



What is the Healthy Families Bright Futures (HFBF) program?

LGBTQ+ teens face increased risk for experiencing dating violence and drinking alcohol compared to other teens. Parents and other caregivers to LGBTQ+ teens can play an important role in reducing these risks. The Healthy Families and Bright Futures program (HFBF) is an online program for LGBTQ+ teens and their parents or other caregivers designed to equip teens and caregivers with skills and information that can help prevent teen dating violence and alcohol use. Each of the seven HFBF sessions are led by an LGBTQ+ young adult and the parent of an LGBTQ+ teen or young adult. The program includes separate sessions for teens and for parents, and all sessions are designed to be interactive, including presentations from group leaders, group discussions, skills practice, and opinion polls. The program focuses on increasing teens' sense of community and pride as well as increasing caregivers' support for their teens. Teens also learn skills for making healthy and safe choices related to dating and alcohol use. Caregivers learn strategies to set boundaries with teens around dating, how to set appropriate consequences for risky behaviors, skills in managing family conflict, and strategies to respond in helpful ways to teen emotions. The program was refined with feedback from both a LGBTQ+ Youth Advisory Board and a LGBTQ+ Caregiver Advisory Board.

What were the goals of the study of the HFBF program?

1. To see whether teens who completed the program had improved communication skills and felt more able to make safe choices around alcohol. We also wanted to see if they viewed dating violence and alcohol use as less common among LGBTQ+ teens.
2. To see whether caregivers who completed the program felt more able to communicate with their teens and set appropriate boundaries and consequences around dating and alcohol use. We also wanted to see if they were more accepting and supportive of their teens.
3. To see whether teens and caregivers found the HFBF program to be supportive, helpful, and enjoyable.

What did we do?

We had 61 dating LGBTQ+ teens (ages 15-18) and their caregivers from all over the U.S. participate in a study of the HFBF program. Parents and teens either completed the HFBF program at the beginning of the study or at the end of the study. They completed three surveys: one before the HFBF program began, one after the HFBF program ended, and one three months after the HFBF program ended. We also interviewed nine teens and nine caregivers about what they thought about the program.

What was the impact of the program?

Overall, the program had promising results. Caregivers who completed the program reported being more supportive and affirming towards their teens, such as taking them to LGBTQ+ events, showing support for their identity, and standing up for them. Caregivers also felt more confident in their ability to communicate with their teens and set limits and engage in appropriate discipline. Teens who completed the program reported feeling

more confident in their ability to communicate with dating partners and accurately believed that most LGBTQ+ teens did not engage in dating violence.

What did caregivers and teens think of the program?

Caregiver Quotes:

- *"...What stood out the most was just the feeling of camaraderie, being able to talk to other parents who are kind of going through the same situations that I'm going through with my own kiddo."*
- *"It's helped my teen open up and realize that I'm not, that I'm not doing things just to harass her or get information out of her, but it's more of a concern, and I want to know what's going on in her life."*
- *"I just think that just being in the program made me say, hey, you know what my teen needs to know not just that I accept them; what I think they need to know now is that I celebrate them. That's the most important thing. I celebrate them."*

Teen Quotes:

- *"...My mom and I gotten closer, too, because, like, after we would all disperse and go back to our own separate things, sometimes she and I would have a one-on-one talk about, like, stuff that I didn't want to say in front of my siblings."*
- *".. I'm using what I learned in the program to better my empathy. I'm using it to have better communication with my boyfriend and my dad."*

What does this mean?

HFBBF appears to be a promising program for helping LGBTQ+ teens learn skills for building healthy relationships and in helping caregivers learn strategies to support their teen in making healthy choices as well as learning how to create an affirming and supportive family environment. Future research with a larger number of families that follows them for a longer time after completing the program is needed to find out the program's longer-term impact on things like teen alcohol use and dating violence.

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