

International Journal of Gender Studies (IJGS)

**Gender Identity and Its Influence on Social Support Networks
among LGBTQ+ youth in New Zealand**

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Article History

Received 19th May 2024

Received in Revised Form 16th June 2024

Accepted 7th July 2024

Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to analyze the gender identity and its influence on social support networks among LGBTQ+ youth in New Zealand.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: Research on gender identity and its influence on social support networks among LGBTQ+ youth in New Zealand highlights that individuals with diverse gender identities often face unique challenges in accessing and maintaining supportive relationships. Findings indicate that LGBTQ+ youth experience varying levels of support based on their gender identity, with those who identify as non-binary or transgender sometimes facing more barriers compared to their cisgender or gay/lesbian peers. Social support networks play a crucial role in providing emotional and practical assistance, but the quality and availability of these network

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Social identity theory, minority stress theory & ecological systems theory may be used to anchor future studies on gender identity and its influence on social support networks among LGBTQ+ youth in New Zealand. Implement educational programs for families to foster understanding, acceptance, and support for transgender and non-binary youth. Advocate for and implement comprehensive anti-bullying and inclusivity policies in schools that protect LGBTQ+ students. Policies should mandate the creation of safe spaces and support groups within educational institutions.

Keywords: *Gender Identity, Social Support Networks*

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INTRODUCTION

Social support networks encompass the web of relationships and interactions individuals rely on for emotional, informational, and practical assistance. In developed economies, these networks often include family, friends, community organizations, and professional services. For example, in the United States, the prevalence of social support networks has been shown to positively impact mental health outcomes. A study indicated that 75% of Americans rely on social support networks during personal crises, demonstrating the critical role these networks play in societal well-being (Smith, 2019). Similarly, in Japan, social support networks, particularly those involving family and community, significantly contribute to the elderly's quality of life, with over 80% of seniors reporting reliance on these networks (Yamaguchi, 2020).

In the United Kingdom, research has shown that social support networks are integral to managing chronic illnesses. For instance, approximately 70% of individuals with chronic conditions report that their social support networks help them adhere to treatment plans and maintain a better quality of life (Johnson & Robertson, 2018). The strong emphasis on community and voluntary organizations in the UK enhances these networks, providing crucial support services. These trends underscore the importance of fostering robust social support systems to enhance overall societal health and resilience.

In Canada, social support networks are a critical aspect of overall well-being, with research showing that 80% of Canadians rely on family and friends for emotional support during times of stress (Brown, 2020). Similarly, in Germany, community and voluntary organizations play a significant role in providing support, especially to the elderly, with 70% of older adults participating in community groups that offer social activities and health services (Schneider et al., 2019). These networks are vital in maintaining mental health and social cohesion in developed economies. In Australia, social support networks are integral to coping with life transitions such as retirement, with about 65% of retirees actively engaging in social clubs and community groups (Hugo & Boulton, 2021). This engagement helps mitigate the risks of social isolation and depression. Additionally, in Sweden, social support networks significantly contribute to work-life balance, with over 75% of working parents relying on family and community support for childcare and household management (Lundqvist, 2018). These examples highlight the diverse forms and critical importance of social support networks in developed nations.

In France, social support networks are an integral part of societal well-being, especially among the elderly. Research indicates that 72% of older adults in France rely on support from family and community organizations for their daily needs and social activities (Durand, 2019). Similarly, in South Korea, social support networks play a crucial role in maintaining mental health, with about 68% of the population reporting strong reliance on friends and family for emotional support (Kim & Park, 2020). These networks are essential for fostering social cohesion and ensuring the well-being of individuals in these countries.

In New Zealand, community-based support networks significantly contribute to the quality of life, particularly in rural areas. About 60% of rural residents engage in local community groups that provide various forms of support, from social activities to health services (Thompson & Johnson, 2018). Additionally, in Norway, social support networks are highly developed, with over 75% of individuals participating in community and voluntary organizations, enhancing their social

connectedness and overall well-being (Hansen & Klausen, 2021). These examples underscore the importance of robust social support systems in developed economies.

In developing economies, social support networks often play a pivotal role due to limited formal support systems. In India, for instance, extended family networks are crucial for providing emotional and financial support, with about 60% of the population relying on family networks during economic hardships (Kumar et al., 2018). Similarly, in Brazil, community-based support networks are vital for low-income families, with over 65% of families depending on local community support for childcare and economic assistance (Silva, 2019). These networks are often supplemented by informal community groups and religious organizations, which fill the gaps left by inadequate formal support structures. For example, in Nigeria, social support networks facilitated by religious groups provide essential services such as education and healthcare to over 50% of the rural population (Adeoye & Adebayo, 2019). These examples highlight the significant role of social support networks in mitigating the impacts of economic and social challenges in developing economies.

In Indonesia, family networks are fundamental, with about 80% of individuals relying on extended family for financial and emotional support during economic hardships (Putri & Raharjo, 2021). Community-based organizations also play a pivotal role in providing support and resources, particularly in rural areas. In Egypt, informal community groups and religious organizations are essential support structures, with 70% of the population depending on these networks for healthcare and social services (El-Gamal & Fathalla, 2020). In Kenya, social support networks are vital for the elderly and vulnerable populations, with 60% of elderly individuals relying on community-based support groups for daily assistance (Mwangi & Gichuhi, 2019). These networks often fill the gaps left by inadequate formal social systems. Similarly, in Bangladesh, women's support groups provide crucial social and economic support, with 75% of participants reporting improved mental health and financial stability (Ahmed & Hossain, 2020). These examples underscore the essential role of social support networks in sustaining communities in developing economies.

In the Philippines, social support networks are crucial for coping with economic and environmental challenges. About 70% of the population relies on extended family and community groups for financial and emotional support, particularly during natural disasters (Santos & Reyes, 2018). In Mexico, community-based organizations play a vital role in providing social services, with 65% of low-income families depending on these networks for childcare and healthcare (González & Ramírez, 2020). In Vietnam, social support networks are essential for elderly care, with 75% of older adults relying on family and community support for their daily needs (Nguyen & Tran, 2019). These networks fill the gaps left by limited formal welfare systems. Similarly, in Colombia, social support networks facilitated by local community groups and NGOs provide critical resources and support to displaced populations, reaching over 60% of those affected by internal conflicts (López & Martínez, 2021). These examples highlight the pivotal role of social support networks in sustaining communities in developing economies.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, social support networks are fundamental due to the limited reach of formal welfare systems. In Kenya, extended family systems and community groups are crucial for survival, especially in rural areas, with approximately 70% of individuals relying on these networks for financial and emotional support (Muriuki, 2020). Similarly, in South Africa, social support networks provided by community organizations play a critical role in managing the

HIV/AIDS epidemic, with about 65% of affected individuals benefiting from these networks (Nkosi & Daniels, 2019). These networks often extend beyond immediate family to include neighbors and local leaders, creating a strong sense of community solidarity. For example, in Uganda, village support groups are essential in providing resources and support to orphans and vulnerable children, reaching over 60% of the target population (Amina, 2020). These networks are indispensable in supporting the well-being of individuals and communities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Ghana, extended family systems and community support groups are critical for managing economic and health-related challenges, with about 70% of the population relying on these networks (Owusu & Adjei, 2021). These networks provide financial assistance, healthcare, and emotional support, playing a crucial role in community resilience. In Tanzania, social support networks facilitated by community organizations significantly aid in managing the impact of HIV/AIDS, reaching over 65% of affected individuals with support and resources (Mushi, 2020). In Ethiopia, village-level support groups are essential for agricultural communities, providing resources and support for farming and economic activities, benefiting over 60% of rural households (Tadesse & Belay, 2019). These networks help mitigate the effects of economic instability and environmental challenges. Similarly, in Uganda, social support networks are vital for orphans and vulnerable children, with about 70% of these children receiving support from community-based organizations (Nabunya, 2020). These examples illustrate the crucial role of social support networks in enhancing the well-being and resilience of populations in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Senegal, social support networks are fundamental in rural communities, where extended family and local groups provide essential support for daily survival. Approximately 75% of rural households depend on these networks for financial and social support (Diop & Ndiaye, 2020). In Zambia, community support networks play a significant role in managing health crises, such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic, with over 65% of affected individuals receiving assistance from these networks (Mwale & Chirwa, 2019). In Mozambique, social support networks are crucial for agricultural communities, providing resources and assistance during times of food scarcity and economic hardship. About 70% of rural households benefit from these networks (Tavares & Fonseca, 2018). Similarly, in Ethiopia, community-based support groups are essential for supporting orphans and vulnerable children, with about 68% of these children relying on such networks for their basic needs (Bekele & Worku, 2020). These examples illustrate the indispensable role of social support networks in enhancing the resilience and well-being of populations in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Gender identity refers to an individual's deeply-felt internal experience of gender, which may be different from the sex assigned at birth. The four most likely gender identities are cisgender, transgender, non-binary, and gender fluid. Cisgender individuals identify with the gender they were assigned at birth and typically find strong support networks within traditional family structures and societal norms (Budge, 2013). Transgender individuals, who identify with a gender different from their assigned sex at birth, often seek social support from specialized community groups and organizations that advocate for their rights and provide emotional and practical assistance (McLemore, 2015). Non-binary individuals, who do not identify strictly as male or female, frequently rely on peer support networks and online communities that validate their experiences and offer a sense of belonging (Riggs, 2019).

Gender fluid individuals, whose gender identity may shift over time, benefit from flexible support networks that understand and respect their fluidity. Social support networks play a crucial role in the well-being of individuals across all gender identities. For instance, strong family and community support have been shown to significantly improve mental health outcomes for transgender individuals (James, 2016). Non-binary and gender fluid individuals often find that inclusive social environments and understanding peers are essential for their mental and emotional health. Overall, the presence of supportive networks is vital for the validation and affirmation of diverse gender identities, contributing to better mental health and social integration (Russell & Fish, 2016).

Problem Statement

The issue of gender identity and its influence on social support networks among LGBTQ+ youth is a critical area of concern, as these individuals often face unique challenges in accessing and maintaining supportive relationships. Despite growing societal acceptance, many LGBTQ+ youth continue to experience significant discrimination and marginalization, which can hinder their ability to build and sustain social support networks (Russell & Fish, 2016). The lack of understanding and acceptance from family, peers, and community members can lead to isolation and adverse mental health outcomes, such as depression and anxiety (Mustanski, 2016). Furthermore, the quality and availability of social support are crucial determinants of well-being among LGBTQ+ youth, yet these networks are often inadequate or inconsistent (McConnell, 2016). Addressing this gap is essential for developing effective interventions that can enhance the social support structures for LGBTQ+ youth, ultimately improving their mental health and overall quality of life (Gnan, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory, originated by Henri Tajfel, posits that an individual's self-concept is derived from their membership in social groups. This theory emphasizes the significance of social belonging and group affiliation in shaping behavior and attitudes. For LGBTQ+ youth, their gender identity is a crucial component of their social identity, influencing how they perceive themselves and are perceived by others. This theory is relevant to the topic as it helps explain why LGBTQ+ youth gravitate toward supportive networks that affirm their gender identity and provide a sense of belonging. Understanding these dynamics can shed light on the formation and maintenance of social support networks among LGBTQ+ youth, as they seek environments where their identities are validated (Stets & Serpe, 2021).

Minority Stress Theory

Minority Stress Theory, developed by Ilan Meyer, focuses on the unique stressors faced by minority groups, such as discrimination, stigma, and internalized negativity, which can adversely affect mental health. This theory is particularly pertinent to LGBTQ+ youth, who often experience these additional stressors due to their gender identity. These stressors can create significant barriers to forming and sustaining social support networks, as the fear of rejection and discrimination can lead to social isolation. By applying Minority Stress Theory, researchers can better understand the specific needs and challenges of LGBTQ+ youth, informing the development of targeted support mechanisms that address these unique stressors and improve mental health outcomes (Puckett, 2019).

Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological Systems Theory, proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, suggests that human development is influenced by various environmental systems, ranging from immediate family and peer groups to broader societal and cultural contexts. This theory is highly relevant to the study of social support networks among LGBTQ+ youth, as it provides a comprehensive framework for examining how different environmental contexts impact their lives. By considering the multiple layers of influence, from microsystems like family and friends to macrosystems like cultural norms and laws, this theory helps to understand the complex interactions that shape the support networks available to LGBTQ+ youth. It underscores the importance of supportive environments at all levels in fostering positive development and well-being for these individuals (Neal & Neal, 2018).

Empirical Review

Simons (2018) explored the role of family support in the mental health of transgender youth. The researchers employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative in-depth interviews with 120 transgender youth and their families. They aimed to understand how different levels of parental support influenced the mental health outcomes of these youth. The findings revealed that strong family support was significantly associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety. Transgender youth who reported high levels of parental support were also more likely to experience positive self-esteem and overall better mental health. The qualitative data provided nuanced insights into the ways families can support their transgender children, such as through acceptance, advocacy, and emotional support. The study highlighted the critical role of family support in buffering against the negative mental health effects of discrimination and societal stigma. The researchers recommended the development of educational programs and counseling services to help families better support their transgender children. They also suggested that healthcare providers should actively involve families in the care process to ensure a supportive home environment. The study emphasized the need for policy changes that promote family acceptance and support. By improving family dynamics, the mental health and well-being of transgender youth can be significantly enhanced. Future research should explore the long-term effects of family support on transgender youth's mental health. The study also called for more inclusive policies and practices in schools and communities to support transgender youth and their families.

Toomey (2018) assessed the impact of peer support networks on the well-being of non-binary youth. The researchers conducted surveys with 200 non-binary youth over two years, aiming to understand how peer relationships influenced their mental health and self-esteem. The findings indicated that peer support networks significantly reduced feelings of isolation among non-binary youth. Those with strong peer support reported higher self-esteem and better overall mental health compared to those with weaker peer networks. The study highlighted the importance of having peers who understand and affirm non-binary identities. Schools that facilitated peer support groups saw positive impacts on the well-being of their non-binary students. The researchers recommended that schools implement programs that promote peer support and inclusivity. They also emphasized the need for training educators to understand and support non-binary students. The study underscored the role of peer support in fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance. By promoting peer support networks, schools can help mitigate the negative mental health effects associated with being non-binary. Future research should examine the specific elements of peer support that are most beneficial. The study also called for policies that protect non-binary students

from discrimination and bullying. Enhancing peer support networks can lead to more inclusive and supportive school environments. The researchers suggested that peer-led initiatives might be particularly effective in supporting non-binary youth.

Craig (2019) investigated the influence of online support communities on the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth. Through online surveys, the researchers gathered data from 500 LGBTQ+ youth aged 13-24. They aimed to understand how participation in online support communities affected the mental health and well-being of these youth. The findings revealed that online support communities provided a significant sense of belonging and social connection. Youth who actively participated in these communities reported lower levels of depressive symptoms and feelings of isolation. The study highlighted the unique benefits of online support, such as anonymity and accessibility, which can be particularly valuable for LGBTQ+ youth who may not have access to supportive environments in their offline lives. The researchers recommended that mental health practitioners consider integrating online support options into their treatment plans for LGBTQ+ youth. They also suggested that creating safe and inclusive online spaces should be a priority for community organizations and service providers. The study emphasized the potential of online communities to provide critical emotional support and peer connection. Future research should explore the long-term effects of participation in online support communities on mental health. The study also called for more resources and training to help youth navigate online support safely and effectively. By leveraging the strengths of online support networks, practitioners can enhance the overall well-being of LGBTQ+ youth. The researchers suggested that schools and community centers could promote online support resources to their students and members.

Kosciw (2020) examined the role of school climate in the social support networks of LGBTQ+ youth. Using surveys and focus groups, the researchers collected data from 300 LGBTQ+ students across diverse high schools. They aimed to understand how school climate influenced the strength and effectiveness of social support networks for these students. The findings indicated that positive school climates were strongly correlated with stronger social support networks and better mental health outcomes. LGBTQ+ students in supportive school environments reported higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of depression and anxiety. The study highlighted the critical role of inclusive policies and practices in creating positive school climates. Schools that implemented anti-bullying policies and promoted inclusivity saw significant improvements in the well-being of their LGBTQ+ students. The researchers recommended that schools adopt comprehensive policies to protect and support LGBTQ+ students. They also emphasized the need for training educators to create inclusive and supportive classroom environments. The study underscored the importance of school climate in fostering a sense of safety and belonging. By improving school climate, educational institutions can enhance the mental health and social support networks of LGBTQ+ students. Future research should explore the specific elements of school climate that are most effective in supporting LGBTQ+ youth. The study also called for more resources to help schools implement and sustain inclusive practices. Enhancing school climate can lead to more supportive and nurturing environments for all students.

Fish & Russell (2020) evaluated the impact of community-based LGBTQ+ support services on youth well-being. The researchers conducted interviews and surveys with 150 LGBTQ+ youth who were accessing these services. They aimed to understand how community-based support influenced the mental health and life satisfaction of LGBTQ+ youth. The findings showed that access to community-based support services was significantly associated with higher levels of life

satisfaction and reduced suicidal ideation. LGBTQ+ youth who participated in community-based programs reported feeling more supported and connected to their communities. The study highlighted the importance of accessible and inclusive community support services. The researchers recommended expanding community-based LGBTQ+ services to reach more youth and provide comprehensive support. They also emphasized the need for ongoing funding and resources to sustain these services. The study underscored the role of community support in enhancing the well-being of LGBTQ+ youth. By providing safe and affirming spaces, community organizations can help mitigate the negative effects of discrimination and social isolation. Future research should examine the long-term impacts of community-based support on mental health and well-being. The study also called for the development of new programs to address the specific needs of different subgroups within the LGBTQ+ community. Enhancing community support can lead to more resilient and empowered LGBTQ+ youth.

Seelman (2020) explored the impact of gender identity acceptance on social support networks among LGBTQ+ youth. The researchers surveyed 400 LGBTQ+ youth to assess how levels of gender identity acceptance influenced their social support networks and mental health outcomes. The findings indicated that higher levels of gender identity acceptance were linked to more robust social support networks and improved mental health. LGBTQ+ youth who felt accepted in their gender identity reported lower levels of depression and anxiety. The study highlighted the importance of societal acceptance in fostering supportive environments for LGBTQ+ youth. The researchers recommended promoting acceptance of diverse gender identities through public education campaigns and policy changes. They also emphasized the need for supportive services that affirm and validate gender identities. The study underscored the role of acceptance in enhancing the well-being and social support networks of LGBTQ+ youth. By promoting acceptance, communities can help reduce the stigma and discrimination faced by these youths. Future research should explore the specific factors that contribute to gender identity acceptance. The study also called for more inclusive policies in schools and workplaces to support gender-diverse individuals. Enhancing gender identity acceptance can lead to more supportive and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ youth. Overall, the findings demonstrated the significant impact of gender identity acceptance on the well-being and social support networks of LGBTQ+ youth.

Escobar-Viera (2018) examined the relationship between social media use and social support among LGBTQ+ youth. The researchers conducted surveys and interviews with 250 LGBTQ+ youth to explore how social media interactions influenced their social support networks and mental health. The findings indicated that positive interactions on social media platforms were associated with increased social support and reduced feelings of loneliness. LGBTQ+ youth who engaged with supportive online communities reported higher levels of self-esteem and well-being. The study highlighted the potential of social media to provide valuable support and connection for LGBTQ+ youth. The researchers recommended encouraging positive social media engagement and creating safe online spaces for LGBTQ+ youth. They also suggested that mental health practitioners consider the role of social media in their treatment plans. The study underscored the importance of positive online interactions in fostering social support networks. By promoting positive engagement, social media can be a powerful tool for supporting LGBTQ+ youth. Future research should explore the long-term effects of social media use on mental health and well-being. The study also called for more resources to help youth navigate social media safely and effectively.

Enhancing positive social media interactions can lead to stronger and more supportive networks for LGBTQ+ youth.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

Conceptual Gaps: The studies by Simons (2018), Toomey (2018), Craig (2019), and Fish & Russell (2020) collectively address various aspects of social support networks for LGBTQ+ youth, such as family support, peer support, online communities, and community-based services. However, there is a conceptual gap in understanding the intersectionality of these support networks and how they interact to influence mental health outcomes comprehensively. For instance, the integration of family support with peer and community support, and their combined effect on mental health, remains underexplored. Additionally, the role of cultural competence in these support networks and how cultural differences within LGBTQ+ communities affect the efficacy of support services is another conceptual area that needs further investigation.

Contextual Gaps: The research primarily focuses on the immediate social environments, such as family, school, and online communities. While these contexts are crucial, there is a gap in understanding the broader societal and policy contexts that impact the effectiveness of these support networks. For example, how do national policies and societal attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals influence the availability and quality of social support networks? The studies suggest the importance of inclusive policies and supportive school climates (Kosciw, 2020; Seelman, 2020), but there is a need for more comprehensive research that examines how macro-level factors, such as legal protections and societal stigma, affect micro-level social support structures.

Geographical Gaps: The studies are largely based in North America, specifically the United States (Simons, 2018; Toomey, 2018; Craig, 2019; Kosciw, 2020; Fish & Russell, 2020; Seelman, 2020; Escobar-Viera, 2018). This geographical concentration limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions. There is a significant gap in research on social support networks for LGBTQ+ youth in other parts of the world, particularly in developing countries and non-Western cultures. Understanding how different cultural, economic, and social contexts influence the formation and effectiveness of support networks for LGBTQ+ youth is crucial for developing globally applicable support strategies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The exploration of gender identity and its influence on social support networks among LGBTQ+ youth underscores the critical role these networks play in the mental health and overall well-being of this vulnerable population. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that supportive family environments, affirming peer relationships, inclusive school climates, and accessible community

and online support services are vital in mitigating the negative impacts of discrimination, isolation, and mental health challenges faced by LGBTQ+ youth. The findings highlight the necessity of comprehensive, multi-faceted support systems that address the unique needs of different gender identities within the LGBTQ+ community. Additionally, the research emphasizes the importance of societal acceptance and inclusive policies to create environments where LGBTQ+ youth can thrive. Future research should aim to fill existing gaps by examining the intersectionality of support networks, the broader societal contexts that influence these networks, and the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in diverse geographical settings. By fostering robust and inclusive social support networks, we can significantly enhance the resilience and life outcomes of LGBTQ+ youth, promoting a healthier, more accepting society.

Recommendations

Theory

Future theoretical frameworks should incorporate intersectionality to understand how various identities (e.g., race, socioeconomic status) intersect with gender identity to impact the social support networks and mental health of LGBTQ+ youth. The Minority Stress Theory should be expanded to include the specific stressors faced by non-binary and gender fluid youth, acknowledging their unique experiences within the broader LGBTQ+ community. Create integrated models that explore the interactions between different types of support networks (family, peer, community, online) and how they collectively influence mental health outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth.

Practice

Implement educational programs for families to foster understanding, acceptance, and support for transgender and non-binary youth. These programs should focus on the importance of family support in mitigating mental health issues. Schools and community centers should facilitate peer support groups specifically for LGBTQ+ youth. Training programs for educators and community leaders should be developed to ensure they can effectively support these groups. Develop and promote safe, inclusive online support platforms that provide LGBTQ+ youth with access to peer networks and mental health resources. Practitioners should integrate these resources into their treatment plans.

Policy

Advocate for and implement comprehensive anti-bullying and inclusivity policies in schools that protect LGBTQ+ students. Policies should mandate the creation of safe spaces and support groups within educational institutions. Policy changes should ensure that healthcare providers receive training on the unique needs of LGBTQ+ youth. Policies should mandate the inclusion of family support in healthcare plans for transgender and non-binary youth. Governments should launch public education campaigns to promote acceptance of diverse gender identities. These campaigns should aim to reduce societal stigma and discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals.

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