



# **Trans Youth and Suicide Awareness:**

## **Best Practices**

# Introduction:

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- 25 Year Career with Waterbury Fire Department
- 5 Years on WFD Peer-Support Team
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# Terminology

The Limits of My Language Mean the Limits of My World.

- Ludwig Wittgenstein
- Philosopher

# Definitions 101:

**Sex:** A definition determined at birth, assigned based upon the newborn's external anatomy.

**Gender:** The social expectations of roles and behavior based upon assigned sex.

**Gender Binary:** The outdated belief that gender is comprised of only two genders and that everyone belongs to one or the other.

**Gender Spectrum:** The concept that gender identity is composed of an infinite combination of the two binary sexes or none at all.

**Gender Identity:** The internal feelings of one's location on the gender spectrum.

**Gender Expression:** The external way a person displays their gender identity.

**Cisgender:** A person whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Transgender:** Having a gender identity that does not match with one's assigned sex.

**LGBTQI+:** An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and others.

**Transitioning:** A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo in order to live more fully as their true gender. This could include a social transition, medical transition, and/or legal transition.

# Definitions 101:

**Gender Nonconforming:** A person with a gender expression that does not match with societal expectations of their gender identity.

**Gender Fluid:** A person with a gender identity that is not fixed on the gender spectrum.

**Agender:** A person with a gender identity that is neutral or nonexistent.

**Queer:** A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQI+ movement.

**Pansexual:** Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way, or to the same degree.

**Pronouns:** The set of terms a person prefers to be identified by when referred to in the subjective, objective, and possessive. (Mine are: She/Her/Hers)

**Misgendering:** Using pronouns or other language inappropriate for a person's gender identity when speaking to or about them.

**Deadnaming:** The act of referring to someone by a name they do not identify as, such as the given birth name prior to transition.

# Societal Overview

What is the current climate for trans youth?

# Demographic Data:

- 3.3% of youth in America identify as transgender.
- Statistics follow a generally even distribution regardless of region.
- Racial disparities when compared to the general population show only a few statistical anomalies.
- Currently 27 states have enacted legislation limiting or outright banning youth access to gender related care.
- HHS & CMS have proposed rules to ban all access to care for trans youth.
- None of the current anti-trans sentiment is in line with decades of internationally recognized science-based data or recommended best practice as developed and reviewed by expert sources.

# The Disparity of Rejection and Denial:

- Trans youth report a rate of serious suicidal ideation nearly 2.5 times that of the general population.
- Trans youth report anxiety rates 3.5 times greater than their peers.
- Trans youth report depression rates 3 times greater than their peers.
- Only 50% of LGBTQ youth wanting mental health care receive it.
- Almost half of trans youth report their families have or are attempting to relocate due to state level anti-LGBTQ efforts.

# Support

How can we be good allies?



# Best Practices to Support Trans Youth:

- Education.
- Outward signs of support.
- Privacy.
- Be humble to apologize and accept correction with grace.
- Be brave enough to defend someone, especially in their absence.
- Be flexible.
- Just listen.

# The Impacts of Proper Care:

- Trans youth given access to gender-affirming care including puberty blockers and hormone therapy have significant reductions in both severe depression and suicidal ideation.
- Transition regret is nearly non-existent in trans youth.
- Trans students perform better in an accepting school environment.
- Trans youth from supportive environments are less likely to experience detrimental outcomes in everyday life.

# **Suicide Awareness**

Resources & Best Practice to in a Crisis

# Suicide Intervention:

- Be direct.
- Be honest while respecting privacy.
- Identify the reason or reasons the person is considering self-harm.
- Identify a reason the person wants to not commit an act of self-harm.
- Develop a plan to access resources.
- Get a commitment to stay.
- Develop a check-in plan.
- Follow through.
- Always be prepared to contact 9-1-1.
- Protect your own mental health.

# Resources:

- 9-8-8 is the new national suicide hotline number. In Connecticut contacting 2-1-1 remains an additional option.
- Additional suicide prevention resources are available specific to the LGBTQ, Trans, and LGBTQ youth populations.
- In an urgent situation, 9-1-1 remains a baseline option, and should always be called if an attempt is in progress or imminent.



# Resources:

- <https://www.preventsuicidect.org/>
- <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
- <https://pflag.org/>
- <https://livingworks.net/training/livingworks-asist/>
- <https://wpath.org/>
- <https://www.samdevorah.org/resources>
- <https://www.transyouthequality.org/>





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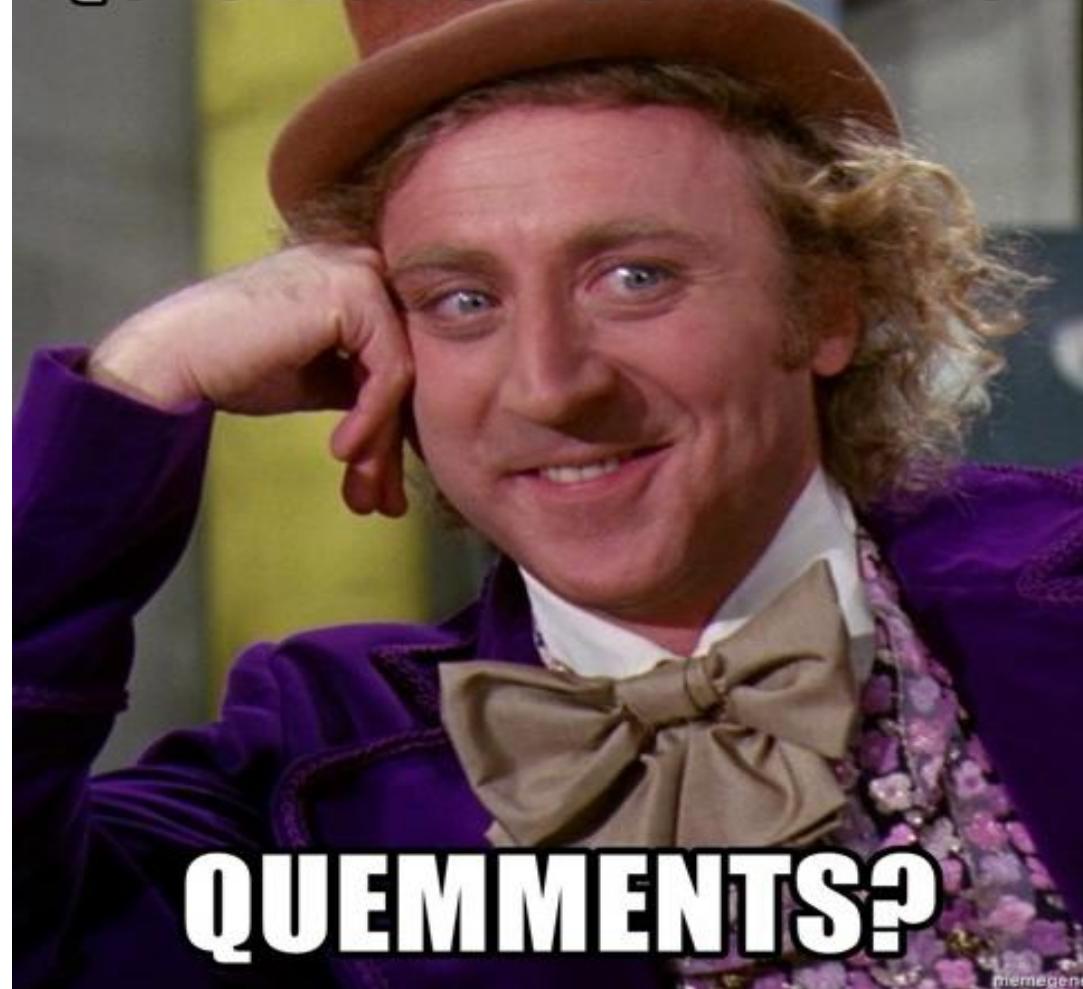
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- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/dbhis/applied-suicide-intervention-skills-training-asist>

**QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?**



**QUEMMENTS?**