



EMPOWERED

Colorado LGBTQ+ Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Initiative

5 HEALTHY TIPS

...to improve sleep

- 1 **Create a restful environment** that is dark, quiet, and the ideal temperature for you.
- 2 **Optimize your sleep schedule** by setting a fixed wake-up time and limiting naps.
- 3 **Follow a bedtime routine** that limits time on electronic devices and encourages relaxation.
- 4 **Foster good daily habits** like limiting caffeine, avoiding eating late, and exercising.
- 5 **Be kind to yourself.** Some nights (and mornings) will be better than others. Try things like meditation, keeping a sleep diary, or experimenting with different methods that work for you.

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November is Transgender Awareness Month



Sharon McCutcheon

November marks the start of Transgender Awareness Month, a time to highlight and continue to promote trans rights and raise awareness of the issues transgender individuals face. With Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) on November 20, it is also a time to honor transgender and gender non-conforming lives that were lost this year to anti-trans violence. TDOR was started in memory of Rita Hester, a black transgender woman and advocate who was killed in 1998.

This year, Transgender Awareness Month is even more important. According to the [Human Rights Campaign \(HRC\)](#), an increase in anti-trans violence has been observed across the country. The majority of violence

observed was against Black and Latinx transgender women. This continues a pattern of anti-trans violence that disproportionately impacts people of color, especially black transgender women.

As COVID-19 increases the need for medical and mental health supports, it is important to recognize the disparities in health care services for transgender individuals. In a survey of LGBTQ+ Coloradans, 34% of transgender respondents identified that they had been denied coverage for an LGBTQ-specific medical issue in the past five years. The survey also found 67% of transgender youth felt sad or hopeless every day for at least two weeks in the past year compared to 30.6% of cisgender youth.

In light of these challenges, →

ADVOCATE STEVEN HADEN

Steven Haden (he/him) is the co-founder of Envision:You. He is passionate about promoting awareness around mental health to reduce barriers and increase access to care. Steven currently lives in Denver with his yellow lab Rigby, both of whom are outdoor enthusiasts. Steven is a constant inspiration to the Envision:You team with his positive attitude and devotion to improving the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals.



TRANSGENDER AWARENESS *continued*

Transgender Awareness Month is a time to listen to and raise up the voices of the trans members of our community. Take some time this month to:

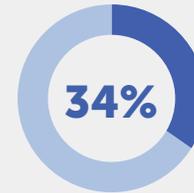
- **Read a book** by a trans author.
- Educate yourself on the risk factors and stigma trans people face every day. **A National Epidemic** by the HRC is a great resource.
- Ask for and respect the pronouns of those around you to build welcoming spaces for transgender and gender diverse people.

If you are looking for more ways to support the transgender community, you can take a look at the National Center for Transgender Equality's list of **"52 things you can do for Transgender Equality."** And then continue to do these things when the month is over.

On a parting note, on November 3, 2020, Sarah McBride became the first openly trans state senator in U.S. history. In an interview with **Buzzfeed News**, she remarked on her election, "They [young trans kids]

can go to sleep knowing that their dreams and their truths are not mutually exclusive."

If you or someone you know is in need of mental health support, please visit the **Envision:You website** for national and Colorado based resources.



34% of transgender respondents have been denied coverage for an LGBTQ-specific medical service, such as HIV medications, hormones, PrEP, PEP, HPV vaccine, or gender-affirming care.

FRESH PRESS



CNN | Health

A new study from the University of Oxford found that one in five people hospitalized with COVID-19 are later diagnosed with a psychiatric illness. While mental health difficulties are not unusual for survivors of a pandemic, an 18% chance of getting a psychiatric diagnosis after contracting COVID-19 is a higher risk than most other medical events have shown. This study demonstrates the need to develop more accessible mental health services to support the growing need due to the pandemic.

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STAYING SOBER DURING THE HOLIDAYS

It is estimated that **30% of LGBTQ+ individuals suffer from some form of addiction**, compared to 9% of the general population. As the holiday season approaches, people in recovery from drug or alcohol addiction can find it harder to stay sober. Challenges like unaccepting families can make that doubly true for LGBTQ+ folks. If you are someone currently trying to stay sober, **here are some tips to keep in mind**. When possible pick events to attend ahead of time that will minimize risk, and always have an exit strategy planned. Knowing that it can be difficult to avoid triggers during



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this time of year, connect with people that support your recovery and get them involved in your sober strategy for the holidays. Most importantly, practice self-care and prioritize yourself and your sobriety, however that looks for you.

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COMMUNITY PARTNER

Envision:You has partnered with Caring for Denver Foundation to offer the COVID-19 Behavioral Health Support Program. The program provides no-cost virtual services to support LGBTQ+ individuals with mental health, emotional and substance use issues,

and interpersonal relationship concerns due to the pandemic. If you live in Colorado, identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community, have been impacted by COVID-19, and do not have insurance to cover the cost, the program will cover up to four appointments.

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