LGBTQIA+ YOUTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA SUMMARY

A Snapshot into Waterbury’s LGBTQIA+ Community

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FUNDING SUPPORT FOR THE LGBTQIA+
YOUTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Queer Unity Empowerment Support Team (QUEST), established in 2015, is a community-based collaborative spaces for members of the LGBTQ community in the Greater Waterbury area that foster meaningful relationships, learning and joy.

In 2018, QUEST obtained Connecticut Community Foundation funding to conduct a needs assessment (n = 40) and a series of focus groups (n = 15) for the local LGBTQ community. The purpose of this inquiry was twofold:

1. to gather data about the needs and experiences of the local LGBT community in the Greater Waterbury area to

2. inform programming, services and resources that can best support this community.

This report presents the findings of the needs assessment and focus groups. In addition to basic demographic data, the report highlights seven identified themes. Each theme speaks to the experiences of survey and focus group participants identifying as LGBTQ. The eight themes presented in this report include:

1. Intersection between race & queerness
2. School culture: homophobia & bullying
3. Queer invisibility & erasure
4. Health & Wellness
5. Social life
6. Home environment
7. Public safety
8. Teen Homelessness

Though the target age for this assessment was 14 - 24, it should be noted that the findings of this report are over-represented by respondents within the 14 - 19 age bracket (mostly high school students). Thus, the action items and suggestions articulated in the report will be largely in response to these findings, though others should be considered specifically for post-secondary young adults.

Conductors of the needs assessment do not presume to reflect the entire experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community; rather this report will present only those findings that were discovered by the Needs Assessment. For example, previous research has revealed that LGBTQIA+ youth are disproportionately affected by homelessness and/or housing instability compared to hetero and cis youth. Despite anecdotal evidence from focus groups and interpretative data from the assessment, results from this assessment did not speak fully to this reality – a possible consequence of hosting the assessment online which is not necessarily accessible to youth experiencing homelessness.
INTRODUCTION

The Queer Unity Empowerment Support Team (QUEST) has assumed four major roles:

- serve as a community educator to the public and its institutions on matters that are important to the LGBTQ community,
- facilitate joyful and healing spaces via public events and community-led projects,
- act as a liaison between community members and positive and affirming service providers in the youth development, medical and mental health fields, and
- advocate for the socio-political needs of LGBTQ folks identified by the LGBTQ community.

It quickly became clear that in order to advocate for our local community, we could not solely rely on national or even state data; though, existing research provided a foundation from where we could begin our inquiry. Consequently, much of the findings in this assessment complimented the national and state context.

It is important that the results from this assessment not be used to further pathologize the LGBTQIA+ population. QUEST assumes a systems-approach to grassroots work, aiming to identify and dismantle the systems that have historically and currently stigmatize and marginalize this community.

We recognize that individual choice is directly impacted by the resources and amount of agency communities are granted to live healthy and successful lives. It is our objective with this assessment to begin a dialogue, and ultimately a series of actions, that will address, if not fundamentally shift, the ways in which systems, and their agents, serve the LGBTQIA+ community.

To best understand this report, please refer to Appendix A for definitions of unfamiliar terms.

THE RESEARCH SHOWS

**National Context**

Sexual minority teens are at increased risk of:

- Depression
- Suicide
- Substance use
- Teen pregnancy
- Homelessness
- School dropout
- Decreased academic achievement

**State Context**

During the 2014/15 school year, 2398 high school students from 83 CT schools were surveyed. The data shows significant disparities, where in sexual minority students were more likely to:

- Carry a weapon to school
- Use alcohol or drugs
- Exhibit chronic absenteeism/truancy
- Experience depression
- Experience suicidal ideation
- Be forced to have sexual intercourse

*See Appendix D for Citations*
ONLINE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The largest data collection came from a 48-question online survey. The assessment targeted youth between ages 14 to 24 who identified as LGBTQIA+. This tool included both open and closed-ended questions (multiple choice and Likert scale). Survey completion was voluntary and anonymous. Preliminary data from the online survey was used to develop questions for the focus groups. In addition to basic demographic information, the survey concentrated on five specific areas: education, healthcare, home environment, public safety and community interests. The QUEST Community Educator was responsible for survey development, with support from the Executive Committee who reviewed preliminary drafts for suggestions, edits and clarifications. Both parties shared news of the assessment with identified youth providers, school personnel and administration and others in their professional and personal networks. Information was also available on all social media outlets including the QUEST official website, Facebook and Instagram. Community events were another strategy to promote the assessment to residents.

Survey was conducted for a 20-week period beginning June 15, 2018 and ending October 31st, 2018. Target areas included: Beacon Falls, Bethlehem, Cheshire, Middlebury, Naugatuck, Prospect, Southbury, Waterbury & Watertown.
FOCUS GROUPS

The online survey was complimented by a two-hour focus group with two Waterbury youth programs:

1. The LGBTQ Support/Social Group
   (Waterbury Youth Services, WYS)
2. Helping Educate Regarding Orientation (HERO)
   (Waterbury Arts Magnet School, WAMS)

In rotating groups, participants were asked to answer and discuss the three following questions:

1. What does it mean to for a space to be LGBTQ friendly, safe & inclusive?
2. How do you express joy in your identity?
3. Name and describe a time you felt unwelcome.

After each group discussed the three questions separately, participants were asked to report back the outcomes of each question as one large group. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected during focus groups. The facilitator documented the frequency of repeated answers (i.e., how many times participants mentioned key words like bullying). The facilitator also documented quotes that could support and/or contradict data from the online assessment and drop box surveys.

DROP BOX SURVEY

Drop box surveys were available only at community social events and offered a quicker method of collecting assessment data. The data cards contained a total of 5 demographic questions, 7 closed-ended questions (multiple choice) and 1 open-ended question. Like surveys, respondent could remain anonymous, though those interested in the results of the assessment chose to provide their contact information for follow-up.

LIMITATIONS

Although over 50 youth providers and other agencies in Greater Waterbury were contacted via email, phone and in-person visits to assist in distribution of the needs assessment information, the number of youth who actually took the survey was somewhat disappointing. There was little feedback from organizations, and no response from Waterbury Public School administration despite support from Superintendent Ruffin, with regard to whether this information was actually disseminated. There was some evidence of sharing of the information on social media by a few agencies, but it is unknown how many youth actually would see such posts.

It appeared that the best predictor of youth taking the survey was actual face-to-face contact with LGBTQ youth, encouraging them to take the survey and/or having them take the survey on the spot. If the decision is made to perform a follow-up assessment, the following considerations and adjustments will be made to promote a larger participation rate:

- shorten length of survey
- live survey conduction
- identify community and school district partners prior to creation and distribution of survey
- Spanish translation
DEMOGRAPHICS

ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS
*Percentages are reflective of 40 survey participants

GENDER
- Female: 42%
- Gender Fluid: 5%
- Gender Queer: 10%
- Male: 37%
- Non-Binary: 2%
- Trans Female: 2%
- Trans Male: 2%
*Zero participants identified as Gender Non-Confirming or specified any other gender identity.

SEXUALITY
- Asexual: 0%
- Bisexual: 10%
- Gay: 40%
- Hetero (Straight): 17.5%
- Lesbian: 2.5%
- Pansexual: 2.5%
- Other: 2.5%
*Zero participants identified as Asexual or specified any other sexual identity.

RACE
- Black/AA: 20%
- Multiracial: 13%
- White: 60%
- Other: 7%
*50% of participants identified as Hispanic/Latinx
*Zero participants identified as Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

21% OF PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED AS NON-CIS GENDER

40% OF PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED AS NON-WHITE
FOCUS GROUP

Of the 15 participants (from 2 focus groups), 67% identified as non-cis gender, the largest demographic in this category being those who identify as non-binary.

The largest identified sexuality was bisexual at 47%, followed by those who identified as gay (26%) and pansexual (20%).

The racial make up of participants was split almost in thirds with the majority identifying as multiracial (40%), followed by white (33%) and black/African-American (27%). 27% of all participants identified as Latinx, regardless of race.

DROP BOX SURVEY

Of the 8 survey respondents, 25% identified as trans-male. The largest representation included those who identified as cis-male at 50%.

The largest identified sexuality was gay at 50%, followed by those who identified as pansexual (25%) and bisexual (12%).

87% of respondents identified as non-white, indicating "other" as the most identified racial category (50%). 88% of all participants identified as Latinx, regardless of race.

For more details on demographic data, see Appendices B & C.
KEY IDENTIFIED THEMES

RACE & QUEERNESS

Intersectionality, a term coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980’s, describes the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalized identities. It looks at the relationships between multiple marginalized identities and allows us to analyze social problems more fully, shape more effective interventions, and promote more inclusive advocacy among communities. Simply, intersectionality understands that we all carry multiple identities at once (race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, etc) and therefore have unique relationships with systems of power based on those intersections. While this assessment concentrates on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ youth, focusing on one identity can only limit how we understand the whole person.

Reflective of Waterbury’s large brown and black population - with 43.2% students and 41.2% of the general population identifying as non-white, the intersection of race and queerness became a consistent theme in focus group discussions:

“A lot of times, queer places are really white. So I know that’s hard for my friends who aren’t white. Like, where do they go?”

~16, white trans male, Focus Group

- Further research demonstrates the ways racism, sexism, cissexism and heterosexism* present in the lives of queer identifying youth of color:
  - LGBTQ youth of color experience lower rates of academic achievement than their white and non queer counterparts
  - LGBTQ youth of color experience higher rates of poverty than their white and non-queer counterparts
  - LGBTQ youth of color experience higher rates of homelessness than their white and non queer counterparts
  - 14% of boys and 40% of girls involved in the juvenile justice system are LGB; and 85% of those LGB youth are youth of color

“I get hit both ways. I hear homophobic jokes all the time in the halls. And then I gotta deal with racist comments, too? Makes things pretty uncomfortable.”

~15, black trans male, Focus Group

*See Appendix A for Terms & Definitions.
KEY IDENTIFIED THEMES

SCHOOL CULTURE: HOMOPHOBIA & BULLYING

While nearly 75% of participants reported feeling physically safe in school, 34% reported experiencing emotional bullying from both peers and school personnel. Emotional bullying included taunting, being called derogatory names, being intentionally and unintentionally mis-gendered and hearing homophobic jokes in the hallways and classroom. Nearly all participants (90%) reported not feeling supported by school staff when instances of school-based bullying occurred. 43% of Drop Box survey respondents reported not feeling safe in school.

QUEER INVISIBILITY & ERASURE

In one focus group, the word “invisible” was mentioned more than 10 times. Students explained “feeling unheard and unseen” by parents and teachers. Drawing again from an intersectional lens, the impact of invisibility and erasure is compounded for queer youth of color who see fewer positive representation of brownness and blackness, let alone representations that are culturally and historically accurate. Many expressed that their only “time to exist” was when they attended their school’s Gender & Sexuality Alliance (GSA) which, due to some parental push back, they’ve renamed Helping Educate Regarding Orientation (HERO). Focus group participants agreed that HERO provided a safe space where LGBTQIA+ youth, of all backgrounds, could find fun, guidance and community. This conversation transitioned into one about the importance of mentors and how youth seldom have queer role models to help them navigate adolescence as a young queer person.

“Adults act as if we don’t exist. So when people hurt us, they don’t defend us – because they can’t see us. They don’t want to.”

~17, trans female Focus Group

“All year they tell us not to bully others, but never have they said what they’ll do to protect us.”

~15, non binary Focus Group

ONLY 5% OF STUDENTS REPORTED SEEING THEIR "GENDER AND/ OR SEXUALITY REFLECTED IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM".

LGBTQIA+ Needs Assessment Data Summary
While over half agree that it is important that their doctor know their sexual or gender identity, only 20% reported having been asked by their primary physician about either.

Mental Health
40% of online survey respondents reported being treated for a mental health condition, mirroring results from Drop Box surveys where 44% of respondents reported "living with a mental illness". An additional 28% were "not sure if they are living with a mental illness". 60% of online survey participants stated they are "not content with their life" or "have healthy coping strategies to deal with normal life stressors".

The top 5 stressors impacting participants’ mental health were:

**SOCIAL LIFE**

**FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS**

**SCHOOL**

**KEY IDENTIFIED THEMES (cont'd)**

**HEALTH & WELLNESS**

Physical Health
All participants who said they are sexually active also reported the use of protection methods to prevent pregnancy or STI contraction; yet only 2/5 reported obtaining routine checkups to screen for STI contraction.

More than half of survey respondents reported having no access to LGBTQ related health information, supporting the overwhelming call for access to inclusive sex education by both survey respondents (94%) and focus group participants.

**HAVE YOU REQUIRED TREATMENT FOR A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION?**

11% of online respondents preferred not to answer if they have required treatment for a mental health condition.

**CDC YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY (2015)**

LGB high school students were more than 4x as likely to attempt suicide

57.5% of LGB high school students reported “feel sad or hopeless” compared to 22.5% of hetero students.
KEY IDENTIFIED THEMES (CONT’D)

SOCIAL LIFE
A common thread throughout surveys and focus groups was the desire for a better social life. Survey respondents reported high interests in both mixed and non-mixed social spaces.

When asked, "What would best improve your livelihood as a young LGBT-identifying person?", respondents answered:

- "Honestly? A relationship."
- "Having more LGBTQ friends like me."
- "More queer activities."
- "More LGBTQ community events."
- "Seeing more of us together in public."
- "A community."

LGBTQIA+ adults who attended a Queer Community Celebration in September echoed these same sentiments. It was made clear that those struggling to find community in adulthood struggled similarly during adolescence.

HOME ENVIRONMENT
72% of survey respondents reported that their immediate family (parents, siblings) knows their sexual identity. A little over half (55%) of non-cis respondents reported that their immediate family does not know their gender identity. 91% report feeling physically safe at home, though we see a 27% drop when respondents are asked if they feel emotionally safe at home (64%). About a third (29%) of online survey respondents reported having an "inconsistent support system".

WHO MAKES UP YOUR CURRENT SUPPORT GROUP?

Friends, family and teachers were the top three sources of support for online survey respondents.

“I’ve told my family I’m trans. They don’t really get it. But they also don’t try to.”

16, trans male
Focus Group
1/5 OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS REPORTED HAVING EXPERIENCED SEXUAL HARASSMENT WHILE IN PUBLIC

KEY IDENTIFIED THEMES (CONT’D)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Violence and safety for the LGBTQIA+ community and within lived community spaces was a chief concern for over half of respondents. About 69% of survey takers stated they have feared for their safety around non-trans or heterosexual people. Participants also reported:

- 1/5 have been verbally harassed and called derogatory names in public
- 9% reported having been forced to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, food, a place to stay, clothing or protection; 9% were unsure if they had forced sexual interactions

TEEN HOMELESSNESS

"Years of research and countless studies have repeatedly shown that members of the LGBT community are more likely to become homeless, and once homeless, more likely to endure discrimination and harassment that extends their homelessness. LGBT youth experiencing homelessness are at particular risk. Between 20 and 40 percent of all homeless youth identify as members of the LGBT community, and for them, homelessness or the threat of homelessness frequently forces youth into survival behaviors that jeopardize their well-being and safety."

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, 2018

During the 2018 Connecticut Youth Count, of those youth who answered questions regarding their gender identity/sexual orientation, and who indicated they were homeless or unstably/unsafely housed, approximately 25% identified as LGBTQIA+ in this area of the state (Greater Waterbury/Litchfield County).

The QUEST LGBTQIA+ Youth Needs Assessment survey asked questions to determine the housing status of respondents. While there were no youth who specifically indicated they were currently homeless in their answers to the survey questions, there were responses which would lead one to believe that some are experiencing housing instability/housing safety issues, as indicated by the following:

- **28%** of respondents did not always feel safe where they are currently living; FOUR individuals have lived in their current situation less than one year; one less than a week; two preferred not to indicate if they had to move in the last 60 days
- **50%** were not certain they would have another place to live if they were to lose access to their current housing
- **15%** said they needed support to find a place to live
- **THREE** reported having felt pressured or forced to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, food, a place to stay, clothing or protection; an additional three were not sure about this.
RECOMMENDATIONS

LGBTQIA+ CULTURAL COMPETENCY/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Focus group participants recommended that students, school personnel and all youth providers (including medical providers) be required to complete LGBTQIA+ cultural competency trainings to improve youth spaces. Students recommended further that professional development trainings for teachers be created and facilitated, at least in part, by LGBTQIA+ students.

According to GLSEN’s 2011 National School Climate Report, “supportive, knowledgeable staff & comprehensive anti-bullying policies and practices were two of the top four indicators for a positive school climate, significantly reducing suicidal ideation among sexual minority youth.” The other two indicators were the existence of a GSA & the implementation of an LGBTQIA-inclusive curriculum.

LGBTQIA+ INCLUSIVE CURRICULA
While only 5% of students reported seeing queerness reflected in their school curriculum, nearly 2/3 of students reported wanting more LGBTQIA+/queer representation in school learning materials. 94% of survey respondents identified an interest in LGBTQIA+-centric education. Focus group participants echoed this sentiment, speaking specifically to the importance of “normalizing [our] existence”:

“Normalize the conversation. Like, just talk about [queerness]. Please.”
~ 15, Non-binary, Bisexual

The research is indisputable at this point: representation matters. Youth need a curriculum that reflects who they were, who they are & who they can be.

QUEER INCLUSIVE SEX ED
LGBTQIA+ youth need and deserve to learn in settings that are inclusive of their experiences and that give them the education necessary to stay safe and healthy. In addition to reducing teen pregnancy rates and sexually transmitted infection rates, inclusive sex ed incorporates positive and healthy examples of queer romantic relationships.

“I just don’t get how I’m supposed to make any good decisions if I don’t have any information.”
~ 17, GNC, Pansexual

Thinking back to the 9% of survey respondents who were “unsure” if they had been forced into unwanted sexual interactions gives insight into what areas the current sex ed curriculum is failing to teach - healthy relationships, body agency and consent.
KEY IDENTIFIED NEEDS (cont’d)
LGBTQIA+ CENTERED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Among Drop Box survey respondents, 57% reported “having access to counseling and mental health services” would immediately improve their well-being. These sentiments are supported by national, state and now local research.

When we take into consideration youth discussion around queer erasure, lack of queer representation, mentorship and emotional safety, these phenomena all directly impact the mental health of young folks.1 The consequences of ignoring the specific needs of LGBTQIA+ youth propel into adulthood.

“A lot of us are dealing with trauma. A lot us have been dealing with it since we were young because we haven’t gotten the help we need.”

~ Community Celebration
20 September 2018

Currently, there is only one LGBTQ-specific mental health provider in Naugatuck (Stoke’s Counseling). And while treatment is not an alternative to the systems change necessary to prevent the initial factors that compromise mental health, there is ample opportunity for the Greater Waterbury area to expand its services to address the specific experiences of queer youth and provide the supports they need.

IN WHICH AREAS DO YOU REQUIRE SUPPORT?

Online survey respondents identified emotional support and advice as the two highest ranking needs for support.

QUEER JOY

PRIDE Festivals, queer prom, school drag shows, community centers - all are calls for more access to joy, joy through queer innovation, queer culture, and among queer community.

IDENTITY-AFFIRMING PROGRAMS & MENTORSHIP

When asked, "What does it mean for a space to be LGBTQ friendly, safe & inclusive?", focus groups participants responded with:

- "no judgement, total acceptance"
- "joyful"
- "respectful of people’s identities and stories"
- "somewhere where I matter"
- "when I can see myself in others, including the teacher"
- "where everyone is accountable to each other"

The findings of this needs assessment make it very clear that youth have specific demands regarding their education, their environment and the adults that guide them. They have given the parameters and are looking for the implementation. But what do we implement?

Identity Affirming Programs (IAP) prioritizes youth voices and youth experiences. The objective is to create an environment in which students who carry historically marginalized identities can find a curriculum and staff that speak to their unique histories and cultures. IAP’s are youth-led and culture-driven. This means participants design the curriculum they want to learn, create and nurture the environment they want to exist in, and find support and guidance from adults who reflect who they are.

"I just want to know some of us make it."

~ 15, trans girl, lesbian
Focus Group

Young folks need validation and representation. They need reflections of themselves and a possible future - and mentorship does exactly that.
A CALL TO ACTION
In September and November, QUEST hosted two community conversations during which LGBTQ attendees were asked two questions:

1. What would you like to see happen for the local LGBTQ population in Greater Waterbury?
2. How can QUEST help you advocate and address the issues affecting the LGBTQ community?

The following are responses from both these events.

NOTE: Discussion group participants reviewed data from the survey prior to making recommendations.

**COMMUNITY CELEBRATION**
**20 September 2018**

What would you like to see?
- Increase frequency of joyful, LGBTQ-centered events
- Intra-community conversations that center healing and learning
- LGBTQ Community Center
- PRIDE Festival
- Inclusive & comprehensive Sex Ed for youth AND adults
- Gay bars

**REVEAL EVENT: DISCUSSION GROUPS**
**29 November 2018**

What would you like to see?
- Elevate trans voices
- Need for adult LGBTQ mentors for queer teens; help youth with healthy emotional development, with envisioning a future
- Increase queer, trans and black representation in academic institutions; LGBTQ representation in public spaces
- Trainings for advocates, mentors, parents and teachers
- Improve relationships between teachers and students
- Support for parents of LGBTQ youth
- Sex Ed that includes LGBTQ health
- Increase LGBTQ health & wellness services; identify funding
- Create catalog that identifies queer-friendly/inclusive spaces; increase accessibility of LGBTQ resources to youth

How can QUEST support your advocacy?
- Create more safe spaces (Silas Bronson Library)
- Interested youth to create LGBTQ Youth Council
- Young people to use social media as a platform to educate and elevate peers
- Board of Education to create inclusive policies and improve anti-bullying policies
After reviewing the concerns and interests from the Needs Assessment, focus groups and community conversations, the Executive Committee has decided on the following action items to be considered for our 2019 Action Plan. QUEST will prioritize identified action items based on urgency, resources and capacity. The 2019 Action Plan will be released on January 31, 2019.

### Community Building
- 1. Continue to host LGBTQ-centered social events
- 2. Continue to host LGBTQ-centered community conversations

### Community Education
- 1. Facilitate public workshops and trainings for the LGBTQ community
- 2. Multi-sector LGBTQ Trainings for service providers (schools, youth serving organizations, health organizations, local police department, etc.)

### Support
- 1. Create a support group for parents (with culturally responsive ways of supporting diverse families as their children come out; one per demographic)
- 2. QUEST to support/collaborate with Waterbury schools’ Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSA’s)

### Local Advocacy
- 1. Push for LGBTQ inclusive sexual education in Waterbury Public Schools
- 2. Push for LGBTQ History to be taught in mainstream curriculum in Waterbury Public Schools
- 3. Mandate that all high schools (WPS & other towns) have Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSA’s) or the equivalent
- 4. LGBTQ cultural competency trainings for school personnel, students and youth providers (led/created in part by LGBTQ youth)
- 5. Review & revise the local policies for school staff and law enforcement in order to require competency trainings; implement accountability measures that can enforce these policies
- 6. Work with schools on anti-bullying policies and restorative justice practices
- 7. Work with schools to implement LGBTQ friendly bathrooms
- 8. Developing one or more health care locations to provide LGBTQ-specific health care
- 9. Identifying an LGBTQ focused mental health resource in Waterbury
# APPENDIX A

## TERMS & DEFINITIONS

*Source: LGBTQIA Resource Center*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asexual</td>
<td>A sexual orientation generally characterized by not feeling sexual attraction or a desire for partnered sexuality. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity. Some asexual people do have sex. There are many diverse ways of being asexual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>A person whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same and other genders, or towards people regardless of their gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cis gender</td>
<td>A gender identity, or performance in a gender role, that society deems to match the person’s assigned sex at birth. The prefix cis- means “on this side of” or “not across.” A term used to call attention to the privilege of people who are not transgender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>A sexual and romantic attraction toward people of the same gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>A social construct used to classify a person as a man, woman, or some other identity. Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Expression</td>
<td>How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress and/or behaviors. Society, and people that make up society characterize these expressions as &quot;masculine,&quot; &quot;feminine,&quot; or &quot;androgynous.&quot; Individuals may embody their gender in a multitude of ways and have terms beyond these to name their gender expression(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Fluid</td>
<td>A person whose gender identification and presentation shifts, whether within or outside of societal, gender-based expectations. Being fluid in motion between two or more genders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>A sense of one’s self as trans*, genderqueer, woman, man, or some other identity, which may or may not correspond with the sex and gender one is assigned at birth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cissexism</td>
<td>Is the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders &amp; that one’s gender or most aspects of it, are inevitably tied to assigned sex. In a genderist/cissexist construct, cisgender people are the dominant/agent group and trans*/ gender non-conforming people are the oppressed/target group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender non-conforming (GNC)</td>
<td>People who do not subscribe to gender expressions or roles expected of them by society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX A

**TERMS & DEFINITIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heteronormativity</td>
<td>A set of lifestyle norms, practices, and institutions that promote binary alignment of biological sex, gender identity, and gender roles; assume heterosexuality as a fundamental and natural norm; and privilege monogamous, committed relationships and reproductive sex above all other sexual practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexism</td>
<td>The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people while it gives advantages to heterosexual people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersectionality</td>
<td>A term coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s to describe the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalized identities. Intersectionality looks at the relationships between multiple marginalized identities and allows us to analyze social problems more fully, shape more effective interventions, and promote more inclusive advocacy amongst communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>A woman whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. An umbrella term that is often used to refer to the community as a whole. Our center uses LGBTQIA to intentionally include and raise awareness of Queer, Intersex and Asexual as well as myriad other communities under our umbrella.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microaggressions</td>
<td>Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults about one’s marginalized identity/identities. (D.W. Sue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misgendering</td>
<td>Attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect/does not align with their gender identity. Can occur when using pronouns, gendered language (i.e. “Hello ladies!&quot;Hey guys”), or assigning genders to people without knowing how they identify (i.e. “Well, since we’re all women in this room, we understand...”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pansexual</td>
<td>Terms used to describe people who have romantic, sexual or affectional desire for people of all genders and sexes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>Linguistic tools used to refer to someone in the third person. Examples are they/them/their, ze/hir/hirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his. In English and some other languages, pronouns have been tied to gender and are a common site of misgendering (attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>One definition of queer is abnormal or strange. Historically, queer has been used as an epithet/slur against people whose gender, gender expression and/or sexuality do not conform to dominant expectations. Some people have reclaimed the word queer and self identify as such. For some, this reclamation is a celebration of not fitting into norms/being “abnormal.” Manifestations of oppression within gay and lesbian movements such as racism, sizeism, ableism, cissexism, transmisogyny as well as assimilation politics, resulted in many people being marginalized, thus, for some, queer is a radical and anti-assimilationist stance that captures multiple aspects of identities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>The systematic subordination of marginalized racial groups (Indigenous/Native American, Black, Chicxu, Asian, Pacific Islander, and non-white Latinx people, non-white Middle Eastern people, etc.) who have relatively little social power in the United States, by members of the agent/dominant/privileged racial group who have relatively more social power (white).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>The cultural, institutional, and individual set of beliefs and practices that privilege men, subordinate women, and devalue ways of being that are associated with women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>The components of a person that include their biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual practices, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Transgender | Transgender: Adjective used most often as an umbrella term, and frequently abbreviated to “trans.” This adjective describes a wide range of identities and experiences of people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from conventional expectations based on their assigned sex at birth. Not all trans people undergo medical transition (surgery or hormones). Some commonly held definitions:  
  - Someone whose determination of their sex and/or gender is not validated by dominant societal expectations; someone whose behavior or expression does not “match” their assigned sex according to society.  
  - A gender outside of the man/woman binary.  
  - Having no gender or multiple genders. |
FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

*Percentages are reflective of 15 focus group participants

GENDER
- Female: 20%
- Gender fluid: 7%
- Gender Non-conforming: 13%
- Male: 40%
- Non-binary: 20%
- Trans Male: 0%

*Zero participants identified as Gender fluid, Gender Non-Conforming or specified any other gender identity.

SEXUALITY
- Asexual: 0%
- Bisexual: 20%
- Gay: 0%
- Hetero (Straight): 47%
- Lesbian: 7%
- Pansexual: 26%
- Other: 0%

*Zero participants identified as Heterosexual or Asexual or specified any other sexual identity.

RACE
- Black/AA: 33%
- Multiracial: 27%
- White: 0%
- Other: 40%

*27% of participants identified as Hispanic/Latinx

REGION
- Naugatuck: 13%
- Southbury: 7%
- Thomaston: 13%
- Waterbury: 67%

*Zero participants identified as residents of Wolcott, Oxford or Woodbury

AGE
- 13-14: 20%
- 15-16: 53%
- 17-18: 27%

LGBTQIA+ Needs Assessment Data Summary
DROP BOX RESPONDENTS
*Percentages are reflective of 8 survey participants
**All respondents identified as currently living in Waterbury.

GENDER
- Female: 25%
- Gender Fluid: 25%
- Gender Non-conforming: 25%
- Male: 50%
- Non-binary: 0%
- Trans Female: 0%
- Trans Male: 0%

SEXUALITY
- Asexual: 0%
- Bisexual: 0%
- Gay: 12%
- Hetero (Straight): 25%
- Lesbian: 13%
- Pansexual: 0%
- Other: 50%

*Zero participants identified as Heterosexual, Asexual or specified any other sexual identity.

RACE
- Black/AA: 50%
- Multiracial: 25%
- White: 13%
- Other: 12%

*88% of participants identified as Hispanic/Latinx

AGE
- 14-17: 22-24
- 18-21: 0%
- 22-24: 62%

*Zero participants identified as Asian or Native American.
APPENDIX D
CITATIONS


5 LGBTQIA Resource Center (2018 Dec) LGBTQIA Resource Center Glossary. University of California: Davis, CA


7 U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2015) Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Center for Disease Control (CDC)


9 Youth First (June 2017) Unjust: LGBTQ Youth Incarcerated in the Juvenile Justice System, Movement Advancement Project & Center for American Progress
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