

A SYSTEM OF CARE APPROACH TO ENGAGE FAMILIES OF LGBTQ YOUTHS DURING THE PROCESS OF COMING OUT

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Objective

To increase awareness among health care professionals of the evidence supporting early family involvement, with reference to resources and guidelines

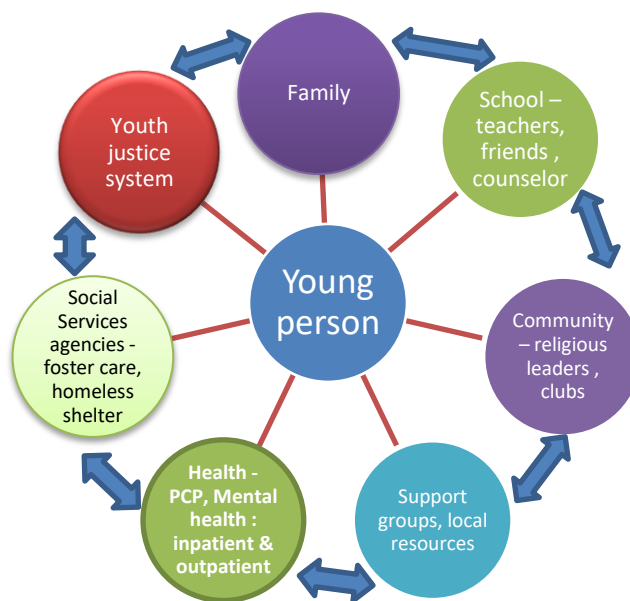
Background

- LGBTQ youth are coming out at earlier age in the recent years
- Direct associations between family reactions and health and wellbeing of LGBTQ children
- Family oriented youth guided approach is needed to provide safe and affirming care

Case Report

JJ is a 14 year-old young person, hospitalized to an adolescent inpatient unit after a serious overdose. JJ has had multiple hospitalizations due to self-harm and suicide attempts. During current admission, JJ presents with severe anxiety, depression and suicidal and self injurious behaviors. During a therapy session, JJ comes out as bisexual. It becomes clear that being the youngest child, JJ has been having fear of rejection by the family who hold strong cultural and religious views against LGBTQ. JJ later comes out to the family during a therapy session. The family do not take JJ's coming out well but agree to work with the therapist and JJ for further family sessions.

The Systems of care



Process of Coming Out

There is no 'one' way
' Safety '

Stages of coming out in developmental and social context

Timing -average age of identification – 13.4

Setting – location, people, individualized approach, special settings e.g. foster care

Reactions to coming out – positive vs. negative reactions

Health and Social Impact

- Direct association between family rejection and health problems
- Increased risks of suicide attempt, self harm, substance use, depression, anxiety, eating disorders
- Increased risks of STDs, HIV, unwanted pregnancy
- Risks of victimization, bullying, rejection, abuse
- elevated risk of homelessness, prostitution

Challenges in the Systems of Care

- Avoiding access to healthcare due to fear
- Limited knowledge and training of providers
- Limited local resources

Resources

- SAMHSA- LGBTQ resources
- AACAP Practice Parameter
- The Trevor project – coming out handbook
- The Family Acceptance Project
- WPATH Standards of care

