

Family Acceptance Project®

**Critical Role of Family Support in Reducing Risk & Promoting Support for LGBTQ Children & Youth**

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**Overview**

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- **Social emergence** of LGBTQ children and youth and support needs for LGBTQ children, youth and families
- Brief overview of some of the Family Acceptance Project's (FAP) **research & resources** – first research on LGBTQ youth & families and first family intervention model for prevention, wellness and care for LGBTQ children and youth
- **Need for family education & guidance**, especially in schools where lack of training and support for families with LGBTQ students is a significant gap in addressing students' health & developmental needs

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**Social Emergence  
LGBTQ Children & Adolescents**

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- Wide access to information about sexual orientation & gender identity has enabled children and adolescents to learn about and **self-identify** as LGBTQ in childhood & adolescence
- **Significant drop in ages** of self-identifying as LGBTQ compared with earlier generations of LGBTQ adults
- Research on sexual orientation and gender identity is grounded in **decades of research**
- **But major gaps in education, services & support for families** of LGBTQ children & youth persist – and this increase risk for LGBTQ children & youth

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### Historical Experiences Related to Families

- Long standing perception that parents, families and caregivers are unable and unwilling to support their LGBTQ children
- Historically, all families were seen as rejecting and as an adversary
- Lack of accurate information about sexual orientation and gender identity
  - For parents, providers and religious leaders
  - For families and others from diverse cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds
- Lack of family-oriented services & support for LGBTQ children and youth

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### When FAP Started...

- When we started the Family Acceptance Project (FAP), families of LGBTQ youth had not been studied
- Their families were seen as incapable of learning to support their LGBTQ children
- LGBTQ youth were served as individuals alone or through peer support - not in the context of their families
- There were no services for parents and caregivers with LGBTQ children to provide guidance and access to support
- Providers did not believe – and many still don't – that families who are seen as rejecting can learn to support their LGBTQ children

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### Normative Child Development

We are finally seeing  
**normative development**  
of sexual orientation & gender identity –  
as an aspect of child development –  
but **without a comparable increase in**  
**family education, guidance & support**

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## LACK OF FAMILY SERVICES for LGBTQ Children & Youth



HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH CARE      SCHOOLS      LGBTQ SERVICES

FAMILY-BASED SERVICES      OUT-OF-HOME CARE      CONGREGATIONS

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## Decreasing Stigma – Persistent Risk

Risk for LGBTQ youth has not decreased over several decades

**Hostile social climate is increasing risk**

**Critical need for family support**

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## Family Acceptance Project® Goals & Aims

- Strengthen and help ethnically, racially and religiously diverse families to support their LGBTQ children
  - Align with underlying values, use strengths-based and harm reduction framework
- Prevent / decrease risk & promote well-being for LGBTQ children and youth
- Help families maintain LGBTQ children in their homes
- Reconnect families and promote permanency
- Provide training & implement family intervention model across systems to support LGBTQ young people in the *context of their families, cultures and faith communities*
- Empower families to advocate for their LGBTQ children

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## Family Research Process

- **In-depth Interview Study** – LGBTQ Youth & Families  
(ages 13-18) 100+ family accepting & rejecting behaviors
- **Young Adult Survey** – LGBTQ Young Adults  
(ages 21-25) How family behaviors contribute to risk & well-being
- **Family & Youth Briefing Sessions** – Diverse Families & LGBTQ Youth  
What helps families change their behavior  
What messaging & resources are needed for culturally diverse families
- **Family Support Model** – Family Intervention  
Reducing risk & promoting well-being for LGBTQ children & youth  
Strengthening & engaging families as allies & advocates

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## Examples of Family REJECTING Behaviors

From More than 50 Identified & Measured in FAP's Research

- Deny that youth are LGBTQ ("It's just a phase," "They're confused")
- Prevent youth from learning about their LGBTQ identity, from having an LGBTQ friend or from participating in LGBTQ youth groups, services
- Blame youth when others mistreat them because they are LGBTQ
- Use religion to condemn / deny / minimize; make them pray, attend religious services to change / prevent / minimize their LGBTQ identity
- Take youth to therapist / religious leader to try change LGBTQ identity
- Don't talk – or let youth talk – about youth's LGBTQ identity
- Ridicule, verbally demean, call LGBTQ youth slurs, speak about LGBTQ people in negative and derogatory ways; beat, hit, physically hurt youth because of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression

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## Examples of SUPPORTIVE Family Behaviors

From More than 50 Identified & Measured in FAP's Research

- Express affection and caring for LGBTQ youth
- Get accurate information about sexual orientation and gender identity – self-educate
- Talk with youth about their sexual orientation and gender identity, and listen respectfully
- Support gender expression
- Require that other family members treat LGBTQ youth with respect
- Advocate for youth when they are mistreated because of LGBTQ identity in families, schools, congregations & communities
- Believe LGBTQ youth can have a happy future
- Talk with religious leaders and congregations about supporting LGBTQ people and welcoming them to services and activities

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### Family Rejecting Behaviors Have Been Normalized

- Family rejecting behaviors / responses to LGBTQ identity and gender expression are **traumatic**
  - Minimizing, trying to prevent, discourage or change LGBTQ identities has been the **default position**
- Rejecting behaviors are **normalized**
  - Many LGBTQ youth expect rejecting experiences & don't know that these behaviors impact self-esteem, risk behaviors, relationships, capacity for self-care and sense of the future
  - These behaviors are culturally transmitted & enforced and are expressed in cultural and religious beliefs
  - Parents & caregivers learn these behaviors intergenerationally
  - Parents & caregivers that are struggling **see these behaviors as caring for their LGBTQ child**, helping them fit in and having a good life

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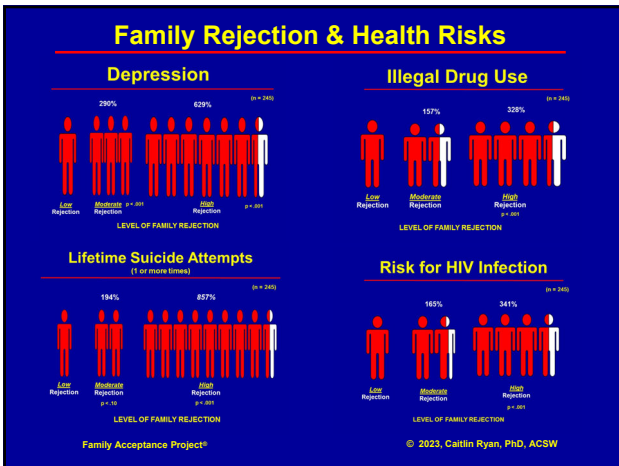
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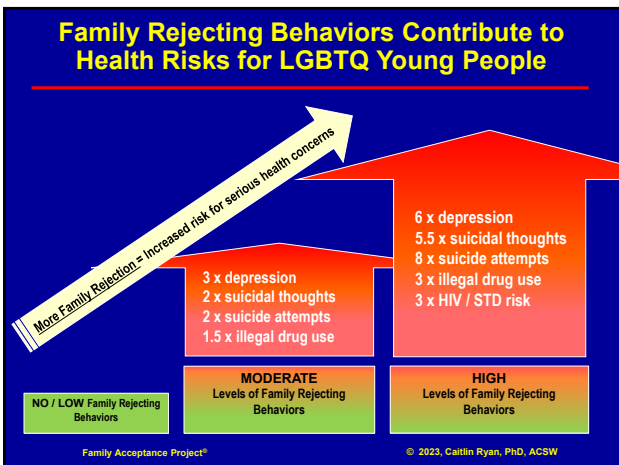
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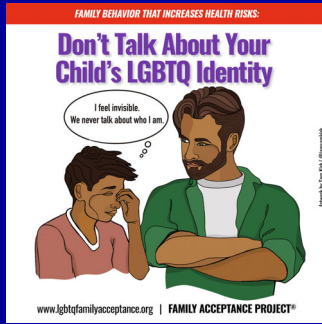
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### What Does Family Rejection Feel Like?



Silence & Secrecy

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### What Does Family Rejection Feel Like?



Ridicule / Call Your LGBTQ Child Harmful Names

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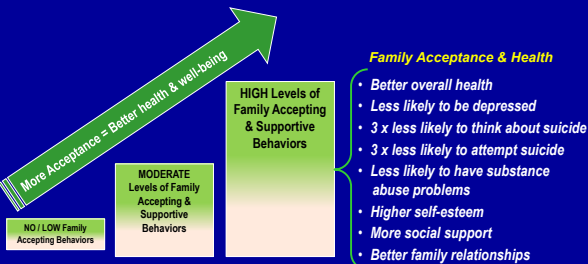
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### Family Accepting Behaviors Protect Against Risk & Promote Well-Being for LGBTQ Young People



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### What Does Family Acceptance Feel Like?

**Believe That Your Child Will Be A Happy LGBTQ Adult**

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### What Does Family Acceptance Feel Like?

**Use Your Child's Chosen Name & Pronouns That Match Their Gender Identity**

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### Family Acceptance Project Components

New Research-Based FAMILY Approach to Wellness, Prevention & Care for LGBTQ Children & Adolescents

- PEER SUPPORT
- FAMILY VIDEO STORIES
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES
- MEDIA
- ASSESSMENT TOOLS
- PEER REVIEWED RESEARCH
- POLICY & PRACTICE GUIDELINES
- FAMILY EDUCATION MATERIALS
- FAITH-BASED COACHING & MATERIALS
- FAMILY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT LGBT CHILDREN & YOUTH
- PROVIDER TRAINING

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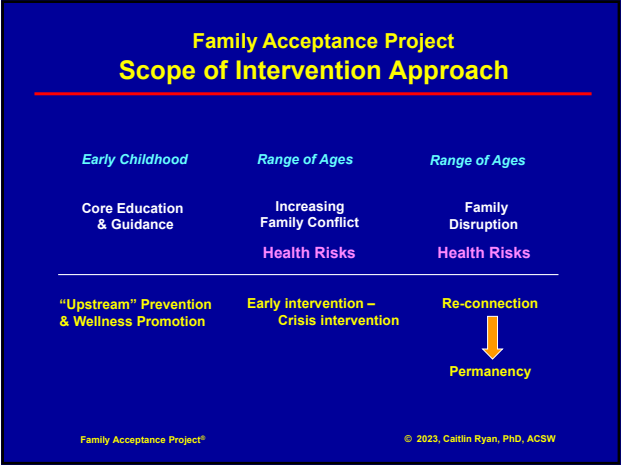
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### FAP Family Video Series

*Short research-informed documentary films that show the journey of diverse families from struggle to support of their LGBTQ children*



**ALWAYS MY SON**  
A family's journey to support their gay son.

**"Moving and Inspiring"**  
The Advocate

**AIMS**

- Give youth & families hope
- Show family accepting & rejecting behaviors
- Show the journey of diverse families from struggle to support of their LGBTQ children
- Humanize LGBTQ young people & their families

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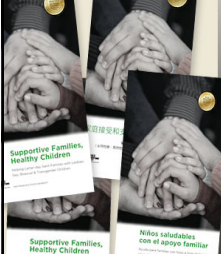
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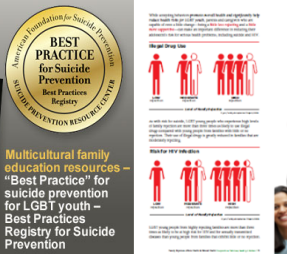
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### FAP Family Education Booklets




**Supportive Families, Healthy Children**

**Supportive Families, Healthy Children**  
Niños Saludables con el apoyo familiar



**BEST PRACTICE for Suicide Prevention**  
Best Practices Registry

Multicultural family education resources – "Best Practice" for suicide prevention for LGBT youth – Best Practices Registry for Suicide Prevention



**"Hay que empezar con la familia."**

Multilingual family education booklets: available in print and online  
 Lower literacy and versions for families from specific faith traditions in development  
<http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/publications>

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## FAP Healthy Futures Posters

English & Spanish  
8 Asian Languages  
Indigenous Version

4 sizes

- Acceptance Version
- Rejection Version
- Conservative Acceptance Version
- Poster Guidance

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## New FAP Publications

How should school professionals engage and provide guidance and access to accurate information and support for parents and caregivers of LGBTQ students?

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## Rejecting Families Can Learn to Support & Affirm Their LGBTQ Children

- Rejecting parents & caregivers can learn to affirm their LGBTQ children when guidance is presented in ways that are culturally relevant for them
- 76% of families have decreased rejecting behaviors and 74% have increased accepting behaviors towards their LGBTQ children as a result of seeing FAP's posters
- Many other parents and caregivers have learned to change rejecting behaviors and to affirm their LGBTQ children as a result of receiving family support services

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### FAP Online Resources

- **FAP Online Resource for LGBTQ Youth & Families** – shares resources for LGBTQ youth and families to access services and support to increase well-being, help decrease mental health risks, provides state-by-state listings, affirming faith-based and culture-based resources - <https://lgbtqfamilyacceptance.org/>
- **FAP Healthy Futures Posters** – guidance on family rejecting behaviors that increase risk and family supportive behaviors that protect against risk and increase well-being for LGBTQ children & youth (11 versions) <https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/poster>
- **FAP Family Education Booklets** – “Best Practice” resource for suicide prevention for LGBTQ youth (English, Spanish & Chinese; developing faith-based versions) - <https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/publications>
- **Family Acceptance Project website** – research, information for family guidance & support, program development & training - <https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>

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### Online Resource for LGBTQ Youth & Families Direct Access to Support Services

<https://lgbtqfamilyacceptance.org/>

Family Acceptance Project®  
**LGBTQ YOUTH & FAMILY RESOURCES**  
To Decrease Mental Health Risks & Promote Well-Being

**FIND LGBTQ SERVICES & SUPPORT**  
Searchable map to access resources to decrease support for LGBTQ youth & families

- Crisis Support
- Culture-Based Resources
- Faith-Based Resources
- Evidence-Based Resources
- National Resources

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### Family Acceptance Project®

FAP's family support model helps families learn to support LGBTQ children & youth in and outside of the family

Families learn to nurture LGBTQ children and transform their culture from within

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Parents, caregivers and family members learn to provide affirmation & support within the family and to advocate for LGBTQ children & youth in the child's social world

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## Diverse Families Can Learn to Support Their LGBTQ Children



Parents Talk About FAP's Family Support Framework



<http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>

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## Family Acceptance Project



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