

# Life in South Sacramento for LGBTQ\* Youth

\* Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Questioning

What we need to know to make life better  
for our LGBTQ youth.

*"In South Sacramento, I don't feel safe... I feel like  
I have to go back in the closet!" Youth participant*



## LGBTQ youth face additional disparities living in South Sacramento

Compared to other areas of Sacramento, youth in South Sacramento experience more:

- Aggression
- Gender-based oppression
- Verbal harassment

Many LGBTQ youth say they do not feel comfortable in their neighborhoods, schools and homes, because they are subjected to homophobic, disparaging comments.

### Appearing feminine puts youth at greater risk:

- Female-identified youth experience frequent unwanted sexual advances from men.
- Gay male youth fear violent reactions from men, for being too feminine. They do not know who in South Sacramento is openly gay and/or safe to talk to.

## Youth Speak Out

*"I have had neighbors tell me that they can 'smell the gay on me!"*  
(Male youth)

*"I don't run errands here in South Sac because of the risk that something could happen. I can pass [as straight] by myself but when I am with my girlfriend, I don't."* (Female youth)

*"Growing up, people would ask me, 'why do you talk like that?' People don't want to hang out with me. They end up preaching to me. I carry a knife with me all the time because I was followed by a group of men."* (Male youth)

*"My boyfriend and I can only hold hands for 2 or 3 blocks before we get homophobic comments. Comments are more scary in South Sac than in midtown!"* (Male youth)

*"My mom says she doesn't want to see any 'fag s\*#%' in her home. At school, I feel safer, but at home it's so different."* (Female youth)

LGBTQ youth who are rejected by caregivers & families are at high risk for health and mental health problems. Rejected youth are:

### Did you know?

- More than 8 times as likely to attempt suicide
- More than 3 times as likely to use illegal drugs

# How do we make South Sacramento a safer place?

There are few LGBTQ services in the area. Youth have to leave South Sac in order to experience a more open and authentic life. Here are some ideas to help increase our level of support:

- Further develop youth leadership
- Create safer equal spaces to socialize
- Address the mental health needs of LGBTQ youth
- Increase advertising about LGBTQ resources and events around Sacramento
- If you are an ally, speak up and help educate those around you.



## Do's & Don'ts for caregivers & families

- DO support the child's identity even if you feel uncomfortable
- DO connect the child with positive LGBTQ role models
- DO advocate for the youth when they are mistreated
- DO support the child's gender expression
  
- DON'T block access to LGBTQ friends, events & resources
- DON'T tell the child you are ashamed of them and how they look or act
- DON'T blame the child when they are discriminated against because of their identity

### LGBTQ Resources

- NorCal Mental Health America  
Emily Bender, ebender@norcalmha.org | 530.366.1777
- Sacramento LGBT Community Center  
www.SacCenter.org | 916.442.0185
- Gender Health Center  
www.TheGenderHealthCenter.org | 916.455.2391
- PFLAG Sacramento  
www.PFLAGsacramento.org | 916.978.0410
- Sacramento City Unified School District  
LGBTQ Support Services  
Emily Herr, emily-herr@scusd.edu | 916.643.2361



2009, Caitlin Ryan, PhD,  
Family Acceptance Project

## Did you know?

- When families are accepting, youth are more likely to believe they will have a good life and will be happy, productive adults
- When youth are accepted by their families, they are much more likely to want to have a family themselves

2009, Caitlin Ryan, PhD, Family Acceptance Project