



Queer Theology and Suicide Prevention in the LGBTQ+ Community

The Rev. Charles Lane Cowen

Suicide rates and the LGBTQ+ Community

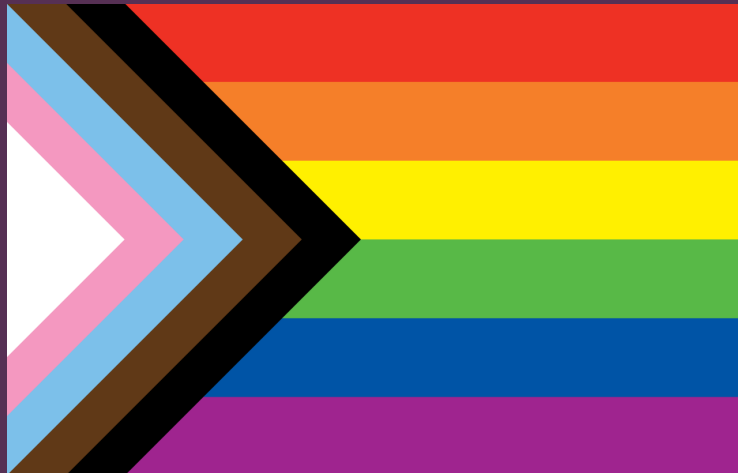
- As many as 20% of, or 1 in 5, LGB adults have attempted suicide during their lifetimes*
- LGBTQ youth are **more than four times** as likely to attempt suicide than their peers**
- Suicide attempts among transgender people is almost 12% higher than the general population (7% v. 0.6%)***

*2016 research by American Public Health Association <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303088>

** <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/facts-about-lgbtq-youth-suicide/>

***US National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 2009). U.S. Transgender Survey, 2015. Toomey et al., 2018

Queerness and Suicide



- LGBTQ youth are not inherently prone to suicide risk because of their sexual orientation or gender identity but rather placed at higher risk because of how they are mistreated and stigmatized in society.*

*<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/facts-about-lgbtq-youth-suicide/>

- Minority Stress
- Rejection and Lack of Social Support
- Physical Harm & Bullying
- Discrimination
- Conversion Therapy
- Lack of Affirming Spaces

Protective Factors

from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

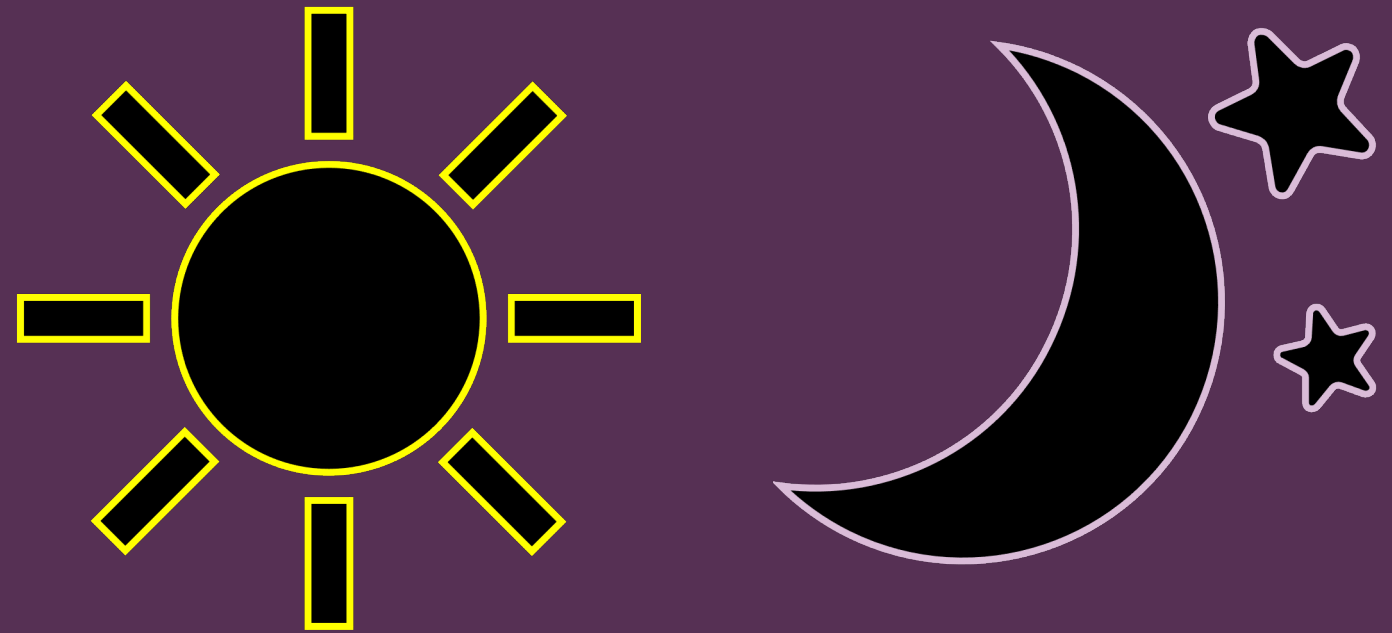
- Access to mental health care, and being proactive about mental health
- Feeling connected to family and community support
- Problem-solving and coping skills
- Limited access to lethal means
- Cultural and religious beliefs that encourage connecting and help-seeking, discourage suicidal behavior, or create a strong sense of purpose or self-esteem

What is Queer Theology?

- Why “Queer” as opposed to other designations?
- Queer Apologetics v. Queer Theology
 - Queer apologetics—a defense of queerness and our right to exist; grappling with questions of sin, morality, and queerness
 - Queer theology—how queer viewpoints and experiences shape our understanding of God and one another.

The Creation Story

Genesis 1:1 - 2:4



Miller, Mary Jane. A Mother's Love Holds the World, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=59655> [retrieved January 12, 2023]. Original source: <https://www.millericons.com/>.

Chosen Family

While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, “Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

Matthew 12:46 – 50 NRSV



Doctrine of the Incarnation

The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation affirms that the eternal Son of God took flesh from His human mother and that the historical Christ is at once both fully God and fully man.

The doctrine of the Incarnation raises questions of the relation of time and eternity, of finitude and infinity.

From the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, Third Edition Revised



Pittman, Lauren Wright. A Choice, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57082> [retrieved January 12, 2023]. Original source: Lauren Wright Pittman, <http://www.lewpstudio.com/>.

Suicide Prevention Resources

- The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (afsp.org)
- The Trevor Project (thetrevorproject.org)
- 988lifeline.org
- Translifeline.org
- ReformationProject.org

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