

OUTLAST

Youth

ENDING LGBTQ YOUTH HOMELESSNESS



**POLICY
PRIORITIES
GUIDE
VOL.2**



Local Policy Priorities For LGBTQ Youth Experiencing Homelessness Volume 2: January 2020

According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), “youth who experience prolonged homelessness also face greater challenges than many of their peers; greater involvement with the child welfare and criminal justice systems; histories of child maltreatment; higher rates of substance use and mental health challenges; higher rates of dropping out of school; higher rates of unemployment and informal work; and unstable housing and living situations.”¹

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth have a 120% higher risk for homelessness.² [Outlast Youth](#) seeks to reduce and prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness in Dallas and surrounding counties by addressing the systemic causes of this complex issue. We believe by turning our focus to the most vulnerable of our homeless neighbors, we are then able to cast a wider net of better caring for all.

By focusing on youth, (ages 12-24, as defined by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and as will be defined in the preceding document) we are able to look to the future of reducing the youth to adult homelessness pipeline. As municipal elections are upon us, it is our intention that this guide be used by candidates and constituents alike. For more information or any further questions, do not hesitate to reach out to us at hello@outlastyouth.org.

Let's end LGBTQ youth homelessness by working together!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J Cogan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Josh Cogan
President & CEO

NOTE: Though local statistics come from Dallas County, the proposed solutions are applicably scalable for all municipalities within the metroplex, unless otherwise stated. Additionally, a statewide legislature section has been added in Volume 2

¹ Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (2017). *Factors Associated With Prolonged Youth Homelessness*. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

² Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.



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City Government

(1) Comprehensive non-discrimination policy for city-funded homeless service providers

Overview: Many homeless service providers are inadequately prepared to best serve some of our most vulnerable homeless neighbors with a trauma-informed response. By adopting a comprehensive non-discrimination policy, for any homeless service provider seeking funds from local city government, we can better care for all of our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

Facts:

- In June 2019, approximately 34% of our surveyed youth identified as LGBTQ³
- 44% of our youth experiencing homelessness reported they felt unsafe in shelters as a direct result of Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity/Expression (SOGI/E).⁴
- LGBTQ youth experienced physical and/or sexual violence⁵ at a rate of 2.5 times higher than their peers, since coming to experience homelessness.⁵
- 9% of foster care youth now experiencing homelessness identify as Transgender, whereas only 2% of all youth experiencing homelessness identify as such.⁶ However, foster care agencies have the freedom to discriminate based on their religious beliefs, which can further perpetuate the foster care to homelessness pipeline.⁷
- In 2019, [Outlast Youth](#) trained 7 applicable homeless agencies on LGBTQ cultural competency and assessing individual bias. The latter is considered a best practice from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) key principles of Trauma-Informed Care.⁸

³ Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (2019). See *Us Now Youth Survey Report*, June 2019. <https://mdhadallas.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/See-Us-Now-Report-Summer-2019.pdf>

⁴ Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (2018). See *Us Now Homeless Youth Address 2018*. <https://mdhadallas.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/See-Us-Now-2018.pdf>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Frank, Cook, Dale, et al. HB No. 3859. <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/85R/billtext/pdf/HB03859H.pdf#navpanes=0>

⁸ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach 11* (2014).



Proposed Solution(s):

- Adopt a LGBTQ inclusivity minimum standards checklist (example on next page).
- Adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the appropriate city office (e.g. City of Dallas' Office of Homeless Solutions) and a privately funded (not funded by HUD or city dollars) third party to conduct checklist with city-funded shelters, no less than annually and no more than quarterly.
- Adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the appropriate city office (e.g. City of Dallas' Office of Homeless Solutions) and a privately funded (not funded by HUD or city dollars) third party to conduct staff-wide, mandatory Implicit Biases trainings for city-funded homeless service providers, annually.

Further Reading on the Issue:

- Implementing a Trauma-Informed Approach for Youth across Service Sectors - https://youth.gov/docs/Trauma_Informed_Approach_508.pdf
- LGBT Homeless Youth & Trauma Informed Care: C. Benjamin Brooks, JD MPH, Advocacy Manager, National Coalition for LGBT Health - <https://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/lgbtq-youth-homelessness.pdf>
- Reducing the Foster Children Homeless Crisis: Richard Villasana - <https://www.fosterfocusmag.com/articles/reducing-foster-children-homeless-crisis>
- Toward Providing a Welcoming Home for All: Enacting a New Approach to Address the Longstanding Problems Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth Face in the Foster Care System: James W. Gilliam Jr. - <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=http://scholar.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=2423&context=llr>



LGBTQ Inclusion Checklist

I. Physical Space/Agency Culture

Residents are housed based on gender identity (10 pts.)

Visible symbol(s) of inclusion posted (e.g. "WE" sticker) (5 pts.)

Staff are trained on asking and using chosen name and accurate pronouns (5 pts.)

SCORE: _____ out of 20

- BONUS:** All-gender or single-use restroom is available
- BONUS:** Housing is all-gender

II. Paperwork

Intake forms ask for chosen name, pronouns, and gender identity (7 pts.)

Pronouns are asked during the intake process (5 pts.)

Name and pronouns prominently displayed on case files (3 pts.)

SCORE: _____ out of 15

III. Policies

LGBTQ non-discrimination policy is signed by all staff (10 pts.)

Outline the safe and gender-affirming placement of transgender residents (5 pts.)

Address safe bathroom access for transgender residents (3 pts.)

Are reviewed during new resident and new staff orientation and annually (2 pts.)

SCORE: _____ out of 20

- BONUS:** All contracted agencies are affirming of LGBTQ residents
- BONUS:** Affirm the rights of transgender residents to present authentically
- BONUS:** LGBTQ non-discrimination policy signed by all residents

IV. Programming

Unique needs of LGBTQ residents included in general programming (5 pts.)

Program calendar is posted in common areas (4 pts.)

Programming includes LGBTQ-specific events (4 pts.)

SCORE: _____ out of 13

- BONUS:** Residents have the opportunity to develop and lead programs

V. Staff Development & Training

Staff trainings include an LGBTQ focus (10 pts.)

Hiring process incorporates LGBTQ cultural competency training (7 pts.)

Staff are trained on respectfully asking pronouns, name, gender identity, and sexuality (7 pts.)

SCORE: _____ out of 22

- BONUS:** LGBTQ residents are consulted when doing trainings in-house

VI. Community Engagement

A list of agency-approved referral resources is given to all staff (5 pts.)

Affirming community resources information is given to all staff (3 pts.)

Partnerships exist with local LGBTQ advocacy organizations (2 pts.)

SCORE: _____ out of 10

- BONUS:** Community-wide LGBTQ events regularly announced & attended by staff/residents

TOTAL SCORE: _____ + **TOTAL BONUS (2 pts each):** _____ = **FINAL SCORE:** _____



(2) Establish local emergency shelter for 18 to 24 year olds (*City of Dallas*)

Overview: 55% of our youth experiencing homelessness are between the age range of eighteen and twenty-four years of age. Local homeless service providers - both adult and youth-focused, respectively - share grave concerns of safety for this age bracket sharing a living space with an older adult chronically experiencing homelessness. There are many local Transitional Living Programs (TLPs) that house 18-24 year-olds. However, a young adult could be waiting for anywhere from a few days to several months for a bed opening. A low-barrier emergency shelter for this age bracket would provide a safe, immediate housing solution.

Facts:

- According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, there is only 1 bed available for every 125 young people living without a home
- 1 in 10 young adults between 18 and 25* experience homelessness each year; this is approximately 3.5 million young people, nationally⁹
- 88% of our unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are between 18 to 24 years of age, whereas 55% of all surveyed youth experiencing homelessness are in this age range (e.g. TLPs; couchsurfing; subsidized housing; etc.).¹⁰ Nationally, unaccompanied youth in this age range also account for 88%.¹¹
- With the top three local causes of youth homelessness being (1) family instability, (2) financial reasons, and (3) being kicked out of the house by friends, many of our youth simply need an immediate housing solution to help them get back on their feet.¹²
- Approximately 48.5% of survey respondents reported that they slept on a street/sidewalk/bridge/overpass in the past 3 months¹³

**Note: While HUD recognizes homeless youth up to age 24, this particular source lists this population up to age 25. While some cities, across the nation, are increasing their transitional-aged youth (18-24 y/o) programs to age 25, this is not yet a national standard.*

⁹ Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

¹⁰ Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (2018). *See Us Now Homeless Youth Address 2018*. <https://mdhadallas.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/See-Us-Now-2018.pdf>

¹¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness. *Youth and Young Adults*. <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/who-experiences-homelessness/youth/>

¹² Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (2019). *See Us Now Youth Survey Report*, June 2019. <https://mdhadallas.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/See-Us-Now-Report-Summer-2019.pdf>

¹³ Ibid.



Proposed Solution:

- Allocate at least \$3M in funds from the City of Dallas' 2017 Homeless Bond Package to purchase and restore a vacant city-owned building for the use of an Emergency Shelter for young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. See an existing model here: [Safe Haven](#), located in Washington, D.C.

Further Reading:

- A Hidden Population: Youth Homelessness Is on the Rise: The PEW Charitable Trusts - <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2017/07/07/a-hidden-population-youth-homelessness-is-on-the-rise>
- Ending Youth Homelessness: Promising Program Models: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Community Planning and Development - <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Ending-Youth-Homelessness-Promising-Program-Models.pdf>
- Juvenile Justice and the Adolescent Brain: Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Law, Brain & Behavior - <http://clbb.mgh.harvard.edu/juvenilejustice/>



(3) Trauma-informed Training for First Responders (City & County Joint Partnership)

Overview: Systemically, juvenile justice-involved youth are in a cycle of homelessness until there are low barrier housing options for them. One report states, “because their homelessness forces them to spend more time than their housed peers in public spaces, homeless youth are more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system for offenses such as loitering, camping, and panhandling.”¹⁴ By training first responders on (1) trauma-informed responses, (2) an understanding of the complexities of the varying subsets of youth homelessness, and (3) the appropriate local resources available for individuals experiencing homelessness, we can better de-escalate potential hostile situations, as well as potentially reduce the book-in rate for young adults experiencing homelessness.

Facts:

- Nationally, 75% of respondents reported regular negative interactions with police, including harassment and being ticketed, and not a single youth reported turning to police for assistance when victimized.¹⁵
- 18-24 year-olds, with a juvenile criminal background, experienced homelessness 4 times or more at a rate of approximately two times more than their peers.¹⁶
- Youth experiencing homelessness, with a juvenile criminal background, trade sex at a rate of two times higher than peers and panhandle at a rate of three times higher.¹⁷
- In October 2018, 36% of 18-24 year-olds booked in Dallas County alone were from drug/alcohol charges.¹⁸ 26% of youth experiencing homelessness report drug and alcohol abuse.¹⁹
- In October 2018, 30% of 18-24 year-olds booked in Dallas County alone were flagged with Mental Health issues.²⁰ Similarly, 31% of youth experiencing homelessness self-reported Mental Health issues.²¹

¹⁴ Sedlak, A., & Bruce, C. *Youth's characteristics and backgrounds: Findings from the Survey of Youth in Residential Placement*. (2010, December). Retrieved from: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/227730.pdf>

¹⁵ Youth Today. (2008) *Voices from the Street: A Survey of Homeless Youth by their Peers*. Retrieved from <http://youthtoday.org/2008/04/voices-from-the-street-a-survey-of-homeless-youth-by-their-peers/>

¹⁶ Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (2018). *See Us Now Homeless Youth Address 2018*. <https://mdhadallas.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/See-Us-Now-2018.pdf>

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Note: This data was sent to the author of this document by Dallas County Department of Criminal Justice on Nov. 29, 2018 and is available per request.

¹⁹ Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (2018). *See Us Now Homeless Youth Address 2018*. <https://mdhadallas.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/See-Us-Now-2018.pdf>

²⁰ Note: This data was sent to the author of this document by Dallas County Department of Criminal Justice on Nov. 29, 2018 and is available per request.

²¹ Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (2018). *See Us Now Homeless Youth Address 2018*. <https://mdhadallas.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/See-Us-Now-2018.pdf>



Proposed Solutions:

- Contract with a third party/parties to train first responders on trauma-informed responses when interacting with individuals experiencing homelessness. Special attention should be given to mental health, substance abuse, victims of sexual exploitation/trafficking, and victims of domestic violence (this is a non-exhaustive list), annually and in the appropriate academies, respectively.
- Contract with a third party/parties to train first responders on the various subsets of youth experiencing homelessness, ranging from LGBTQ youth, sexually exploited youth, and youth with a criminal background (this is a non-exhaustive list), annually and in the appropriate academies, respectively.
- Contract with a third party/parties to train first responders on the resources available for the vast array of individuals experiencing homelessness, annually and in the appropriate academies, respectively.

Further Reading:

- LGBTQ Youth and the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Shannon D. Snapp, Jennifer M. Hoenig, Amanda Fields & Stephen T. Russell - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0743558414557625>
- Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people: Lucius Couloute - <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html>
- Youth's Characteristics and backgrounds: Findings from the Survey of Youth in Residential: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/227730.pdf>



County Government

(1) Mental Health Services for Youth experiencing Homelessness

Overview: The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services reports “the more time youth spend on the streets, the greater their likelihood of mental health disorders.”²² Currently, there is a lack of adequate resources for assisting our homeless neighbors within the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, at large. By allocating emergency services and more resources towards preventative and early intervention strategies for our youth, then we could see a reduction in the mental health and homelessness overlap over time.

Facts:

- Nationally, 67% of youth at highest risk of experiencing 5 or more years of homelessness reported more mental health issues, including depression.²³
- Nationally, approximately three-quarters of chronically homeless adults report serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or both.²⁴
- Nationally, being homeless at age 18 or younger is the largest (35%) of 5 pathways into adult (defined in this report as ages 21+) homelessness.²⁵
- 45% of our youth experiencing homelessness are between 12-17 years of age.²⁶
- 66% of our youth first experienced homelessness between the ages of 12-17.²⁷
- 31% of our youth experiencing homelessness self-report having mental health issues.²⁸

²² U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (2017). *Serious Mental Illness and Prolonged Youth Homelessness*. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257811/SMIProlongedYouthHomelessness.pdf>

²³ Rice, E. (2013). *The TAY Triage Tool: A tool to identify homeless transition age youth most in need of permanent supportive housing*. Retrieved from http://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/TAY_TriageTool_2014.pdf.

²⁴ Eden, E.L., Mares, A. S., & Rosenheck, R.A. (2011). *Chronically homeless women report high rates of substance use problems equivalent to chronically homeless men*. *Women's Health Issues*, 21, 383-389.

²⁵ Chamberlain C & Johnson G (2011). *Pathways into adult homelessness*. *Journal of Sociology*, 49, 60–77.

²⁶ Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (2018). *See Us Now Homeless Youth Address 2018*.

<https://mdhadallas.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/See-Us-Now-2018.pdf>

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.



Solutions:

- Establish a partnership between a county hospital (e.g. Parkland in Dallas County) and an appropriate mental health agency (e.g. North Texas Behavioral Health Association) to allocate dedicated emergency beds for youth (up to 24 years of age) experiencing homelessness who are also experiencing mental health issues. *A similar program can be found [here](#).*
- Establish a partnership between a county hospital (e.g. Parkland in Dallas County) and an appropriate mental health agency (e.g. North Texas Behavioral Health Association) to create a robust program for youth experiencing mental health issues, similar to the [Bill Wilson Center](#). The suggested program would include individual therapy, rehabilitation counseling, and case management, to name a few services.
- Invest in establishing a partnership with local Independent School Districts (ISDs), early childhood education programs, and existing after-school programs to provide programming positively engaging the mental health of children and youth at an earlier age (e.g. creative arts; cooking; controlled physical activities such as boxing; etc.).

Further Reading:

- The Mental and Physical Health of Homeless Youth: A Literature Review: Jennifer P. Edidin, Zoe Ganim, Scott J. Hunter, & Niranjan S. Karnik - <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10578-011-0270-1>
- The TAY Triage Tool: A Tool to Identify Homeless Transition Age Youth Most in Need of Permanent Supportive Housing: Eric Rice, Ph.D. - https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/TAY_TriageTool_2014.pdf



(2) Expand youth homelessness services outside Dallas city limits

Overview: With limited mobility, youth experiencing homelessness have a difficult time accessing services that may be available to them. By pulling and diversifying our resources, we can better serve our youth experiencing homelessness who may not have access to services due to limited mobility.

NOTE: Though the proposed solutions focus specifically on Dallas County, they are applicably scalable for all municipalities within the metroplex.

Facts

- Approximately 57.68% of youth are experiencing homelessness outside Dallas city limits, with a high concentration in Plano and Mesquite, respectively.²⁹
- [The National Campaign for Youth Shelter](#) calls for an “immediate commitment to add 22,000 beds with appropriate services,” corresponding with the annual, National Point in Time Count’s numbers. The National Campaign also reports approximately 500,000 unaccompanied youth experience homelessness each year, whereas there are only approximately 4,000 shelter beds for youth.

Solutions

- Establish a comprehensive community-wide program, allocating appropriate funds from appropriate funding sources (e.g. participating cities; county hospital(s); Department of Health & Human Services; etc.) within Dallas County. This program would have a range of services and resources available for youth experiencing homelessness across the county (e.g. outreach; health services; residential programs; etc.). *See a similar national program [here](#).*
- Ensure, as new resources are proposed within the county, we are diversifying locations of our services available for our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

Further Reading

- Young Homeless People and Urban Space: Fixed in Mobility: Waverly Duck - <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/symb.247>

²⁹ Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (2019). *See Us Now Youth Survey Report*, June 2019. <https://mdhadallas.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/See-Us-Now-Report-Summer-2019.pdf>



Independent School Districts (ISDs)

(1) Awareness for assisting your peers and students experiencing homelessness

Overview: In 2018, 36% of our youth experiencing homelessness did not access any services available. Anecdotally, youth consistently report that they are simply unaware of the resources available for them. By better educating both teachers AND students, we can create (1) general awareness for teachers on how their ISD's homeless education office can assist their students and (2) a peer-to-peer assistance network, better creating (3) a trauma-informed support base for youth experiencing homelessness and (4) expanding capacity for our ISDs' under-resourced homeless liaison offices.

Facts

- Nationally, approximately 46% of surveyed service providers reported a lack of community support as a barrier to best serve LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness.³⁰
- In the 2014-2015 school year, there were more than 113,000 homeless students enrolled in Texas' public schools. Almost 16,000 of these students are unaccompanied by any adult.³¹
- In the 2014-2015 school year, 1/3rd of ISDs, with the highest count of homeless students in Texas, came from within the Metroplex.³²
- Nearly one-third of surveyed school district homeless liaisons across Texas reported they do not have time to adequately perform their duties.³³
- Nationally, 61% of students said they were never connected with any outside organization while homeless. 87% of those who *were* connected found the help valuable.³⁴
- Nationally, 86% of students have a close connection with their peer, as well as having someone to talk with for emotional support.³⁵

³⁰ Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). *Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund.

³¹ Texas Appleseed & Texas Network of Youth Services (2017). *Young, Alone, and Homeless in the Lone Star State: Policy Solutions to End Youth Homelessness in Texas*. Austin, TX. Texas Appleseed and Texas Network of Youth Services.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ingram, E.S., Bridgeland, J.M., Reed, B., and Atwell, M. (2016). *Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools*. Civic Enterprises with Hart Research Associates.

³⁵ Ibid.



Solutions

- A mandatory training for teachers (K-12) on the indicators of youth homelessness and the appropriate services available. Aforementioned reports indicate our school district homeless liaisons have many challenges with their duties, due to bandwidth. By educating and equipping the teachers on the avenues available to directly assist their students, we can provide a more robust community support structure.
- In a similar manner, an awareness campaign for students (K-12) on indicators and appropriate resources available would add to a community support structure. As aforementioned, the majority of students experiencing homelessness have a close connection with their peers and are, anecdotally, more likely to share their challenges with a peer rather than an adult.

Further Reading

- Education Barriers for Homeless Youth: National Network 4 Youth (NN4Y) - https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/IssueBrief_Education.pdf
- Peer Outreach Professionals Help the Night Ministry Engage Homeless Youth - <https://www.thenightministry.org/blog/peer-outreach-professionals-help-the-night-ministry-engage-homeless-youth>
- Searching for Kinship: The Creation of Street Families Among Homeless Youth: Hilary Smith - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002764207311986>



Statewide Legislature

(1) Addressing Conversion Therapy

Overview: In 2017, the American Psychological Association issued a resolution “advising parents, guardians, young people, and their families to avoid sexual orientation change efforts that portray homosexuality as a mental illness or developmental disorder and to seek psychotherapy, social support and educational services that provide accurate information on sexual orientation and sexuality, increase family and school support, and reduce rejection of sexual minority youth.”³⁶ There have been states and local municipalities, nationwide, that have sought to protect our youth from this medically-debunked practice.

Facts:

- 698,000 LGBT adults (ages 18-59) in the U.S. have received conversion therapy, including about 350,000 LGBT adults who received treatment as adolescents³⁷
- 16,000 LGBT youth (ages 13-17) will receive conversion therapy from a licensed health care professional before they reach the age of 18 in the 32 states that currently do not ban the practice, unless additional states pass conversion therapy bans³⁸
- An estimated 57,000 youth (ages 13-17) across all states will receive conversion therapy from religious or spiritual advisors before they reach the age of 18³⁹
- San Francisco State University found that “compared with LGBTQ young people who were *not* rejected or were only a little rejected by their parents and caregivers...” highly rejected LGBTQ young people were 8.4x more likely to report having attempted suicide⁴⁰

Proposed Solutions:

- City-wide ordinance protecting the physical and psychological well-being of minors, including but not limited to LGBTQ youth, from exposure to the serious harms and risks caused by conversion therapy or reparative therapy by licensed providers. Examples of language include, but are not limited to: [Kansas City, MO Ordinance #190902 \(passed\)](#); [Milwaukee, WI #171760 \(passed\)](#).

³⁶ American Psychological Association, Resolution on Appropriate Affirmative Responses to Sexual Orientation Distress and Change Efforts, <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/sexual-orientation.aspx>

³⁷Williams Institute, Conversion Therapy and LGBT Youth (Update, June 2019), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Conversion-Therapy-LGBT-Youth-Update-June-2019.pdf>

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ GLAAD, Conversion Therapy https://www.glaad.org/conversiontherapy?response_type=embed



- Statewide legislation protecting the physical and psychological well-being of minors, including but not limited to LGBTQ youth, from exposure to the serious harms and risks caused by conversion therapy or reparative therapy by licensed providers. Examples of language include, but are not limited to: [Illinois HB217 \(99th General Assembly; passed into law\)](#); [Nevada SB201 \(79th Session, passed into law\)](#); [Texas HB517 \(86th Session, left pending in Public Health Committee\)](#).

Further Reading:

- Ending Conversion Therapy: Supporting and Affirming LGBTQ Youth - SAMSHA <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma15-4928.pdf>
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health Disparities: Executive Summary of a Policy Position Paper From the American College of Physicians - Hilary Daniel, BS; Renee Butkins, BA; for the Health and Public Policy Committee of the American College of Physicians <https://annals.org/aim/fullarticle/2292051/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-health-disparities-executive-summary-policy-position>
- Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE) and Conversion Therapy with Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexuals, and Transgender Persons - National Association of Social Workers (May 2015) <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=yH3UsGOQmYI%3d&portalid=0>



(2) Addressing Emotional Abuse

Overview: In the state of Texas, emotional abuse (defined as “mental or emotional injury”) is connected to an “observable and material impairment” (as defined in Texas’ *Family Code, Sec. 261.001, A*). This has many implications for our youth experiencing varying levels of emotional abuse and can oftentimes overlap with and/or lead into physical or sexual abuse. Raising more attention around child emotional abuse and amending the definition will allow us to be more preventative when it comes to protecting our children.

Facts:

- The United States has one of the worst records among industrialized nations - losing on average between four and seven children every day to child abuse and neglect⁴¹
- For new cases in 2008 alone, lifetime estimates of lost worker productivity, health care costs, special education costs, child welfare expenditures, and criminal justice expenditures added up to \$124 billion⁴²
- Around 80% of child maltreatment fatalities involve at least one parent as perpetrator⁴³
- According to the Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (MDHA) See Us Now, approximately 44% of our youth experiencing homelessness have experienced child abuse or neglect⁴⁴

Proposed Solutions:

- Raise public awareness of the signs of child emotional abuse
- Increase research to improve our understanding of child emotional abuse in the state of Texas: the extent, multiple layers, causes, consequences, and what helps prevent it.
- By amending language in the Texas *Family Code*, we could be more preventative for our children in Texas. You can read various suggestions of amended language here: [AZ Revised Statutes 8-201, 2 & 33](#); [MT Annotated Code 41-3-102, 21 & 23](#); [NY Family Court Act, Sec. 1012, h](#); & [WI Annotated Statutes, Sec. 48.02, 1gm & 5j](#)

Further Reading:

- Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence - CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingACES-508.pdf>
- What is Emotional Child Abuse? - Amy Morin, LCSW; Medically reviewed by Steven Gans, MD <https://www.verywellfamily.com/what-is-emotional-child-abuse-4157502>

⁴¹ 1. CDC, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study & Child Maltreatment, 2014

⁴² Fang, X., et al. The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention. *Child Abuse & Neglect* (2012), doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2011.10.006

⁴³ Kids Count

⁴⁴ Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (MDHA) See Us Now, Youth Survey Responses February 2019 <https://mdhadallas.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/See-Us-Now-Report-February-2019.pdf>



Glossary of Terms

- **Conversion therapy:** psychiatric therapy aimed at changing a person’s sexual orientation, based upon the assumption that homosexuality is a mental disorder requiring therapy (a position condemned by The American Psychiatric Association as unethical) (as defined by Segen’s Medical Dictionary, 2012)
- **Couch-surfing:** those who are sharing housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; common “doubled-up” experience for homeless youth (as defined by National Network for Youth)
- **Doubled-up:** when a youth (or any person or family) has no legal right to stay where they are staying; includes, but is not limited to, youth couch-surfing or sleeping in sheds, garages, attics, or basements, etc. (as defined by National Network for Youth)
- **Early childhood education:** broad term used to describe any type of educational program that serves children in their preschool years (as defined by Pre School Teacher.org)
- **Emergency shelter:** any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for *people experiencing homelessness* in general or for specific populations of *homeless neighbors* (as defined by HUD, with *italicized words* are the author(s) of this document)
- **First responders:** a person (such as a police officer or an EMT) who is among those responsible for going immediately to the scene of an accident or emergency to provide assistance (as defined by Merriam-Webster)
- **Gender expression:** external appearance of one’s gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine (as defined by Human Rights Campaign)
- **Gender identity:** one’s innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither - how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One’s gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth (as defined by Human Rights Campaign)
- **Homeless liaison:** Local Educational Agencies (also known as school districts) must, to the extent feasible, keep students in homeless situations in their school of origin (the school attended when permanently housed or in which the student was last enrolled), unless it is against the parent’s or guardian’s wishes. *Though there are many duties associated with the liaison, they educate and assist their Local Educational Agency*



(LEA) in matters pertaining to students experiencing homelessness (as defined by HUD, with italicized words are the author(s) of this document)

- **Housing and Urban Development (HUD):** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **(Human) Trafficking:** modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act (as defined by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security)
- **Implicit bias:** the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner (as defined by The American Academy of Family Physicians)
- **LGBTQ:** acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (as defined by Human Rights Campaign)
- **Limited mobility:** for youth experiencing homelessness, this means having little to no access to transportation (e.g. public transportation, car, etc.)
- **Low barrier housing:** where a minimum of expectations are placed on people who wish to live there...to allow more people access to services (as defined by Visions Journal, "Housing and Homelessness" issue) *Note: for more info on a clear definition, please read "So, you think you're a low barrier shelter...let's check" by Iain De Jong: www.orgcode.com/lbhc*
- **Memorandum of understanding (MOU):** an agreement between two parties that is not legally binding, but which outlines the responsibilities of each of the parties to the agreement (as defined by Legal Dictionary.net)
- **Queer:** a term people use to express fluid identities and orientations; often used interchangeably with "LGBTQ" (as defined by Human Rights Campaign)
- **Questioning:** a term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity (as defined by Human Rights Campaign)
- **Rehabilitation counseling:** practice of working with people with significant physical, mental, emotional, and social challenges every day (as defined by Social Work Degree Guide)
- **Reparative therapy:** see "conversion therapy"
- **Sexual exploitation:** taking the advantage of sexuality and attractiveness of a person to make a personal gain or profit; the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes (as defined by US Legal.com)



- **Sexual orientation:** an inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people; *simply, who you are attracted to emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually* (as defined by Human Rights Campaign, with *italicized words* are the author(s) of this document)
- **Transgender:** umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth; does not imply any specific sexual orientation (as defined by Human Rights Campaign)
- **Transitional Age Youth:** young people, ages 16 to 24, who are at high risk of not successfully transitioning into independent adulthood due to the complexity of their needs, the many challenges they face, and the lack of a support system to assist them (as defined by Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.)
- **Transitional Living Program (TLP):** authorized in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and is supported by the Family & Youth Services Bureau within the Administration for Children and Families; provides long-term residential services to homeless youth between the ages of 16 and 22; provides living arrangements for youth in host families, group homes, maternity group homes, and supervised apartments owned or rented by the program (as defined by Youth.gov)
- **Trauma-informed care:** seeks to resist re-traumatization of clients as well as staff; reflects adherence to six key principles rather than a set of practices or procedures: (1) safety; (2) trustworthiness & transparency; (3) peer support; (4) collaboration & mutuality; (5) empowerment, voice & choice; (6) cultural, historical, & gender issues (as defined by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)