

*LGBTQ and the Juvenile and Criminal Justice System*

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The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (LGBTQ) community is overrepresented in both the Juvenile and the Criminal Justice System. Only about 4 to 7% of the U.S. population identify as LGBTQ, but 20% make up the population in juvenile detention centers and about 7-8% of the prison population. Feminist and Queer theory attests that Collective Culture has discriminated against the LGBTQ community throughout history, and continues to do so via attitudes, policies, and institutions. The LGBTQ community may often experience family rejection, sexual orientation violence, and peer victimization at an early age, which increases the likelihood of coming into contact with the Juvenile Justice System at an early age, and more often. We can counteract these detrimental practices by using appropriate sentencing options, taking into account that some offenses may be survival crimes, and having more empathy for those who come from unhealthy home lives.