

## Resource Center on Justice-Involved LGBTQ2S+ Youth Newsletter

Welcome to the first newsletter for the Resource Center on Justice-Involved Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) Youth!

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) — with funding provided by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention — is collaborating with the National Center for Youth with Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression (The National SOGIE Center) to support essential juvenile justice system reforms addressing the needs of justice-involved LGBTQ2S+ youth. Also lending support and input are other national organizations, including the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, the Gault Center, and the Tribal Law and Policy Institute.

The necessity of this resource center is amplified by recent research showing that up to 20 percent of the youth in America's juvenile detention facilities identify as LGBT, questioning, or gender non-conforming.<sup>1</sup> That's almost three times their estimated number in the general population. Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) researchers found that LGBTQ+ and Two-Spirit youth are subject to high rates of peer victimization, truancy, and discipline resulting from hostile school environments.<sup>2</sup> LGBTQ2S+ youth are often rejected by caregivers and ostracized from their homes resulting in disproportionate numbers experiencing homelessness nationwide, estimated at 40%.<sup>3</sup> Without stable housing, LGBTQ2S+ youth can turn to theft, survival sex, and the selling of illegal substances to survive, putting them at greater risk of arrest and incarceration.

Once in contact with the juvenile justice system, the disparities are only exacerbated. For example, lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth confined in juvenile facilities are at least seven times more likely to be sexually assaulted by other youth than their heterosexual peers.<sup>4</sup> A recent National Survey of Youth in Custody found that youth who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or another sexual orientation were nearly twice as likely to report sexual victimization by peers and staff than heterosexual youth (12% as opposed to 6.5%).<sup>5</sup> An even higher percentage (19.1%) of youth who identified as a different gender from their sex recorded at birth reported sexual victimization compared to youth who identified with their biological sex (6.8%).<sup>6</sup> Of these youth, 85% are youth of color.<sup>7</sup>

Understanding the impact of stigma and anti-LGBTQ2S+ bias on youth is critical to making informed decisions about all youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Affirmative steps must be taken to protect their safety and advance their well-being. Misinformation and bias marginalize these youth, causing de facto inequity for low socio-economic youth, immigrant youth, and youth of color.

The Resource Center on Justice-Involved LGBTQ2S+ youth will be a hub of information and resources to address the specific challenges faced by justice-involved LGBTQ2S+ youth. The NCJFCJ and its collaborators want to provide professionals working in the juvenile justice system with the skills to collect data, assess their practices, reform the courts, and affirm the sexual orientation and gender identity of LGBTQ2S+ youth, along with increasing the ease of accessibility to evidence-based practices and current data. The significant overrepresentation and documented vulnerability of LGBTQ2S+ youth in the juvenile justice system prompted recent changes in law and policy that significantly impact practice. In future newsletters, webinars, and targeted training, we will address these standards and will continue to promote practices and policies that prevent discrimination and harm. We will advocate for the fair and equitable treatment of LGBTQ2S+ youth arrested and referred to juvenile justice agencies.

If you would like to continue to receive the Resource Center on Justice-Involved LGBTQ2S+ Youth Newsletter, please subscribe below.

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## Upcoming Events

### Webinar: An Introduction to LGBTQ2S+ Justice-Involved Youth

March 29, 2023

10:00am - 11:00am (PDT)

[Register Here](#)

## Language Spotlight

It is important to stay current on language and terms used by the communities we work with. Language and terms in the LGBTQ2S+ community evolve as the identity spectrum is further explored and understood. It is vital to ask people what terms they use to describe their own sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. This spotlight will provide information regarding some terms and language but is not intended to be exhaustive. Each newsletter will delve into new terms. If there are terms you are curious about or would like to see included, please contact Elisha Harris, NCJFCJ Site Manager, at [eharris@ncjfcj.org](mailto:eharris@ncjfcj.org).

**LGBTQ2S+:** An acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and Two-Spirit. There are many variations of this acronym. A plus sign is used to recognize that there are limitless identities within the community (HRC).

**Two-Spirit:** Encompasses sexual, cultural, gender, and spiritual identities in some Indigenous and Native American communities. Two-Spirit refers to a person who has both a male and female essence or spirit. This term should not be used to identify non-indigenous people and is not used by all Native American or indigenous communities (PFLAG).

**Sexual orientation:** An enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, or affectional attraction or non-attraction to other people. Sexual orientation can be fluid (AECF).

**Gender identity:** A person's deeply held core sense of self in relation to gender. Gender identity is best represented as a spectrum and an individual may move around this spectrum. Some terms that are associated with this spectrum are man, woman, gender fluid, genderqueer, trans, transgender, and Two-Spirit, although these are not the only terms (PFLAG; The National SOGIE Center).

**Gender expression:** The ways in which an individual communicates their gender to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice, etc. Gender expression is not an indication of gender identity or sexual orientation; a person can express one gender and identify with another (The National SOGIE Center; AECF).

The definitions listed here were written with information gathered from:  
The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) <https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>  
The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) <https://www.aecf.org/blog/lgbtq-definitions>  
PFLAG <https://pflag.org/glossary/>  
The National SOGIE Center

<https://sogiecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/qic-lgbtq2s-sogie-glossary.pdf>

## Sources

<sup>1</sup>Field, M. B., & Davis, E. (2020, November). Victim, perpetrator, and incident characteristics of sexual victimization of youth in juvenile facilities, 2018 - statistical tables. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<sup>2</sup>Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., Truong, N. L., & Zongrone, A. D. (2020). The 2019 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN.

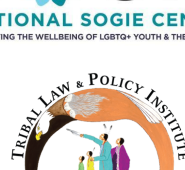
<sup>3</sup>Durso, L., & Gates, G. (2012). Serving our youth: Findings from a national survey of service workers working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with the True Colors Fund and the Palette Fund.

<sup>4</sup>Beck, A.J., Harrison, P.M., & Guerino, P. (2010). Sexual victimization in juvenile facilities reported by youth. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<sup>5</sup>Field, M. B., & Davis, E. (2020, November). Victim, perpetrator, and incident characteristics of sexual victimization of youth in juvenile facilities, 2018 - statistical tables. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



### NCJFCJ Disclaimer

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