LGBTQ Homeless Youth Prevention Initiative
Houston Funders' Tool Kit

Critical Points

NEST is The Way Home's effort to prevent and end homelessness among youth and young adults who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ) by 2020. in Houston, Harris County, and Fort Bend County.

www.thewayhomehouston.org
www.montrosecenter.org/hub/nest-home/

Public systems are a critical intervention point: schools, child welfare, and juvenile justice all represent opportunities for risk identification and mitigation for this group.
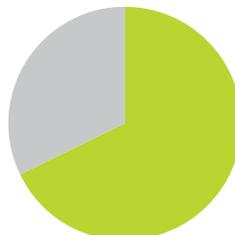
A range of responses is needed:

Families need support to stay together. Many youth/young adults need trauma-informed services. Shelters need to respond to the needs of youth/young adults, and more affordable housing is needed.
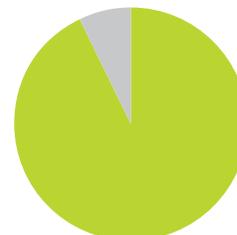
Houston Homeless Youth Facts*:

There are approximately 630 homeless youth and young adults in Houston, Harris County, and Fort Bend County at any given time:
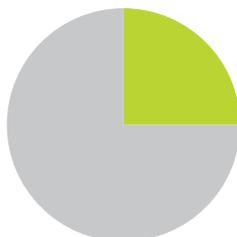
The mean age of homeless youth and young adults is

21

61% are African American
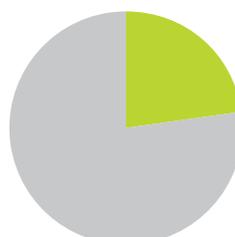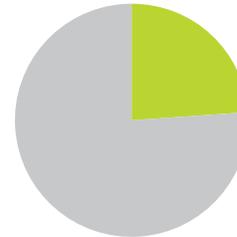
93% are born in the USA

25% identify as LGBTQ

23% have been raped

24% have children

22% are employed

51% have spent time in jail or detention

41% from the foster system

* Data courtesy of the YouthCount 2.0!

Terms

Language matters. LGBTQ people come from all walks of life and experiences. It is important for us to understand empowering language related to the LGBTQ community.

Sex:
At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy.

LGBTQ:
About 1 in every 10 people identify as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning). Identity is not fixed and can change throughout life. To really understand an individual, it is best to ask, "How do you identify?"

Sexual Orientation:
Describes an individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

Gender Identity:
One's internal, deeply held sense of one's gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. This can exist somewhere outside or between the male/female binary.
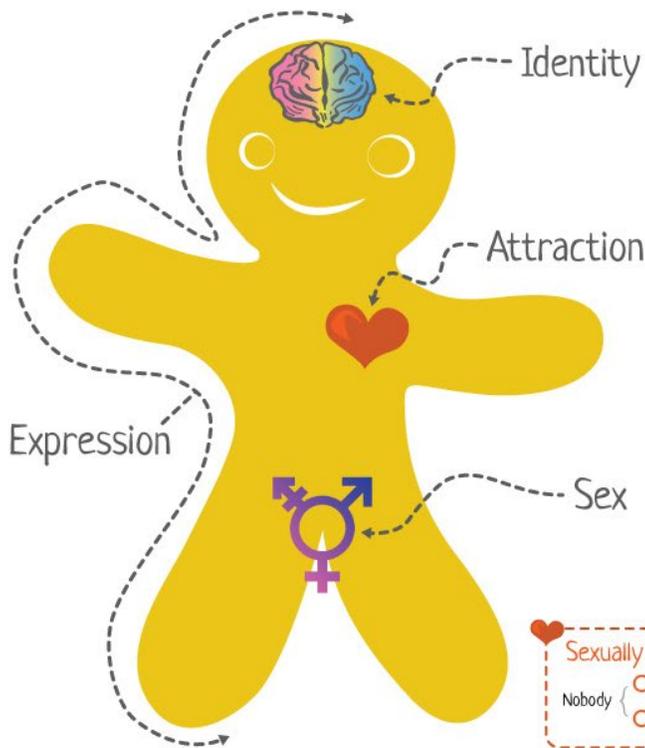
Gender Expression:
External manifestations of gender expressed through one's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine and feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Typically, transgender people seek to make their gender expression align with their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

The Genderbread Person v3.3

by it's pronounced METROsexual .com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more. In fact, that's the idea.

Plot a point on both continua in each category to represent your identity; combine all ingredients to form your Genderbread

4 (of infinite) possible plot and label combos

Identity

Attraction

Expression

Sex

⊘ Indicates a lack of what's on the right.

Gender Identity
- Woman-ness
- Man-ness

How you, in your head, define your gender, based on how much you align (or don't align) with what you understand to be the options for gender.

"woman" · "man" · "two-spirit" · "genderqueer"

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine

The ways you present gender, through your actions, dress, and demeanor, and how those presentations are interpreted based on gender norms.

"butch" · "femme" · "androgynous" · "gender neutral"

Biological Sex
- Female-ness
- Male-ness

The physical sex characteristics you're born with and develop, including genitalia, body shape, voice pitch, body hair, hormones, chromosomes, etc.

"male" · "female" · "intersex" · "MtF Female"

Sexually Attracted to
Nobody {
- (Women/Females/Femininity)
- (Men/Males/Masculinity)

Romantically Attracted to
Nobody {
- (Women/Females/Femininity)
- (Men/Males/Masculinity)

In each grouping, circle all that apply to you and plot a point, depicting the aspects of gender toward which you experience attraction.

For a bigger bite, read more at http://bit.ly/genderbread

Why is there LGBTQ Youth Homelessness?

Increased Risk Factors:

- Higher risk for family rejection - family forces youth out of home
- Aged out of foster care or juvenile justice system
- Family poverty
- Higher high school dropout risk
- Higher risk for harassment/ abuse in schools and in general

Limited Protective Factors:

- Insufficient response in schools to harassment
- Little to no programs for LGBTQ youth/ young adults
- Little to no support available to resolve family conflict

Investments are needed in many areas!

Education & Employment

- + Improved attention in schools toward LGBTQ youth/young adults
- + Improved referrals to services
- + Attention to graduation rates and dropout risk
- + Support for developing career goals and achieving employment

Stable Housing

- + Decreased homelessness
- + Better service models for LGBTQ youth/young adults
- + Expanded access to safer housing
- + Improved data collection

Permanent Connections

- + Increasing affirming staff in school services and communities
- + Improving family connections

Social-Emotional Well-Being

- + Increasing culturally-competent and affirming primary and behavioral health care

Effective Grantmaking Questions

Organizational Overview:

- What is your non-discrimination policy? How is it communicated? How are concerns addressed?
- Gender and sexual identity are involved with a lot of youth issues. Does your organization ask and acknowledge Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) among youth/young adult clients?
- What type of training does your staff receive around identifying and serving LGBTQ youth/young adults?

Services & Supports:

- Describe the services you offer to help support LGBTQ youth/young adults and their families.
- What conditions and/or rules do you place on LGBTQ youth/young adults who are accessing services? How do you retain LGBTQ youth/young adults?
- How have you or how do you plan to retrain your staff toward LGBTQ youth/young adults? If you have already retrained your staff, what new outcomes are you seeing as a result?

Connections & Coordination:

- To what extent are you partnering with nonprofits and programs that traditionally serve LGBTQ youth/young adults and families?
- How does your staff help LGBTQ youth/young adults connect to mainstream services such as childcare, health care, education, job training and welfare? Do you take any steps to make sure they feel safe and supported in those other spaces?
- Can you share an example of how your staff have demonstrated skill in supporting LGBTQ youth/young adults?

Data Outcomes & Advocacy:

- Can you measure your success with the LGBTQ youth/young adults you serve? If so, how? What outcomes do you track?
- How do you solicit feedback from the LGBTQ youth/young adults you serve? How do you use this data to improve programs and services?
- How does your organization advocate on behalf of those you serve? Do you actively advocate for services to support LGBTQ youth/young adults?

Resources

- [Funders for LGBTQ Issues](#)
- [Funder Tools for Supporting LGBTQ Communities of Color](#)
- [Toward Equity Training Curriculum](#)
- [Federal Framework to End Youth Homelessness](#)
- [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#)
- [Trauma Informed Care](#)
- [At the Intersections](#)