

Inclusive Emergency Planning & Response

Considerations for the

# **LGBTQ+** **Community**

in your organization or  
community's emergency  
planning & disaster response



**MARYLAND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS NETWORK**

*Helping Maryland's Most Vulnerable*

March 23, 2022

Leighton Jones, ALM, CEM.

# Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association



The Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association (MNCHA) is the trade association for the homecare sector in Maryland. We represent both non-profit and for-profit health care providers in Maryland and D.C. including Medicare-certified **Home Health Agencies**, **Private Duty** agencies and registries, and **Durable Medical Equipment** businesses.

Executive Director: **Caitlin Houck**

Questions: Email Caitlin at [chouck@mncha.org](mailto:chouck@mncha.org)

Website: [www.mncha.org](http://www.mncha.org)

# Maryland Emergency Preparedness Network (MD EPN)



The **Maryland National Capital Homecare Association (MNCHA)** and the **Maryland Department of Health Office of Preparedness and Response (MDH OP&R)** partner to better enable homecare providers and their patients to be prepared in the case of an emergency.



Our partnership created the **Maryland Emergency Preparedness Network (MD EPN)** which disseminates free, important, and timely information before, during, and after an emergency. We encourage you to check out our Fact Sheets and webinars. The EPN's goal is to build health resilience among one of Maryland's most vulnerable populations, the homebound.



This event is brought to you by the Maryland Department of Health Office of Preparedness & Response through the Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association (MNCHA), & Direct Relief.

Website: [www.mdemergencyprepnetwork.org](http://www.mdemergencyprepnetwork.org)

Questions: Email Associate Director Char McCready at [info@mdemergencyprepnetwork.org](mailto:info@mdemergencyprepnetwork.org)

# About Our Speaker

Leighton is the Director of Emergency Response for **Direct Relief**, an international humanitarian organization based in Santa Barbara, CA.

Prior to joining Direct Relief Leighton led the Emergency Preparedness Research, Evaluation & Practice (EPREP) Program at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, which serves as Harvard's Center for public health and healthcare preparedness.

Leighton's background is in non-profit administration and emergency management having previously worked as the Chief Program Officer for the American Red Cross of Massachusetts and in various leadership positions for The American Red Cross and The Salvation Army in New York. He has deployed in response to numerous disasters across the United States including hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fires, and aviation disasters. Leighton also served at Ground Zero in Manhattan immediately following the September 11th attacks and led the Red Cross response to the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings.

Leighton is a graduate of the University of Plymouth (UK) and Harvard University. He is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) with the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) and conducts trainings nationally on diversity, equity and inclusion in emergency planning and response.



**Leighton Jones**  
(he, him)

[www.directrelief.org](http://www.directrelief.org)

# Webinar Structure

- Overview of the LGBTQ+ Community
- Demographics & statistics level-setting
- Definitions
- Emergency planning considerations
- Emergency response considerations
- Resources



## Action Points

'Action Points'

Suggestions to consider in your planning and response



## Pause Point

'Pause Point'

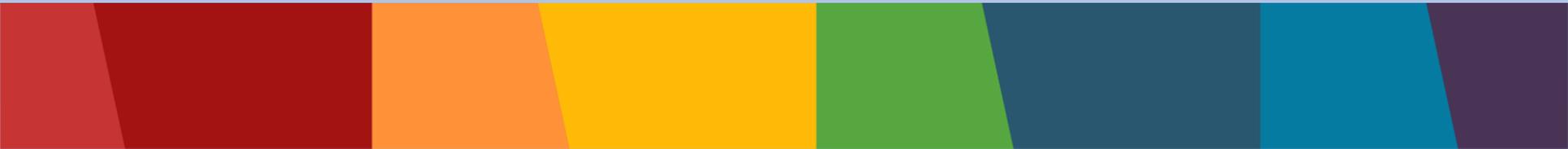
Briefly pause to digest and take questions

# Webinar Ground Rules

## Note:

- Be open to learning from the experience of others.
- Be empathetic.
- No one has all the answers.
- Everyone has bias and prejudice.
- Assume the best of people.

“Do the best you can until you know better.  
Then when you know better, do better.”  
Maya Angelou



**“Disasters don’t  
discriminate,  
but sometimes  
people do”**

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services



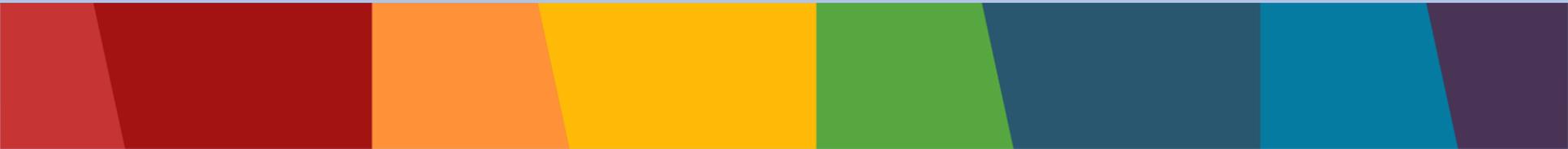
# Whole Community Disaster Planning

## Whole Community Disaster Planning.

A planning approach

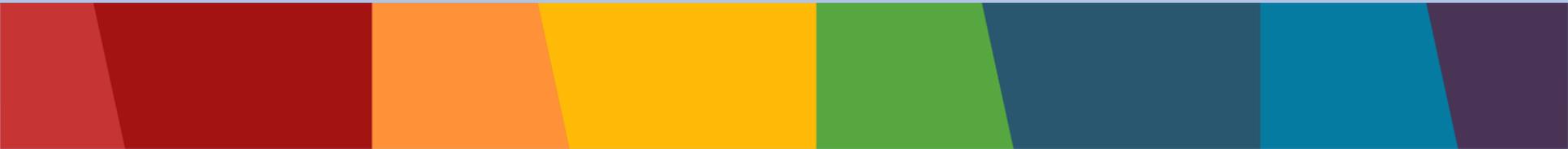
*“by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests.”*

- FEMA

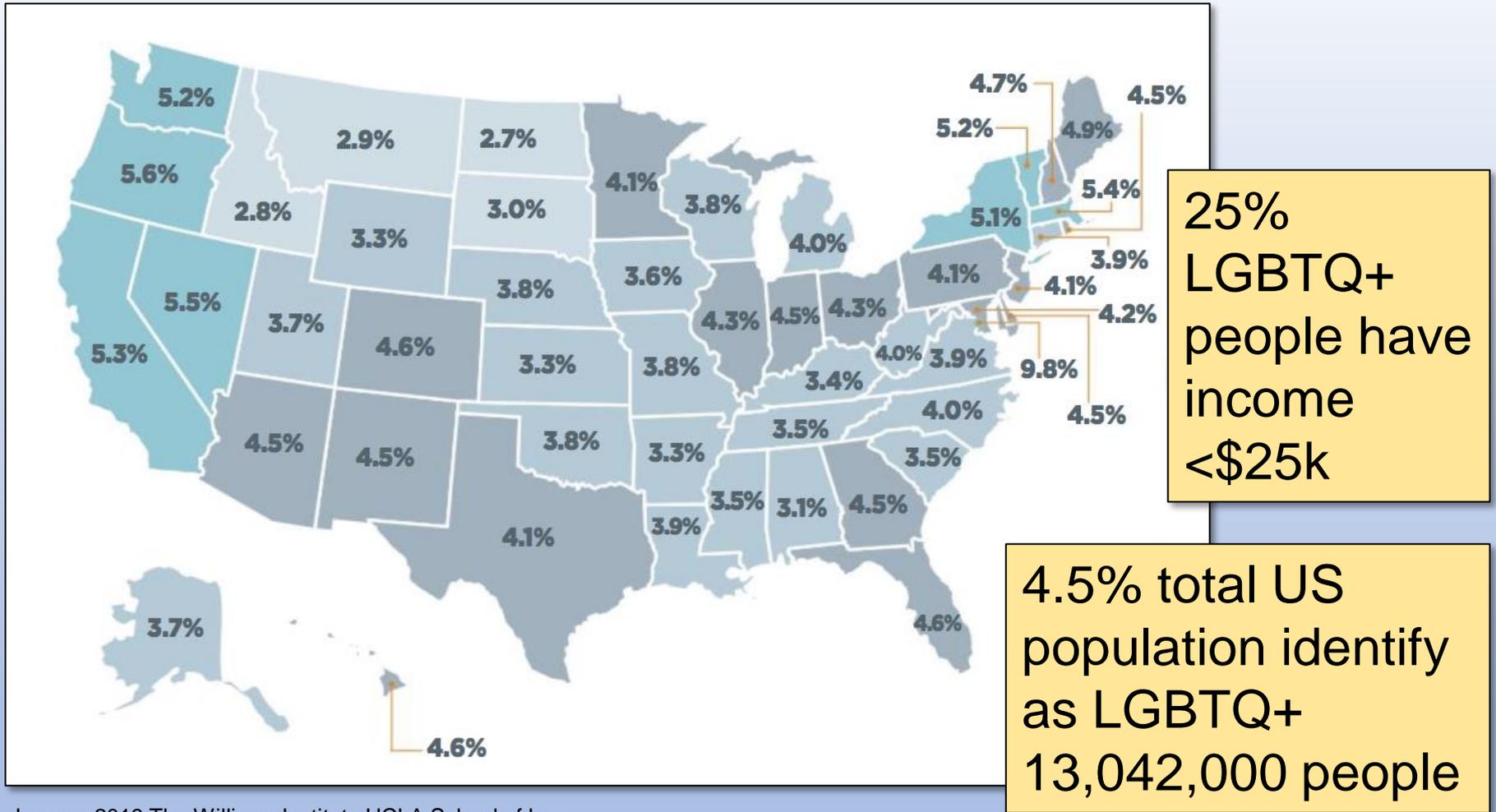


# LGBTQ+ Community

- The LGBTQ+ Community is diverse.
  - Everyone is unique.
  - There are no set answers that apply to every individual.
- 
- Lesbian
  - Gay
  - Bisexual
  - Transgender
  - Intersex
  - Gender Non-Conforming
- Non Binary
  - Gender Fluid
  - Queer
  - Questioning
  - Asexual
  - +



# LGBTQ+ Community



# LGBTQ+ Community



Action

Points

- Use 'Orientation' rather than 'Preference'. Orientation & identity are not a choice
- Its about humanitarianism and compassion not politics
- If your organization doesn't already have an inclusion statement, think about drafting one, and then display it prominently

# LGBTQ+ History

1969 ~ Stonewall Riots

2011 ~ Don't ask don't tell repealed

2004 ~ Massachusetts allows same-sex marriage

2013 ~ US vs Windsor Supreme Court Ruling

Defense of Marriage Act overturned

2015 ~ Obergefell vs Hodges Supreme Court Ruling

Federal marriage equality

2020 ~ Supreme Court ruling

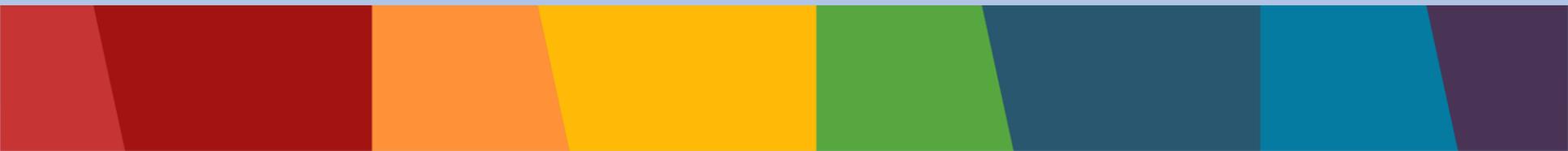
LGBTQ+ equal protection under 1964 Civil Rights Act

Now ~ Texas Governor's letter

Defining gender-affirming medical care as child abuse

~ Florida Parental Rights in Education Bill

Prohibits classroom discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity



# LGBTQ+ Youth

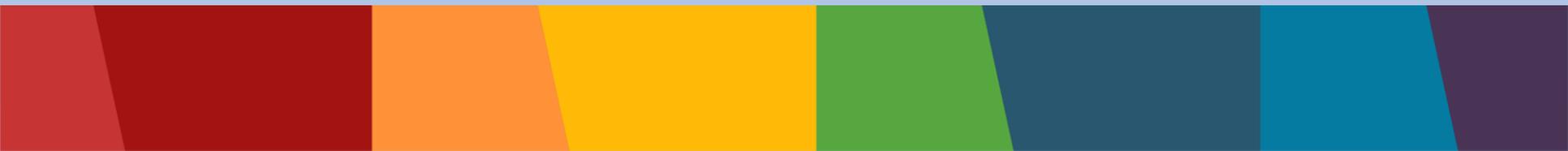
- 42% say where they live is not accepting of LGBTQ+ people
- 90% have been harassed or assaulted in the last year
- 40% of homeless youth are LGBTQ+
- 5x more likely to attempt suicide
- 40% of trans youth attempt suicide

# LGBTQ+ Seniors

- LGBTQ+ Senior Population expected to double by 2030
- 21% do not tell their doctor their orientation
- 2x more likely to live alone
- 4x less likely to have children

2019: Trevor Project

2021: Sage USA: National Resource Center on LGBT Aging

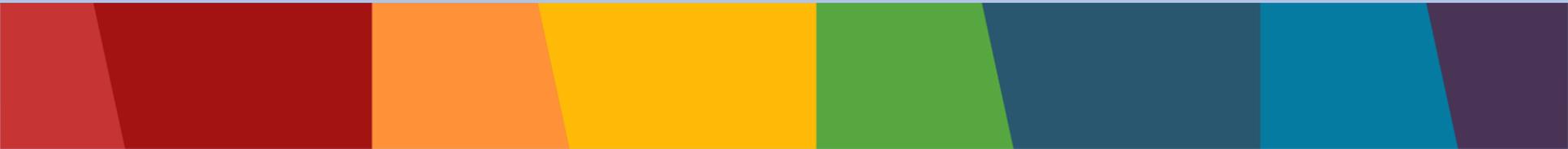


# LGBTQ+ Families with Children

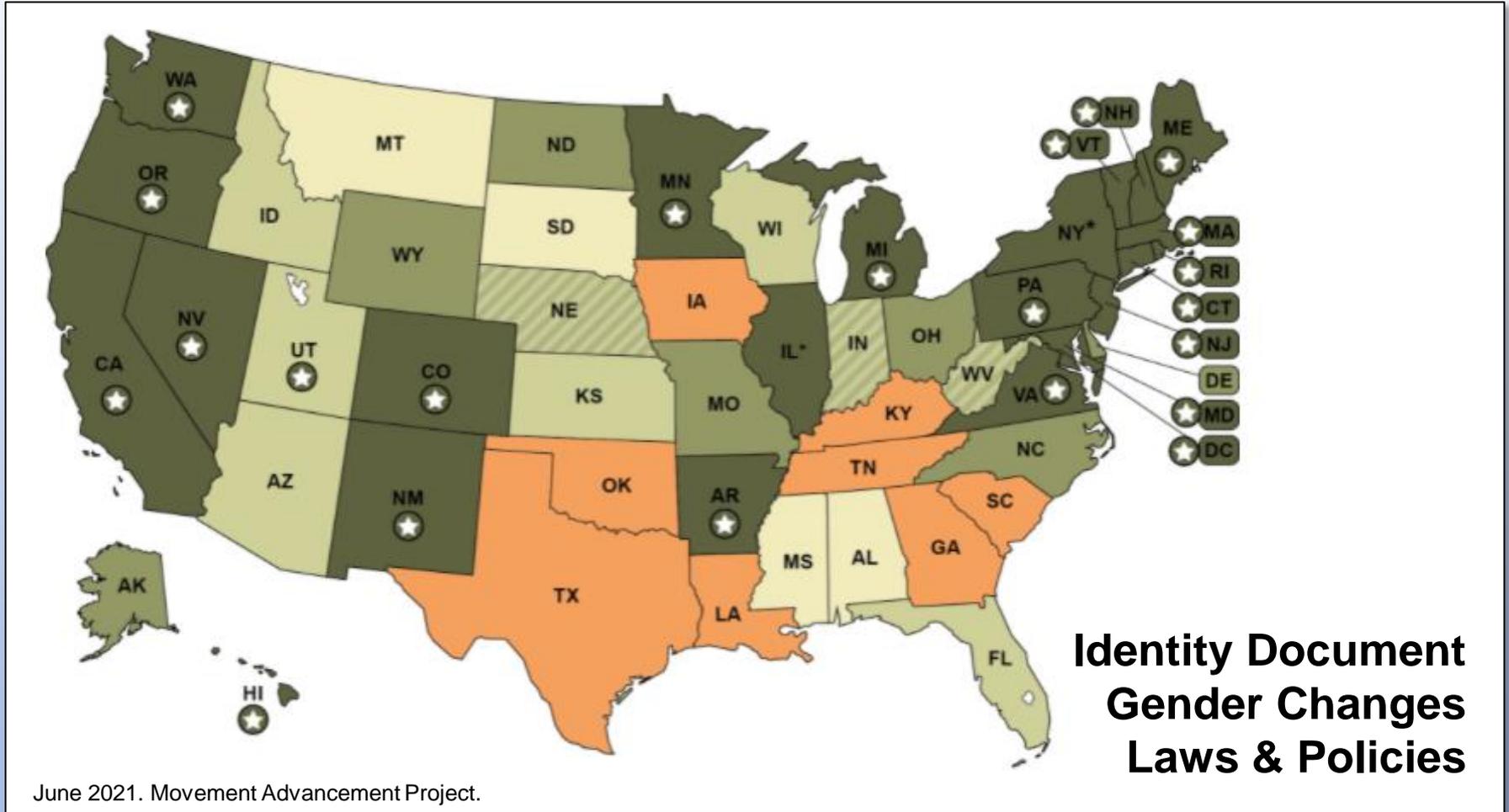
- 48% of LGBTQ+ women are raising children
- 20% of LGBTQ+ men are raising children
- States with the highest percentage of LGBTQ+ raising children: Mississippi (26%), Wyoming (25%), Alaska (23%)
- LGBTQ+ individuals are 6x more likely to be foster parents
- Higher likelihood of poverty:
  - Single parent LGBTQ+ families are 3x more likely to be in poverty (than other single parent families)

# LGBTQ+ Transgender Community

- 40% have attempted suicide
  - 9x the rate of the general population
- 29% in poverty (12% US population)
- 47% have experienced sexual assault
- Unemployment is 3x the general population
- 68% don't have an identification with the name and gender they prefer



# LGBTQ+ Transgender Community



# LGBTQ+ Intersectionality

“There is no such thing as a single issue struggle because we do not live single issue lives” - Audre Lorde

34% of black trans women have an income <\$10k per year

2021: 57 murders of trans people in the US – majority were trans POC. (under reported)

47% of POC LGBTQ+ adults were low income (13% US)

LGBTQ+ political power is weighted towards white, gay, men

International/cultural differences in LGBTQ+ acceptance





Pause  
Point



# LGBTQ+ Family Relationships

## Definition of Household

1988 Stafford Act (Federal Disaster Assistance Act)

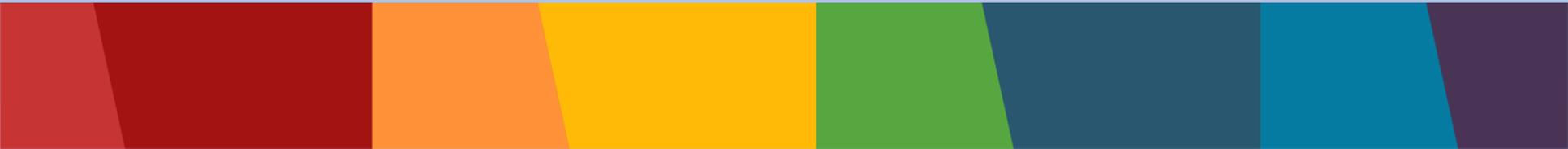
“one or two cohabitating individuals and the dependent children of either individual, regardless of biological relation or adoptive relationship, for whom an individual is currently acting as the primary caregiver.”

*However there is often an assumption of heteronormativity during disaster response*



# LGBTQ+ Family Relationships

- Despite marriage equality - not everyone chooses to marry
- Wide range of terminology used: Partners, spouses, husbands/wives, girlfriends/boyfriends, roommates, friends, etc. May or may not use same last name
- Different perception of anniversaries
- Many LGBTQ+ people may have 'chosen families'
- Extended family may not know, or recognize LGBTQ+ relationships



# LGBTQ+ Families



Action

Points

- Respect all relationships and family structures
- Avoid asking too many intrusive questions about their relationship
- Honor the importance of ‘chosen family members’
- Try asking, “Who do you consider family?”

# LGBTQ+ Families



Action

Points

- Use gender-neutral language on family registration forms. For example, parent/guardian in place of mother/father and partner/spouse in place of husband/wife
- Honor family units and the relationship status of all families when providing services
- Be careful not to 'out' someone to their extended family

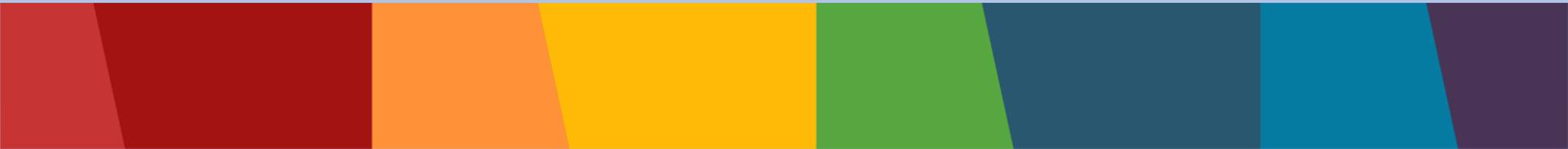


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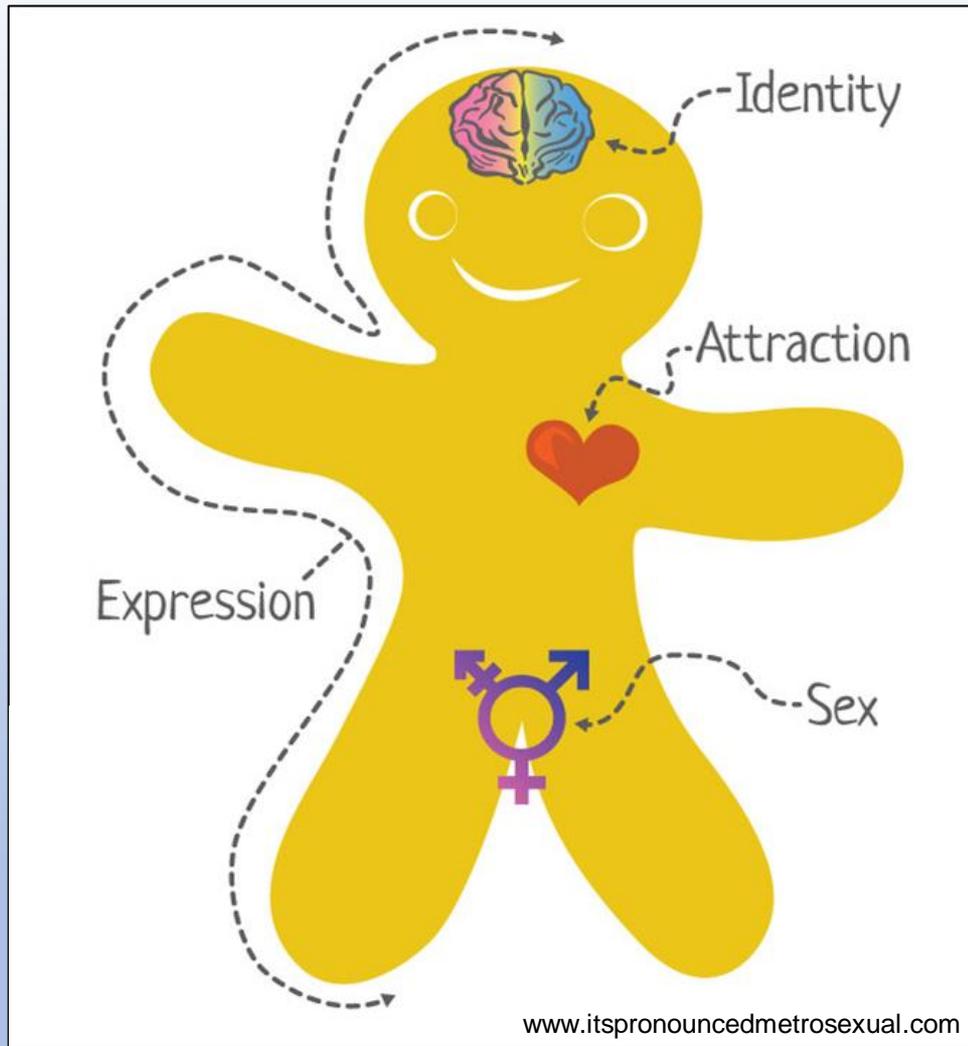


# LGBTQ+ Transgender Community

- Gender vs Sex: Sex is biological. Gender refers to socially constructed norms, roles and relationships
- Transgender: People whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex that they were assigned at birth
- A transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures
- Being transgender does not imply any sexual orientation
- Gender Identity: Internal. Sense of self
- Gender Expression: External. How you express your gender



# LGBTQ+ Transgender Community



# LGBTQ+ Transgender Community

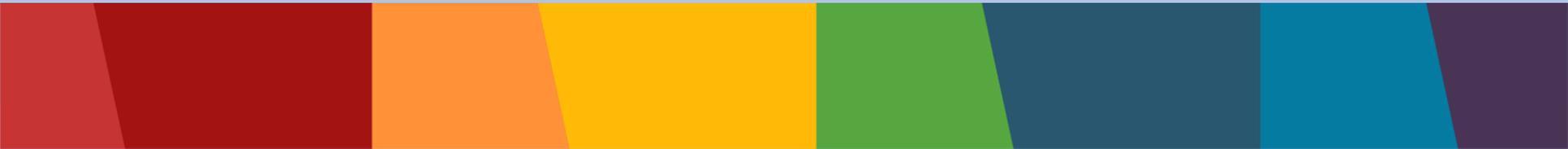
**Transgender woman:** identifies as a woman, but was not assigned this gender/sex at birth

**Transgender man:** identifies as a man, but was not assigned this gender/sex at birth

**FTM/MTF:** relatively outdated terms to refer to a “female to male” “male to female” transgender people

**Non-Binary:** do not identify solely as a man or a woman. They may identify as both, neither, or as a gender somewhere in-between

**Cisgender:** describes a person whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth are the same



# LGBTQ+ Gender & Pronouns

- He/Him/His
  - She/Her/Hers
  - They/Them/Theirs
  
  - Don't assume
  - Ask
  - Apologize if you mis-gender
- 
- **Mis-Gender:** Being labeled by others as a gender other than one that a person identifies with
  - **Dead-naming:** referring to a transgender or non-binary person by a name they used prior to transitioning, such as their birth name



# LGBTQ+ Gender & Pronouns



Action

Points

- Normalize asking for pronouns for everyone. Suggestion: Can you clarify your name, your DOB and your pronouns?
- Consider eliminating gender questions from registration forms, if knowing someone's gender is not needed to offer assistance. Registration forms give a first impression
- If you do need to include non-binary options. Avoid using "other" as a gender option. A write-in option is a great idea

# LGBTQ+ Gender & Pronouns



Action

Points

- Introduce yourself using your pronouns and add them to your name badge, email signature, etc
- Don't assume gender, orientation or relationship
- Under 'Name' on your registration form, add 'Legal Name, if different'
- Be aware, and understanding, that many transgender people do not have id that matches their gender identity

# LGBTQ+ Gender & Pronouns



Action

Points

- Avoid using gendered greetings such as “sir”, “ma’am”, or “Ladies & Gentlemen” to be more inclusive.
- Ask how you can best offer assistance, and how you can make them feel welcome and safe.



Pause  
Point



# Disaster Shelter Planning

**Sharli-e Dominique Case Study:** A trans woman arrested for taking a shower in the women's bathroom at a shelter at Texas A&M University following hurricane Katrina. She spent five days in jail for criminal trespass

 <https://www.chron.com/news/hurricanes/article/Transgender-evacuee-survives-all-c>

## Transgender evacuee survives all obstacles

**KATRINA'S AFTERMATH**  
**Vicks remains positive in spite of shelter arrest**

By **Lisa Gray** Published 5:30 am CDT, Thursday, September 15, 2005

Arpollo Vicks was born male, but in January, the 20-year-old became, she says, she started living as a woman.

In New Orleans, this was no big deal.

# Disaster Shelter Planning



## Action

## Points

- Consider temporarily replacing bathroom signage in shelter facilities to provide gender-neutral bathroom options. In some states and municipalities it is legally required to permanently sign all single-stall bathrooms as gender-neutral
- Create a shower sign-up schedule for everyone. This provides everyone greater privacy
- Never create separate and unequal accommodations for transgender shelter residents

# Disaster Shelter Planning



## Action

## Points

- Provide private areas for changing of clothing that are gender-neutral and available for all to use
- Ensure that staff and volunteers actively monitor the shelter through the day and night. This helps to provide a safe environment, free from harassment or violence
- Include non-binary gender options on registrations forms. Avoid using “other” as a gender option. Consider using ‘non-binary’ or an open ‘write-in’ field

# Disaster Shelter Planning



Action

Points

- Ensure access to appropriate healthcare following a disaster, including access to medication
- Post a statement of inclusion in a prominent place in your shelter.



Pause  
Point



# LGBTQ+ Community Spaces

- LGBTQ+ Community gathering places are important
  - Community centers, LGBTQ+ business, gay coffee shops, welcoming faith communities, bars and nightclubs, etc
- LGBTQ+ community places may have been impacted by the disaster
  - After Katrina 4 out of 7 LGBTQ+ community providers closed and never reopened
- Reliance upon online connections for community



# LGBTQ+ Community Spaces



Action

Points

- Include LGBTQ+ Community organizations and spaces in your community response and recovery priorities
- Ensure that mental health services provided after a disaster are culturally competent

# Other LGBTQ+ Response Considerations

- **Re-closeting:** When LGBTQ+ people hide their orientation and/or gender identity upon entering an unfamiliar, uncomfortable or threatening environment.
- **Immigration considerations:** Disasters often exacerbate immigration challenges.
- **Disaster fatalities:** potential extended family complications, relationship and inheritance concerns.



# Other LGBTQ+ Response Considerations



**INDEPENDENT**

**Gay people to blame for Hurricane Harvey, say evangelical Christian leaders**



**REUTERS®**

**Religious figures blame LGBT+ people for coronavirus**

**theguardian**

**Superstorm Sandy and many more disasters that have been the gay community**

**Newsweek**

**WORLD**

**Russian Orthodox Church Leader Blames Invasion on Ukraine's 'Gay Pride'**

# Other LGBTQ+ Response Considerations

- The LGBTQ+ Community are frequently blamed for the disaster
- Distrust of the American Red Cross
- Distrust of some faith communities who are often central to the disaster response and recovery



# Other LGBTQ+ Response Considerations



Action

Points

- Acknowledge past negative experiences and distrust with some responding organizations and reassure that you are here to support
- Invite LGBTQ+ community leaders and groups into the emergency planning process to assist in developing inclusive practices and policies.
- Ask LGBTQ+ community members to participate in community disaster exercises and drills

# Other LGBTQ+ Response Considerations



Action

Points

- Recruit LGBTQ+ volunteers into local volunteer disaster response groups
- Consider including LGBTQ+ cultural competency training for your staff and/or volunteers
- Offer personal preparedness education sessions to LGBTQ+ Community groups



Pause  
Point



# LGBTQ+ Personal Preparedness

“Part of being LGBT is being prepared. You cannot assume your family, relationship and/or gender identity will be recognized or understood.”

- Legal and identification documents
- Partner is listed on insurance
- Partner is emergency contact
- Additional go-kit considerations
  - Grooming, packing, binding supplies.



# LGBTQ+ Personal Preparedness



MD EPN Online Spring 2022 Webinar:

## Disaster Preparedness for the LGBTQ+ Community

For Community Members & MD EPN Community

Wednesday, March 30, 2022, 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. EDT

**Disaster  
Preparedness  
for the LGBTQ+  
Community**

Wednesday  
March 30  
11:00am

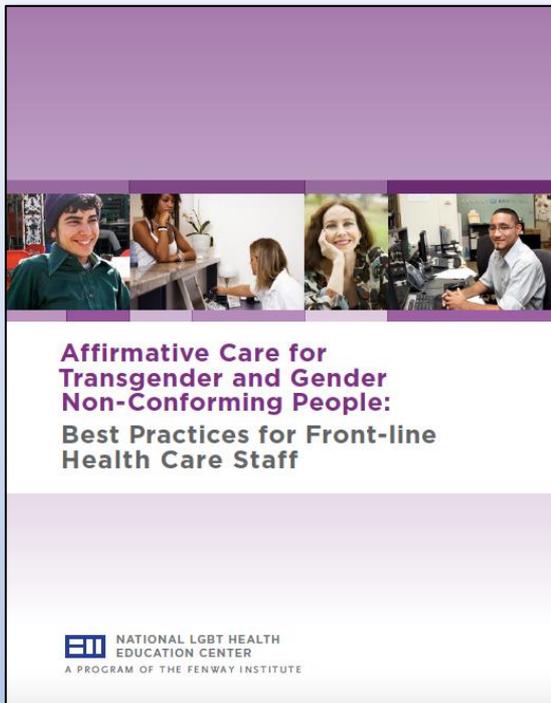


**Maryland Emergency  
Preparedness Network  
LGBTQ+ Emergency  
Preparedness Guides**

1. *My Emergency Preparedness Guide: LGBTQ+ Considerations for Emergency Managers, Responders and Community Providers*
2. *My Emergency Preparedness Guide: LGBTQ+ Community Members*

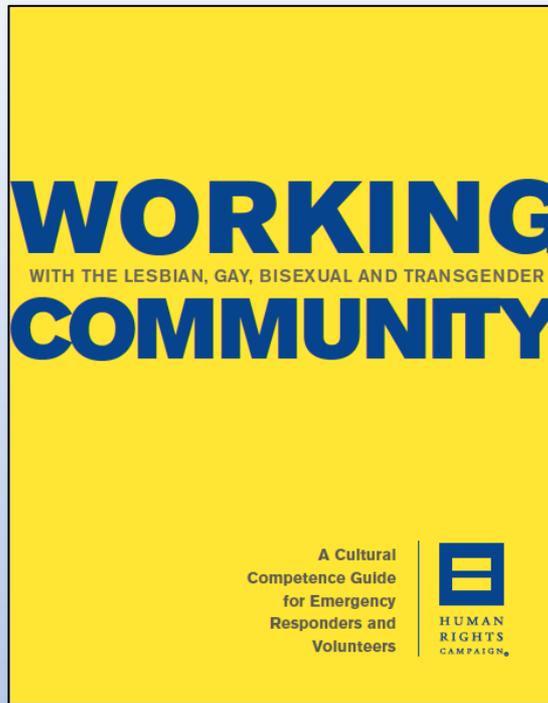


# Resources



Affirmative Care for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People: Best Practices for Front-line Health Care Staff

**ENH** NATIONAL LGBT HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER  
A PROGRAM OF THE FENWAY INSTITUTE



**WORKING WITH THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY**

A Cultural Competence Guide for Emergency Responders and Volunteers

**HR** HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN



PROJECT HEALTH

TRANSGENDER MEDICAL CONSULTATION SERVICE

**TRANSLINE**



Chase Brexton Health Care



**Q&A**



**Survey**

# Contact

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# References

- *Emergency Preparedness and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) People.* **National LGBT Health Education Center. Fenway Institute.** Boston, MA
- *Working with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community – A Cultural Competence Guide for Emergency Responders and Volunteers.* **Human Rights Campaign.** Washington DC.
- *Be a Ready Congregation: LGBT Needs & Disaster.* **National Disaster Interfaiths Network.** New York, NY.
- *Human Rights Commission Glossary of LGBTQ+ Terms:* <https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>. **Human Rights Commission.** Washington DC.
- *FEMA. A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action.* [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/whole\\_community\\_dec2011\\_2.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/whole_community_dec2011_2.pdf)
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- **LGBTQ+ Communities & Disasters**. 2022. <https://disasterphilanthropy.org/> **Center for Disaster Philanthropy**. Washington DC.
- **LGBTQ People are at Higher Risk in Disasters**. 2022 <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/lgbtq-people-are-at-higher-risk-in-disasters/> **Scientific American**. New York, NY

