



## Protecting LGBTQ+ Youth from Firearm Suicide

*If you or someone you know is in crisis, please call or text 988, or visit [988lifeline.org/chat](https://988lifeline.org/chat) to chat with a counselor from the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, which provides 24/7, free, and confidential support to people anywhere in the U.S. Additionally, The Trevor Line offers 24/7, free and confidential counseling to LGBTQ+ young people during times of crisis. Dial 1-866-488-7386 or Text "START" to 678-678.*

LGBTQ+ youth are not inherently prone to suicide risk because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, but they experience an increased risk because of stigmatization and marginalization.<sup>1</sup> With barriers to accessing mental health care and increasing hateful anti-gay and anti-transgender legislation sweeping the country, LGBTQ+ youth are facing pointed identity-based marginalization.

- 60% of LGBTQ youth experience discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>2</sup>
- 67% of LGBTQ youth report that someone tried to convince them to change their sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>3</sup>
- 93% of transgender and nonbinary youth have worried about transgender people being denied gender-affirming medical care due to state or local laws.<sup>4</sup>
- 91% of transgender and nonbinary youth worry about transgender people being denied access to the bathroom due to state or local laws.<sup>5</sup>
- 83% of transgender and nonbinary youth have worried about transgender people being denied the ability to play sports due to state or local laws.<sup>6</sup>

This marginalization is causing a truly devastating impact: 41% of LGBTQ+ teens within the United States seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, and 14% (one in seven) made an attempt.<sup>7</sup>

It's critical to recognize the unique role that firearms, a particularly lethal means, can have in suicide. More than 40% of suicides among kids and teens involve guns,<sup>8</sup> and more than 8 out of 10 child gun suicides involve a gun belonging to a family member.<sup>9</sup> The correlation between an increased presence of unsecured firearms and an increased suicide rate is no coincidence.

### **Firearm suicide among LGBTQ+ youth is preventable.**

Approximately 4.6 million US children live in a household with at least one gun that is stored, while loaded and unlocked. One of the most crucial steps you can take to prevent youth suicide, and protect at-risk LGBTQ+ kids from dying by suicide, is to practice secure firearm storage.

Research shows that access to firearms is strongly associated with youth suicide rates: For each 10% increase in household gun ownership in a state, the youth suicide rate increased by more than 25%.<sup>10</sup> Firearms are also by far the most lethal means of suicide; more than 90% of suicide attempts with a gun result in death.<sup>11</sup>

Gun owners can make their homes and communities safer by storing their guns securely. This means storing them unloaded, locked, and, when possible, separate from ammunition. Households that locked both firearms and ammunition were associated with a 78% lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries among children and teens.<sup>12</sup> Parents and caregivers should also normalize having conversations with other adults about the presence of unsecured guns in homes where their kids spend time.

## What can you do to help make the LGBTQ+ youth in your life feel more loved, protected, and valued?

- **Offer Support and Acceptance**
  - Having at least one accepting adult in the life of an LGBTQ+ youth can reduce suicide attempt by 40%.<sup>13</sup>
- **Welcome in LGBTQ+ Friends and Partners**
  - LGBTQ+ youth who felt high social support from family and friends reported significantly lower rates of attempting suicide.<sup>14</sup>
- **Talk Respectfully About Identity**
  - LGBTQ+ young adults who experienced parental rejection during adolescence were 8 times more likely to report having attempted suicide.<sup>15</sup>
- **Respect and Use Name and Pronouns Correctly**
  - LGBTQ+ youth, particularly transgender and nonbinary youth, attempt suicide less when their pronouns are consistently respected and when they are allowed to officially change the gender marker on their legal documents.<sup>16</sup>
- **Support Gender Expression**
  - LGBTQ+ young adults from highly accepting families attempt suicide at significantly reduced rates compared to those in low accepting families (31% versus 57%).<sup>17</sup>
- **Educate Self on LGBTQ+ People and Issues**
  - Seeing and respecting LGBTQ+ people in the media has a positive and inspiring impact on LGBTQ+ youth's mental health.<sup>18</sup>
- **Help Your Youth Find Mental Health Care**
  - 81% of LGBTQ+ youth wanted mental health care, and 56% of those who wanted it were not able to get it. Many LGBTQ+ youth fear discussing mental health concerns with parents.<sup>19</sup>
- **Find and Support Affirming Spaces and Activities**
  - Having a supportive and trusting network and space that affirms gender identity links to higher levels of self esteem and protects against anxiety and depression.<sup>20</sup>

## Help Is Available

It's the responsibility of all of us to take care of one another, since those closest to us are the ones who are likeliest to notice when someone is in crisis. It's critical that in moments of crisis, as well as before and after, people have the support they need. A trusted person can help make the necessary intervention and connect the person to the mental health resources or other support systems. Below are some additional crisis or support resources that may be helpful.

### For Immediate Support in a Crisis

- **988:** The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, previously known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, provides 24/7, free and confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress anywhere in the U.S.
  - **How to Contact:** Call or text 988, or visit [988lifeline.org/chat](https://988lifeline.org/chat) to chat with a counselor
  - **Español:** [Recursos Aquí](#)
- **The Trevor Line:** Helpline operated by The Trevor Project that offers 24/7, free and confidential counseling to LGBTQ+ young people during times of crisis.
  - **How to Contact:** Dial 1-866-488-7386, Chat Live [here](#), or Text "START" to 678-678
- **Crisis Text Line:** 24/7, free and confidential mental health support in times of crisis via text message.
  - **How to Contact:** Text HOME to 741741 anywhere in the U.S.
  - **Español:** [Recursos Aquí](#)
- **211.org:** 24/7, free and confidential service connecting people to local support including mental health resources, disaster relief, food, housing and utilities programs.
  - **How to Contact:** Dial 2-1-1
  - **Español:** [Recursos Aquí](#)
- **SAMHSA Disaster Distress Line:** Helpline operated by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that offers 24/7, free and confidential crisis counseling for people experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster (including mass shootings).
  - **How to Contact:** Dial or Text 1-800-985-5990 to connect with counselors in 100+ languages via 3rd party interpretation services.
  - **Español:** [Recursos Aquí](#)

### Ongoing Support

- **TrevorSpace:** TrevorSpace, operated by The Trevor Project, is a free, global online community for LGBTQ+ young people between the ages of 13-24 years old. TrevorSpace is designed so that LGBTQ+ young people can explore their identity, get advice, find support, and make friends in a moderated community intentionally designed for them.
  - **How to Contact:** [Join Here](#)
- **NAMI HelpLine:** A free, nationwide peer-support service operated by the National Alliance on Mental Illness providing information, resource referrals and support to people living with a mental health condition, their family members and caregivers, mental health

providers and the public. Please note: not a hotline, crisis line or suicide prevention line. More on Youth and Young Adult resources [here](#).

- **How to Contact:** NAMI HelpLine is available M-F 10 am—10 pm, ET. Connect by phone 800-950-6264 or text "Helpline" to 62640, or [chat](#).
- **Everytown Survivor Network:** A nationwide community of survivors of gun violence working together to end gun violence. The Survivor Network connects survivors to each other for ongoing peer support, amplifies the power of survivor voices, offers trauma-informed programs, provides information on direct services, and supports survivors who choose to become advocates.
  - **How to Contact:** Text the word SURVIVOR to 644-33 to join.

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<sup>1</sup> The Trevor Project, "Facts About LGBTQ Youth Suicide," December 15, 2021, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/facts-about-lgbtq-youth-suicide/>.

<sup>2</sup> The Trevor Project, "2023 US National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People," 2023, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023/>. Ages 13–24.

<sup>3</sup> The Trevor Project, "2022 US National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People," 2022, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>. Ages 13–24.

<sup>4</sup> The Trevor Project, "2022 US National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People," 2022, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>. Ages 13–24.

<sup>5</sup> The Trevor Project, "2022 US National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People," 2022, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>. Ages 13–24.

<sup>6</sup> The Trevor Project, "2022 US National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People," 2022, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>. Ages 13–24.

<sup>7</sup> The Trevor Project, "2023 US National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People," 2023, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023/>. Ages 13–17.

<sup>8</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. A yearly average was developed using four years of most recent available data: 2018–2021. Analysis includes children aged 0 to 17

<sup>9</sup> Renee M. Johnson et al., "Who Are the Owners of Firearms Used in Adolescent Suicides?," *Suicide & Life-Threatening Behavior* 40, no. 6 (2010): 609–11.

<sup>10</sup> Anita Knopov et al., "Household Gun Ownership and Youth Suicide Rates at the State Level, 2005–2015," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 56, no. 3 (March 2019): 335–42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2018.10.027>. Ages 10–19.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Conner, Deborah Azrael, and Matthew Miller, "Suicide Case-Fatality Rates in the United States, 2007 to 2014: A Nationwide Population-Based Study," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 171, no. 2 (2019): 885–95, <https://doi.org/10.7326/M19-1324>.

<sup>12</sup> David C. Grossman et al., "Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Firearm Injuries," *JAMA* 293, no. 6 (2005): 707–14, <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.293.6.707>.

<sup>13</sup> The Trevor Project, "Accepting Adults Reduce Suicide Attempts among LGBTQ Youth," June 27, 2019,

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/accepting-adults-reduce-suicide-attempts-among-lgbtq-youth/>.

<sup>14</sup> The Trevor Project, "2022 US National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People," 2022, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>. Ages 13–24.

<sup>15</sup> Caitlin Ryan et al., "Family Rejection as a Predictor of Negative Health Outcomes in White and Latino Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Young Adults," *Pediatrics* 123, no. 1 (2009): 356–52, <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2007-3524>. White and Latino 21- to 25-year-olds who identified as LGBTQ during adolescence.

<sup>16</sup> The Trevor Project, "2021 US National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People," 2023, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2021/>. Ages 13–24.

<sup>17</sup> Caitlin Ryan et al., "Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults," *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing* 23, no. 4 (2010): 205–13, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6171.2010.00246.x>. White and Latino 21- to 25-year-olds who identified as LGBTQ during adolescence.

<sup>18</sup> The Trevor Project, "2022 US National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People," 2022, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>. Ages 13–24.

<sup>19</sup> The Trevor Project, "2023 US National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People," 2023, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023/>. Ages 13–17.

<sup>20</sup> Caitlin Ryan et al., "Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults," *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing* 23, no. 4 (2010): 205–13, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6171.2010.00246.x>. White and Latino 21- to 25-year-olds who identified as LGBTQ during adolescence.