Building welcoming and affirming communities for Maine’s LGBTQ+ youth

Safe and welcoming communities
Informed and supported families
Safe and affirming schools
A strong, educated provider safety net

PO Box 1723, Rockland, ME 04841
800-530-6997   www.outmaine.org,
OUT Maine’s mission is to build welcoming and affirming communities for Maine's LGBTQ+ youth.

The only statewide organization focused exclusively on LGBTQ+ youth for the last 25 years.
OUT Maine’s approach

Building youth communities/connections

Safe and welcoming communities

Supporting parents and families

- Parent group (monthly)
- Family events to connect families in communities
- One-on-one consulting

20% - 11,000

1000+ annually

Informed and supported families
OUT Maine’s approach

Creating welcoming and affirming school districts

- Strengthening policies/procedures
- Staff & student training/education and supports
- Safe Spaces - Gay Straight Trans Alliances
- Consulting with administration/staff

Building a Network of trained professionals

- Regional training
- Individual school/organization training
- Online self paced training

Safe and affirming schools

A strong, educated provider safety net

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Self-reported sexual orientation & gender identity
Maine high school students, 2019

17% of Maine high school students identified as gay/lesbian or bisexual or unsure of their sexual orientation.

3.2% of Maine high school students identified as transgender or unsure of their gender identity.

11,000 high school students nearly 1 in 5

*2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey

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Health/wellbeing disparities for Maine’s Transgender youth

Violence

- 44% are **bullied** regularly
- 49% have **violence or threat of violence in their homes**
- 41% have experienced **forced sexual contact**
Health/wellbeing disparities for Maine’s Transgender youth

Mental health

- **72%** have *depressive symptoms* (compared to 31% of cisgender teens)
- **52%** have *thought about suicide* (compared to 15% of cisgender teens)

*Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey 2019*
Health/wellbeing disparities for Maine’s Transgender youth

Substance use

- 3x more likely to smoke cigarettes
- 1.5x more likely to use marijuana
- 4x more likely to misuse prescription drugs

High risk of STDs and unintended pregnancy

*Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey 2019
Steroid use without a doctor’s prescription?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Maine HS Students</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay/Lesbian</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure SO</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure GI</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5 - 5.5x more likely to use steroids without a doctor’s prescription
Why are these youth using anabolic steroids?

Gender dysphoria
The feeling of distress or discomfort because of the difference between a person’s gender (assigned at birth) and their gender identity.

- to feel better about themselves
- to align physical appearance with internal sense of self
- to reduce dysphoria
- lack of access to medical care
- don’t need parental permission
- easy to get
- lack of education
Results of taking steroids

Secondary sex characteristics they are seeking

- growth of facial hair or excess body hair
- decreased breast size
- increased muscular build
- changes in or stop in the menstrual cycle
- deepened voice
Other results

Physical concerns

- stunted growth (when high hormone levels from steroids signal to the body to stop bone growth too early)
- stunted height (if teens use steroids before their growth spurt)

Mental health concern

- paranoid (extreme, unreasonable) jealousy
- extreme irritability and aggression ("roid rage")
- delusions—false beliefs or ideas
- impaired judgment
- mania
Risk Factors

- Isolation
- Homelessness
- Unsupportive families & communities
- Feeling unsafe in schools, homes, communities
- Depression, anxiety, suicide ideation, substance use
Protective Factors

- **Unconditional support** of child’s identity, whatever it is
- **One** supportive adult/family support
- **Access** to safe and supportive healthcare and mental health services, community resources like OUT Maine, welcoming and affirming schools.
- **Inclusive** policies, procedures, forms, resources, educational materials.
- **Educate** all youth on the impact of these substances and about LGBTQ+ topics.
Trans Health Action Team

Key themes that were explored in more depth throughout the project:

- The importance of **listening** by providers,
- The importance of **intersectionality** within the trans experience, and
- The **isolation** experienced by trans patients in their journey.
Recommendations

**Provider Resources:** To help increase the understanding and trans competent health care practices among providers in Maine.

- Training
- Educational materials
- Best practices guide

**Practice tools for providers to use with patients**

- Explore gender identity
- Navigate individual journey

**Patient Resources**

- Educational materials
- FAQs
- Community resources
Questions & Resources

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(800) 530-6997
outmaine.org

Trans Youth Action Team Healthcare Provider Resource survey
https://forms.gle/Ny37EK1aoCyXZx7fA