Breaking Down Barriers:

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEY), Homelessness, & LGBTQ+ Youth

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Today's Agenda

Risk Factors

Discuss factors that put youth at risk of homelessness

Challenges

Discuss basic human needs, the unmet needs of youth experiencing homelessness, and how these vulnerabilities tie into CSEY

Barriers

Understand the barriers that youth might face when trying to exit homelessness, especially as it relates to CSEY

Solutions for Providers

Share solutions and best practices for serving youth experiencing homelessness

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The mission of TNOYS is to strengthen services and support for Texas youth and families to help them overcome challenges and achieve healthy development.

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Membership at a Glance

- Over **80 Organizational Members** serving youth, young adults, and families in **every Texas region.**

- A diverse range of individual members, including frontline staff.

- Representation across systems such as **education, child welfare, housing, and much more**.

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Our work is guided by a comprehensive **systems-change** approach

Training and support, professional development, capacity building.

Practice

Partnership

Partnerships with youth and young adults to effect systems-change; experiential camps for youth.

Policy

Advocacy at the Texas Capitol and engaging systems stakeholders on behalf of youth and families.

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Policy

We work with youth and providers on **research-driven** policy advocacy.

Past Win

First-ever line item in the state budget to serve youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.

Looking Ahead

On March 6, TNOYS Day of Action for Youth will convene youth, young adults, and providers to advocate for change at the Texas Capitol.

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Practice

TNOYS equips professionals with **skills and resources** to meet the complex needs of youth and families.

Past Win

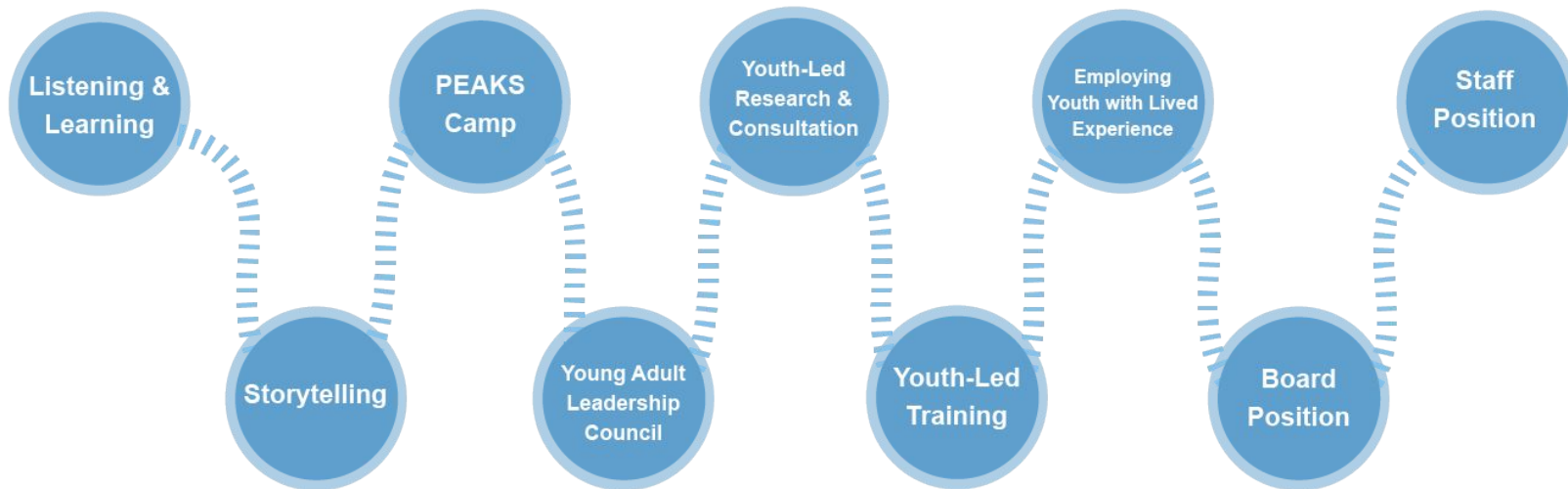Provided professional development to thousands of youth services professionals across Texas.

Looking Ahead

TNOYS' 40th Annual Conference is scheduled to take place June 13 - 16 in Houston, Texas. A limited virtual day will also be available.

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Partnership

TNOYS **centers youth and provider voice** in everything we do. TNOYS offers many opportunities for youth to engage in our work in both big and small ways.

TNOYS' Youth Engagement Roadmap

- Listening & Learning
- Storytelling
- PEAKS Camp
- Young Adult Leadership Council
- Youth-Led Research & Consultation
- Youth-Led Training
- Employing Youth with Lived Experience
- Board Position
- Staff Position

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Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC)

The YALC empowers youth and young adults by elevating their stories and lived expertise.

The YALC is a 12-month leadership development program for youth and young adults from across Texas.

Equity & Inclusion

A commitment to **diversity, equity, and inclusion** underscores our work.

TNOYS elevates the voices and experiences of youth and providers who have been underrepresented in the past, including people of color and those in the LGBTQ+ community.

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Content Warning

Terms and Definitions

- **LGBTQIA+** | An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual.

- **Sexual Orientation** | An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people.

- **Gender Identity** | One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves.

- **Gender Expression** | External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut, or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

- **Survival Sex** | Exchanging sex in order to secure basic needs for youth this could be-Housing, Shelter, Food, Money, Shower, Drugs to cope, etc.

- **CSEY** | An acronym for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth.

Risk Factors for Youth Homelessness & CSEY

Risk Factors for Youth Homelessness

How did we get here?

- Economic hardship

- Familial dysfunction

- Abuse or neglect

- Mental health challenges

- Foster care involvement/ aging out of care

- Exiting the juvenile or criminal justice system

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Risk Factors for LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness

A pervasive issue

- Exposure to violence

- Lack of acceptance
  - Family or caregivers
  - Discrimination
  - Employment

- Difficulty accessing services
  - Supportive housing
  - Healthcare

LGBTQ youth represent as much as **40%** of the homeless youth population.

Source: Community Solutions

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Risk Factors & Vulnerabilities for CSE
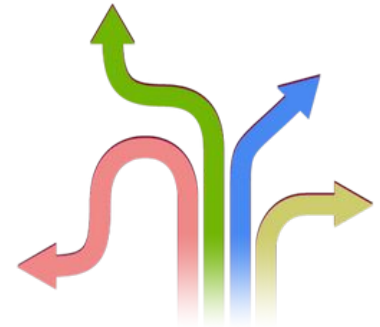
Disproportionate impacts

- Family disruptions

- Prior abuse or neglect

- Mental health needs

- Housing instability

- Child welfare involvement

- Juvenile justice involvement

- Gender identity & LGBTQ+

- Race and ethnicity

- Unmet emotional & psychological needs

Pathways to Commercial Sexual Exploitation

A slippery slope

- Some pathways that lead to CSE while experiencing homelessness include:
  - Romeo exploitation (seduction by romantic or sexual partner)
  - Guerilla exploitation (violence, threats, force)
  - Peer-to-peer recruitment
  - Gang-based recruitment
  - Internet enticement (social media, chat rooms)
  - Illicit sexually oriented businesses (SOBs)
  - Survival sex

Trauma and Adversity

Adversity and Trauma

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Maternal Depression

Emotional & Sexual Abuse

Substance Abuse

Domestic Violence

Physical & Emotional Neglect

Divorce

Mental Illness

Incarceration

Homelessness

Adverse Community Experiences

Poverty

Discrimination

Community Disruption

Violence

Poor Housing Quality & Affordability

Lack of Opportunity, Economic, Mobility & Social Capital

Adapted from Ellis, W., Dietz, W. (2017). A new framework for addressing adverse childhood and community exp The building community resilience (BCR) model. *Academic Pediatrics, 17*(7S), S86-S93.

- Adversity refers to the event(s) themselves.

- Trauma is the **overwhelming nature** of an event or repeated events and the accompanying harm that it creates for an individual.

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood.

The Effects of Trauma

The Five B's of Trauma

- Brain

- Body

- Beliefs

- Biology

- Behavior

Source: Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University (TCU)

Impossible Choices

Would you rather not be able to trust anyone or trust everybody always?

Would you rather relive the same day for 365 days or lose a year of your life?

Would you rather be alone forever or always have other people around?
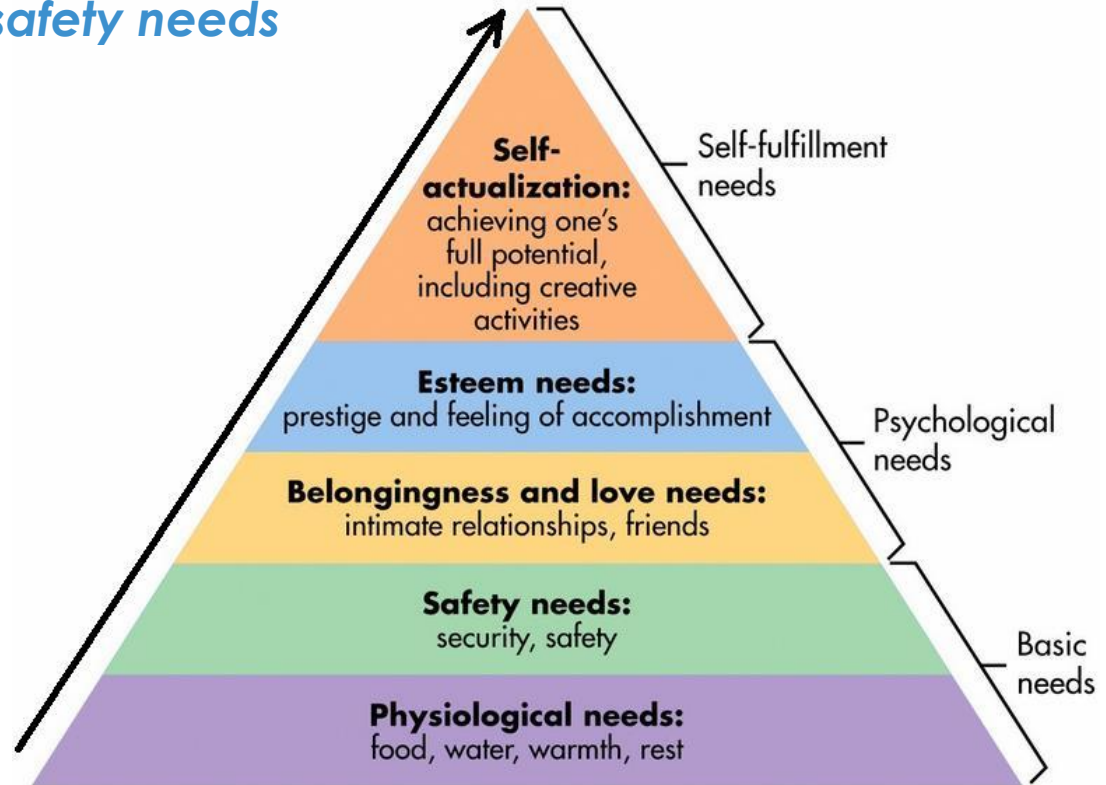
Would you rather lose all of your memories from birth to now or lose your ability to make new long term memories?

Would you rather be constantly tired or constantly hungry?

Challenges While Experiencing Homelessness

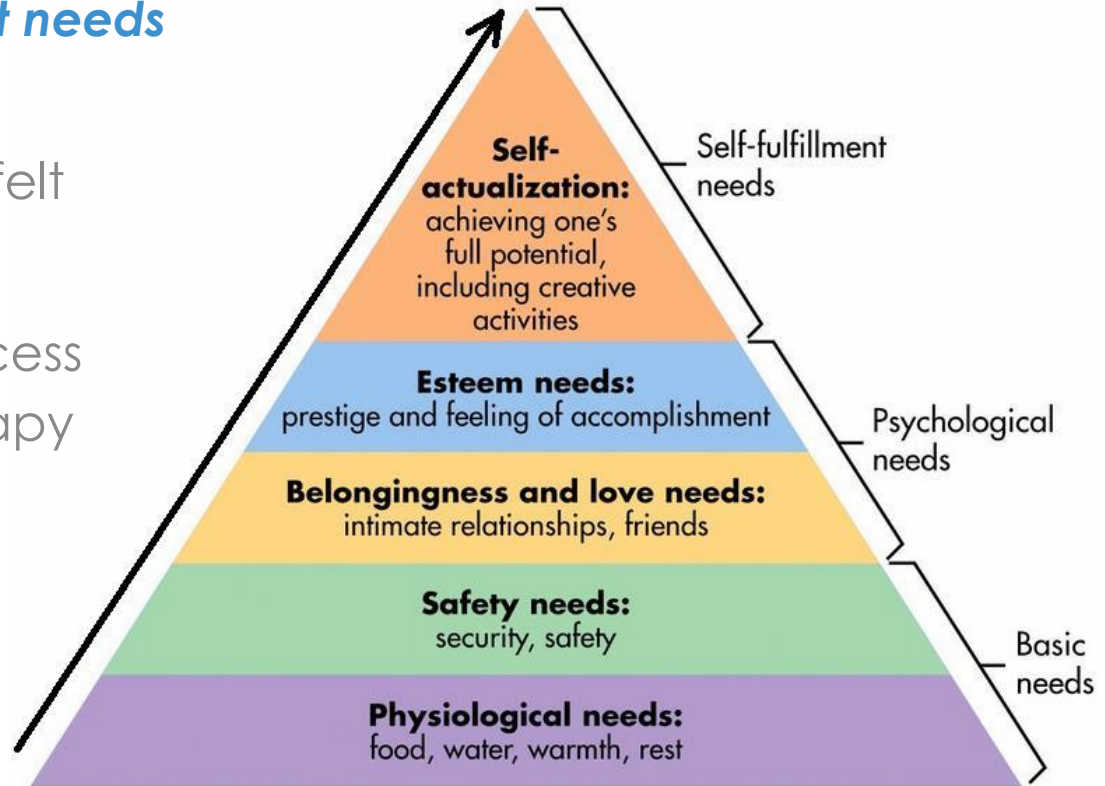# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Basic needs: physiological & safety needs

- Housing

- Food and water

- Warmth/shade

- Physical safety

Self-actualization: achieving one's full potential, including creative activities — Self-fulfillment needs

Esteem needs: prestige and feeling of accomplishment — Psychological needs

Belongingness and love needs: intimate relationships, friends

Safety needs: security, safety — Basic needs

Physiological needs: food, water, warmth, rest
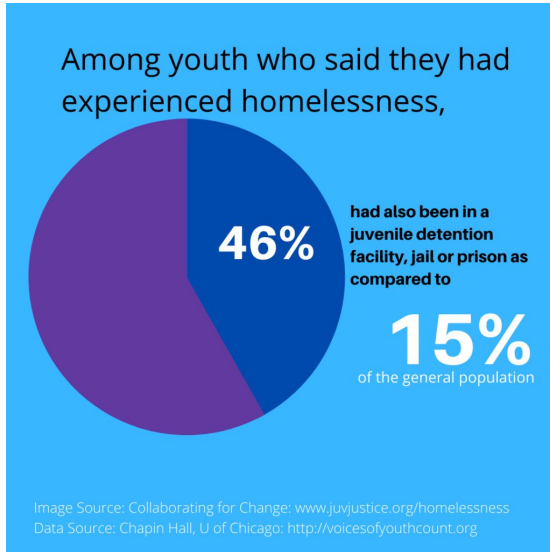
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Psychological & self-fulfillment needs

- Sense of community, felt safety

- Supportive & safe access to cost-effective therapy

- Self autonomy

Self-actualization: achieving one's full potential, including creative activities

Esteem needs: prestige and feeling of accomplishment

Belongingness and love needs: intimate relationships, friends

Safety needs: security, safety

Physiological needs: food, water, warmth, rest

Self-fulfillment needs

Psychological needs

Basic needs

Additional Factors that Create Vulnerabilities

Compounding factors

Among youth who said they had experienced homelessness,

46% had also been in a juvenile detention facility, jail or prison as compared to

15% of the general population

Image Source: Collaborating for Change: www.juvjustice.org/homelessness
Data Source: Chapin Hall, U of Chicago: http://voicesofyouthcount.org

- Criminalization of homelessness
  - Ex: Camping bans, survival crimes

- Evictions

- Not enough services to meet demand

- Location of services
  - Lack of transportation

- Limited access to healthcare
  - Ex: Gender care

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Survival Tactics and Behaviors

Getting by while experiencing homelessness

- Survival Tactics
  - Survival sex
  - Couch hopping
  - Avoidance
- Survival Behaviors
  - Self-medicating
  - Self-isolation
  - Running away
  - Closeting one's identity

Barriers to Exiting Homelessness & CSEY

Barriers to Exiting Homelessness

The path to stability is not linear

- Legal challenges
  - Ex: Access to an ID, name change, eviction, etc.

- Lack of wraparound services
  - Ex: Case management, crisis care and outreach, survivor services

- Lack of extended care services
  - Ex: Supportive housing, therapy, legal aid

- Limited access to health care

- Difficulty establishing adequate employment

- Limited options finding healthy support systems or safe spaces

Barriers to Exiting "The Life"

The path to stability is not linear

- Limited awareness of exploitation

- Inability to get basic needs met elsewhere

  - Ex: Housing, hygiene, food/water, healthcare, emotional needs, etc.

- Trauma bonds

  - Inability to escape exploiter physically or psychologically

- Fear or distrust of other adults or caregivers

- Lack of wraparound and extended care services

  - Ex: Housing, crisis care and outreach, workforce, addiction recovery

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Scenario Activity

Scenario

Let's dissect this challenge as a group

A 16 year old boy is kicked out of his grandmother's house after coming out to her as gay. He finds a couple friends to stay with in between being on the streets, but he is running out of options. He later finds an advertisement online for a modeling gig. After the first photo shoot, the photographer says he knows how the boy can make more money. He agrees to pose for explicit photos, and then is pressured into explicit videos, which soon leads to having sex with other men for money. After several "sessions" he is able to afford a motel room of his own. He has no idea that he is being exploited.

Scenario Activity

10 minutes

1. **Clarify the problem** - Identify the problem(s) that arise in this scenario.

2. **Identify options** - Brainstorm a number of different options that are available to address the problem at hand.

3. **Weigh outcomes** - Talk through some of the options presented and possible outcomes of going in those directions. Weigh pros and cons.

4. **Do it. Listen. Reassess.** - Decide on a direction and talk through implementation as a group. How do we see this playing out? What are some possible future barriers or complications that might arise?

   a. **During**: What might happen in the moment?

   b. **After**: What might happen immediately after the situation?

   c. **Follow-up**: What might happen 1-2 weeks later?

   d. **Before**: How can we prevent this situation from happening again?

Solutions and Best Practices For Providers

Partner With Youth

Youth engagement = higher self-efficacy & positive self-esteem

- Prioritize **shared decision-making**.
  - Practice open and honest communication.
  - Allow youth to have a say in their daily lives.
  - Help youth understand what is on the table.

- Provide opportunities for youth **leadership and skill-building**.

- Uplift **youth voices** and ensure services are **survivor-informed**.

- **Build trust** through interpersonal relationships.

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Practice What You Preach

Create a system of inclusivity

- Create **intake processes** that are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ and other marginalized identities. Display **visual indicators** of inclusivity and safety.

- **Screen** ALL youth ages 10+ for CSE using the Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool (CSE-IT).

- **Assess strengths and needs** of youth to develop individualized service plans.

- Regularly **train frontline staff** to best meet the needs of youth with complex trauma histories, such as experiences of marginalization, systems involvement, and CSEY.

- Support youth with **long-term service planning**.

Collaborate Across Systems

Strengths-based partnerships

- **Know where to find resources** for youth who require services your organization cannot provide.
  - Screen new potential resources to ensure youth's safety and security before they go.

- Develop **cross-systems relationships** in your community to better identify available resources and provide wraparound care.

- **Maintain relationships** through shared goals and objectives, formalized partnerships, and regular communications.

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TNOYS CSEY Resources

Tools to prevent and address CSEY among the youth you serve

- **TNOYS Upcoming Events**:
  tnoys.org/events/

- **CSEY Manual** for Youth Housing and
  Homelessness Services Providers (2023)

- **CSEY Resource Center**:
  tnoys.org/tnoys-csey-resource-center/

- **TNOYS Training & TA**:
  tnoys.org/training-technical-assistance/

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QUESTIONS?

Get Involved

Join our mailing list at tnoys.org/subscribe/ or with the QR code below!

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Citations & Resources (1/2)

- https://youth.gov/youth-topics/lgbtq-youth/homelessness

- https://truecolorsunited.org/our-issue/

- https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/youth-homeless

- https://www.hrc.org/resources/2018-lgbtq-youth-report

- https://ovc.ojp.gov/news/featured-resources/november-2021-featured-resources?utm_campaign=ojp_digests&utm_content=december&utm_medium=email#transgender-day-of-remembrance

- https://thesafezoneproject.com/activities/

- https://www.theotx.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Youth-Homelessness-Fact-Sheet.pdf

- https://www.acf.hhs.gov/trauma-toolkit/trauma-concept#:~:text=Historical%20trauma%20is%20intergenerational%20trauma,on%20psychological%20and%20physical%20health

- https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/Meaningful%20Work-Full%20Report_FINAL_3.pdf

- https://firstfocus.org/resources/report/from-theory-to-practice-creating-victim-centered-systems-of-care-to-address-the-needs-of-commercially-sexually-exploited-youth

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Citations & Resources (2/2)

- https://community.solutions/pride-month-primer-lgbtq-homelessness/

- https://www.juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/FINAL%20Principles%20.pdf

- https://coping.us/toolsforhandlingcontrol/temperingsurvivalbehaviors.html

- https://firstfocus.org/resources/report/from-theory-to-practice-creating-victim-centered-systems-of-care-to-address-the-needs-of-commercially-sexually-exploited-youth

- https://polarisproject.org/resources/promising-practices-an-overview-of-trauma-informed-therapeutic-support-for-survivors-of-human-trafficking/

- https://child.tcu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/TBRI-TIC-Facilitator-Guide.pdf

- https://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VoYC-LGBTQ-Brief-Chapin-Hall-2018.pdf

- https://calculators.io/national-transgender-discrimination-survey/

- https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15299732.2018.1451971

- https://www.americanprogress.org/article/discrimination-prevents-lgbtq-people-accessing-health-care/

- https://dictionary.apa.org/self-preservation-instinct

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THANK YOU!