



## LGBTQ+ Communities and Homelessness

By Emerson Johnston

June 26, 2017 was an amazing day for the entire country. For the first time in American History, gay marriage became legal in all 50 states. Since then, the LGBTQ+ community and its troubles have been sidelined due to the most recent, arguably more pressing issues happening within the states at the current moment. With terrorist attacks, protest rallies, and more, issues including this one are becoming more and more neglected as time passes. One of these issues include the ever-so increasing rates of homelessness within this community.

According to a 2012 study conducted by the Williams Institute at UCLA Law, “up to 1.6 million youth experience homelessness each year.” The statistics for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) homeless youth are even more shocking, as this group represents up to 40% all young people experiencing homelessness. These numbers are disproportionately high, considering that the LGBT youth represent an estimated 7% of the total youth population. The same study reports other findings each equally bleak: 46 percent of homeless LGBT youths ran away because of family rejection of their sexual orientation or gender identity; 43 percent were forced out by parents, and 32 percent faced physical, emotional or sexual abuse at home. The most common cause of all youth homelessness is familial conflict, even more so for those in the LGBTQ community. For them, the conflict tends to be over their sexual orientation or gender identity and for most, the result is not pretty. More than half receive a negative reactions and almost 25% are thrown out of their homes. Other reasons include the intersection of homophobia, poverty, and abuse.

In terms of health care, LGBT youth tend to be underserved due to a shortage of clinics and facilities that cater to their unique health needs – and because some healthcare providers refuse to treat minors without parental consent. When the True Color Fund, asked a group of homeless youth service provided what they had thought about the physical and mental health of the LGBTQ youth they serve. The reported that overall, LGBTQ youth reported worse experiences than those non-LGBTQ youth. More notably, providers reported transgender youth were more likely to experience these disparities.

What we all must realize is that even though our world, our country is filled with terrible peoples and events, we can no longer neglect issues like this one. No longer can we all stand by as more and more youth are shoved into homelessness purely based on the nature of who they love.