

LGBTQ+ young people are over-represented in foster care. A 2019 study found that 30.4 percent of youth in foster care identify as LGBTQ+ and five percent as transgender, compared to 11.2 percent and 1.17 percent of youth not in foster care.

While many LGBTQ+ youth enter the child welfare system for the same reasons as non-LGBTQ+ youth, 44 percent of LGBTQ+ youth in state custody report they were removed, ran away, or were thrown out of their home for reasons directly related to their identity.

Compared with non-LGBTQ+ youth and youth in stable housing, LGBTQ+ youth in unstable housing report poorer school functioning, more substance use, and poorer mental health.

LGB youth experience higher rates of childhood maltreatment, interpersonal violence, and traumatic experiences than non-LGBTQ+ youth, and as much as 57% of transgender youth report family rejection.

Once in the system, LGBTQ+ youth in foster care are at higher risk of additional harms, including discrimination, institutionalization, and abuse. They are more likely to age out without ever achieving finding a permanent family home.

Reports have found that around 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+.

Transgender, gender-expansive and gender-nonconforming youth, who may identify across the sexual orientation spectrum, are overrepresented in child welfare systems at even higher rates than youth who identify as LGBQ.

Reports have found that around 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+. Homeless youth typically report factors such as familial conflict, poverty, abuse, and emancipation from the foster care system as the underlying causes of their homelessness. LGBTQ+ youth may face rejection or abandonment by family members due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, which also can lead to homelessness.

In New York, the birthplace of the modern gay rights movement, studies show some 78 percent of LGBTQ+ youth were removed or ran away from foster homes because of the hostilities they faced, and 56 percent chose to live on the street—rather than in a foster care placement—because they felt safer there.

LGBTQ+ youth face higher rates of mental illness than their non-LGBTQ+ counterparts.

LGBTQ+ youth face higher rates of mental illness than their non-LGBTQ+ counterparts. According to a 2022 survey 45% of respondents reported that they had seriously considered attempting suicide, 73% experienced symptoms of anxiety, and 58% experienced symptoms of depression.



**Findings show that, when compared with their heterosexual and cisgender peers, LGBTQ+ youth in the juvenile justice system are twice as likely to have experienced child abuse, group and foster care placement, and homelessness.**

LGBTQ+ young adults are also overrepresented in the juvenile justice system. While LGBTQ+ youth comprise only an estimated 5 to 7 percent of the overall youth population in the United States, they represent **13 to 15 percent** of those currently in the juvenile justice system.

Findings show that, when compared with their heterosexual and cisgender peers, LGBTQ+ youth in the juvenile justice system are **twice as likely** to have experienced child abuse, group and foster care placement, and homelessness.

LGBTQ+ young people in foster and congregate care and juvenile legal systems are **disproportionately people of color** and are therefore exposed to heightened and unique inequities associated with their intersectional identities.



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