



Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, And Queer/ Questioning (LGBTQ+) Youth Suicide Prevention

Resource Manual

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Introduction

As part of the investigation and moving forward within the City and County of Denver's ("the City") focus on the topic of suicide prevention; looking into minority communities is an important aspect to better reach the community as a whole. This is in part of the work that Rick Padilla started August of 2019 to investigate where the City and Colorado lies with suicide prevention and to be able to better the community reach. The primary focus for the suicide prevention plan at this time is to be able to help support and promote youth voices to lead the change, prevent suicide from happening, and reduce the stigma within Denver.

Throughout this research, various amounts of data have been collected to be able to assess how Denver youth feel about mental health topics; one being identity and mental health. In order to better address these matters, research within the resources, materials, and outlooks with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) individuals were evaluated. It is known that all aspects may not have been identified through the analysis and it is acknowledged that additional data is out there that we were not privy to at the time of completion.

Goal

The work through this resource manual is to be able to assess how the City is doing within response to the rising youth suicide rates in regard to the LGBTQ+ community. This is to be able to access the main gaps in reaching the LGBTQ+ youth and finding any gaps within the Denver community that can be better addressed. Through finding these gaps, can lead to spearheading a direction to better serve the City and work against fighting the suicide epidemic.

The ultimate goal of the City is to prevent suicide from happening within Denver and develop an approach that could have the possibility to be expanded throughout the state of Colorado.

Having a focus with the youth population, our goal is to not only work towards the reduction of youth suicide rates but to be able to provide youth a space to be and make the impact alongside our efforts. To better protect the youth, the youth are needed to be involved to make the greatest impact.

Scope of Work

With the rise of suicide rates in Denver, particularly among the youth, multiple agencies and organizations are working on developing a suicide prevention initiative. The task for this particular aspect is to look into the LGBTQ+ youth and the initiative that are being created around this minority group to better serve this population. Youth in general have different struggles when it comes to mental health than adults; but in comparison LGBTQ+ youth face more challenges when in the face of mental health. Thus, the importance of looking into what is out there for just these individuals and not just the group as a whole. It is crucial for this work to understand where the City is currently at, what specific LGBTQ+ resources are there, and reporting any gaps in reaching this audience. It is important to take on a local laws, community, schools, and individual perspective to be able to see where the greatest impact in reducing LGBTQ+ youth suicide in Denver will be able to take action and who to bring to the table, besides just youth, when looking into creating initiatives moving forward.

While exploring the main protective factors for LGBTQ+ youth it led into looking at the City in parts of affirmative care, the school climate, LGBTQ+ centers, laws or policies, and other various resources. This also took into consideration the findings from the 2020 youth survey on how interested this community had on identity and mental health topics. This project looked at

resources and programs within the cities of Denver, Salt Lake City, Nashville, and at a national level. Data has been collected from various levels within these cities in order to take a broad approach on this topic.

This project has been broken down within 3 parts: part 1) review of the City youth survey, part 2) research within resources and approaches, and part 3) direction for future approaches. This resource manual will look at a combination of all three parts.

Methodology

To keep consistency with the other data analysis for this program the comparison of Denver to two other cities were kept. This looks into the resources offered at a National level, Salt Lake City, Utah and Nashville, Tennessee. Salt Lake City is used as a reference because of the similarities in youth suicide and school approach. Nashville is used as a reference because of the similar size in compared to Denver. It is important to be able to compare Denver to similar cities within the scope of suicide prevention.

The aspect of what was considered a resource had to fit the criteria of: LGBTQ+ focused, promoted a protective risk factor, promoted suicide prevention, accessibility to the youth population, and the promotion of LGBTQ+ youth voice. The work of this City is focused on making a platform that is for youth and is directly by the youth voices. Such approach for these resources was taken by secondary online research; if applicable reaching out to organizations, primarily ones within Denver for partnerships. A secondary approach was used because of the timeline for this project and the resources due to COVID-19 many companies are running on a limited team especially those focused within the LGBTQ+ community.

Each city was researched extensively though local LGBTQ+ centers, health care resources, school resources, trainings, local laws, and programs that were directed towards the prevention of LGBTQ+ youth suicide.

Background and Current Context

The city has previously looked into mental health and the rising suicide rates among the United States during the Phase 1 Gap Analysis. Within this it had looked at the nation and community as a whole and broke down some of the minority communities, LGBTQ+ being one of those subcategories. Directly looking into LGBTQ+ youth it is estimated that within the age ranges 13-17 more than 10,000 US youth identify as apart of the LGBTQ+ community ("Growing Up LGBT in America: View and Share Statistics," n.d.). Knowing that that is just a four-year gap there are many that are unrepresented since demographic data on LGBTQ+ youth is often not recorded. Within the age range of 12-24 at least 9 out of 10 individuals are out to at least one friend or family member ("Growing Up LGBT in America: View and Share Statistics," n.d.). These individuals have a **three times higher** rate of suicide attempts (Goldbach, Rhoades, Green, Fulginiti, & Marshal, 2019). Looking at suicide ideation of those within the LGBTQ+ community are around **43-56%** whereas the heterosexual counterparts are 15% (Goldbach et al., 2019; Meyer, Ilan M.; Luo, Feijun; Wilson, Bianca D.M; and Stone, 2019). Looking into suicide attempts showed that there was an **average of 30%** and the heterosexual counter parts are around 6% (Johns, Poteat, Horn, & Kosciw, 2019). Breaking that down more transgender and gay males seem to report higher rates of suicide ideation and attempts (Kuper, Adams, & Mustanski, 2018).

Some of the factors that may lead to these higher rates is these individuals are at a higher risk of mental health disorders and substance abuse. In a 2018 research study it showed that LGBTQ+ turned to self-harm and harmful substances as coping mechanism (Kuper et al., 2018). These youth also have reported high rates of bullying within the school and online (McConnell, Clifford, Korpak, Phillips, & Birkett, 2017). 98% of LGBTQ+ students have heard the term "gay" in a harmful way from either another peer or even staff in the past school year (Hatzenbuehler, Mark L. and Keyes, 2013). LGBTQ+ individuals were two times more likely to have been bullied and skip school for their safety compared to their counterparts (Meyer, Ilan M.; Luo, Feijun; Wilson, Bianca D.M; and Stone, 2019).

Key Terms

The following are important terms and definition that should be acknowledged before moving forward with discussing matters of the LGBTQ+ community and suicide prevention work.

Youth: For the context of this manual this is any individual that falls within the age range of 12-24 years of age.

LGBTQ+: Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning. These are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. The "+" in the acronym includes all those that are not included within the LGBTQ identities.

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. Men, women and non-binary people may use this term as their descriptor.

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 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.

Queer- A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Often used as an umbrella term for many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or genderexpansive identities. This term was previously a slur but has since been reclaimed by the LGBTQ movements.

Sexual Orientation: An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people; this does not depend on an individual's gender identity.

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.

Biological Sex: Refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones and chromosomes.

Gender Non-Conforming: A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.

Non-Binary: An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. These individuals may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories.

Affirmative Care: Health care and health care workers that understand how people's identities, experiences, and relationships might affect their health.

Coming out: The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share with others.

Outing: Exposing someone's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or gender identity to others without their permission. This can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety, religious or family situations.

Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA): Student- led school club that aims to create a safe, welcoming, and accepting school environment for all youth, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Risk Factors: Something that increases a person's chances of developing a mental illness.

Positive Factors: Conditions and/or attributes in individuals, families, communities or the larger society that help people deal more effectively with stressful events and helps eliminates risk within a person's life.

Risk and Protective Factors

In relation to focusing on suicide prevention it is important to breakdown specific risk and protective factors. Some of these may be similar to those of the heterosexual counter parts but the following list in particular is the viewpoint of LGBTQ+ youth. It is important to note that the following is listed in alphabetical order and not in order of importance. There is truly no order of importance for this sense everyone experience is different and have different life impacts.

Risk	Protective
Being Outed - This can harm an individual and put them into situations that they are not safe in.	Access to affirmative care - This increases the likelihood that individuals will seek out care and get the appropriate care needed.
Bullying - LGBTQ+ youth have a higher chance of being bullied within school or via social media. It's reported that 83% experience verbal harassment from peers and even staff members of schools.	Building of resiliency - This allows for individuals to know that they are strong enough and have the tools to face the challenges that might be presented.
Feeling of unsafe - LGBTQ+ youth have reported higher in skipping school because of feeling unsafe.	Family acceptance - Family ties can be on either side of this equation but having an accepting family decreases risks drastically.
Homelessness - With unaccepting households many youths within the LGBTQ+ community have found themselves kicked out or homeless at one point in their life.	Positive representation - Many within the LGBTQ+ community do not see themselves through social media; allowing more representation allows for more to realize that it is a "normal" part of life.
Mental health problems - Individuals within this community have been found to have higher rates of mental health problems.	Safe places - (centers, schools, housing, etc.)- These allow for individuals to feel a sense of connectiveness and belonging.
Partaking in risky behaviors - Examples of such risky behaviors are drugs, alcohol, and unsafe sex.	Trusted person - Having a trusted person in some part of an individual's circle decrease rates of suicide.
Substance abuse - Individuals within the LGBTQ+ community are at 190% odds higher of drug and alcohol abuse.	Use of correct pronouns - This allows for an individual to know that they are accepted and validated on how they view themselves within the world.



Key Takeaways

City Comparisons

Overall comparisons between the three cities had already been conducted on an overall level. For the purpose of this comparison, it just focused on the resources among the LGBTQ+ population. Again, it is known that this is not a complete list but ever growing with more efforts and resources to come. This will be broken down by each type of category in order to compare each city. These categories are affirmative care, school-based program, LGBTQ+ centers, hotlines, advocacy, laws, various resources, and a targeted suicide prevention plan.

Affirmative Care

Overall, the impact of affirmative care shows that each city has taken a focus to provide some type of care centered of the LGBTQ+ population. Based off of these finding an overall focus was shown that there is a need for specific transgendered resources and health care. One unique aspect that Denver resources have is the TRUE Center based out of the Children's Hospital, this really shows the focus of giving the access of care to youth in such an important time for some individuals.

Denver	Salt Lake City	Nashville	National
<u>Colorado Health Network</u> : services focused with addiction, coming out/ living authentically, family service agencies, HIV/AIDS, hospitals, physicians, surgery, therapists/counselors, and treatment centers (https://coloradohealthnetwork.org)	<u>LGBTQ+ Affirmative Therapist Guild of Utah</u> : Provides innovative and affirmative training to mental health professionals and trainees. Has a list of LGBTQ-affirming therapists (https://www.lgbtqtherapists.com/index.html)	<u>Program for LGBTQ Health- Vanderbilt</u> : Promote national leadership in providing excellent patient care, education, research, and advocacy for the LGBTQ community. (https://www.vumc.org/lgbtq/welcome-co-founder)	<u>National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center</u> : Provides educational programs, resources, and consultation with the goal of optimizing quality, cost-effective health care for LGBTQIA+ people. (https://www.lgbtqiahealtheducation.org)
<u>Health One, UC Health, Denver Health</u> : Resources for finding affirming care	<u>University of Utah's Transgender Health Program</u> : Multidisciplinary team committed to providing comprehensive, compassionate, evidence-based care for gender diverse individuals in supportive, affirming environment. (https://medicine.utah.edu/surgery/plastic-surgery/trans-health-program/)	<u>Trans Buddy Program Vanderbilt</u> : Increase access to care and improve healthcare outcomes for transgender people by providing emotional support to transgender patients during healthcare visits. (https://www.vumc.org/lgbtq/trans-buddy-program)	
<u>Transgender Center of the Rockies</u> : Services provided care management services, HIV/AIDS, and support groups	<u>UTAH STRONG Crisis Counseling Program</u> : Services free of charge focused on emotional support, crisis counseling,		

https://www.transgendercenteroftherockies.org	coping strategies, mental health education, and referrals. (388-386-2289, UtahStrong@utah.gov)		
TRUE Center at Children's Hospital: Only comprehensive care center in the Rocky Mountain region specifically set up for gender-diverse children, adolescents and young adults. Services include puberty-blocking medicines, hormone therapy, gender counseling, referrals for mental health, and assistance with legal name change/gender marker. (https://www.childrenscolorado.org/doctors-and-departments/departments/gender-diversity-center/)			

School Based Programs

The main protective factor for school was having either a trusted adult or a safe organization to turn to within the school. Data was not collected on teachers training on exclusivity or if students felt as if there was a trusted adult within the school, for a future study this could be something to evaluate. The main thing that was assessed was how many schools within the district had a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA). These have been shown to be a core protective factor within school and indirectly states that there is at least one accepting adult since there needs to be a supervising teacher. It should be known that these are rough estimated numbers of GSAs within each city. Since each fall under a club within a school, make the consistency of how many do exist within each school or district harder to track.

Denver	Salt Lake City	Nashville
Estimated 50 within Denver Public Schools as of 2021	Estimated 27 as of 2017	No specific number but showed that it was supported in the city

LGBTQ+ Center

A city having a LGBTQ+ Center is an important consideration in looking into resources, this aspect can provide various amounts of safety and acceptance for these individuals. LGBTQ+ centers can provide a sense of community and belonging through youth groups and be a space for individual to gain more knowledge of the specific LGBTQ+ organizations and resources that are within their community. Listed below are just specific LGBTQ+ centers, it is known that

there are other organizations that are centered for LGBTQ+ youth that are listed within various resources.

Denver	Salt Lake City	Nashville
<p><u>The Center- Rainbow Ally</u>: safe, brave space where LGBTQ youth and their allies find support and acceptance. Provide drop-in space, youth-led events and activities, counseling and support groups, health services and life skills. (https://lgbtqcolorado.org/programs/rainbow-alley/) Youth Director: Meryl Franklin (303.733.7743; mfranklin@lgbtqcolorado.org)</p>	<p><u>Utah Pride Center</u>: Offers youth and family programs, resources for mental health and suicide prevention (https://utahpridecenter.org/youth-programs/)</p>	<p><u>Oasis Center- Just Us</u>: Program dedicated to helping LGBTQ youth to achieve their full potential. Provides LGBTQ+ youth with a liberating space where they can be authentic and celebrate the fluidity of identity. (http://justusoasis.org)</p>

Hotlines

None of the cities themselves have an LGBTQ+ specific hotline. At the national level there are two specific ones that can be easily accessed. Having one could provide a specific safe space and have a greater chance of LGBTQ+ youth using a hotline compared to just only having a generalized hotline at a state level.

Denver	Salt Lake City	Nashville	National
No LGBTQ+ Specific	No LGBTQ+ Specific	No LGBTQ+ Specific	<p><u>Trevor Help Line</u>: 1 (866) 488-7386 www.thetrevorproject.org</p> <p><u>Trans Life Line</u>: (877) 565-8860 https://translifeline.org</p>

Advocacy

Each city and at the national level have a specific organization that focuses on advocating for the LGBTQ+ community and their rights. Having advocacy at each of these levels is important for provide access to equal resources and rights on a multi-level from having a state and a national level focusing on LGBTQ+ rights. It should be known that the following are based at more of a state level of implementation than directly the city.

Denver	Salt Lake City	Nashville	National
<u>One Colorado:</u> States leading advocacy organization dedicated to advocating equality for LGBTQ+ Coloradan one-colorado.org	<u>Equality Utah:</u> Secure equal rights and protections for LGBTQ Utahns and their families (https://www.equalityutah.org)	<u>Tennessee Equality Project:</u> Advocates for the equal rights of LGBTQ people in Tennessee. (https://www.tnep.org)	<u>Human Rights Campaign:</u> Strives to end discrimination against LGBTQ people and realize a world that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all. (https://www.hrc.org)

Legislation

Taking on an approach through legislation, Denver has the most protective laws, followed by Salt Lake City, then Nashville. Below are the various laws implemented at a state level that are in at least one if not all three of the following. An X means that this is fully protected and in place, \ means that there is a partial law in place, and nothing means that there is no law put in place as of May 2021.

Laws	Denver	Salt Lake City	Nashville
<u>Anti-Conversion Therapy:</u> Protects youth from "conversion therapy"	X	X	
<u>Education:</u> Addresses discrimination against student based on sexual orientation and gender identity.	X		
<u>Employment:</u> Cannot discriminate against public employees based on sexual orientation	X	X	
<u>Gender Marker Updates on Identification Documents:</u> Laws/policies that facilitate gender marker updates on both driver's licenses and birth certificates.	X		
<u>Hate Crimes:</u> Law that addresses hate	X	X	\

or bias crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity.			
<u>Housing</u> : Prohibits housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.	X	X	
<u>Marriage equality & Other Relationship Recognition</u> : State issues marriage licenses to same-sex couples.	X	X	X
<u>Public Accommodations</u> : Prohibits discrimination in public accommodations based on sexual orientation and gender identity.	X		
<u>School Anti-Bullying</u> : Addresses harassment and/or bullying of students based on sexual orientation and gender identity.	X		
<u>Transgender Healthcare</u> : Bans insurance exclusions for transgender healthcare.	X		

Various Resources

The following are resources that did not fully fit into the other categories but are important to include. Some of these resources allow for the aspect of promoting youth voices, have an impact on youth homelessness, and the promotion of preventing risky behaviors.

Denver	Salt Lake City	Nashville	National
<u>Colorado LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce</u> : Strive to promote professional development, business diversity, and personal enrichment. (https://colgbtqcc.org)	<u>Family Acceptance Project</u> : Family education booklets designated as a best practice resource for suicide prevention for LGBT people (https://)	<u>Launch Pad</u> : Provides street free sleep to youth between the ages of 18-24 with a focus on being affirming and welcoming to LGBTQ youth. (https://www.nashvillelaunchpad.com)	<u>GLSEN</u> : Advise on, advocate for, and research comprehensive policies designed to protect LGBTQ students as well as students of

	familyproject.sfsu.edu/publications)		marginalized identities. (https://www.glsen.org)
<u>Envision: You:</u> Support, educate, and empower members of Colorado's LGBTQ+ community who are living with a mental health and/or substance use disorder. (https://www.envision-you.org) Steven Haden (steven.haden@envision-you.org)	<u>PFLAG Utah:</u> promotes health and well-being of LGBTQ persons, their families and friends. (http://pflag-saltlakecity.org)	<u>Nashville LGBT Chamber:</u> Advances common business interest, economic growth, and equality in the workplace and society for its LGBT members, business, and allies by providing educational, networking, and community building opportunities. (https://nashvillelgbtchamber.org)	<u>It Gets Better:</u> Mission to uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ youth around the globe. (https://itgetsbetter.org/about/)
<u>LGBTQIA Healthcare Guild:</u> Chapter of a national, grassroots organization of mental and medical healthcare providers, contains both patient and provider resources related to health issues (http://healthcareguild.com/denver.html)	<u>Utah LGBTQ+ Chambers of Commerce:</u> Works to create lasting partnerships between key organizations and business, ensuring growth and visibility for the LGBTQ+ community (https://www.utahlgbtqchamber.org/about/)	<u>PFLAG Nashville:</u> Provides free support for parents, family, and friends of LGBT people (http://pflagnashville.org)	<u>National LGBT Chamber of Commerce:</u> the realization of the impact of economics on the LGBT quality movement, actively engaged in serving the LGBT business community. (https://www.nglcc.org)
<u>OutFront Magazine:</u> Major local publication focused on LGBTQ+ living within the Denver area		<u>Recovery Within Reach:</u> Resources for LGBTQ+ individuals living a life of recovery from mental illness, substance use disorder, or others. (https://recoverywithinreach.org/resources/lgbtqi/)	<u>PFLAG:</u> Mission to build on a foundation of loving families united with LGBTQ people and allies who support one another, and to educate ourselves and our communities to speak up as advocated until all hearts and minds respect, value, and affirm LGBTQ people. (https://pflag.org ; (202) 467-8180)

<p><u>PFLAG Denver</u>: Envisions a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. (https://www.pflagdenver.org)</p>			
<p><u>Urban Peak</u>: Non-profit organization in Denver that provides a full convergence of services for youth ages 15 through 24 experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. (https://www.urbanpeak.org)</p>			

Targeted Suicide Prevention Plan

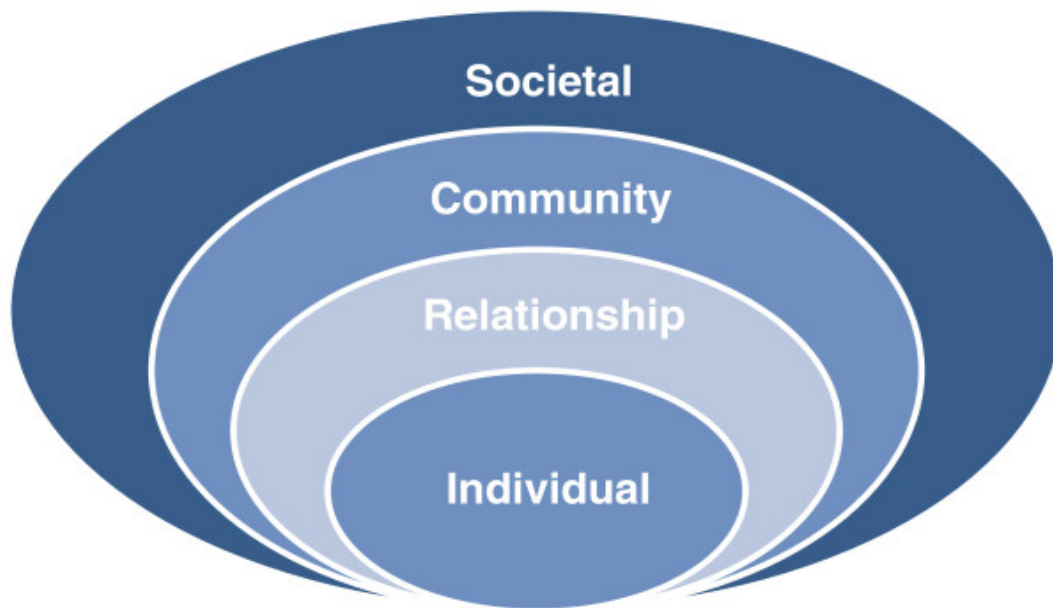
Strictly looking at a LGBTQ+ youth suicide prevention plans the only city that has one in place is Salt Lake City. Nashville had a specific resource within the main plan that focused on a version of QPR training. Whereas Denver does not have an initiative currently focused on LGBTQ+ youth suicide prevention.

Denver	Salt Lake City	Nashville
<p>No specific LGBTQ+ youth suicide prevention plan</p>	<p><u>Utah LGBTQ+ Suicide Prevention Plan 2020-2023</u>: Goal- coalition work group dedicated to long-term suicide prevention efforts in the LGBTQ+ people. Educational hub and resource for those working to decrease risk of suicide among the LGBTQ+ people of Utah. (https://sprc.org/sites/default/files/Utah%20LGBTQ%2B%20Suicide%20Prevention%20Plan%202020-2023.pdf)</p>	<p><u>LGBTQ+ Gatekeeper Training</u>: Part of the Tennessee Statewide Suicide Prevention- 60-120 minute in-person customized version of QPR regarding suicide risk within the LGBTQ+ population (https://www.tspn.org/request-training-now/)</p>

Recommended Overall Strategy

When it comes to moving forward with a suicide prevention plan it is important to acknowledge that some of the organizations that are listed above are also working towards the same goal. With that in mind it is important to build partnerships to work in collaboration. Through looking more into the city comparison and the Salt Lake City prevention plan the aspect of a comprehensive approach seems highly effective.

With that being known it is suggested that Denver takes on a comprehensive approach stemming from the social- ecological model. This approach will take on all aspects that impact an individual's life and in later research can easily help point out various strengths and weakness.



- Societal Level
 - This includes policies that provide resources to establishing and maintaining a coalition that serves a mediating structure connecting individuals and the larger social environment.
 - Focus on local, state, national, and global laws and policies.
 - Examples within Denver:
 - Partnering with One Colorado
 - Continuing to protect LGBTQ+ Youth through legislation
- Community Level
 - Improving the physical and social environment in social settings and addressing other conditions that increase risk factors.
 - Focus on schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods.
 - Examples within Denver:
 - Provide resources for youth
 - Create events and safe places not just centered around night clubs
 - School climate
 - Training teachers on inclusivity within the school
 - Push for inclusive content

- Making sure that each school in DPS has a GSA or at least one known trusted adult for LGBTQ+ youth
 - Social media campaign
 - Showing the challenges that LGBTQ+ youth face within Denver, breaking down the stigmas and promoting a safe culture
- Relationship Level
 - At this level the focus of close relationships of peers, partners and family members- influence the individual through their behavior and contribute to their experiences.
 - Focus on peers, family, and strengthening relationships.
 - Examples within Denver:
 - Provided a space and resources for families
 - Especially within the coming out phase
 - There are resources centered around this so highlighting access to these resources is key
 - Connect with:
 - Peer support groups
 - PFLAG
 - Promotion of building healthy relationships
 - Romantic
 - Friendships
 - Direction of 2021 youth summit for youths as a whole
- Individual Level
 - This factor looks into the biological and personal factors that affect an individual's way of life.
 - Factors: age, education, income, substance use, or personal history.
 - Examples within in Denver:
 - Access to safe spaces
 - Access to medical insurance and care
 - With all of the other aspects in place the idea is that the individual will have room to grow within oneself

Looking into both a short- and long-term approach moving forward the City should have a strategic plan that is focused on strengthening the bonds within the levels of the community and relationships. The thought behind this is to be able to create a safe environment that encompasses the individual to grow with having resources and trusted individuals to lean on in times of need. If an individual's basic needs and environments are strong then there is room for them to grow in oneself. After the city comparison it showed that Denver has the most in place on a societal level, not saying that it cannot be of focus but should not be of main focus for this particular initiative.

Strategic Action Plan

Moving forward to create an action plan the focus of the community and relationships for youth are at the forefront. We have made some short-and long-term focused suggested to better represent and target the LGBTQ+ community. This work will not change perspectives overnight but is looking at the long-term focus of bringing up a better future for the next generation while impacting those youth right now.

Again, because we are not privy to all of the preliminary work that may have been done, this timeline may change based on steps the City may have already taken or deem to be of more importance of moving forward.

Short-Term Focus

1. Promotion of LGBTQ+ youth events and spaces.

There are LGBTQ+ youth centers (Rainbow Alley) within Denver that do already hold events that target this population. The main focus behind this is to make sure those events are known, and that youth have full access to the resources that are available to them. Along with that to help promote safe events for this community, when thinking about events for this community it is often just Pride that is thought of. Though that is a great example that is also one that can be centered around a party culture, so it is important to offer events that are not centered around this culture.

Outside of the LGBTQ+ center and night clubs there is no specific spot for youth 12-24 to go to that is a safe place. Some business within the Denver community is labeled as accepting but are not an LGBTQ+ specific space so at times can still feel not accepting. For the City moving forward there should bring focus to these spaces and if a program were to be implemented to help target within these spaces. Though address the fact that there is not a spot that is LGBTQ+ that is not a night club is something to be address but does not directly fit the scope of this specific plan.

Partnerships:

- The Center on Colfax- to be able to better promote their youth events.
- Denver business- to provide an accepting place for youth that is not just a night club within the city.

2. Provide access for youth and families.

For many youths and their families this age range is a time of change. To some they many easily accept this change, but others may need a little more time and understanding. Providing or amplifying resources that help families in the coming out process. This factor is important because having an accepting support system leads to better out comes for the individual and allows them to be their true authentic self. Having this approach would allow for a sense of connectedness and belonging within their homes to provide a protective factor.

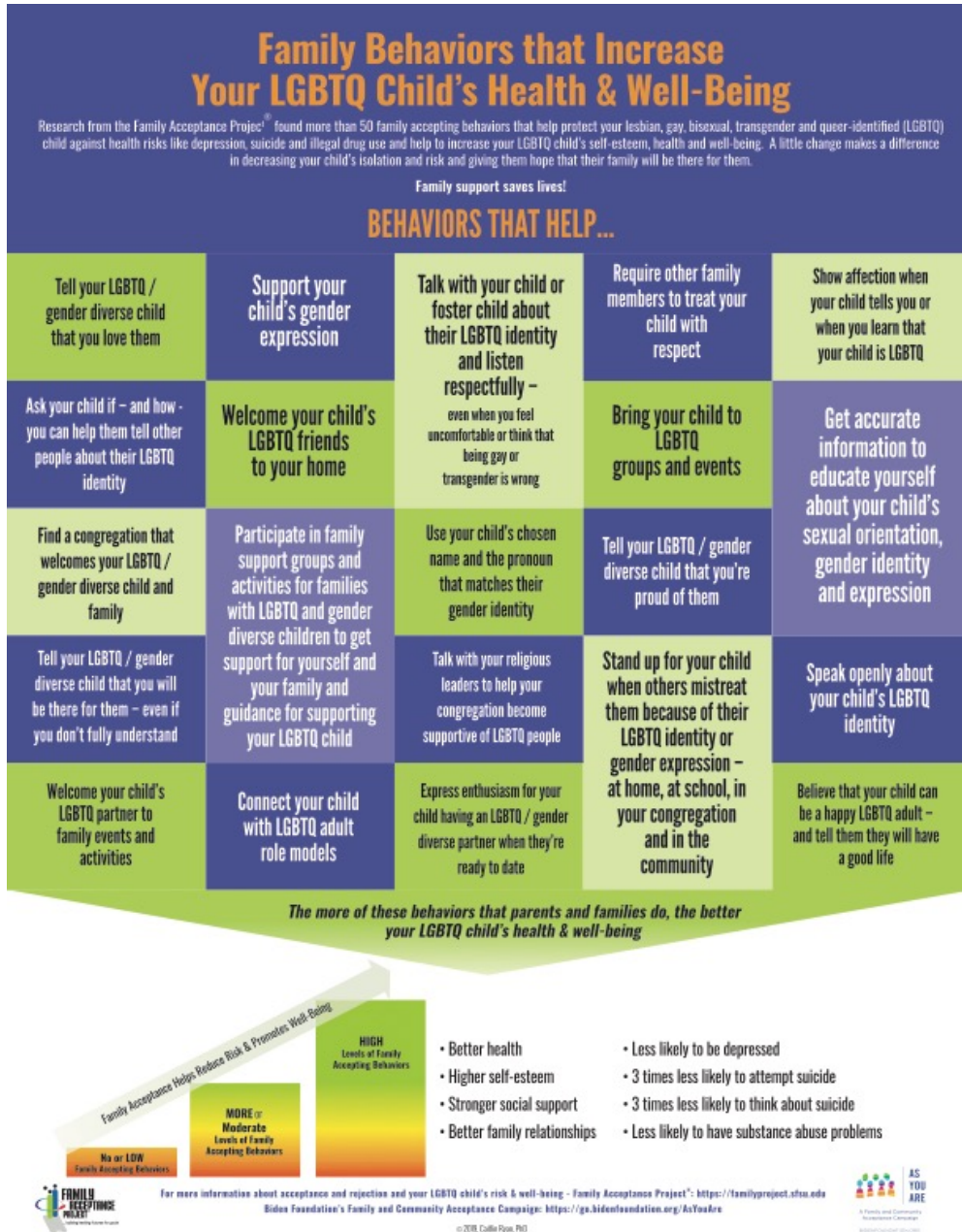
Examples:

- Providing youth led workshops or spaces for the coming out process
- Providing adults, the resources and space for discussing with other on "My child just came out, now what?"

Within Salt Lake Cities plan they outlined The Family Acceptance Plan, that is based out of the San Francisco State University. This project focuses on training and resources for families during the coming out phase of their youth's process. These workshops focus on strengthening the

family unit and decreasing mental health risks. It is suggested to either partner with or adapting this program to be integrated within the Denver community for those to feel as if there is this safe place to learn next steps.

Examples of infographic from The Family Acceptance Plan:



3. Work on specific Denver and LGBTQ+ partnerships.

It is known that there are other organizations within Denver that are working towards the goal of reducing youth suicide and stigma centered around mental health. It is important moving forward to bring these groups together for the collective good of the community. Those listed below are those that are just LGBTQ+ that the City is already in the process with building a relationship and/or seeking out a relationship to build off of.

Partnerships:

- The Center on Colfax
- One Colorado
- Trevor Project
- Envision: You
- TRUE Center with Children's Hospital

It is encouraged for the City to continue reaching out to these groups and bringing in those to the table for the main focus of the community. These organizations already provide a great resource to the Denver youth and with the City's help can bring these voices out and to a wider scale of increased efforts.

4. Start work on gaining LGBTQ+ specific data.

Currently there is limited data from the LGBTQ+ youth community on thoughts for mental health topics from the Denver youth survey that was conducted within 2020. It is important to gain more LGBTQ+ youth population within that approach. Along with that with a long-term goal of creating a social media campaign it is important to make sure that what these youth want to hear will actually be targeted.

Next Steps:

- Put out revised youth survey.
 - Focus on what mental health topics they want to know about, along with taking an approach of what do you want people to know about being a part of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Be able to determine the focus of the social media campaign through the survey results.
- Encourage this to be a safe and accepting space for their voices to be heard within the Denver community.
- Reach out to GSA's, The Center, and other LGBTQ+ organizations to push out the survey to Denver or all of Colorado to get the targeted approach of LGBTQ+ individuals.
 - Know with this approach there will be the bias of just having the LGBTQ+ voice be known.
- Gather overall LGBTQ+ youth demographics to better understand this community and the Denver community.

Long-Term Focus

1. Mandate trainings for all healthcare providers, emergency first responders, and educators to provide LGBTQ+ inclusivity.

It has already been recommended within the Phase 2 of the Denver's prevention plan to press forward with the Zero Suicide model that it has been using. With these trainings it is important to make sure that there is LGBTQ+ content integrated within the training. One of

the main focuses within this needs to be the focus of Transgender care since in this current climate Transgendered rights are already the least protected.

This should also be considered from a legislation aspect in making sure that affirmative care is protected within Denver. All healthcare providers should have mandatory training on providing affirmative care and being a safe place for these individuals.

2. Work with DPS and legislation on providing inclusive school curriculum.

In order to show more representation within their normal day life the push for more inclusive curriculum within the school district should occur. This allows for youth at a young age to learn more about the LGBTQ+ history that is not normally taught and helps destigmatize the LGBTQ+ community. This will have to be taken on from a district and legislation approach to be able to get within the school.

Content within this can focus on a range of topic from including LGBTQ+ population within the history setting, inclusive sexual education, and much more. This is important in helping destigmatize the LGBTQ+ population and bring in a more accepting school climate. This also is an important place to bring in talking about and using respected pronouns and educating on the importance and normalization of using and announcing them even for cis-gendered individuals.

3. Push out an LGBTQ+ specific social media campaign based off of new data.

Using the data that is collected from the short-term goals, it is suggested that Denver works on a social media campaign targeting just the LGBTQ+ community. Many within the LGBTQ+ community turn to social media to find out information or feel connected to those within their own community. Ideally the information that will be used to lead this campaign will be from the youth voices within Denver.

- Allow for youth to know that things that they might be going through others have gone through similar experiences and that they are not alone in this.
- Share resources, stories from youth, and lead to empowering the LGBTQ+ youth of Denver.
- Provide a space for youth to feel connected with each other.

4. Create an LGBTQ+ specific suicide hotline.

When looking into all three cities it showed that no city has a specific hotline for LGBTQ+ individuals. The only ones that are currently out there are at a national level being The Trevor Project and Trans Lifeline. Moving forward with the partnership Denver is currently creating with The Trevor Project, can gain knowledge and prospect on creating a Denver specific hotline. This holds importance so that it shows that the city cares specifically about the LGBTQ+ community and that these individuals have a place to reach that is on a local level. Studies have reported that a LGBTQ+ individual was more likely to use a LGBTQ+ specific hotline in the adolescent years for more of a protective factor in knowing that they would not be outed.

Conclusion

Moving forward it is important to keep a long-term focus, knowing that this movement will not change overnight but will happen with a constant drive from those involved. Being able to make this change is a group effort from the City, youth, healthcare workers, and those within the community. It will be important to follow the data, impact legislation, and to give youth a platform to make an impact

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