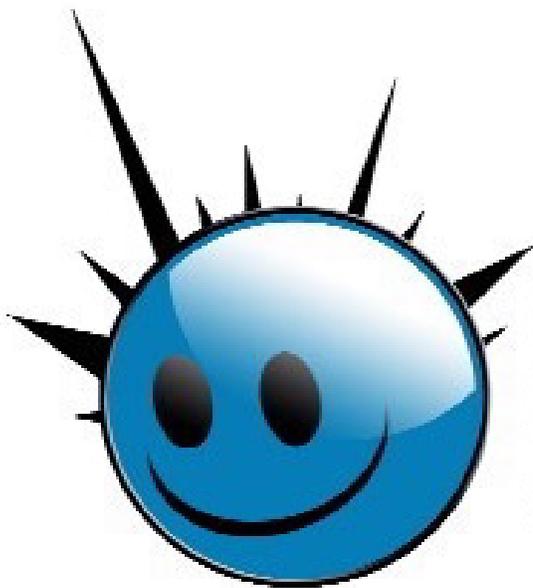


Confronting the Crisis

Issues Facing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Transgender and Questioning Youth,
Especially LGBTQ Youth of Color, in the District



A publication of

SMYAL

SAFE SPACE TO BE WHO YOU ARE

The Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League

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I. introduction

About this Document:

In **Section I**, we provide information about our history and the process to create this action plan. **Section II** offers a summary list of the action items necessary to improve the lives of District LGBTQ youth. **Section III** presents detailed information about each of the eight major focus areas, including supporting data. The eight major focus areas of this document include: **schools and education**; **shelter and housing**; **jobs and life skills**; **after-school time**; **mental health, substance abuse, and HIV**; **violence and victimization**; **Latino/a LGBTQ youth**; and **transgender youth**.

Who We Are:

For over twenty years, the Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL) has provided services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth in the D.C. metropolitan area. In that time, we have seen some positive changes as awareness of LGBTQ youth issues grows in our community. We have also seen each new generation of LGBTQ youth encounter many of the same problems of generations past as they struggle to find their place in the world. As part of our mission, we educate our community members and advocate for change until our society is a safe space for all LGBTQ youth.

Who We Serve:

In 2005, SMYAL provided services to 494 unduplicated LGBTQ youth for a total of 3,023 youth contacts. In addition to being LGBTQ, 97% of youth served by SMYAL are youth of color. We serve most of our youth through our after-school Youth Center on Capitol Hill where 99% are African-American. Our youth face many developmental and societal challenges specific to their sexual orientation and gender identity, in addition to problems associated with racial marginalization.

LGBTQ youth are more likely to engage in unsafe sex, be abused at school and at home, be forced onto the street, fall prey to alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs, and commit suicide.

Current social science research shows that LGBTQ youth, especially LGBTQ youth of color, are more likely to encounter significant risks to their health and wellbeing, including drug and alcohol dependency, high drop-out rates, increased incidence of HIV/AIDS infection and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as mental health issues. They are often targets of verbal, mental, and physical abuse from parents, peers, and society as a whole. Many are kicked out of their homes.

Developing a Plan:

In September 2005, SMYAL facilitated two focus groups, one with SMYAL youth and one with SMYAL staff, to discuss the challenges District LGBTQ young people face in their daily lives. From these discussions, SMYAL staff members identified major areas of need, discussed possible solutions and strategies, and determined concrete actions to address these issues.

Little data exists about the needs of LGBTQ youth or specifically LGBTQ youth of color in the District of Columbia. For this reason, we have used the results of the focus groups and data from recent studies of LGBTQ youth from around the country to help create the recommendations in this document.

II. recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon focus groups conducted with SMYAL youth and SMYAL staff. Based upon our findings, we strongly encourage the District of Columbia to institute the following actions.

Creating Safe and Affirming Schools:

All DCPS schools and charter schools must implement the following practices:

- Enforce existing Sexual Harassment and Harassment Policy that protects students from physical and verbal abuse relating to their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity (DCMR, Title 5, Education: 2503.2.g-h).
- Include LGBTQ youth issues in both HIV prevention and comprehensive sexuality education curricula.
- Require and provide LGBTQ youth cultural competency training and harassment and bullying prevention training for all staff members.
- Collect data about LGBTQ youth living in the District by including sexual orientation and gender identity as variables in annual Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Dedicated Shelter and Housing:

- D.C. must provide dedicated beds for LGBTQ youth in its existing funded transitional and emergency housing facilities or, preferably, fund a new program specifically dedicated to providing emergency housing for LGBTQ youth.
- D.C. must provide private rooms and bathrooms for transgender youth so they do not need to share accommodations with people of either gender.
- All employees of organizations housing youth must be trained and evaluated based on their cultural competency with LGBTQ youth.
- D.C. must provide outreach, emergency services, and referral to emergency housing to homeless and street youth with expertise and focus on LGBTQ homeless youth.

Jobs and Life Skills:

- D.C. must ensure appropriate regulations for the recent "Human Rights Clarification Act" are created to enforce employment protection for transgender youth.
- D.C. must fund job training and referral programs specifically developed for LGBTQ youth of color, with specific focus on transgender youth.

Safe 'Out-of-School Time':

- D.C. must designate funding specifically for after-school, late night and weekend programs for LGBTQ youth, especially LGBTQ youth of color.
- D.C. must work with private and community-based organizations to provide appropriate spaces in DCPS buildings, community recreation centers, and other D.C. government buildings for safe space activities for LGBTQ youth.

Increased Funding for Expert Mental Health, Substance Abuse and HIV Prevention and Treatment Services:

- Ensure all Department of Mental Health Service Providers are trained to identify and work with LGBTQ youth with mental health issues.
- Identify available clinicians with expertise in working with LGBTQ youth and refer LGBTQ youth to these specialists.

Increased Funding for Expert Mental Health, Substance Abuse and HIV Prevention and Treatment Services (continued):

- Provide funding and ensure availability of substance abuse prevention and treatment programs specifically targeted for LGBTQ youth, including “club drugs” and crystal methamphetamine.
- D.C. must dramatically expand HIV prevention, outreach, and counseling, testing, and referral funds specifically targeting LGBTQ youth 13-24 years old with specific focus on youth of color.

Safe and Affirming Communities:

- D.C. must track hate crimes based on both sexual orientation and gender identity separately.
- Mandate LGBTQ youth cultural competency training for all DC Police Officers.
- Address violence participation and victimization of LGBTQ youth through crime prevention strategies.
- D.C. must fund domestic and relationship violence prevention and support programs specifically for LGBTQ youth, especially youth of color.

Culturally Competent Services for LGBTQ Latino/a Youth:

- D.C. must fund the creation of culturally competent safe spaces for LGBTQ Latino/a Youth where they can receive services including preventive health care, emergency/transitional housing, substance abuse care, education assistance, and support for other issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity. This site must serve Latino/a LGBTQ youth regardless of economic and immigration status and have a staff fluent in Spanish.
- D.C. must fund the development of programs for LGBTQ Latino/a youth that focus on personal growth and leadership skills, preparing them to become future community leaders, to advocate for their own needs, and to work within their community to change negative attitudes toward LGBTQ Latino/a individuals.
- D.C. must fund cultural and educational programs for Latino/a LGBTQ youth, their parents, peers, and their community which foster acceptance of these youth and help them identify with the entire Latino/a community.

Jobs and Life Skills for Transgender Youth:

- D.C. must ensure appropriate regulations for the recent “Human Rights Clarification Act” are created to enforce employment protection for transgender youth.
- D.C. must fund job training and referral programs specifically developed for transgender youth, especially youth of color.

Safe Spaces for Transgender Youth:

- D.C. must require and provide transgender youth cultural competency training and harassment and bullying prevention training for all DCPS faculty and staff.
- D.C. must provide private rooms and bathrooms in emergency and transitional housing for transgender youth so they do not need to share accommodations with people of either gender.
- D.C. must track hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity separately.

III. issue areas

Violence and Harassment at School:

For LGBTQ youth, going to school means facing abuse and violence on a daily basis.

- In a 2003 national study of LGBT middle and high school students, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) found that 84% of these LGBT youth are verbally harassed at school each year due to their sexual orientation. Almost one in five (17%) are physically assaulted at school each year for the same reason.¹
- Many LGBT students stop going to school to avoid future abuse. GLSEN reports that LGBT students who do not know about a school policy protecting them from abuse are almost 40% more likely to skip school out of fear.

Inadequate Sexuality and HIV Prevention Education:

Although LGBTQ youth face a heightened risk of HIV and other STD infection, many schools do not address their issues through sexuality education curricula.

- In a 2004 focus group study of young men of color who have sex with men (YMCSM) in the metro DC area created by SMYAL and Metro Teen AIDS, only 15% of these young men report receiving sexuality education from their school.²
- A 2001 study shows that GLB students who received GLB-sensitive health education reported fewer lifetime sexual partners (1.3 vs. 2.4) and were less likely to report making a plan to commit suicide (27.7% vs. 45.7%) and missing school for personal safety reasons (12.2% vs. 23.4%).³

Only 15% of young men of color who have sex with men in the metro DC area report receiving sexuality education from their school.

(SMYAL & MTA 2004)

Creating Safe and Affirming Schools:

All DCPS schools and charter schools must implement the following practices:

- Enforce existing Sexual Harassment and Harassment Policy that protects students from physical and verbal abuse relating to their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity (DCMR, Title 5, Education: 2503.2.g-h).
- Include LGBTQ youth issues in both HIV prevention and comprehensive sexuality education curricula.
- Require and provide LGBTQ youth cultural competency training and harassment and bullying prevention training for all staff members.
- Collect data about LGBTQ youth living in the District by including sexual orientation and gender identity as variables in annual Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Homelessness:

Many LGBTQ youth are thrown out of their homes when their parents discover their sexual orientation or gender identity; others leave their homes to escape an abusive family.

- In the 2004 focus group study held by SMYAL and Metro Teen AIDS, 35% of young men of color who have sex with men reported being physically threatened or harmed by their immediate family members when their families learned of their sexual orientation.
- A 2005 University of Texas study shows that 73% of homeless lesbian and gay adolescents and 25.6% of bisexual homeless youth are homeless because their parents disapproved of their sexual orientation.⁴
- A 2002 study shows that homeless LGBT youths reported leaving home more often than their heterosexual peers (mean of 12.38 times vs. 6.69 times).⁵
- With no source of income, these youth often turn to high-risk sex for survival. A 2000 study reveals that 46% of gay and bisexual young homeless men and 23% of lesbian and bisexual young homeless women reported exchanging sex for money, drugs, and other needs.⁶
- In a survey of SMYAL youth, 35.9% of our LGBTQ youth reported running away from home at least once.⁷ Of youth who reported running away, 30.8% reported leaving home three or more times.

46% of gay and bisexual young homeless men and 23% of lesbian and bisexual young homeless women report exchanging sex for money, drugs, and other needs.

(Youth & Society, 2000)

Dedicated Shelter and Housing:

- D.C. must provide dedicated beds for LGBTQ youth in its existing funded transitional and emergency housing facilities or, preferably, fund a new program specifically dedicated to providing emergency housing for LGBTQ youth.
- D.C. must provide private rooms and bathrooms for transgender youth so they do not need to share accommodations with people of either gender.
- All employees of organizations housing youth must be trained and evaluated based on their cultural competency with LGBTQ youth.
- D.C. must provide outreach, emergency services, and referral to emergency housing to homeless and street youth with expertise and focus on LGBTQ homeless youth.

Employment Discrimination and Economic Disadvantage:

Unsafe schools force many LGBTQ youth to drop out before graduating from high school, significantly lowering their ability to find employment. These youth also face employment discrimination due to employers' bias against LGBT individuals, which is especially problematic for transgender youth.

- GLSEN also reports that LGBT students who report significant harassment are twice as likely to report that they do not intend to go to college and report lower grade point averages (2.9 vs. 3.3).⁹ The prevalence of in-school harassment and violence creates a chain reaction that harms LGBTQ young people's ability to succeed for the rest of their lives.
- Some SMYAL youth are also at greater risk to drop out of high school or to live in poverty because they live in the District of Columbia. The high school dropout rate for D.C. students is 40% overall and 45% for African-American youth.¹⁰
- The Kaiser Family Foundation reports the District also has a higher percentage of children 18 and under living in poverty compared to the rest of the country (39% vs. 23%).¹¹

Jobs and Life Skills:

- D.C. must ensure that appropriate regulations for the recent "Human Rights Clarification Act" are created to enforce job protection for transgender youth.
- D.C. must fund job training and referral programs specifically developed for LGBTQ youth of color, with specific focus on transgender youth.

Too Few Safe 'Out-of-School' Activities:

The constant threat of violence and harassment which LGBTQ youth experience on a daily basis prevents them from participating in the extracurricular activities crucial to adolescent development. Many LGBTQ young people, seeking validation and community, frequent places unsafe for youth such as bars and internet 'hook-up' sites, while others turn to criminal behavior.

- In a 2004 survey of SMYAL youth, 30.6% of our LGBTQ youth reported that they had been jailed in their lifetime.¹²
- The 2004 Focus Group Report created by SMYAL and Metro Teen AIDS found that many young men of color who have sex with men lie about their age online and in bars. They reported doing so because there is "a lack of places to hang out that are gay-friendly."¹³
- SMYAL is the only LGBTQ youth service agency in the city. Our hours do not extend past 8 P.M. and our space is extremely limited. Many youth do not access services at other organizations for fear of being harassed or victimized. Many of our youth have no safe space other than SMYAL. This lack of safe space is especially problematic after we close for the evening.

Safe 'Out-of-School Time':

- D.C. must designate funding specifically for after-school, late night and weekend programs for LGBTQ youth, especially those of color.
- D.C. must work with private and community-based organizations to provide appropriate spaces in DCPS buildings, community recreation centers, and other D.C. government buildings for safe space activities for LGBTQ youth.

Under-funded and Inadequate Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Services:

The devastating impact of harassment and anti-LGBT sentiment leads many LGBTQ youth to attempt escaping the painful reality of their lives through desperate means.

- In a 2001 study, one in ten LGBT youths attempted suicide within the previous year. Of these, 34% reported needing emergency care after the attempt.¹⁴ In contrast, the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health found that only 4% of all youth reported attempting suicide in the previous year.¹⁵

One in ten LGBT youths attempted suicide within the previous year.

(Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 2001)

- A 2003 study of all Massachusetts high school students shows that LGBT youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to report smoking tobacco recently (48% vs. 19%) and on a daily basis (23% vs. 6%), alcohol use (60% vs. 45%), binge drinking (44% vs. 29%), drug use (49% vs. 29%) and lifetime drug use (73% vs. 46%).¹⁶ Current funding for this vulnerable population is extremely limited.

Unsafe Sexual Behavior:

Without the support and education they need to make healthy decisions, many LGBT young people engage in unsafe sexual behavior, putting them at risk for HIV and other STD infection.

- A national study of LGBT college students conducted by Western Kentucky University over the 2001-2002 academic year found that only one in three (35.6%) gay, bisexual, and transgender men in college reported using a condom during their most recent sexual encounter.¹⁷
- While many assume that lesbian and bisexual young women are at decreased risk for HIV, STDs, and pregnancy, a 1999 study finds the opposite is true: lesbian and bisexual young women report higher rates of pregnancy than their heterosexual peers (12% vs. 5.3%).¹⁸

Increased Funding for Expert Mental Health, Substance Abuse and HIV Prevention and Treatment Services:

- Ensure all Department of Mental Health Service Providers are trained to identify and work with LGBTQ youth with mental health issues.
- Identify available clinicians with expertise in working with LGBTQ youth and refer LGBTQ youth to these specialists.
- Provide funding and ensure availability of substance abuse prevention and treatment programs specifically targeted for LGBTQ youth, including "club drugs" and crystal methamphetamine.
- D.C. must dramatically expand HIV prevention, outreach, and counseling, testing, and referral funds specifically targeting LGBTQ youth 13-24 years old with specific focus on youth of color.

Violence and Hate Crimes in the Community:

LGBTQ youth are often targeted for violence by complete strangers due to their attackers' bias against LGBT individuals. Many LGBTQ youth and adults do not report these hate crimes committed against them because of the stigma they feel for being LGBTQ. For this reason, the reported numbers of hate crimes released by the FBI are likely to be lower than the numbers of crimes actually committed. Even so, the statistics are alarming.

- In 2004, 49 hate or bias crimes were reported in the District of Columbia. More than half (29) of these crimes were based on the victim's sexual orientation.¹⁶
- The District currently treats hate crimes against lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals along with crimes against transgender individuals as crimes based on the victim's sexual orientation. This method does not record the number of crimes specifically based on the victim's gender identity, and so prevents accurate reports of hate crimes against transgender individuals.

More than half of the hate crimes reported in 2004 in the District were motivated by the victim's sexual orientation.

(FBI, 2004)

Domestic and Relationship Abuse:

- A 2003 survey shows that 30% of sexual minority youth reported dating violence, compared to only 9% of other students, and 41% reported nonconsensual sexual contact, compared to only 8% of other students.¹⁷
- Young lesbians and bisexual women are at even greater risk for experiencing sexual violence and rape. A 2003 study released by the San Francisco Department of Public Health found that these women were more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to report being forced to have sex (50% vs. 23%) and being threatened with force to have sex (55% vs. 25%).¹⁸

Young lesbians and bisexual women are more likely than their heterosexual peers to report being forced to have sex (50% vs. 23%).

(*Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 2003)

Safe and Affirming Communities:

- D.C. must track hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity separately.
- Mandate LGBTQ youth cultural competency training for all DC Police Officers.
- Address violence participation and victimization of LGBTQ youth through crime prevention strategies.
- D.C. must fund domestic and relationship violence prevention and support programs specifically for LGBTQ youth, especially those of color.

No Services for LGBTQ Latino/a Youth:

No survey has yet assessed the needs of Latino/a LGBTQ youth living in the District, but the large size and continued growth of the city's Latino/a population suggests that there are many Latino/a LGBTQ youth living, going to school, and working here. Currently, no programs which specifically serve this population exist in our city. SMYAL is small and limited in our capacity, which has prevented us from developing a program specifically for Latino/a youth.

SMYAL asked the community group **Latin@s En Accion** (Latinos/as En Accion) to partner with us to develop these specific recommendations that could be implemented to help identify and provide critical services to Latino/a LGBTQ youth.

SMYAL wishes to thank Ruby Corado and Latin@s En Accion for their assistance with developing this section of the report.

No survey has yet assessed the needs of Latino/a LGBTQ youth living in the District, and, currently, no programs which specifically serve this population exist in our city.

Culturally Competent Services for LGBTQ Latino/a Youth:

- D.C. must fund the creation of culturally competent safe spaces for LGBTQ Latino/a Youth where they can receive services including preventive health care, emergency/transitional housing, substance abuse care, education assistance, and support for other issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity. This site must serve Latino/a LGBTQ youth regardless of economic and immigration status and have a staff fluent in Spanish.
- D.C. must fund the development of programs for LGBTQ Latino/a youth that focus on personal growth and leadership skills, preparing them to become future community leaders, to advocate for their own needs, and to work within their community to change negative attitudes toward LGBTQ Latino/a individuals.
- D.C. must fund cultural and educational programs for Latino/a LGBTQ youth, their parents, peers, and their community which foster acceptance of these youth and help them identify with the entire Latino/a community.

About Latin@s En Accion:

The Mission of Latin@s En Accion is to promote social, cultural, educational and community interests within the Latin@ GLBT community by developing cooperation and mutual understanding, by creating positive role models within the Latin@ GLBT Community, demonstrating that our sexual orientation is a source of pride and respect, and opposing existing discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes while developing and strengthening ties between persons of our sexual orientation and the rest of our community.

An Invisible Population:

In this document, we outline several action steps that pertain specifically to the problems facing transgender youth, especially transgender youth of color, in the District of Columbia. We include transgender youth with lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth in many other recommendations. Although they may be related to LGB issues, many of the issues transgender youth face are specific to their transgender status. For this reason, we have included a section to address the specific needs of this population.

Little data exists about the specific problems facing transgender youth due to the tendency of researchers to group them with lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, so we have included data about transgender adults in the District of Columbia that is relevant to youth issues.

78.8% of transgender middle and high school students report feeling unsafe in school due to their gender expression.
(GLSEN, 2004)

- In GLSEN's National School Climate Survey, more than three out of four transgender middle and high school students (78.8%) reported feeling unsafe in school due to their gender expression. 23.8% of the transgender students reported being physically harassed due to their gender expression.²²
- The Washington Transgender Needs Assessment Survey (WTNAS), released in 2000, evidences the problems many transgender adults face in finding employment (42% reported being unemployed), learning job skills (40% had not finished high school), and dealing with STDS and HIV (32% of male-to-female transgender individuals reported being HIV positive). In further examining the HIV infection rate, researchers found that 25% of the transgender women did not realize unprotected sexual contact carried any risks.²³

Jobs and Life Skills for Transgender Youth:

- D.C. must ensure appropriate regulations for the recent "Human Rights Clarification Act" are created to enforce employment protection for transgender youth.
- D.C. must fund job training and referral programs specifically developed for transgender youth, especially those of color.

Safe Spaces for Transgender Youth:

- D.C. must require and provide transgender youth cultural competency training and harassment and bullying prevention training for all DCPS faculty and staff.
- D.C. must provide private rooms and bathrooms in emergency and transitional housing for transgender youth so they do not need to share accommodations with people of either gender.
- D.C. must track hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity separately.

¹ Kosciw, J.G. (2004). *The National School Climate Survey: The school-related experiences of our nation's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth*. New York: GLSEN.

² Metro Teen AIDS (2004). Washington DC Area Young Men of Color who have Sex with Men Focus Group Report.

³ Blake, S.M., Ledsky, R., Lehman, T., Goodenow, C., Sawyer, R., Hack, T. (2001). Preventing sexual risk behaviors among gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents: the benefits of gay-sensitive HIV instruction in schools. *American Journal of Public Health* 91(6), 940-946.

⁴ Metro Teen AIDS (2004).

⁵ Rew, L., Whittaker, T. A., Taylor-Seehafer, M. A., & Smith, L. R. (2005). Sexual Health Risks and Protective Resources in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Heterosexual Homeless Youth. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, 10(1), 11-19.

⁶ Cochran, B.N., Stewart, A.J., Ginzler, J.A., Cauce, A.M. (2002). Challenges Faced by Homeless Sexual Minorities: Comparison of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Homeless Adolescents with Their Heterosexual Counterparts. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(5), 773-777.

⁷ Moon, M.W., McFarland, W., Kellogg, T., Baxter, M., Katz, M., Mackellar, D., & Valleroy, L. (2000). HIV Risk Behavior of Runaway Youth in San Francisco: Age of Onset and Relation to Sexual Orientation. *Youth & Society*, 32(2), 184-201.

⁸ To determine the effectiveness of our programs and the needs of our youth, SMYAL asks youth to complete a questionnaire called a Risk Assessment Tool (RAT) and uses an independent evaluator to track the results. This particular data was obtained in 2005.

⁹ Kosciw, J.G. (2004).

¹⁰ Cave, G., Andrews, J., Lai, A. (2002). *Youth Development Needs and Capacities in the District of Columbia*. Retrieved 6 December 2005 from <http://www.jointcenter.org/aamales/index.html>.

¹¹ Urban Institute and Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured estimates based on the Census Bureau's March 2004 and 2005 Current Population Survey. Retrieved 3 March 2006 from <<http://www.statehealthfacts.org>>

¹² SMYAL Risk Assessment Tool.

¹³ Metro Teen AIDS (2004).

¹⁴ D'Augelli, A. R., Hershberger, S. L., & Pilkington, N. W. (2001). Suicidality patterns and sexual orientation-related factors among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 31(3), 250-264.

¹⁵ Resnick, M.D., Bearman, P.S., Blum, R.W., Bauman, K.E., Harris, K.M., Jones, J., Tabor, J., Beuhring, T., Sieving, R.E., Shew, M., Ireland, M., Bearinger, H., & Udry, J.R. (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm. Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 278(10): 823-32.

¹⁶ Massachusetts Department of Education (2004). *2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results*. Retrieved June 8, 2005 from Massachusetts Department of Education. <<http://www.doe.mass.edu/>>

¹⁷ Lindley, L. L., Nicholson, T. J., Kerby, M. B., & Liu, N. (2003). HIV/STI associated risk behaviors among self-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender college students in the United States. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 15(5), 413-429.

¹⁸ Saewyc, E. M., Bearinger, L. H., Blum, R. W., & Resnick, M. D. (1999). Sexual intercourse, abuse and pregnancy among adolescent women: does sexual orientation make a difference? *Family Planning Perspectives*, 31(3), 127-131.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Justice. Federal Bureau of Investigation. *Hate Crime Statistics, 2004*. Retrieved 12/20/05 from [/www.fbi.gov/ucr/hc2004/openpage.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/hc2004/openpage.htm).

²⁰ Massachusetts Department of Education (2004).

²¹ Scheer, S., Parks, C.A., McFarland, W., Page-Shafer, K., Delgado, V., Ruiz, J. D., Molitor, F. & Klausner, J. D. (2003). Self-reported sexual identity, sexual behaviors and health risks: examples from a population-based survey of young women. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 7(1), 69-83.

²² Kosciw, J.G. (2004).

²³ Xavier, J.M. (2000). *Final report of the Washington Transgender Needs Assessment Survey*. Retrieved 17 August 2005 from <<http://www.gender.org/resources/dge/gea01011.pdf>>

The Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL) is the only Washington, DC metro area service organization solely dedicated to supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning (LGBTIQ) youth. Founded in 1984, SMYAL is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.

Our mission is to promote and support self-confident, healthy, productive lives for LGBTIQ youth as they journey from adolescence into adulthood. To fulfill our mission, we focus our commitment and energy on five focus areas: (1) Life Skills & Leadership Development, (2) Counseling & Support, (3) Health & Wellness Education, (4) Safe Social Activities, and (5) Community Outreach & Education.

SMYAL was founded in 1984 by a group of community activists in response to the hospitalization and incarceration of "cross-dressing" youth in St. Elizabeth's Psychiatric Hospital. SMYAL began as a weekend support group, expanded into an after-school program, and in 1997 purchased two adjacent row houses on Capital Hill that serve as our administrative offices and Youth Center.

410 7th Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003
[p] 202.546.5940 [f] 202.544.1306
SMYAL.org
UW/CFC #8142