

# THE IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSING & ADDRESSING LGBTQ+ BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS

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## BACKGROUND

LGBTQ+ individuals have been historically underserved, and are too often traumatized by environments and systems that should be sources of support. Experiences of discrimination, violence, and challenges with family and social support of LGBTQ+ identities all **increase the risk for poor behavioral health outcomes.**

There is also **disparate data available** into the size, concerns and needs of the LGBTQ+ community. **The availability of data is critical to informing patient care.**

To address this gap in research, in 2021 published - in collaboration with the OMNI Institute - **The Colorado LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health State of the State Survey Report.**

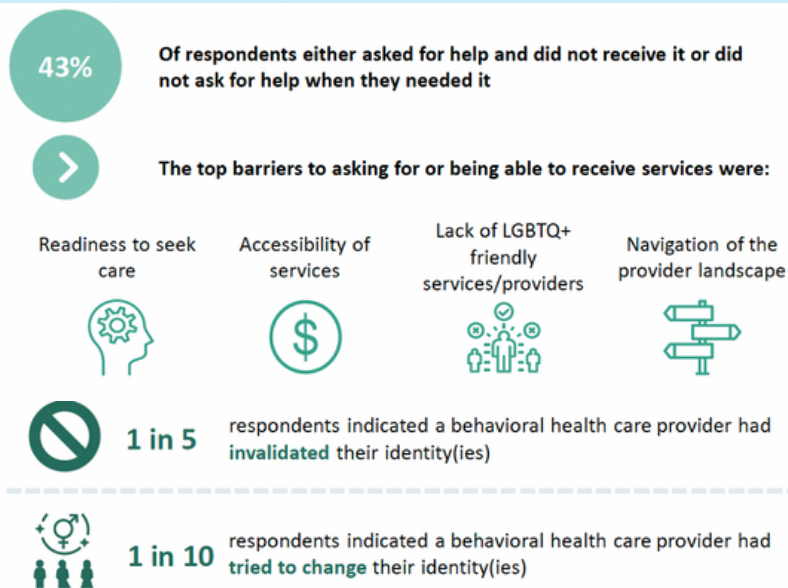
This report entailed surveying LGBTQ+ Coloradans regarding their behavioral health concerns and experiences to inform LGBTQ+ behavioral health priorities for community organizations and state leaders.

## STATE OF THE STATE SURVEY: METHODS & RESPONDENTS

- A community survey disseminated throughout Colorado (English and Spanish)
  - 588 respondents total
- Interviews with community members from key groups that have been particularly underrepresented in prior data collection efforts
  - 17 interviews total
- The following **key areas** were identified for the assessment:
  - Mental Health and Substance Use History
  - Service Access
  - Experiences in Health Care and Treatment Settings
  - Impacts on Day-to-Day Life
  - Social Supports & Strength



## STATE OF THE STATE SURVEY: KEY FINDINGS



Young adults experienced higher rates of diagnosis and symptoms of anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and eating disorders than their older peers.

24% had seriously considered harming themselves in the past 30 days compared to 9% of older respondents

9% had harmed themselves on purpose in the past 30 days compared to 3% of older respondents

**Over 1 in 4** BIPOC respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are able to cope with a crisis, a rate somewhat higher than that of their white peers (20%).

## REFERENCES

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health 2020, <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-health>. Accessed 3 December 2021.

OMNI Institute. Colorado LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health State of the State Survey Report. Envision:You, 2021.

The Trevor Project. (2022). 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. New York, New York: The Trevor Project.

Source: Suicide Risk and Prevention for LGBTQ People. National LGBT Health Education Center: A Program of the Fenway Institute. September 2018.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to our research partner **OMNI Institute** for their work and dedication to this survey effort, and to the **Denver Foundation** for financially supporting this critical survey effort to better understand the challenges LGBTQ+ Coloradans face.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on survey respondent recommendations, the following are **most desired from health care providers:**

- Having LGBTQ+ inclusive forms
- Accepting insurance
- Specialization in LGBTQ+ health topics
- Use of gender neutral language when discussing health topics

Additional improvements noted include: use of **correct names and pronouns**; practice of **trauma-informed care**; **culturally responsive services**; increase **affordability and accessibility.**

## ENVISION:YOU PROGRAMMING

Envision:You is a Colorado based nonprofit that seeks to close gaps in behavioral health outcomes for LGBTQ+ individuals through co-created community programming, advocacy engagement, public awareness campaigns, and evidence-based training. To learn more, visit:

[envision-you.org/](https://envision-you.org/)

**ENVISION:YOU LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Provider Training Program** **Two-part training program** designed to help providers identify and avoid biases, develop new skills, and gain critical knowledge to **enhance the delivery of quality, culturally relevant, and affirming behavioral health interventions for members of the LGBTQ+ community.**

**Q is for Questioning** is a multi-part workshop series being conducted across Colorado. **The program is designed for any adult with an LGBTQ+ youth in their lives who is seeking to create more affirming environments and relationships.** Parents, caregivers, coaches, teachers, and others can benefit from the content.

