness/Housing Instability may be a result of sexual orientation or gender identity
 - Rejection from familial home/home or origin
 - Denied access to shelters/group homes
 - Shelters, group homes, and other housing supports often lack knowledge of supporting LGBTQ+ spaces, particularly for those who are Transgender/GNC forcing them into single-gendered/sexed spaces.
 - These experiences further harm by those trying to help as a result of lack of knowledge relative to supporting LGBTQ+ populations.

Strategy: Centering Care and Compassion – Power and Critical Self-Reflection

Acknowledge and understand the inherent power differential in helping relationships

- Understanding how you show up
 - Reflection on your own identities
 - Recognition of power, privilege, space you take up, how your identities intersect and interact with others'
 - Reflect on your language and its explicit and implicit implications, nonverbals,
 - Recognize your own biases, growth edges, strengths

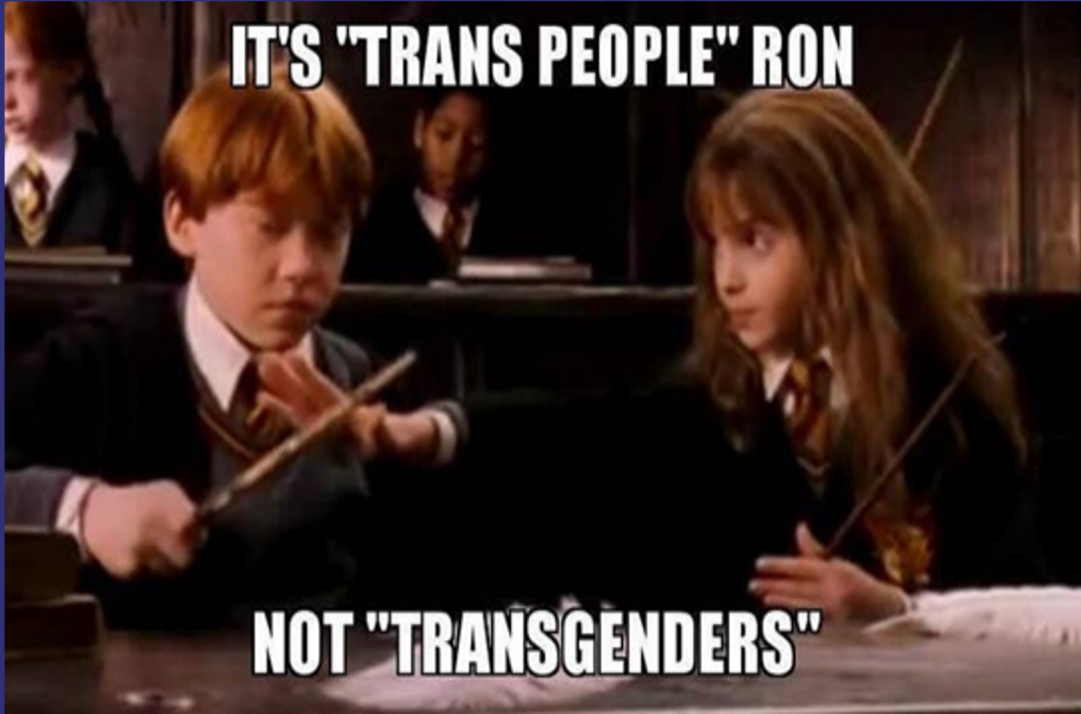


Strategy: Approaching Individuals with Care and Compassion – Establishing Rapport...

- Consider your initial interaction(s) with students...do you
 - Ask about preferred name/name you go by
 - Include your own pronouns when introducing yourself
 - Ask about pronouns
- Understand and use language of LGBTQ+ community
- Have LGBTQIA+ Affirming Flyers, Stickers, All-Gender Restrooms



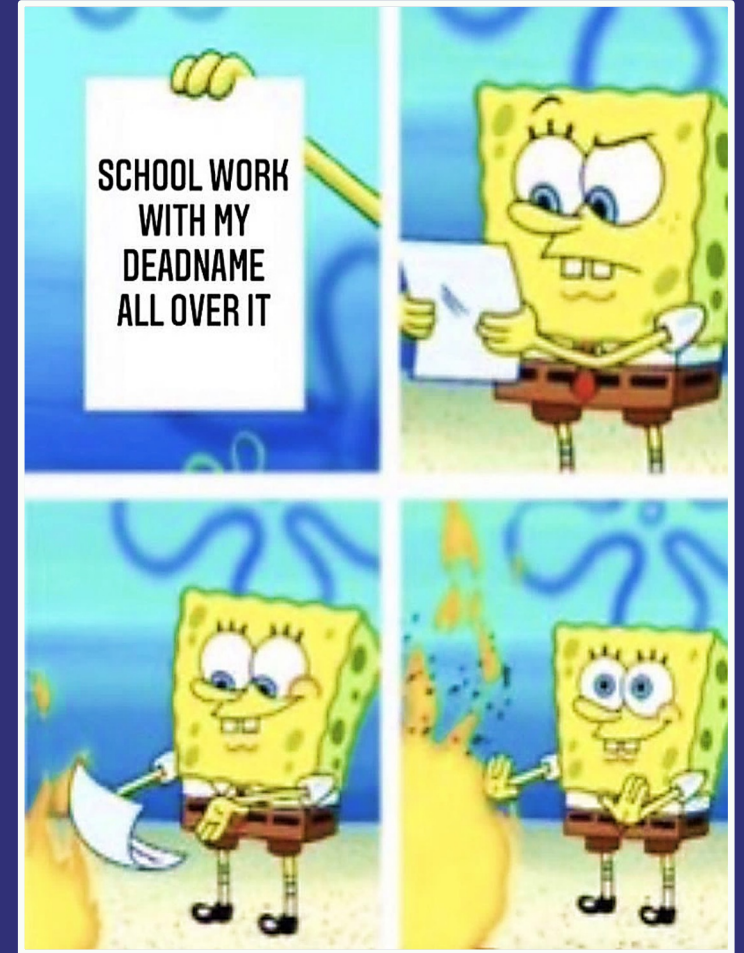
Strategy: Approach Individuals with Care and Compassion – Safety



- Upon disclosure, ask:
 - Who are they out to?
 - What do they actually need?
Gender Identity/Sexual orientation is often not the main or only concern*
- Use correct pronouns: practice!
- If accidentally use wrong pronoun, upon realizing, correct yourself and move on...

Strategy: Approach Individuals with Care and Compassion – Advocacy

- Model name and pronouns regularly
- Correct other people as needed
- Be knowledgeable of and provide resources
- Get involved
- Assist in educating others
- Make it safe for people to tell you their stories w/o judgment IF relevant



Strategy: Centering Care and Compassion – Humble Inquiry & Trauma-Informed Approach

Humble Inquiry

- “Humble Inquiry is the fine art of drawing someone out, of asking questions to which you do not already know the answer, of building a relationship based on curiosity and interest in the other person” (Schein, p.2)
- Relationship(s) over Task Accomplishment
- Asking instead of Telling – Asking builds relationships
- Here and Now Humility

Trauma-Informed Approach

→ 6 Guiding Principals

- Safety
- Trustworthiness & Transparency
- Peer Support
- Collaboration and Mutuality
- Empowerment Voice & Choice
- Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues

Reputable Resources: LGBTQIA+ Resources

Not expected to be experts, but familiar with resources and connections to those who are:

- Crisis Text Line - Text HOME to [741741](https://www.crisistextline.org/)
- [Trevor Lifeline Call, Text, Chat](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/)
- [Human Rights Campaign](https://www.humanrights.org/)
- [Lambda Legal – Resources for LGBTQ+ Youth by State](https://www.lambdalegal.org/)
- [CenterLink - Find LGBT Community Centers in Illinois](https://www.centerlink.org/)
- [Illinois Department of Children and Family Services LGBTQI+ Youth Support](https://www.idhs.gov/children-family-services/lgbtqi-youth-support/)
- [Equality Illinois](https://www.equalityillinois.org/)
- [Queer Oriented Rural Resource Network \(Illinois Resources\)](https://www.queeroriented.org/)

Resources: LGBTQIA+ Individuals Experiencing Homelessness and/or Housing Instability

- [Familiarize yourself with Federal, State, Local Anti-Discrimination Laws](#)
- [National Center for Transgender Equality – Know Your Housing Rights Guide](#)
- [HUD Resources for LGBTQIA+ Individuals in Crisis](#)
- [National Coalition for the Homeless' Guide for Making Shelters Safe for Transgender People](#)

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