



LGBTQ+ People and COVID-19

Why are LGBTQ+ individuals more vulnerable?

- Rates of smoking are about 50% higher among LGBTQ+ communities than the general population. COVID 19 is a respiratory illness that could be especially harmful for individuals who smoke.
- LGBTQ+ people have higher rates of HIV and cancer, and therefore may have a compromised immune system, making them more susceptible.
- Compared to the general population, LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to be uninsured. Moreover, LGBTQ+ individuals experience discrimination and cultural insensitivity when seeking health care. Many may avoid engaging in health care services or delay checking in with their providers.

Impact of COVID 19 on LGBTQ+ populations

- LGBTQ+ people, in general, experience greater social isolation than the general population. Shelter-in-place policies and closing of social venues can further decrease social connectedness. This may exacerbate mental health issues (depression, suicidal ideations) and substance misuse behaviors.
- LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to experience homelessness, unstable housing, or live in foster care- often due to family rejection, compared to their straight counterparts. Due to widespread school closures as a result of COVID-19, LGBTQ+ youth are at risk of losing access to important resources (e.g., meals, mentorship, or social support) provided by schools. Additionally, they may be required to spend more time in unsupportive environments - including home settings where they face family rejection.
- LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to work in jobs that are highly affected industries by the COVID-19 crisis (e.g. food service, entertainment, retail, and hospitals). Statistics suggest that more than 5 million LGBTQ workers could be heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tips and Precautions

Practice the following steps, outlined by the CDC, to stay safe and healthy:

- Practice physical distancing guidelines. Staying at least six feet away from other people reduces the risk of transmission.
- Adhere to shelter-in-place policies implemented within your community.
- Practice good hygiene:
 - Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds
 - Reduce the number of times you touch your face
 - Disinfect high touch areas regularly like doorknobs, light switches, phones and computer keyboards
- Stay home when you are sick.

NOTE: LGBTQ+ individuals who have cancer, smoke, are HIV+, are over 65 years old, or who have other health conditions should take extra precautions to reduce the risk of infection.

- Social Support:
 - Use video conferencing apps (zoom, WhatsApp, Facetime, skype) to connect with family and friends and others in your social network.



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- [Fenway Health](#) has an LGBT Helpline and a Peer Listening Line, which people can call from across the country. Call 888.340.4528 for adults 25years and older. Call 800.399.PEER for those under age 25.
- Access support from LGBTQ+ [community health centers](#) in your area. **Note: Please do not visit a health center if you are sick or have been exposed. Call the organization to inquire about hours and options for virtual or telephone based support.**
- With social and physical distancing guidelines, engaging in short bouts of [physical activity](#) (e.g., walking) can be a great way to ease muscle tension, stress, and improve blood circulation.
- Practice strategies such as [relaxation and mindfulness exercises](#) to manage anxiety and stress.

Resources

Local Resources (Tucson)

- [Southern Arizona Gender Alliance](#) (SAGA) provides resources for Southern Arizona's Transgender communities. SAGA's website offers an extensive list of LGBTQ+ friendly health care providers and clinics.
- [Senior Pride of Southern Arizona](#) provides resources for LGBTQ+ seniors.
- [Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation](#) (SAAF) provides those living with HIV/AIDS an array of services such as housing, food, case management, and psychosocial support groups.
- The SAAF [Anti-Violence Project](#) has a 24-hour crisis hotline (1-800-553-9387) to prevent and respond to violence against and within LGBTQ+ persons. Bilingual services available.
- [Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network](#) (TIHAN) provides community resources and support for people living with HIV/AIDS. Learn more about their response to COVID19 and action taken to support the community here (<https://tihan.org/a-special-announcement/>).
- The [Arizona Smokers' Helpline](#) (1-800-556-6222) provides free help quitting smoking. You can also visit smokefree.gov for free text messaging support and tips for becoming smokefree.

National Resources

General Health Resources

- National LGBTQ Cancer Network: [Coronavirus 2019 Information](#)
- HIV.GOV: [Coronavirus Information for Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Recipients and Partners](#)
- National Center for Transgender Equality: The Coronavirus (COVID-19): [What Trans People Need to Know](#)
- The Fenway Institute: [Coronavirus, COVID-10, and Considerations for People Living with HIV and LGBTQ+ People](#)

Mental Health Resources:

- [Trans Lifeline](#) (877-565-8860) provides a peer support hotline for Trans people in need.
- [Trevor Project](#) provides access to counselors by phone call (1-866-488-7386), online chat, or text (text START to 678678).
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) (800-273-8255) provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources. Online chat feature available.
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) (1-800-799-7233) provides 24/7 support for those impacted by domestic violence or intimate partner violence. Online chat feature available.
- [Stronghearts Native Helpline](#) (1-844-762-8483) is a domestic and dating violence helpline for American Indians and Alaskan Natives. Services available between 7am-10pm CT (5am-8pm AZ time).
- [SAGE](#) (877-360-LGBT) runs a National LGBT Elder Hotline that provides crisis response and helps senior LGBTQ+ individuals with community resources. Services available in English and Spanish.



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Other LGBTQ+ resources

- [Family Equality](#) provides education and resources for LGBTQ+ families
- [The Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund](#) has prepared [Know Your Rights](#) guide for transgender and non-binary people dealing with issues related to employment, housing, health care, identification, and accessing assistance from government agencies among other issues.
- [The Human Rights Commission](#) (HRC) is the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer civil rights organization.
- [Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality](#) (previously known as the Gay & Lesbian Medical Association-GLMA) is the largest association of LGBTQ+ healthcare professionals. Use their [directory](#) to find a LGBTQ+ friendly healthcare provider in your area.

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