



## Minority Stress and Coping for LGBTQ+ Adolescent Health

LGBTQ+ adolescents are at heightened risk for many behavioral health outcomes, including misuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD). Decades of research suggests that these experiences are tied to discrimination, known as “minority stress”<sup>1</sup>. Recent research has identified a number of key life experiences that drive ATOD use among LGBTQ+ youth. The below table represents a variety of common stressors and conversation starters which can open the door to an evidence-based approach to intervention. For more tools and educational resources on best practices for serving LGBTQ+ people, visit [lgbtquequity.org](http://lgbtquequity.org).

Minority Stressors <sup>2</sup>	Conversation Starters <sup>3</sup>
Social marginalization	What do you know about LGBTQ+ history? Where do you find community when you need support?
Internalized homo/trans-negativity	What are some things you like about being LGBTQ+?
Homo/trans-negative climate	Sometimes being visibly out can be dangerous. How do you navigate these environments? How does adapting to your climate impact how you feel about your identity?
Religion/Spirituality	What does it look like to be both religious/spiritual and LGBTQ+ at the same time?
Homo/trans-negative communication	What messages are communicated to you about being LGBTQ+ from your community, interpersonal relationships, and institutional systems? How have you coped with negative communication surrounding your identity?
Family rejection	While coming out, it is not uncommon to lose some relationships whether biological or chosen. Some of us may experience grief and go through a mourning process. Who do you go to when you have something stressful that you’re dealing with? Why?

Identity management	What is an identity? How do your multiple identities interact with one another and help mold you into the person you are today?
Negative disclosure experiences	How do you appreciate being supported related to coming out? What are ways that you can personally help protect yourself from harm?
Negative expectancies	Think about one goal for your own health that you would like to work, and that you feel like you could make progress in the next few weeks or months. What are some measurable steps you can take to move toward that goal?
Intersectionality	What does it mean to be an ally to another group?

Strategies are pulled from *Proud & Empowered*, an evidence-informed support intervention for LGBTQ+ youth. More information on the program, and the research that supports it, can be found at [www.proudandempowered.com](http://www.proudandempowered.com).

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Goldbach, Schrage et al., 2014

<sup>3</sup> Goldbach et al., 2021

*Funding for the Center of Excellence on LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity was made possible by Grant No. 1 H79 FG000583-01 from SAMHSA of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, SAMHSA/HHS, or the U.S. Government.*

