

Queers don't go to Heaven: One family's struggle for acceptance

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Abstract

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The stigma of homosexuality may lead to psychosocial problems for an adolescent such as; family conflict, anxiety, attempted suicide, and substance abuse (Coleman & Remafedi 1989). The US Department of Health and Human Services (1989), reports that gay and lesbian youth are 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide. Gay and lesbian teenagers commit 30% of the completed suicides. Suicide is the leading cause of death for this group of youth. The stress from verbal and physical abuse puts this group at a high risk of low self-esteem, substance abuse, and suicide (Savin-Williams 1994). The Massachusetts Department of Education (1989), reports that high school students hear anti-gay epithets like "faggot" and "dyke" on an average of 30 times a day. Schools are often the site of violence against gay and lesbian teens due to the fact that most perpetrators of violence against this group are high school aged males (D'Augelli, 1992). Unfortunately schools continue to lack knowledgeable staff and counselors to assist gay and lesbian youth in a supportive and non-judgmental fashion.