

Spencer Pride Festival – June 4

Come celebrate the 5th Anniversary Spencer Pride Festival with us on **June 4 from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM** on the south lawn of the **Owen County Courthouse in Spencer**. We will have live entertainment/music all day, as well as a marketplace with over 40 retail and informational booths, a silent auction, food, and giveaways.
Admission is Free. Parking is Free.
Entertainment is Free.

Gay Suicide Risk in the U.S., By Region

By Jeffrey Fishberger, MD, Psychiatrist and LGBTQ Youth Mental Health Specialist, On-Call Clinician for The Trevor Lifeline

As the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, [The Trevor Project](#) has served the needs of LGBTQ youth at a dark moment in their lives for the past 13 years -- offering hope and expertise when few others can.

The findings in Dr. Hatzenbuehler's recently published study in *Pediatrics* largely mirror what we have learned through the Trevor Lifeline regarding social environments and the risk for suicide among LGBTQ youth -- namely that young people who live in areas with a more negative sociopolitical climate towards LGBTQ young people and without affirming resources are at an increased risk for suicide when compared with their peers in more supportive environments.

More than 70 percent of the thousands of calls to the 24/7 Trevor Lifeline originate in the southern and central regions of the United States, where there are traditionally fewer legal protections, in- and out-of-school support services and accepting environments for LGBTQ young people. While there are wonderful programs in these areas that do excellent work, some youth in these areas receive less support and face tougher challenges in their communities and schools.

For example, 1.95 percent of the United States population resides in the state of Missouri, yet 3.37 percent of the 2010 volume to The Trevor Lifeline originated there -- illustrating a disproportionately high demand for LGBTQ crisis intervention and suicide prevention services in that state.

Other states with disproportionately high call volume include: Nebraska, **Indiana**, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi to name a few. The youth in these states, along with countless others, are in need of help that just is not often accessible at the local level.

Dr. Hatzenbuehler's research serves to highlight what we have seen for more than a decade: Non-accepting community, school and familial environments are associated with an elevated risk for suicide attempts among LGBTQ youth. Examining counties across Oregon, he finds that youth living in environments with less support for lesbian and gay people are 20 percent more likely to attempt suicide than those youth living in areas with support.

We applaud Dr. Hatzenbuehler's work as a starting point, but do want to stress that there is much work to be done in

examining the interplay of social environments and suicide among LGBTQ youth. For example, this study does not include transgender youth and those who do not fit into narrow gender stereotypes. Examining how social environments react to gender non-conforming behavior among youth is critical. From what we have seen in our own research and experience, social environments for transgender youth are likely even tougher and may play a role in their elevated risk for suicide attempts.

Nonetheless, the data here are drawn from a population-based sample, a relative rarity in LGBTQ youth research, which has largely depended on smaller convenience samples. This study highlights why asking sexual orientation questions on larger population-based surveys is so important; those data allow us to make larger generalizations and better target our programs to the young people most in need. The absence of data speaks to an even greater need for gender identity data in large research studies like this. Dr. Hatzenbuehler highlights several valid limitations to his ecological study, but these limitations should inform future research about the complex nature of suicide among LGBTQ young people.

Protective factors against suicide among LGBTQ youth include school safety, support and connectedness (including Gay-Straight Alliances), wider community support, and strong connections with parents and families. It is our duty, as caring adults and allies, to ensure that youth have connections and support -- regardless of the social environment in which they live. We must also remember that young people in more progressive cities can struggle with community and personal acceptance, just as young people in rural, more conservative parts of the nation can flourish with support and acceptance. The research finds that: "Characteristics of the social environment increase the risk for suicide attempts among LGB youth, over and above individual-level factors." Therefore a larger scale approach that focuses on changing environments for LGBTQ youth is suicide prevention.

MetLife Is 2011 Straight for Equality in Business Award Winner

WASHINGTON D.C., March 7, 2011 – PFLAG National has named MetLife the 2011 Straight for Equality in Business honoree. This award acknowledges an organization with a demonstrated commitment to achieving equality for LGBT people in the workplace by educating and engaging straight allies in creating both policy and culture change.

Since the initial launch of Straight for Equality in 2007, MetLife has provided education and support for LGBT and straight ally employees of the corporation. MetLife has hosted over 30 Straight for Equality in the Workplace training sessions around the country. MetLife also has been a strong financial supporter of PFLAG National programs, such as Safe Schools.

In the workplace, MetLife offers its U.S. employees and their domestic same- and opposite-sex partners a variety of health and other benefits. MetLife has a recognized LGBT affinity group, Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgenders and Allies at MetLife (GLAM), which provides support and guidance for MetLife's LGBT marketing strategy and recommends best practices and strategies to increase recruiting in the LGBT market. Beyond GLAM, MetLife also has as a strong diversity community comprised of more than 30 employee-led groups.

To talk with a parent who also has a gay son or lesbian daughter & to learn more about Indy PFLAG, please contact:

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