

NH SPC POSITION ON ACCESS TO CARE AND FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION FOR LGBTQ+ PERSONS

OVERVIEW OF THE COUNCIL

The New Hampshire Suicide Prevention Council (SPC) was established in 2008. The SPC's mission is to reduce the incidence of suicide in NH through the goals identified in the State Suicide Prevention Plan, including:

- raising public and professional awareness of suicide prevention;
- addressing the mental health and substance misuse needs of all residents;
- addressing the needs of those affected by suicide; and
- promoting policy change.

New Hampshire has a proud and impressive history of pursuing research-based initiatives to address this concerning and preventable public health problem, such as Crisis Intervention Team Training, The Connect™ Program, and the NH Firearm Safety Coalition.

MENTAL HEALTH EXPERIENCES OF LGBTQ+ GRANITE STATERS

LGBTQ+ people in New Hampshire face an increased risk of mental health challenges and suicide as a result of experiences with discrimination, victimization, and a lack of access to community support and mental health services. As of 2024, over 40% of LGBTQ+ young people in New Hampshire considered attempting suicide, including 52% of transgender and nonbinary young people. This translates to increased attempts, with more than 1 in 7 lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and more than 1 in 4 transgender and nonbinary youth who have attempted suicide — roughly triple the rate of these young people's straight/cisgender peers.⁷

Supportive communities and access to healthcare are essential to reducing suicide risk for LGBTQ+ young people, as well as adults. For example, LGBTQ+ young people who reported living in very accepting communities attempted suicide at less than half the rate of those who did not, and transgender/nonbinary youth who report having their pronouns respected attempt suicide at half the rate of those who do not.^{1,5} Further, LGBTQ+ youth who report experiencing physical threat or harm relating to their identity have a 25% rate of attempting suicide; when that harm is removed, the rate of attempt falls to 8%..¹

For LGBTQ+ people living in New Hampshire, as well as their families and loved ones, ongoing experiences with discrimination, isolation resulting from community exclusion, and

lack of access to supportive healthcare pose a significant challenge to their ongoing mental health, wellness, and ability to live fulfilling lives within their communities.

POLICY IMPACTS ON SUICIDALITY IN LGBTQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE

Policies that decrease access to core protective factors for LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly among young people, pose a substantial threat to mental health and suicide risk in LGBTQ+ young people . Research shows statistically significant increases in rates of suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary young people following the enactment of laws that negatively impact transgender people.^{1,4}

Further, these policies have been shown to harm the LGBTQ+ community regardless of whether or not they are enacted. 90% of LGBTQ+ young people say their well-being has been negatively impacted by recent politics, and 84% of transgender adults have made significant life decisions in response to LGBTQ-related politics or laws.^{1,6} Not only do these policy proposals cause fear in LGBTQ+ Granite Staters, but they also promote misinformation and harmful discussions regarding LGBTQ+ people and their place within our communities. No one should have to hear conversations that portray them in an inherently negative light, nor should they have to experience the victimization and harassment that can result from the stigma created by these policies.

NH SPC POLICY POSITION AND VISION

The NH Suicide Prevention Council recognizes the disproportionate risk of suicide affecting LGBTQ+ young people resulting from experiences with discrimination, and policies that increase the risk of suicide in LGBTQ+ Granite Staters. This includes policies that eliminate supportive, protective environments and access to care for LGBTQ+ young people, which is counterproductive to the critical work of reducing suicide in our state.

The NH Suicide Prevention Council envisions a Granite State where every person feels safe enough to live another day. Rather than adopting harmful policies and practices, state policymakers, private and public institutions, and community leaders must seek to eliminate discrimination and cultivate supportive, affirming environments for all. Together, we can raise awareness and increase access to mental health, substance misuse, and suicide prevention services, thereby reducing suicide deaths in New Hampshire.

ENDNOTES

¹*2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People* (The Trevor Project, 2024).

²Joseph G. Kosciw, Caitlin M. Clark, and Leesh Menard, *The 2021 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in our nation's schools* (GLSEN, 2022).

³*2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People in New Hampshire* (The Trevor Project, 2024).

⁴Lee, Wilson & Hobbs, J. & Hobaica, Steven & DeChants, Jonah & Price, Myeshia & Nath, Ronita. (2024). State-level anti-transgender laws increase past-year suicide attempts among transgender and non-binary young people in the USA. *Nature Human Behaviour*.

⁵*Facts About Suicide Among LGBTQ+ Young People* (The Trevor Project, 2021).

⁶*New Survey Reveals Dramatic Changes for LGBTQ Adults Since November 2024* (Movement Advancement Project, 2025).

⁷*2023 New Hampshire Youth Risk Behavior Survey*