



YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

What does it mean to experience homelessness?

Experiencing homelessness means not having stable, safe and appropriate housing, nor the means and ability of obtaining it.

Being LGBTIQ+, young and without a stable home

Young LGBTIQ+ people around the world are more likely to face disapproval, exclusion, and rejection from their families and communities, which can force them to leave home. Given young people's dependence on family and community networks,

leaving home starts a vicious circle of vulnerability to yet more discrimination and violence.

Being homeless can take various forms. It is generally defined as not having stable, safe and appropriate housing nor the means and ability of

obtaining it. Regardless of the form it takes, it's a devastating experience with serious negative effects on the physical, mental and emotional health, development, well-being and the overall life-trajectory of those affected.

Are young LGBTIQ+ people more likely to not have a home?

While comprehensive data on youth homelessness is lacking around the world, research confirms that homelessness disproportionately impacts LGBTIQ+ youth. Research from Australia, Canada, the European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States has for instance shown

that a disproportionate percent of young people without a home identify as lesbian, gay, bi, trans, intersex or queer. The likelihood of homelessness is especially high for young transgender people. Data from Europe suggests that intersex people are at a particularly disproportionate risk of

homelessness. A report from West Africa listed homelessness as one of the serious issues faced by lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer youth living there. A similar report from Nepal suggests that young transgender women and young lesbian, gay, bi and trans people in general are at significant risk of home instability.

Australia:



Lesbian, gay and bi people are at least twice as likely to become homeless

Nepal:



Lesbian, gay, bi and trans youth especially trans women are at significant risk of homelessness

West Africa:



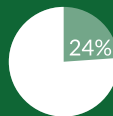
Homelessness reported as a serious issue faced by lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer youth

Canada & the United States:



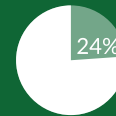
of homeless youth identify as lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer or two-spirit

United Kingdom:

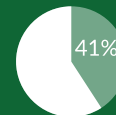


of homeless youth identify as lesbian, gay, bi, trans or queer

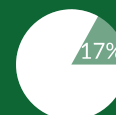
European Union:



of trans youth aged 18-24 experienced some form of homelessness



of intersex youth aged 18-24 experienced some form of homelessness



of lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex youth aged 18-24 experienced some form of homelessness





What are the causes?

No single narrative can capture all the factors that drive so many young LGBTIQ+ people to experience homelessness, but common threads do exist. Family rejection seems to be the most common cause of homelessness for LGBTIQ+ youth. It explains why they are more likely to experience not having a home than their peers and why, once without a home, they experience additional discrimination. Moreover, the

discrimination and violence LGBTIQ+ youth experience in schools, foster care or juvenile justice systems, can simultaneously function as both drivers of homelessness and barriers to finding a new home. At the same time, LGBTIQ+ youth without a home are more likely to experience physical and mental health issues, sexual abuse, physical violence, drug use or practice survival sex. Laws used to criminalize lesbian,

gay, bi, trans and queer people in general, such as bans of same-sex intimacy and trans persons, and laws that punish homelessness, including vagrancy and loitering laws, often target LGBTIQ+ youth and lead to further harassment and abuse. Arrest and criminalization perpetuate the vicious cycle of social exclusion and poverty and act as barriers to accessing support and remedy when faced with violence or discrimination.

Facing multiple forms of discrimination at once

Many LGBTIQ+ people also face violence and discrimination based on their age, gender, race, ethnicity, migration status, disabilities, religion and other characteristics, increasing their risk of becoming homeless.

Data from the USA shows that lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer youth who are part of a racial or ethnic minority, notably youth of African descent, make up a disproportionate number of

young lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people without a home. African American youth have an 83% higher risk of homelessness compared to their white peers. Youth experiencing homelessness in Canada and Australia are disproportionately likely to be indigenous. A study from Finland shows that young immigrants are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness. Similarly, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women are more

likely to be living in poverty, which is one of the main drivers of homelessness. Emerging research indicate that youth with cognitive disabilities are more likely to become homeless and that rates of cognitive disabilities are higher among people experiencing homelessness than within the general population. However, the intersection of disability and homelessness for youth remains largely unexplored.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- 1** Educate yourself about homelessness and the experiences of LGBTIQ+ youth without a home, their issues and concerns.
- 2** Advocate for the rights of homeless LGBTIQ+ youth, including women, migrants, youth with disabilities, youth of African descent, indigenous and minority youth and others who face multiple forms of discrimination.
- 3** Speak out when you see any form of stigma, discrimination or violence against LGBTIQ+ youth experiencing homelessness.
- 4** Openly support inclusion of young LGBTIQ+ people in youth programs.
- 5** Volunteer with local organizations/shelters that serve LGBTIQ+ youth without a home.
- 6** Donate money, food, clothing and other resources to homeless LGBTIQ+ youth in your community.
- 7** Engage in and support efforts to change policies and laws, secure funding, and advance programs that will address LGBTIQ+ youth homelessness.
- 8** Share our online and social media content to spread the word among your friends and social networks.



WHAT GOVERNMENTS SHOULD DO

1 Focus on prevention and early intervention by:

- offering family counselling and case management
- connecting youth with LGBTIQ+ friendly employers, community supports, and social groups
- raising youth awareness of community resources
- providing immediate access to safe housing, particularly for those most vulnerable
- meeting the specific needs of transgender and gender-nonconforming youth
- ensuring facilities and programs are inclusive and safe spaces for women, migrants, youth with disabilities, youth of African descent, indigenous and minority youth and others who face multiple forms of discrimination
- working together with LGBTIQ+ youth who have experienced homelessness in designing, implementing, and improving programs that support their journey forward

2 Eliminate any laws or policies that discriminate against LGBTIQ+ people

3 Eliminate any laws or policies that criminalize homelessness

4 Ensure non-discrimination laws clearly protect all persons from violence and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics

5 Ensure education, healthcare and other stakeholders that work with young people receive training and guidance on inclusion and non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics

6 Investigate all incidents of violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ youth and holding perpetrators accountable

7 Ensure accessibility of programs that serve youth experiencing homelessness, including for residents from rural areas

8 Provide for the health care needs of homeless youth, including access to gender affirming care for trans youth, and access to safe sex information and materials

9 Ensure ongoing monitoring and data collection on access to adequate, safe and affordable housing for LGBTIQ+ people, including LGBTIQ+ youth

