



# CONNECT

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## CELEBRATION OF LOVE, FREEDOM, AND PRIDE

**By: Cedralia Ellis, MSW, LCSW**

The month of June is filled with celebrations of Love, Pride, and Resilience. Throughout the world, the LGBTQ+ and African American communities come together to celebrate and raise awareness of the ongoing pursuit for 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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## Why Celebrate Juneteenth

By: Terry Gish

I've found that people either don't know what Juneteenth is or think that it is the day that slavery was abolished throughout the country. The truth is complex and not as cut and dry as some might think. Here it is, in my words.

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 crusted 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.

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.



# Juneteenth Celebration



## Juneteenth Flag:

That banner with a bursting star in the middle is the Juneteenth Flag, a symbolic representation of the end of slavery in the United States.

- **The star:** it represents Texas, the Lone Star State.– the country's last remaining enslaved people that, under the Emancipation Proclamation issued two years earlier, were free. The star also represents the freedom of African Americans in all 50 states.
- **The burst:** this represents a new beginning for the African Americans of Galveston and throughout the land.
- **The arc:** represents a new horizon: the opportunities and promise that lay ahead for black Americans.
- **The colors:** The red, white and blue represents the American flag, a reminder that slaves and their descendants were and are Americans.

## Juneteenth Celebrations

To commemorate Emancipation Day, friends and family gather to celebrate the legacy of resilience and acknowledge the ongoing struggle through marches, prayers and other remembrances.

## What Kind of Food Is Served:

Soul food is associated with comfort food, but it was born out of struggle and necessity. Enslaved Africans turned meager, low-quality rations into delicious fried, boiled, roasted and baked dishes. In the process, they preserved old food traditions and created new ones.

## Juneteenth Color:

**The Red Trinity**—Red food is traditionally served at Juneteenth celebrations because the color is a representation of the bloodshed and resilience of the enslaved. (barbecue, watermelon and red soda—is at the heart of the meal.)

# THE COST OF LOVE

By: Jessica Thomas, BA,MHA

In June 1958, Mildred Jeter, a black woman, and Richard Loving, a white man traveled to the District of Columbia to be married due to their home state of Virginia's anti-miscegenation laws. Anti-miscegenation laws imposed and enforced racial segregation of marriages and intimate relationships by criminalizing interracial marriages and partnerships. Once the couple returned to their home state of Virginia, they were arrested for violating the statute known as the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 and sentenced to a year in prison. The Racial Integrity Act called for two categories of race, white and colored and for this to be recorded at the time of birth. It discusses the "one drop rule" stating that if an individual has even "one drop" of color in their blood they are classified as colored. The goal was to protect the "whiteness" of Virginia and to eliminate the mixing of races in the state. Loving v. Virginia (1967) was a landmark civil rights supreme court case that declared anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional per the 14th amendment. This is often referred to as the first steps to dismantling Jim Crow laws, but also impacted overall marriage rights in the years to come.

This has and always will be an extremely important piece of history for me and my family, as it allowed me to marry my soulmate, despite him and I not being the same race. When I met my husband, I knew he was the one within days of meeting him. He was perfect to me and for me and despite my efforts to not fall for him, I totally did!



I was nineteen and madly in love with the perfect guy and LIFE was GREAT! Then it happened, I started losing lifelong friends, I started hearing things like, "once you go black you never go back" or "I just thought you were different, not one of those girls". My father was so upset he didn't speak to me for 10 months because me being with a black man, "embarrassed" him. People stared and gawked at us when we were out. I never carried his picture in my waitress book out of fear that one of my customers would see it and decide to treat me differently or withhold my tip just because I was, "one of those girls". It was disheartening to realize that the love that was perfect and beautiful to me was a source of disgust for so many others.

As a country, we are 63 years removed from legalizing interracial marriages and yet many people hold the view that we should be kept within the race you identify with instead of marrying for love. I didn't let the views of others stop me from marrying my soulmate, I just went into it knowing that it would be a much harder road to travel, but at least I had the love of my life to tackle it with. I wish that I could tell you that 19 years later, things are different, but they aren't, and currently things actually seem much worse. I wish I didn't have stories filled with hatred towards my little family, or stories of my kids being referred to as half breeds or being called the N word, but I do. I wish that the world could see my marriage and the two beautiful children that we created, through my eyes and not through the eyes of a society built on discrimination and hatred. Although Loving v. Virginia was an importance step for interracial couples, we still have a long way to go. Until then, we just keep fighting to show the world that LOVE is BEAUTIFUL regardless of race or gender!

# 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

## 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.

## 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.

## 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 FEMINE

**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.

As many of us know, worldwide, June is designated Pride Month to honor LGBTQ+ history, celebrate advances in rights and protections, and to highlight those areas where progress is still needed. As mental healthcare professionals, we are called to educate ourselves on the history of mental health within the LGBTQ+ community and ways in which we can provide a safe and welcoming space for individuals seeking services. In order to do this, we must first understand the non-affirming and harmful practices that exist. Unfortunately, a part of this history is the use of “conversion therapy” and ex-gay ministries.

Conversion therapy has taken on many forms by both licensed professionals and by unlicensed religious ministers and life coaches over the years who utilized “conversion or reparative therapies.”

These practices over the years aim at attempting to change one’s sexual orientation or gender identity through a wide range of ‘therapies.’ More severe treatments such as chemical castration with hormonal treatment, electric shock, and nausea-inducing medications are no longer utilized in the United States, but counseling, psychoanalysis, skills training, and spiritual and religious interventions can still be found. It is important to note that conversion therapy is not founded in scientific evidence and is widely rejected by healthcare professionals and their professional associations. Meanwhile, there is more mounting evidence from research communities highlighting the negative and damaging outcomes of conversion therapy.

With so much negative feedback, surely these services are no longer available, right? Actually, they are. A quick Google search for providers confirmed for me just how easily these “therapies” can be accessed.



## PRIDE AND MENTAL HEALTH BY: LYNN FALCONY

### Who is most at risk? LGBTQ+ youth.

- According to the Trevor Project’s 2020 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, 10% of youth reported experiencing conversion therapy, with 78% reporting that it occurred under the age of 18.
- And youth who underwent conversion therapy were more than twice as likely to report having attempted suicide and more than 2.5 times as likely to report multiple suicide attempts in the past year.

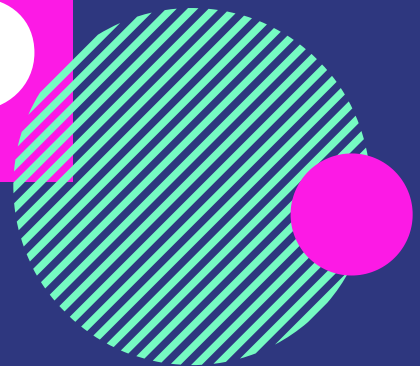
Unfortunately, conversion therapy is currently still legal in 30 states across the US, including Indiana. Conversion therapy is only one concern facing the LGBTQ+ community. As we embark on Pride Month, I invite each of us to pause and reflect on our roles as mental healthcare professionals with the following questions:

- How comfortable and prepared am I in my role to adequately meet the unique needs of the LGBTQ+ community?
- What steps can we take, as individuals, as a department, and/or as an organization, to increase our awareness of the needs facing the LGBTQ+ community and other vulnerable communities in order to continue to provide quality and equitable services to all?



**UPCOMING**

**EVENTS**





# LGBTQ+

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & ENGAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE PRESENTS**

## **CULTURAL HUMILITY SERIES: PRIDE PANEL**

Facilitator: Tyler Plogher, BS  
Panelist: Murphy Jones, MSW  
Katie Garner, LCSW  
Lynn Falcony, BS, CHW, CRS  
Jamie Childers, BS  
Ashley Hawkins, BSW

**JUNE 24, 2021 @ 12NOON-1:30 PM  
VIA ZOOM**

Please register through Relias (course code: 1190373) .  
Registration is open  
June 1st-June 22nd. CEUs will be offered.

The Indiana Behavioral Health and Human Services Licensing Board has approved this organization to provide Category I Continuing Education for LSW, LCSW, LMFT, and LMHC.





# RED DAY

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## JUNETEENTH:

*Celebrating  
African-American  
FREEDOM,  
families, heritage...  
and becoming  
the ancestors' DREAM.*

**Show your support for the  
Juneteenth by wearing Red  
on June 18, 2021.**

