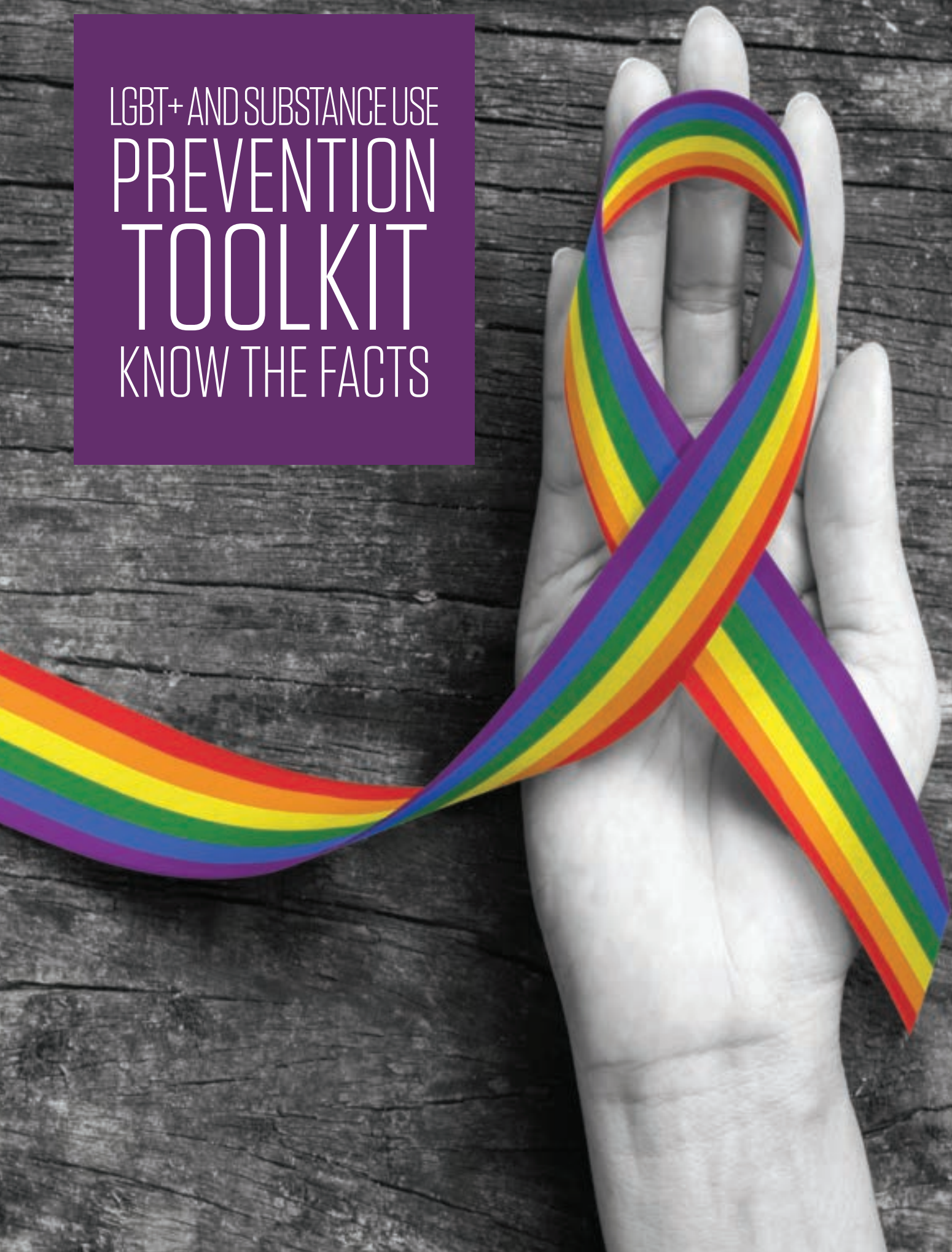


LGBT+ AND SUBSTANCE USE
PREVENTION
TOOLKIT
KNOW THE FACTS



LGBT+ AND SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION TOOLKIT

United Way of Broward County Commission on Behavioral Health and Drug Prevention has developed this Toolkit as part of *“Prevention in a Box”* to bring relevant information about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT+) to individuals, families, practitioners, and other key community stakeholders. The Commission on Behavioral Health and Drug Prevention is dedicated to empowering our diverse community to live healthy and drug-free. Recognizing the consequences of substance abuse and mental health conditions among Broward County youth and adults, the Commission seeks to distribute accurate information and resources that promote health and wellness.

The Commission strives to build individual, family, and community competence and capacity for lasting positive social change.

Sincerely,



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President & CEO
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Gonzalo Cadima
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Mission

United Way of Broward County Commission on Behavioral Health and Drug Prevention's mission is to **empower our diverse community to live healthy and drug-free.**



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LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER (LGBT+)

Most lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBT+) youth are happy and thrive during their adolescent years.

Having a school that creates a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and having caring and accepting parents are especially important.

Positive environments can help all youth achieve good grades and maintain good mental and physical health.

However, some LGBT+ youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience negative health and life outcomes due to stigma, discrimination, and other factors.



LGBT+ Youth and Substance Abuse

Being LGBT+ does not cause substance abuse. Consequences of prejudice weaken LGBT+ adolescents' support systems and increase pressure for them to use drugs and alcohol.

Understanding these differences is crucial for helping LGBT+ teens grow up healthy, happy, and substance-free.

As they cope with stigma, harassment and even rejection by their families, LGBT+ teens are more likely than their non-LGBT+ peers to abuse drugs and alcohol.

LGB students are up to five times more likely than other students to use illegal drugs.

Risk Behaviors and Sexual Identity

- 33% of Broward LGB students seriously considered attempting suicide
- 33% of Broward LGB students made a plan about how they would attempt suicide
- 26% of Broward LGB students attempted suicide
- 24% of Broward LGB students took prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it
- 15% of Broward LGB students were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property
- 23% of Broward LGB students experienced sexual violence
- 29% of Broward LGB students were electronically bullied

Substance Abuse Consequences

- Poor school attendance
- Poor academic performance
- Failing grades and classes
- Unprotected and unsafe sexual activity
- Accidents and injuries
- Damage to the developing brain

LAWS AND LEGAL CONSEQUENCES

The Broward County School Board approved the Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9 immediately following the passage of Florida Statute 1006.147 (2008)

- Broward's Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9 prohibits the bullying, harassment, cyberstalking and cyberbullying of any student or employee on the basis of any one of the following protected categories: sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, socioeconomic background, ancestry/ethnicity, linguistic preference, political belief, social/family background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

EDUCATING INDIVIDUALS

Protective Measures

- Build and maintain motivation for a healthy lifestyle
- Associate with positive and kind LGBT+ peers or LGBT+ allies
- Learn positive strategies to cope with stigma, discrimination, and peer pressure
- Seek a trusted adult or LGBT+ community center if you are struggling with any problems



INFORMING FAMILIES

Research has shown that family acceptance of LGBT+ adolescent's leads to greater self-esteem, social support, and better health outcomes, as well as protection against substance abuse, depression, and suicidal ideation.

Family support for their teens' sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression is one of the primary influences to prevent substance use and abuse.

Young people whose parents and caregivers affirm their LGBT+ identity are less likely to use drugs and alcohol, and more likely to trust these adults for help if they do have trouble with these substances.

Teens whose parents or caregivers support their identity are better able to withstand other sources of stress, like harassment at school.

FAMILY GUIDANCE

- Family support takes more than ignoring or tolerating a young person's LGBT+ identity.
- Monitoring youth behaviors such as asking and confirming how and with whom they spend their time with has been shown to reduce likelihood to drink or use drugs.
- Remember it's never too early to start preventing alcohol and underage drinking



TOOLS FOR EDUCATORS

Educators and other youth-serving professionals play several key roles in preventing substance abuse and promoting well-being among LGBT+ teens.

Educators and other professionals are responsible for speaking up against anti-LGBT+ bias

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

- Set an affirming tone by reducing gender separation and stereotypes
- Highlight gender and sexual diversity in lessons, and use LGBT+-inclusive language
- Intervene and support victims of bullying
- Address anti-LGBT+ comments or behavior among colleagues



RESOURCES

SunServe

www.sunserveyouth.com

Gay Straight Lesbian Educators Network (GLSEN): Downloadable LGBTQ safe space toolkit for educators

<https://www.glsen.org/safespace>

The Family Acceptance Project

<https://familyproject.sfsu.edu>

Broward County School Board: Diversity, Prevention, and Intervention: Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Clubs

<https://www.browardschools.com/Page/32873>

The Pride Center

<http://www.pridecenterflorida.org>

Broward House

<https://www.browardhouse.org>

YES Institute

<https://yesinstitute.org>

SOURCES

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids

Center for Disease and Control: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, And Transgender Health: LGBT Youth

Broward County School Board: Diversity, Prevention, and Intervention

NOTES



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