



EMPOWERED

IMPROVING LGBTQ+ MENTAL HEALTH

Shining a Light on Suicide Awareness Month: Understanding LGBTQ+ Community Challenges

September marks **suicide awareness month**, a crucial time to shed light on the alarming rates of suicide within the LGBTQ+ community. Recent data from the Trevor Project's **annual survey** paints a somber picture, revealing that nearly half of LGBTQ youth have seriously contemplated suicide in the past year. This distressing statistic underscores the urgent need for increased support and awareness.

The survey further highlights concerning disparities among transgender and LGBTQ youth of color, with approximately 1 in 5 transgender and nonbinary youth reporting attempted suicide. While overall suicide rates have seen a dramatic increase in the United States over the last two decades, the lesser-discussed reality is the staggering number of suicide attempts, totaling around 1.1 million annually.

One prevailing challenge in addressing this issue is our struggle to initiate conversations about suicidal thoughts, both with those we care about and within ourselves. This barrier often stems from a lack of familiarity with appropriate language and timing. The fear of saying the wrong thing or inadvertently encouraging harmful actions can paralyze us.

However, it's essential to recognize that directly discussing suicide can be an instrumental step towards providing support and resources. In fact, asking someone directly about their feelings can make them feel heard and understood while also guiding them towards the assistance they urgently require.

Empowering the dialogue around suicide necessitates amplifying the voices of survivors, individuals who have navigated the harrowing journey of suicidal ideation and emerged stronger. By elevating their perspectives, we can challenge misconceptions and bridge the gap between those with personal experience and those seeking to understand.

There was a time when I felt trapped in a storm of thoughts and emotions that seemed insurmountable. It felt as if the weight of the world was crashing down on me, and I couldn't see a way out. But today, I stand before you stronger and more resilient than I ever thought possible.

I want you to know that reaching out for help was the turning point on my journey. It wasn't easy, and there were moments of doubt, but I found the courage to confide in someone who listened without judgment. They helped me find the resources and support I needed to heal.

Through this journey, I discovered that there is a network of caring individuals and organizations dedicated to guiding us through the darkness. Together, we can break the silence and shatter the stigma surrounding mental health. No one should ever feel alone in their struggles.

If you're reading this and finding yourself in a difficult place, please know that you are not alone. There is a path to healing, and it starts with reaching out. Whether it's a friend, family member, therapist, or a **helpline** like the Trevor Project or by calling **9-8-8**, someone is there to listen and support you.

Remember, the storm may be fierce, but the sun will rise again. With help, determination, and a community that cares, you can overcome the challenges that lie ahead. Your story is important, and your journey is worth fighting for.

During this Suicide Awareness Month, let us commit to fostering a culture of open communication, empathy, and support. By acknowledging the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community and advocating for accessible mental health resources, we can work together to save lives and create a brighter future for all.

I wish you strength, courage, and the unwavering belief that a brighter tomorrow awaits.

With love and respect,

Steven Haden (he/him)
CEO & Founder

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

9-8-8

Trevor Project
Trans Lifeline

HOW TO ...talk to someone about suicide

- 1 Have suicide crisis resources available.** Such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Text 988, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or visit [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) to chat.
- 2 Ask the question.** Ask directly about suicide in such a way that is natural and slows over the course of the conversation. Ask in a way that gives you a direct "yes" or "no". Ask: "Are you thinking about killing yourself?" or "Are you thinking about ending your life?"
- 3 Validate the person's experience.** Talk openly. Don't panic and be willing to listen and allow emotional expression. Don't pass judgment and reassure them that help is available. Don't promise secrecy. Do NOT leave this person alone.
- 4 Get help.** Share the available resources with the person. Be willing to make the call, or take part in the call. Let the person know that you are willing to go with them to see a professional when they're ready.
- 5 Stay safe.** If you feel the situation is critical, escort them to the nearest Emergency Room or call 9-1-1. Never put yourself in danger. Never negotiate with a person who has a gun, call 9-1-1 and leave the area. If at any time during the process you are concerned about your safety, or that the person may harm others, call 9-1-1.

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Our GEM (Gives Every Month) donors are vital and allow us to continue our community-informed efforts to improve LGBTQ+ mental health and well-being year-round. Whatever amount feels right for you, [please consider becoming a GEM](#) to help our mission of improving LGBTQ+ mental health.

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Partner Highlight

Envision:You is excited to team up with KGA and offer our LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Provider Training Program to its network of providers. KGA provides support globally as a top-tier Employee Assistance Provider (EAP). We're offering their network 25% off our comprehensive training on how to provide affirming services to the LGBTQ+ community.

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