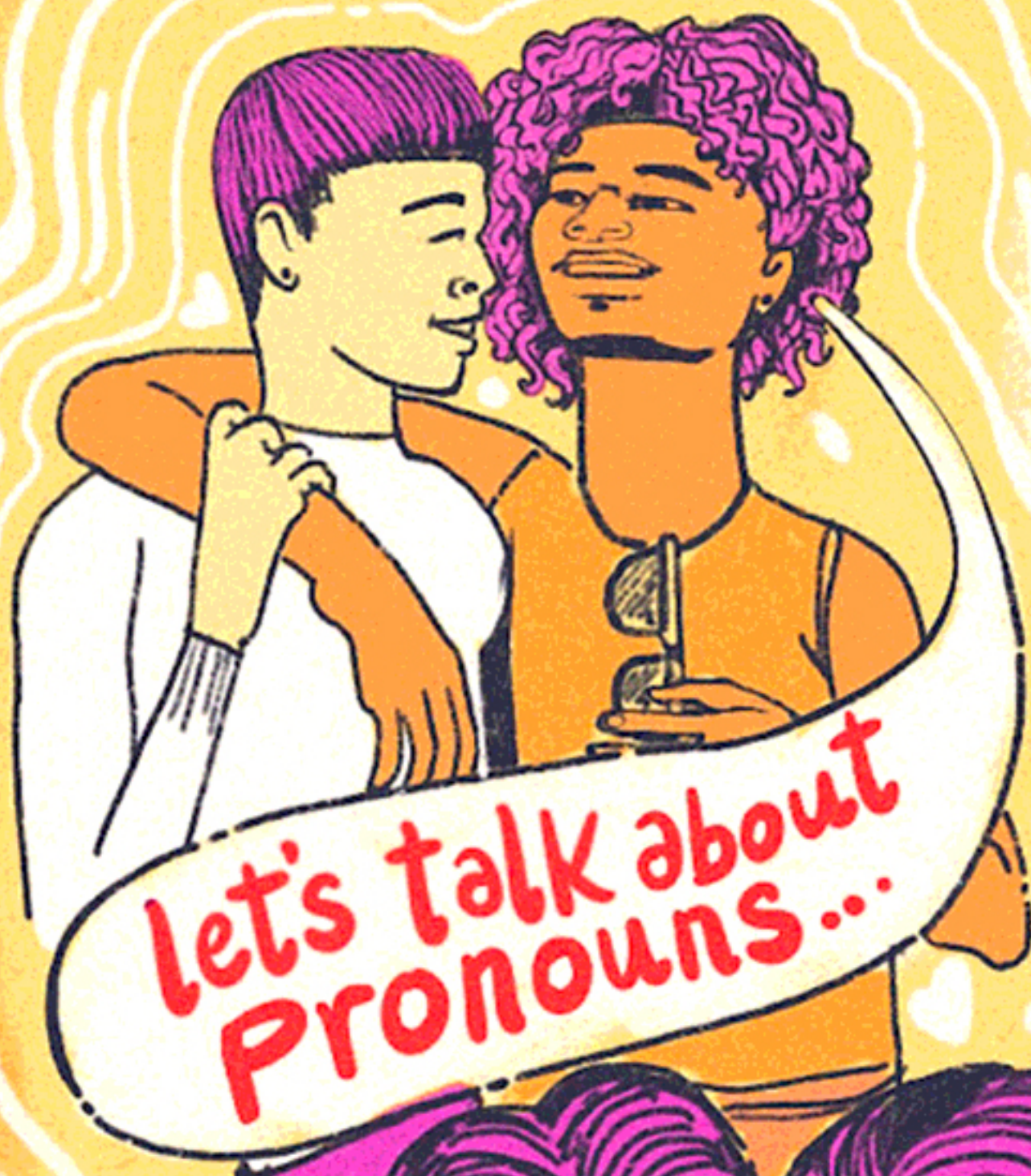
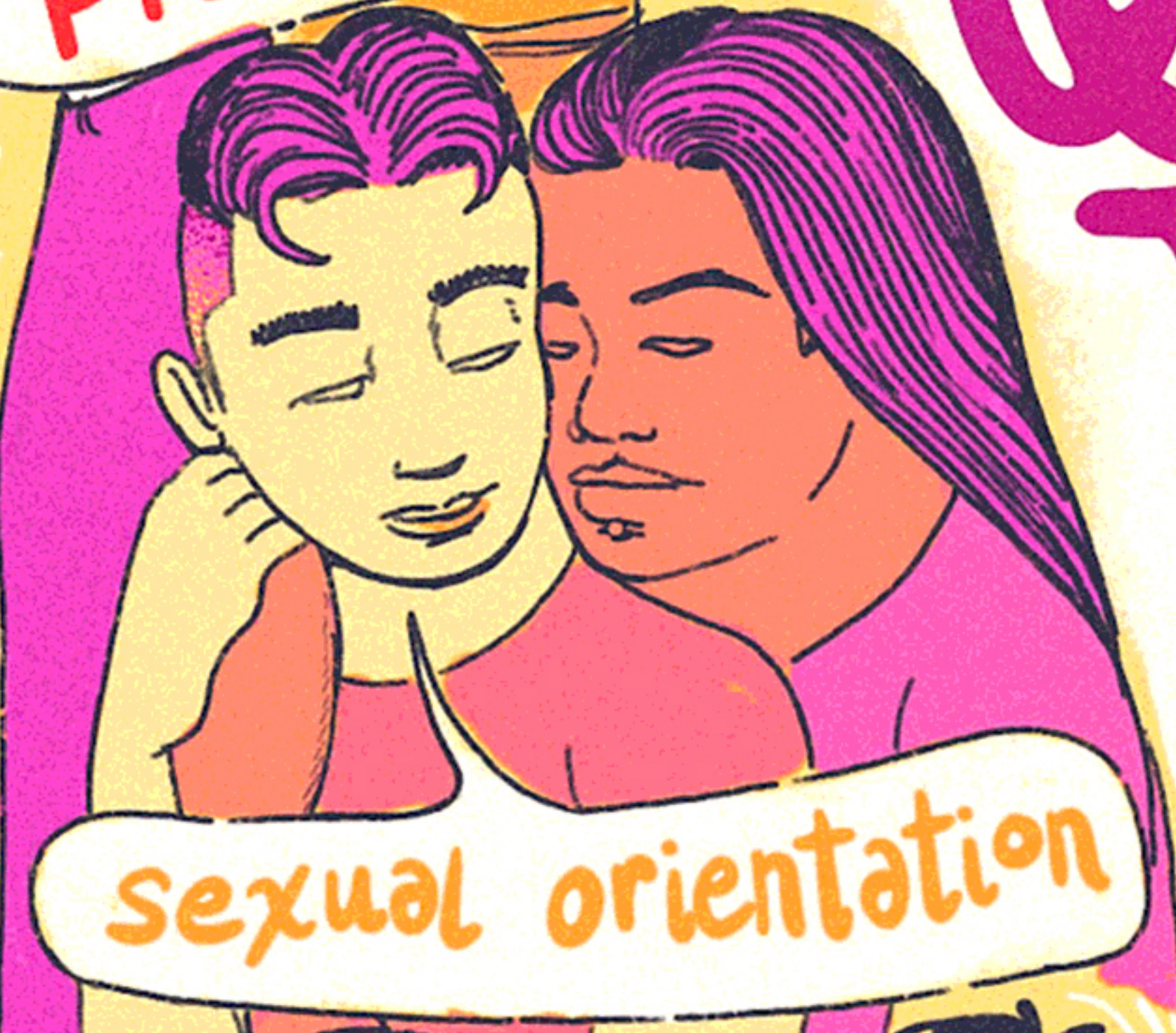


Supporting Queer and Trans Youth

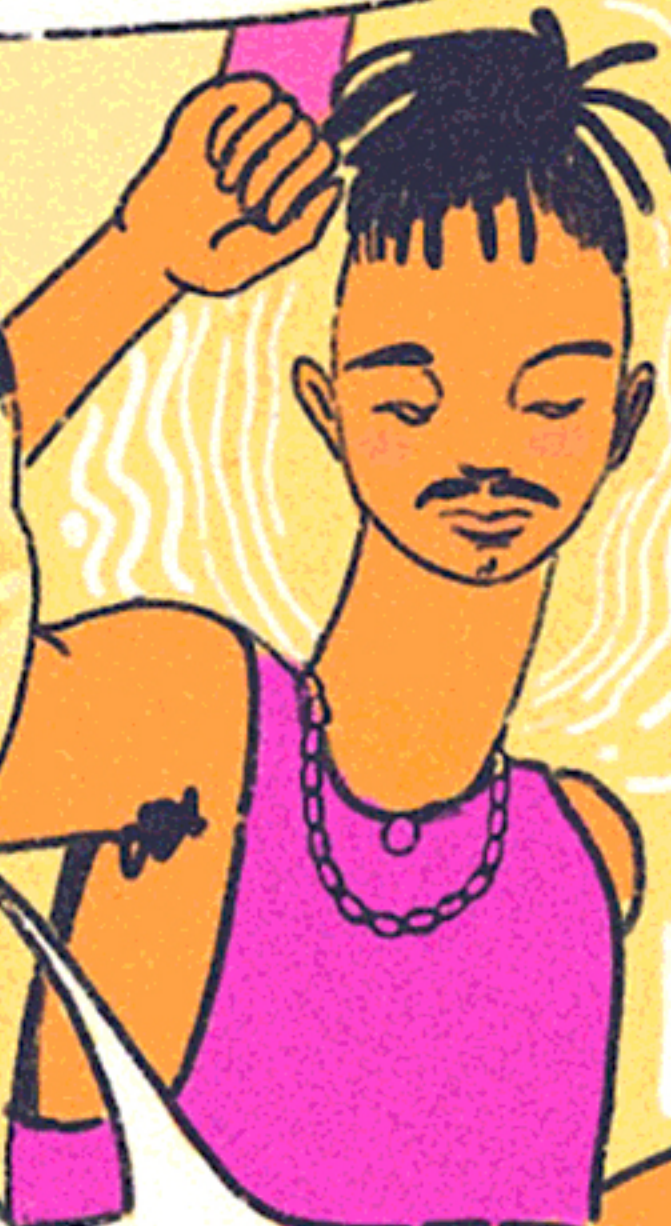
a guide for
adults and
allies



let's talk about
Pronouns...



sexual orientation



queer
history



gender identity

Rainbow
Pride
Youth
Alliance



LGBTQ+ Affirming
Care

Supporting Queer & Trans Youth: A Guide for Adults and Allies

Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance (RPYA)



RPYA



Unity Hope



RPYA is a grassroots California non-profit 501(c)(3) organization (est 2001). We provide services to LGBTQ+ youth, as well as their parents and caretakers, including workshops, online support groups, and linkage to resources. Visit our website for more information.

For crisis support, you can also visit our peer crisis counselor program, Unity Hope.

Concept, design, text & illustration
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RAINBOW PRIDE YOUTH ALLIANCE

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THE CENTER
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A Bit of History...

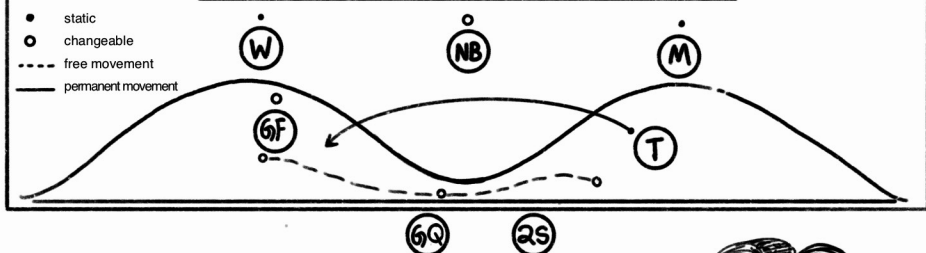
The LGBTQ+ Movement for Civil Equality emerged into the US public consciousness in the 1960s & 70s (known back then as *the Gay Liberation Movement*). The Movement, spearheaded by LGBTQ+ people of color, embraced the idea that queer & trans people's mere existence challenges **rigid social norms**. As such, queer & trans folks possess a unique perspective that can help to **positively transform society**.

The LGBTQ+ Movement, like all cultural struggles for civil equality, will benefit everyone. **All liberation movements contribute in different ways**. The LGBTQ+ Movement has helped to start collective conversations around things like **sex, sexuality, non-normative desire, diverse relationship models, harm reduction, collective care, & gender, including the expanding use of pronouns**.



Gender Identity

One way to think of gender is as a spectrum



One end of the gender spectrum represents **women** (W), the other end represents **men** (M), & the in-between space represents a variety of expressions that can be referred to broadly as gender non-conforming.

I'm **gender fluid**, so I am a person who can move back & forth between points on the gender spectrum.

My gender expression can change & is not static.



I identify as **non-binary**, so I am someone whose gender expression is neither man nor woman, but somewhere in between or some beautiful, androgynous combination of gender characteristics.



I am **gender queer**, so I am someone whose gender expression *queers*, or challenges, conventional understandings of gender.

Gender Identity

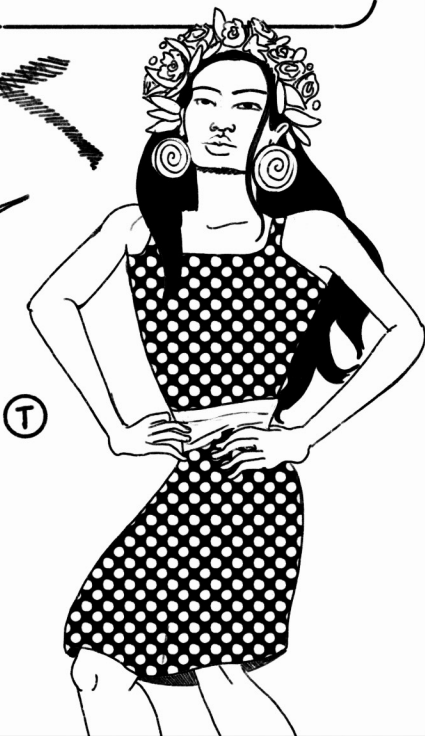


Two-spirit: Many indigenous cultures across the Americas regard individuals who straddle gender lines as *two-spirited*; that is, they transcend the dualistic confines of gender in a way that can also be spiritually significant within the context of their community.

Transgender: A person who makes a more or less permanent transition from one point on the spectrum to another.

Trans people are socialized as children to identify with a certain gender, but this assigned gender does not align with their gender identity.

So, when a person realizes this, they can start their transition to a gender presentation that is more aligned with their gender identity.



Gender Dysphoria: The sense of unease or disquiet that a person experiences when their **gender identity** (how they conceive of themselves) does not align with their **gender presentation** (how they express their gender outwardly/to society).

A note on gender identities: Gender is expansive & fluid. There are many gender identities, and the idea of gender is defined differently by different cultures. The terms presented here are just guidelines for helping us to understand gender in a general sense.

Gender Presentation

Gender presentation refers to the way you express (or display) yourself to the world.

Everyone has a gender presentation, even if it's not something you are fully conscious of. Most often, we are taught what is "appropriate" or not according to **the gender we were assigned at birth**. For example, "boys do this ..." and, "girls do this..."

A lot of things can define our gender presentation...



Pronouns

she/her



Used most often by people who identify as women.

Pronouns form a big part of our gender presentation.

There are a lot of different pronouns, but the most common are the ones presented here.

If you are unsure about what pronouns a person uses, **it's okay to ask**. That can look like, **"Hey friend, what pronouns do you use?"**

Have fun & don't be too hard on yourself. Like learning a new language, **mistakes will happen**. With time & practice, less mistakes will happen.



Understanding Neopronouns

Check out this excellent guide from the *Human Rights Campaign* about pronouns beyond he, she, & they.

they/them



Used most often by people who identify as non-binary, gender queer, etc.

he/him



Used most often by people who identify as men.

mixed pronouns



For example, if I use *she/they* pronouns, I appreciate when people mix it up & alternate pronouns when referring to me.

Affirmation



Teens basically live in two social spheres ...

...the home & school.



Teens should be able to regard both the home & school as positive, nurturing environments. If one or both spaces are unaffirming (e.g. bullying from family or peers), this will negatively affect their mental health & development.

The way you treat LGBTQ+ youth & the language you use around gender & sexuality sets standards for future behavior in the home & in the school environment...

Therefore, it is important for adults & peers in the lives of queer & trans youth to be affirming.



Affirmation

As a teacher, how you respond to homophobic comments will model behavior for the rest of the classroom ... don't be complicit in bullying.

As a friend, use your pal's pronouns, even when they are not present.

As a parent, let your teen know where you stand on LGBTQ+ issues so that they know that they can open up to you if/when they want.



Not everyone needs to label themselves, so don't pressure teens to define their gender identity or sexual orientation. Being a teen means figuring out who you are & your place in the world, so just allow for that exploration by not pressing the issue.

LGBTQ+ Affirming Care

If a teen is queer or trans, the journey of affirmation should begin with a culturally competent, affirming therapist to provide a space where they can talk openly about their experiences & feelings.



It is also important for queer & trans youth to have a culturally competent primary care provider. Follow the QR code for a list of questions you can use to screen potential providers.



**CA LGBTQ Health &
Human Services Network**
Finding a Therapist

LGBTQ+ Affirming Care

Hormone Blockers

In most cases, minors do not undergo gender-affirming surgery. Once a person turns 18, they can discuss the possibility of gender-affirming surgery and/or hormone replacement therapy (HRT) with their care provider.

That said, culturally competent care providers take the negative effects of gender dysphoria seriously and, in some cases, will discuss the benefits of *hormone blockers* when addressing dysphoria with patients under the age of 18.

Hormone blockers, also known as *puberty blockers*, delay the process of puberty *temporarily* to allow time for a trans teen to come to terms with their identity & plan for the future.

Check out the resources below for more info about gender affirming care, hormone blockers, and HRT.



Mayo Clinic
Pubertal blockers for transgender and gender-diverse youth



Planned Parenthood
Gender affirming hormone care (GAHC)



Scientific American
What the Science on Gender Affirming Care for Transgender Kids Really Shows



Keep in mind, gender is about personal expression. Many trans people live their lives without ever opting for gender-affirming surgery. While some people do choose surgery, it is ultimately up to the individual to decide what is right for them.

Our Why

A poll from the Trevor Project in 2021 found that 42% of queer youth had contemplated suicide.



The Trevor Project provides information & support to LGBTQ+ young people 24/7, all year round, including a support hotline.

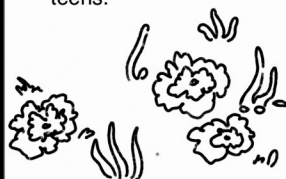
Compared to their straight peers, LGBTQ+ youth are at a 4x greater risk of suicide due to the effects of minority stress, e.g. bullying, victimization, anti-queer cultural sentiments, etc.

Risk of depression & suicide will decrease if a young person has a sense of connectedness, community, affirmation, access to health services, etc.

Queer teens don't live in a world where dating & courtship is modeled for them the way it is for their straight peers.

Queer teens deserve to be affirmed & provided the space to just be teens.

It is a small but significant effort to educate ourselves & attempt to be supportive of our queer & trans pals.



Glossary

Cultural competence: also known as *intercultural competence*, this term refers to the development and practice of skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication with people from cultures different than our own.

Gender: the socially constructed characteristics, norms, behaviors, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other (*who.int*).

Gender affirmation: the process by which a person receives social recognition and support for their gender identity and expression.

Gender dysphoria: psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one's sex assigned at birth and one's gender identity (*psychiatry.org*).

Gender identity: a person's internal sense of being male, female, some combination of male and female, or neither male nor female (*mariam-webster.com*).

Gender nonconformity: having a gender presentation that does not conform to conventional understandings of gender norms.

Gender presentation: refers to the way you express (or display) yourself to the world, especially as it relates to societal expectations about masculinity and femininity.

Harm reduction: a range of public health policies designed to lessen the negative social and/or physical consequences associated with various human behaviors, both legal and illegal, e.g. sex, sex work, and drug use.

Pronouns: any of a small set of words (such as I, she, he, you, it, we, or they) in a language that are used as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases and whose referents are named or understood in the context. The third person personal pronouns (such as he/him, she/her, and they/them) that a person goes by (*mariam-webster.com*).

Sex: the physical differences between people who are male, female, or intersex. A person typically has their sex assigned at birth based on physiological characteristics, including their genitalia and chromosome composition (*medicalnewstoday.com*).

Sex assigned-at-birth: At birth, infants are commonly assigned a sex. This is usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy, and is often confused with gender (*itgetsbetter.org*).

Sexual orientation: a component of identity that includes sexual and emotional attraction to another person (*apa.org*); the fact of being heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, etc.

Do you have more questions about terms? You can always contact us at info@rainbowprideyouthalliance.org