

The ABCs of Substance Abuse, Co-Occurring Issues and
Cultural Considerations of the LGBTQI+ Community
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STARLITE RECOVERY CENTER



What does LGBTQ Stand for?

LESBIAN

GAY

BISEXUAL

TRANSGENDER

QUEER

+ STANDS FOR: QUESTIONING, INTERSEX, AND ASEXUAL

WHAT DOES QUEER MEAN?

- Queer is a word that describes sexual and gender identities other than straight and [cisgender](#). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and [transgender](#) people may all identify with the word queer.
- Queer is sometimes used to express that sexuality and gender can be complicated, change over time, and might not fit neatly into either/or identities, like male or female, gay or straight.
- The word “queer” has history to it that’s hurtful — “queer” used to be (and sometimes still is) used to put down or disrespect LGBT people. But more and more, people use the word with pride to identify themselves. So don’t call someone “queer” unless you know they’re cool with it. The best thing to do is ask what labels people prefer.

(+) QUESTIONING, INTERSEX, ASEXUAL

- Questioning = Unsure, Still Exploring, Still Defining
- Intersex = Individuals who are born with variations of sex characteristics (i.e. chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals that, according to the UN office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies.”
- Asexual = Individuals who are not sexually attracted to others; they can be romantically attracted, but not physically attracted in a sexual way.

SOME ISSUES FOR LGBTQ+

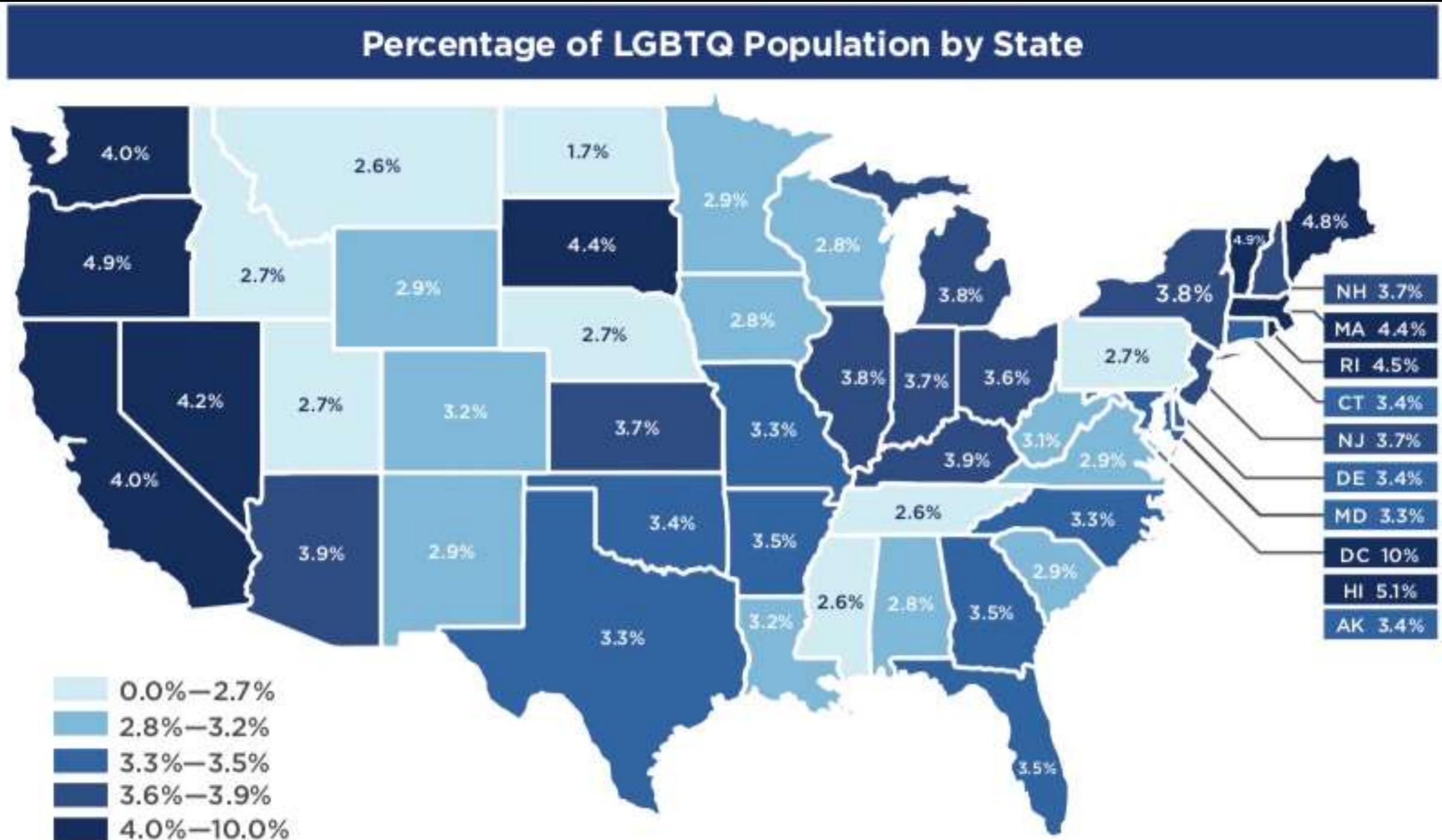
- JOB DISCRIMINATION
- FAMILY ISSUES
- RELIGION EXEMPTION
- MENTAL HEALTH AND
SUBSTANCE ABUSE



JOB DISCRIMINATION

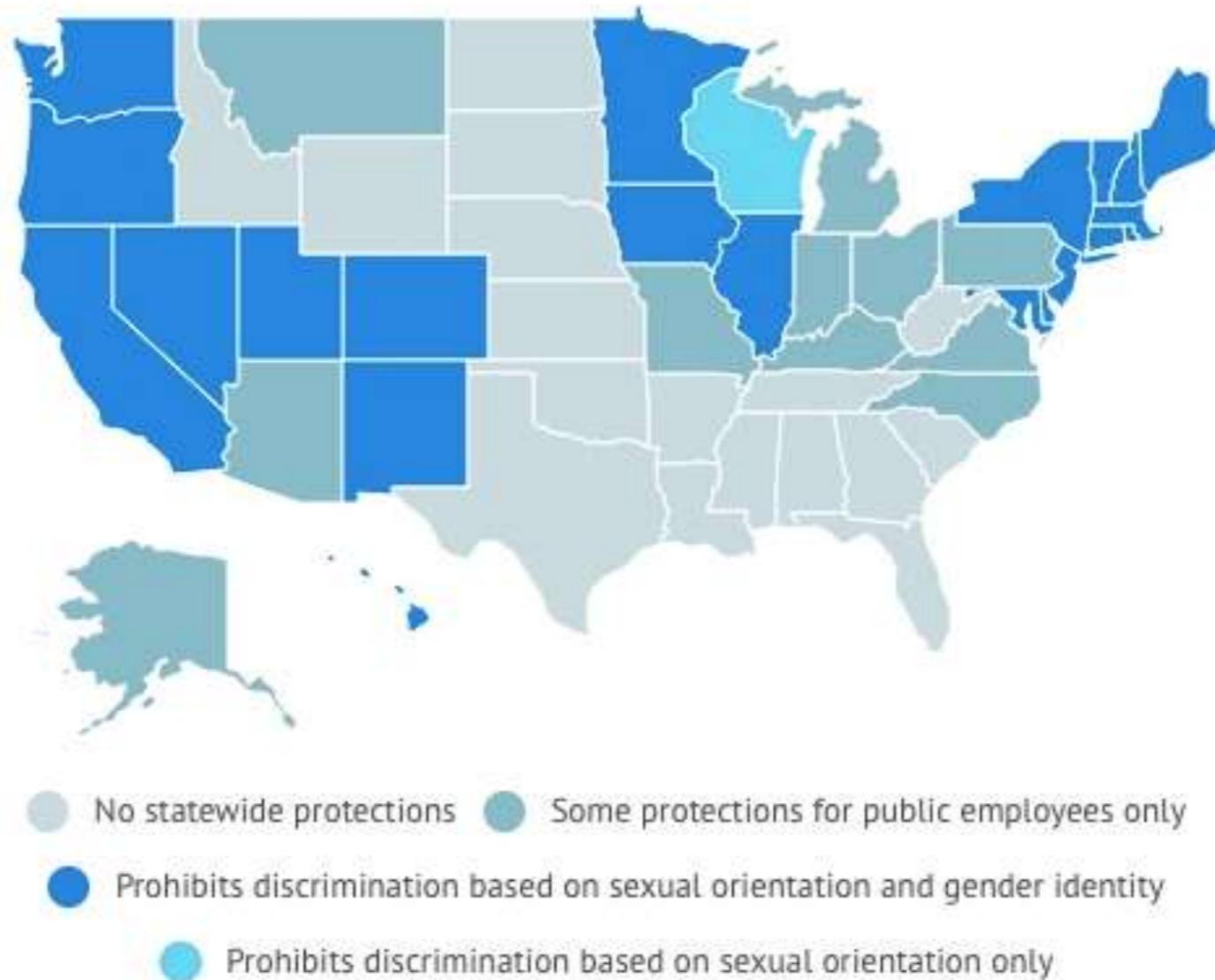
- LGBT Workers continue to face inequalities, unfairness, harassment, and discrimination in the workplace (2).
- They often have nowhere to turn for help (2).
- There are many barriers there prevent LGBTQ workers to receive the same opportunities as non-LGBTQ workers (2).

PREVALENCE OF LGBTQ PER STATE IN UNITED STATES



Source: Gates & Newport, 2013

LGBT Employment in 2019 Non-Discrimination Laws By State



Data source: [Movement Advancement Project](#); [Human Rights Campaign](#)

CHALLENGES FOR LGBTQ PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE

- Gay and transgender individuals continue to face widespread discrimination in the workplace.* Studies show that anywhere from 15 percent to 43 percent of gay people have experienced some form of discrimination and harassment at the workplace (4).
- Eight percent to 17 percent of gay and transgender workers report being passed over for a job or fired because of their sexual orientation or gender identity (4),
- Ten percent to 28 percent received a negative performance evaluation or were passed over for a promotion because they were gay or transgender (4).
- Seven percent to 41 percent of gay and transgender workers were verbally or physically abused or had their workplace vandalized (4).

LGBTQ+ and Family



HUMAN
RIGHTS
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**all children
all families**

Achieving Safety, Permanency and Well-being by
Improving Practice with LGBTQ Youth and Families

COMING OUT TO FAMILY

- In the past, very few adolescents “came out” to their families or told others they were gay. Most lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (LGB) waited until they were adults to talk about their LGB identity with others (5).
- With greater access to resources, more LGBT youth are coming out (sharing their gay or transgender identity with friends, family, and other adults) during adolescence (5).
- There are still many myths about sexual orientation. Families and providers often believe that young people have to be adults before they can know they are gay. Many assume that being gay is a “phase” that youth will grow out of as they get older. Some think that teens may decide to be gay if they have a gay friend, read about homosexuality, or hear about gay people from others. These myths are very common and they are also incorrect (5).

COMING OUT TO FAMILY

- Researchers have found that families who are conflicted about their children's LGBT identity believe that the best way to help their children survive and thrive in the world is to help them fit in with their heterosexual peers ⁽⁵⁾.
- LGBT young people who were rejected by their families because of their identity have much lower self-esteem and have fewer people they can turn to for help. They are also more isolated and have less support than those who were accepted by their families ⁽⁵⁾.

COMING OUT TO FAMILY

Compared with LGBT young people who were not rejected or were only a little rejected by their parents and caregivers because of their gay or transgender identity, highly rejected LGBT young people were:

- More than 8 times as likely to have attempted suicide
- Nearly 6 times as likely to report high levels of depression
- More than 3 times as likely to use illegal drugs
- More than 3 times as likely to be at high risk for HIV and STDs (5)

LGBTQ+ FAMILY FACTS

- Approximately 4.3% of adults in the U.S. identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ). That means that there are more than 10.7 million LGBTQ adults in the U.S (6).
- **Transgender.** A recent Williams Institute Report estimates that 1.4 million adults (.6% of adults) in the U.S. identify as transgender (6).
- **Bisexual.** Roughly half of the LGBTQ population identify as bisexual (6).

LGBTQ+ FAMILY FACTS

- **What Our Families Look Like:** Like other parents, LGBTQ parents are married, unmarried and cohabitating, separated or divorced, and single. There are intact families and blended families, and children who live between households (6).
 - **Married.** While the prevalence of marriage in the general population continues to decline, the number of same-sex married couples has increased significantly in the last decade as LGBTQ people gained the freedom to marry nationwide (6).
 - **Unmarried.** According to a 2015 Gallup Poll, over 1.2 million LGBTQ people in the U.S. are in an unmarried same-sex relationship (6).
 - **Parenting.** Between 2 million and 3.7 million children under age 18 have an LGBTQ parent, and approximately 200,000 of them are being raised by a same-sex couple (6).

LGBTQ+ FAMILY FACTS

- **Family Formation:** The legal and social climate for LGBTQ people has a direct impact on how LGBTQ people form families and become parents. Historically, in the face of an anti-LGBTQ legal and social climate, LGBTQ people have tended to come out later in life, oftentimes after having a different- sex relationship ⁽⁶⁾.
- Today, LGBTQ people are coming out earlier in life, and an increasing number of same-sex couples are planning and creating their families through assisted reproductive technology (ART) and surrogacy, as well as adoption and foster care ⁽⁶⁾.
- **Adoption/foster care:** LGBTQ people and same-sex couples are more likely to foster and adopt than their non-LGBTQ counterparts. Same-sex couples are six times more likely to foster children, and at least 4 times more likely to adopt ⁽⁶⁾.

LGBTQ+ FAMILY FACTS

- **Family Composition.:** Among LGBTQ adults under 50 living alone or with a spouse or partner, 48% of women and 20% of men are raising a child who is under 18 years old ⁶⁾.
- **Race and Ethnicity.** Racial and ethnic minorities who are LGBTQ are more likely to be raising or having kids. More than a third of same-sex couples raising children are racial or ethnic minorities – approximately 12% are African American and 15% Latina ⁶⁾.
- **Income.** LGBTQ individuals and same-sex couples raising children have lower incomes than different-sex counterparts and higher levels of poverty. Nearly one in five children being raised by same-sex couples (24%) live in poverty compared to 14% of children being raised by different- sex couples ⁶⁾.
- **Education.** Nearly all research shows that individuals in same-sex couples have higher levels of education; however, this is not true for those raising children. Only one third of same-sex couples raising children have a college degree ⁶⁾.

RELIGION ISSUES

- Against this backdrop of legal vulnerability, lawmakers who oppose marriage for same-sex couples and recent moves to advance transgender equality have led an anti-LGBT charge, pushing for, and often succeeding in getting, new laws that carve out religious exemptions for individuals who claim that compliance with particular laws interferes with their religious or moral beliefs (7).
- In recent years and mostly since 2015, when the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality, numerous states have considered and at least eight US states have enacted new laws that permit people to infringe on the rights of LGBT individuals and their families to the extent they believe that discriminating against them is necessary to uphold their own religious or moral beliefs

RELIGION ISSUES

- ***The Change:*** Within nearly every religious denomination there are now supportive groups that have adopted different interpretations about LGBTQ people. Some denominations, such as Reform Judaism and the Episcopal church, are openly supportive of LGBTQ members. As society shifts to be more accepting of LGBTQ people, many other denominations are starting to become LGBTQ-inclusive ⁽⁸⁾.



RELIGION ISSUES

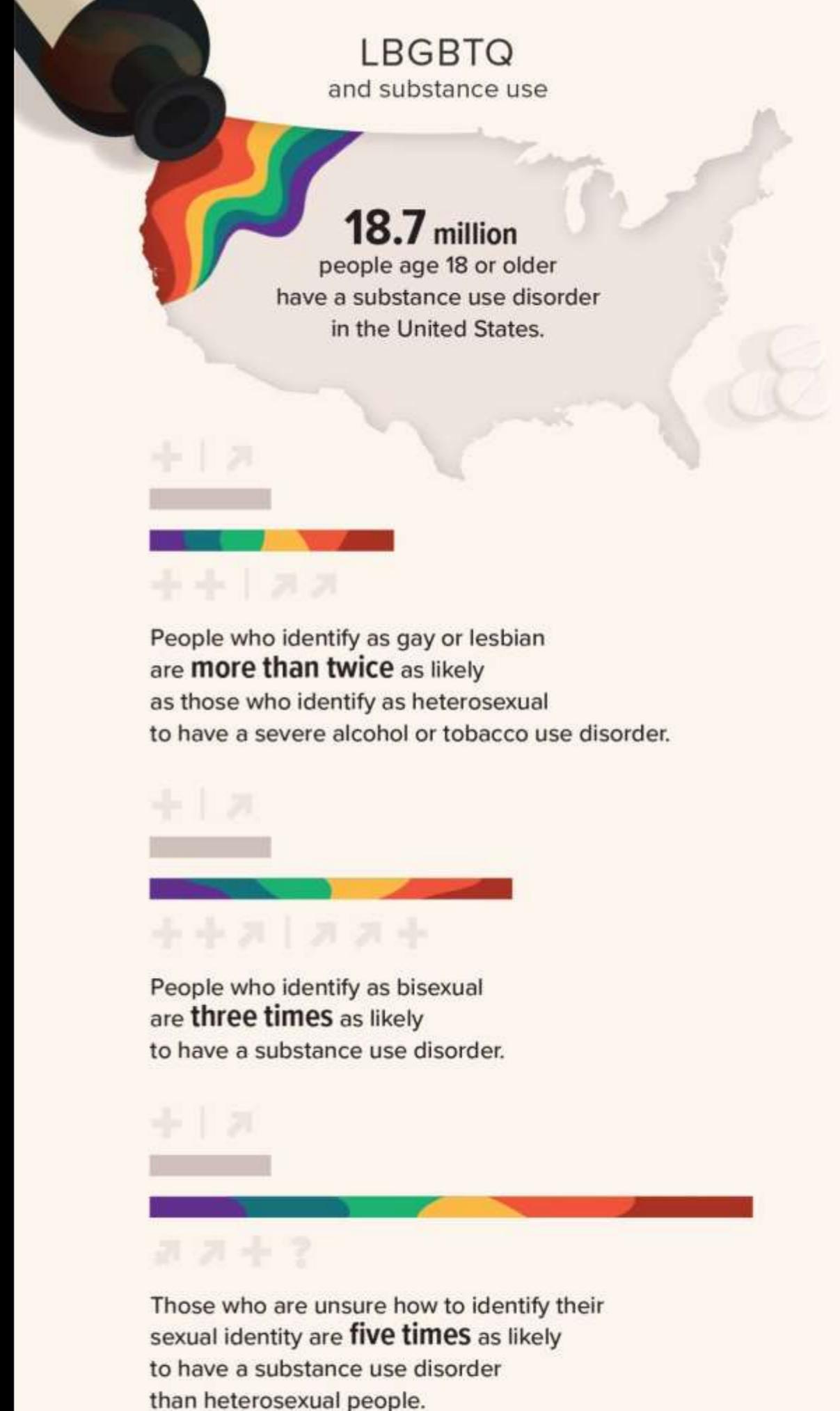
- The Texas state senate [passed Senate Bill 17](#), which would protect the right of state-licensed workers such as doctors, teachers, and counselors to refuse to provide their services based on “a sincerely held religious belief”, except in cases where medical services are necessary to “prevent death or imminent serious bodily injury” (8).
- Some of the authoritative bodies and doctrines of the world's largest religions may view these negatively (10).
- Liberal and progressive voices within these religions tend to view LGBT people more positively, and some liberal [religious denominations](#) may bless [same-sex marriages](#), as well as accepting and marrying people who are transgender (10).

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN LGBTQ



LGBTQ AND ADDICTION

- An estimated 20 to 30 percent of the LGBTQ community abuses substances, compared to about 9 percent the population as a whole (11).
- This is due in part to a number of societally imposed obstacles that they face, often on a daily basis, that those who identify as heterosexual typically don't (11).
- Oftentimes, LGBTQ individuals will turn to [drugs](#) or [alcohol](#) as a way to self-medicate from the prejudice they face in everyday society. Substances can help temporarily numb uncomfortable feelings they may be experiencing, such as depression, anxiety, anger or fear. Although substance abuse may appear to be beneficial initially, there are many long-term, negative consequences from hiding your feelings (11).



LGBTQ PHYSICAL OR HEALTH SYMPTOMS - RELATED TO SEXUALITY

- Compulsive sexual behavior
- Sexual dysfunction
- Sex or HIV-related anxiety
- Sexual abuse or assault ⁽¹¹⁾

STATS ON DRUGS OF CHOICE FOR LGBTQ COMMUNITY

- **Tobacco**

Gay and transgender individuals use [tobacco](#) up to 200 percent more than those who identify as heterosexual ⁽¹¹⁾

- **Alcohol**

Between 20 and 25 percent of the LGBTQ community have moderate to severe [alcohol dependency](#) ⁽¹¹⁾

- **Marijuana**

Gay men are 3.5 times more likely to use [marijuana](#) than straight males ⁽¹¹⁾

- **Amphetamines**

Members of the LGBTQ community are 12.2 times more likely to use amphetamines ⁽¹¹⁾

- **Heroin**

LGBTQ individuals are 9.5 times more likely to use [heroin](#) than heterosexual individuals ⁽¹¹⁾

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS FOR LGBTQ

- Discrimination based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity has been linked to many negative psychological and physical health outcomes in previous research, including increased suicidal ideation (12).
- Mental health disorders have consistently been among the strongest predictors of suicide attempts and suicide deaths (12).
- Moreover, LGBTQ individuals have shown higher prevalence of anxiety, mood, and substance use disorders than heterosexual individuals (12).

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS FOR LGBTQ

- Discrimination has been consistently implicated as a major stressor with adverse psychological effects (12).
- Moreover, LGBTQ individuals who experienced more rejecting behaviors from their family had an eight-times higher risk for attempting suicide (12).
- LGBTQ older adults face a number of unique challenges, including the combination of anti-LGBTQ stigma and ageism (13).
- Approximately 31% of LGBTQ older adults report depressive symptoms; 39% report serious thoughts of taking their own lives (13).

STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION = MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES

- Many LGBTQ people have reported experiencing stigma and discrimination when accessing health services, leading some individuals to delay necessary health care or forego it altogether ⁽¹³⁾.
- LGBTQ individuals may have less social support than heterosexual individuals, particularly if they live in a region without a large LGBTQ population or if they have experienced rejection by their family of origin ⁽¹³⁾.
- Transgender individuals have higher rates of poverty and unemployment than non-transgender individuals ⁽¹³⁾.
- LGBTQ individuals are more likely to be victims of violence compared with their heterosexual peers ⁽¹³⁾.

“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

-NELSON MANDELA

RESOURCES TO
HELP WITH
POSITIVE
CHANGE AND
COMMUNITY
GROWTH



RESOURCES

- [The American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#) provides countless educational and support resources on a range of LGBTQ topics.
- [The Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Issues in Counseling](#) delivers educational and support resources for LGBTQ individuals, as well as promoting competency on LGBTQ issues for counseling professionals.
- [The Association of Gay and Lesbian Psychiatrists](#) offers numerous resources for LGBT individuals experiencing mental health conditions and psychiatric professionals with LGBT clients.
- [The National Center for Transgender Equality](#) offers resources for transgender individuals, including information on the right to access health care.
- [The Trevor Project](#) is a support network for LGBTQ youth providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention, including a 24-hour text line (Text “START” to 678678).
- [The LGBT National Help Center](#) offers confidential peer support connections for LGBT youth, adults and seniors including phone, text and online chat.
- [The Gay and Lesbian Medical Association's Provider Directory](#) is a search tool that can locate a LGBTQ-inclusive health care provider.

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www.StarliteRecovery.com
830-634-2212

Starlite Recovery Center helps LGBTQ+ individuals struggling with addiction and mental health disorders build a strong foundation for long-term recovery. Located in the heart of Texas, Starlite is the leading provider of behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment for adults ages 18 and over.