



CONNECT

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Celebration of Pride & Freedom

The month June is filled with celebrations of Love, Pride, and Resilience as the world recognizes two equally deserving annual celebrations. "June nineteenth" Juneteenth abbreviated, is the oldest celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in America. It's also LGBTQ month which honors Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) Pride. While the two honor different fights for freedom, they both share a common purpose of cultural visibility and equality. As we reflect on how far we've come as a country, it is important to honor the strength, courage, and resilience of those who fought for freedom, equal rights, and love.

To show your alliance for these marginalized communities, challenge yourself to continued education on topics of race, gender, intersectionality, don't be silent, call injustices out, and have those difficult conversations.

DIVERSITY EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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LGBTQ+

YOUTH & MENTAL HEALTH

By: Jennifer Greenlee, BS.

According to a Pew Research article (2013), lesbian, gay and bisexual adults report that they started questioning their sexuality as being something other than heterosexual at the age of twelve. As far as gender identity goes, 73% of transgender women and 78% of transgender men began experiencing gender dysphoria, which can be defined as distress often caused by a discrepancy between a person's gender identity and their biological sex assigned at birth, by the age of seven (Cedars-Sinai, 2020). Children and even teenagers, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity, are often experiencing a lot of confusion and uncertainty about many things. Their bodies are rapidly changing and they're experiencing overwhelming emotions while trying to navigate and learn about the world around them. In this article, I hope to detail why LGBTQ youth are often at greater risk of experiencing poor mental health conditions and suicidality (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2022).

According to The Trevor Project, the second leading cause of death among children and young adults aged ten to twenty-four is suicide. LGBTQ youth are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide compared to their cisgender, heterosexual peers. In fact, one suicide attempt is made by an LGBTQ child or adolescent every forty-five seconds. In a 2022 national survey on LGBTQ youth mental health, almost half of LGBTQ youth reported seriously considering suicide in the last year, and this number was more than half for transgender and nonbinary youth. The numbers are even more alarming when we review research examining the experiences of LGBTQ youth of color, who report higher and disproportionate rates of suicide attempts compared to their white peers (The Trevor Project, 2022).

There are a few leading factors that contribute to these extremely disheartening disparities in mental health in regard to LGBTQ youth. Research has shown that these youth do not often experience acceptance of their true identities by their peers, or even their own family. One statistic shows that only one-third experience parental acceptance (The Trevor Project, 2021). They also report a lack to affirming spaces, including their schools and home environments. Research shows that fifty two percent of LGBTQ middle and high schoolers have been bullied online or in person during the past year and were at three times greater odds of attempting suicide. LGBTQ youth also report experiencing discrimination as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity (The Trevor Project, 2021). The Minority Stress Model suggests that mental health disparities experienced by LGBTQ youth are the result of internalized experiences of victimization and anti-LGBTQ messages that can exacerbate and "produce negative mental health outcomes and increase suicide risk among LGBTQ individuals" (The Trevor Project, 2021).

These issues are very near and dear to my heart, as I have LGBTQ youth in my family. I wanted to share a quote that resonated with me significantly from the Trevor Project website: "LGBTQ youth are not inherently prone to suicide risk because of their sexual orientation or gender identity but rather placed at higher risk because of how they are mistreated and stigmatized in society." In other words, there is nothing inherently "wrong" with these children and adolescents, only with the societal norms and expectations placed upon them.



LGBTQ+ PRIDE MONTH



What is LGBT Pride Month?

The commemorative month is meant to recognize the sweeping impact that LGBT individuals, advocates and allies have on history in the United States and around the globe, according to the Library of Congress

When is it?

LGBT PRIDE MONTH IS CELEBRATED EVERY YEAR IN JUNE.

Why was the month of June chosen?

The month of June was chosen for LGBT Pride Month to commemorate the riots held by members of the LGBT community against a police raid that took place at the Stonewall Inn in New York City on June 28, 1969.

The Stonewall riots were a "tipping point" for the gay liberation movement in the United States, according to the Library of Congress. The uproar also paved the way for the modern fight for LGBT rights.

Previous U.S. presidents have, on several occasions, officially declared June as LGBT Pride Month.

LGBTQ+ Flags



PRONOUNS FOR ALLIES

- Using someone's correct pronouns is an important way of affirming someone's identity and is a fundamental step in being an ally.
- Common pronouns include she/her/hers, he/him/his, and they/them/theirs.
- It is important to ask people what their pronouns are.
- Make a habit of introducing yourself with your pronouns, not just in LGBTQIA-specific situations.

GENDER IDENTITY

CISGENDER: SOMEONE WHOSE GENDER MATCHES THEIR "ASSIGNED" SEX AT BIRTH.

TRANSGENDER: A PERSON WHOSE GENDER IS DIFFERENT FROM THEIR "ASSIGNED" SEX AT BIRTH.

NON-BINARY: A SPECTRUM OF GENDER IDENTITIES THAT ARE NOT EXCLUSIVELY MASCULINE OR EXCLUSIVELY FEMININE

GENDERQUEER: SIMILAR TO "NON-BINARY" - SOME PEOPLE REGARD "QUEER" AS OFFENSIVE, OTHERS EMBRACE IT.

GENDERFLUID: APPLIES TO A PERSON WHOSE GENDER IDENTITY CHANGES OVER TIME OR CHANGES AT DIFFERENT TIMES.





GENDER EXPANSIVE PANEL

ON JUNE 2, 2022

VIA ZOOM

12 PM TO 1:30 PM

D.E.E. COMMITTEE PRESENTS

GENDER EXPANSIVE PANEL

**REGISTRATION IS OPEN!
PLEASE REGISTER THROUGH RELIAS
COURSE CODE: **CH-GENDEREXPANSIVE**
CEUS WILL BE OFFERED**

EMAIL THE D.E.E. COMMITTEE DEE@SOUTHWESTERN.ORG FOR ALL QUESTIONS

TRANSGENDER WOMEN OF COLOR IN THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT

By: Tyler Plogher, BS.



After more than a year of nonstop hustle and momentum, our agency is poised to accomplish a series of back-to-back firsts, which we hope will demonstrate our commitment to the communities we serve, while reinforcing that our strength lies in our diversity.

A large number of us will march in support of our LGBTQ+ colleagues, clients, and loved ones, and we will provide targeted outreach to sexual and gender minorities who, it is well documented, experience higher-than-average rates of mental illness and addiction. We are also preparing to celebrate Juneteenth for the first time as a company, in an event we will make open to the community,

and which we hope will be a powerful and educational commemoration of African American emancipation.

It fills me with so much pride and excitement that our relatively small committee has agreed to invest such substantial time and energy into these undertakings; when it might have been easier to select just one of these events, we committed to all three, because the surest way to create a safe and inclusive future for all is to make every effort right now, even when it is hard.



Although these events will primarily be celebrations, our participation will also honor those who struggled before us, and whose efforts often went unnoticed, or unrewarded, or were carried out at great personal risk. When thinking about the generations of African Americans and LGBTQ+ people who put in the work before us, my thoughts turn, as they often do, to intersectionality.

In particular, according to those who were there, and according to historians who have interviewed early queer activists, the LGBTQ+ movement owes a great debt to transgender women of color and Hispanics, and the Stonewall riots are believed to have been bravely set off by transgender women of color, like Marsha P. Johnson (although, she always humbly denied that she was even there at the start).

“The idea of choosing to come out is a luxury for some people... [we owe] a huge debt of gratitude to the ones who really didn’t have that much of a choice, who were out there taking the beatings, and taking the verbal abuse... they paved the way.” - Mason Funk

In what ways did these communities support each other? Was the American Civil Rights Movement a catalyst for “gay liberation”, as it was called? What roles did LGBTQ+ people of color play in the events of the sixties and seventies?

Given that media depictions of the Stonewall riots have disproportionately represented white members of the LGBTQ+ community, it is important that we recognize the significant contributions of African Americans to the LGBTQ+ struggle for equity and equality.

Historian Joshua Burford has commented on those who identified with more than just one minority community at the time, and in particular those who were easy targets of prejudice and hate, due to their characteristics making it very difficult to safely blend in with the crowd. “They had already been marginalized to such a degree, and the fact that they were trans or gay at the time just added another level to which they could be discriminated against.

They fought back. They had been pushed and pushed and pushed into such a corner.” According to Mason Funk with the OUTWARDS Archive, “The idea of choosing to come out is a luxury for some people... [we owe] a huge debt of gratitude to the ones who really didn’t have that much of a choice, who were out there taking the beatings, and taking the verbal abuse... they paved the way.”

Unfortunately, though, it has been remarked that the people who sowed the seeds of “gay liberation” have been erased from the narrative, have been denied seats at the table, and over fifty years later, transgender women of color still remain unable to fully reap the rewards of half a century of LGBTQ+ activism and legal victories. While some members of the community have been made safer and feel more secure now than ever, African American transgender women are still so likely to be the victims of homicide and hate crimes, the American Medical Association has actually declared it an epidemic. According to the Human Rights Campaign, “at least twenty-five transgender or gender non-conforming people were” murdered in 2019, and of those, ninety-one percent were Black women.

When the Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that same-sex marriage is constitutionally protected, many well-intending people questioned whether the need for activism in this area might be coming to an end; these grim statistics serve as a reminder, though, that although there is great cause for celebration this June,

equity and equality are not states of being that, once achieved in one area, can be set aside, and left to the past. We work so hard on the Diversity, Equity, and Engagement Committee, because just like in our daily work as mental health professionals, we recognize that the health and well-being of our community needs to be nurtured and maintained. Growth and accomplishments are worthwhile and should be celebrated, but celebration does not necessarily mean that our work is done; its an empowering reprieve that energizes us, so we can continue the work tomorrow.

I am proud that I will be able to celebrate Pride with so many of you this year. I sincerely thank you all for being partners in the work we do.

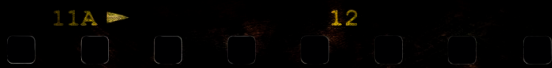
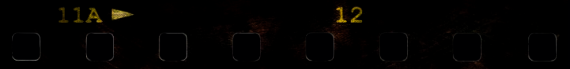
WHAT IS JUNETEENTH?

On September 22, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln declared that all enslaved people in rebellious states were to be set free. This is known as the **Emancipation Proclamation**.

Despite the proclamation, for two years slavery was still rampant in the state of Texas.

In the spring of 1865, General Gordon Granger and Federal troops arrived at Galveston, Texas, and he announced that all slaves were free.

The following year, freed men in Texas organized and celebrated "Jubilee Day" on June 19 to celebrate their freedom.



Today, it is a national holiday and the tradition of celebrating **Juneteenth** has spread all across the United States.

Juneteenth

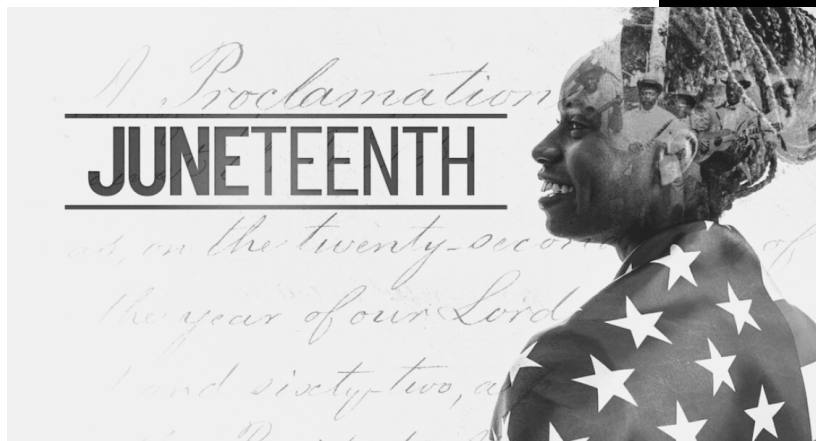
By: Terry Gish

Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. However, that meant nothing to the dissenting states of the Confederacy. Then, when the Civil War OFFICIALLY ended (in May 1865), all slaves were finally freed, right? In name only. Factions of Confederate forces continued to fight past the date of official surrender. Lifetimes before lightning-fast electronic communication, word of the South's ultimate defeat trickled slowly. Stories would later surface of masters on isolated plantations who conveniently forgot to tell their slaves that they were legally free.

After news of the Civil War's end finally reached Texas, a group of about 2,000 federal soldiers descended on Galveston on June 18th, 1865, to help "ease" them into a state of transition. The following day, on June 19th, General Order Number Three declared the freedom of slaves in the state of Texas. Juneteenth was first celebrated one year later in the now slave-free state of Texas.

Jubilant voices celebrating Juneteenth in Texas were bolstered by the promises made by Reconstruction, promises that were initially delivered and then quickly taken back. The sickness of racism would wither the leaves of hope, and bitter officials in Texas would try to squash the celebration of Juneteenth under Jim Crow's thumb.

How, then, did a Texas declaration and later Texas celebration become the national holiday that we know today? Because racism withered hope but could not kill it. During the Great Migration, when thousands of Black citizens migrated upward and outward from Texas (and other parts of the South), they carried the memory of Juneteenth in their hearts, the story unstilled on their lips. The words began falling out as a whisper, then a cry, then a shout, until everyone heard.



<https://allsaintsatlanta.org/news-and-publications/juneteenth/>

So, Juneteenth is not "the day when all the slaves were freed," as people sometimes mistakenly post, but it IS the day when we CELEBRATE the liberation of all slaves, not just the ones who first tasted freedom on that historic day in Galveston. I celebrate Juneteenth not just as a multi-ethnic man with a proud Black heritage but as an American who will never forget the day that Texas chains were shattered.

We hope that you will join us in celebrating Juneteenth two days early on June 17th at noon in the Welborn Room!



**DIVERSITY, EQUITY &
ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE
PRESENTS**

JUNETEENTH

CELEBRATING FREEDOM

JUNE 17, 2022 ——— 12 NOON



**410 MULBERRY ST.
EVANSVILLE, IN 47713
WELBORN ROOM**

GUEST SPEAKER: DR. ANNETTE PARKS

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