



# RISE TOGETHER

EDUCATE TO EMPOWER

## **Rise Together: Educate to Empower.**

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CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

01

---

## Introduction

- *Challenges*

03

---

## Letters

- *Parent to Parent*
- *Youths Reflect*

05

---

## Terminology Guide

06

---

## In the Know

07

---

## Keep an Eye Out

- Forms of Bullying
- Q & A

10

---

## Know Your Rights

- *Scenarios*

13

---

## What Can You Do?

- Preventative Measures
- Q&A

16

---

## Family Matters

- Impacts

19

---

## Help Guide



# ABOUT

## **CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice**

CAISO is a feminist civil society organisation committed to ensuring wholeness, justice and inclusion for Trinidad and Tobago's LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex) communities, by developing analysis, alliances, and advocacy. CAISO's work is underpinned by eight core values that underpin our work: Wholeness, Justice, Imagination, Inclusion, Empowerment, Community, Accountability, and Feminism.

## **Wholeness and Justice**

CAISO established the Wholeness & Justice programme to expand access by diverse LGBTQI+ people in Trinidad & Tobago to wholeness, justice, and social services. The Programme responds to violations of LGBTQI+ community members, with an emphasis on trans, non-binary, gender-non-conforming and intersex people; and to deliver clinically competent, trauma-informed interventions that enable healing and resilience.

# PURPOSE OF GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to offer you assistance and guidance for the young LGBTQI+ people in your life, through understanding them, understanding their experiences, and providing them the confidence to advocate for themselves. Through disseminating practical strategies and legal and social resources, we want to help you to take the steps to seek justice and solace for children or young people in your life.

While this guide is primarily for parents or guardians of LGBTQI+ youth, we hope it reaches key groups that interact with LGBTQI+ youth: teachers, healthcare workers, legal aid advisors, and those who support LGBTQI+ communities. Our hope is that in these hands, this guide becomes a tool for advocacy and awareness, a support for legal and emotional guidance.

# INTRODUCTION

Being responsible for a young person is a complex journey full of joys, difficulties, surprises and hopes. Investing in the growth and well-being of the person you are raising asks for you to reflect, engage and learn about them as well as yourself. Being a supportive and guiding part of your child's life is an integral way to contribute to their wellness and development. Whether your child decided to share their gender and sexuality with you, or this is something you discovered along the way, your response, support, and care surrounding this important aspect of their lives will have impacts far beyond this moment.

This guide is an important first step to providing that support. We encourage you to continue along this path and hope this guide empowers you as you begin this journey.

## CHALLENGES

In the Caribbean, LGBTQI+ youth face discrimination, bullying, and hostility disproportionately more than the average youth. Discrimination has been found to permeate places such as religious institutions, educational institutions, health care centres, and other community spaces which often create isolating environments. This may come as a surprise to many, as cases of bullying and discrimination often go underreported. However, these situations are difficult and pervasive.

For the youth, the experience of being the victim of bullying and discrimination is often an experience that is hard to bring to light or discuss. The inability of children and adolescents to find outlets for expression or solace during these times can form a scar they carry into adulthood, impacting them throughout their lives. Parents and adults can support young people in their care by creating safe spaces for conversations, accepting their self-identity and gaining more knowledge about discrimination and violence. There is promise for a better world for our youth through supporting them, informing yourself and giving them the proper tools to advocate for themselves. This is essential for creating better social environments and obtaining the justice our children deserve.



## PARENT TO PARENT

Parent to Parent,

Raising children is a journey filled with hopes, dreams, and challenges. As parents, our goal is to guide and protect our kids, recognising that they come into this world with their own unique personalities and paths. It's our responsibility to help them flourish into their true selves, rather than molding them into our preconceived notions. Reflecting on my own experience, my children were always spirited and strong-willed, yet filled with kindness, intelligence, and strong moral values. I think of them as 'good people'.

My primary concern has always been their safety and well-being, especially in a world where being different can sometimes lead to harm. Navigating this path wasn't easy, but open communication was key. I admit, I made mistakes. For instance, I once shared my child's sexual orientation with someone close, before my child was ready to disclose it themselves. My child made it clear that I should not do that unless they were okay with this. I apologised, learned from this, and our relationship grew stronger.

I took the time to listen, ask questions, and educate myself. Embracing change and confronting unfamiliar situations was challenging, but essential. I sought out stories of supportive parents, choosing to focus on the positive aspects rather than dwelling on my initial apprehensions. This journey, though awkward at times, has been incredibly rewarding. My child, now a confident and loving adult, has shown me the immense value of living authentically. Their strength and independence are a testament to their character.

Our bond has deepened immeasurably as I've learned to love and support them for who they are. This experience has been a profound lesson in parenting and personal growth. I share this with you in the hope that it might offer some insight or comfort for your own parenting journeys.

Warm Regards. ***Let Us Rise Together.***

## YOUTHS REFLECT ON PARENTS

I thought my mother's opinion did not bother me because she was not hateful, but when she accepted my partner and talked to me about my relationship, I was surprised at how happy it made me and how close I felt to her.

When I think about the relationships in my youth, I feel like I did a lot of risky things because I didn't like myself very much. I didn't feel like my parents or community did either. It would've helped to have someone to talk to and to have my parent's support.

My parents have both always supported me. I came out to them as bisexual when I was 15 and gay when I was 18. We are very close, they helped me in a world that is not very kind to people like me and it makes me stronger.

My relationship with my parents is strained. When I came out to them they tried to pray the gay away. I share a lot of the same faith as them but it expresses itself in different ways. Their responses make me feel like I am not welcome. They don't know how much this has changed where I feel safe and the ways I know how to love. We don't speak much anymore.

The road has been rocky but things are much better now. When I first came out my parents were not very accepting. They said some rough/cold things. However as they've seen how I've grown, met my friends, spoken more with me and met my partners, our relationship has improved. I think this change has been good for all of us.

My parents know but we don't really talk about it. Sometimes when issues about queer people come up and they say harsh things, I feel like it is their way of saying what they really think of me. I shut them out of a lot of my life now because of this. We have always had ups and downs but used to be able to work through the tough stuff. This is different and I don't know why. I wish they would realise that being negative about LGBTQI+ people hurts me too.

\* These reflections are based on real anonymised experiences from personal interactions.

# TERMINOLOGY GUIDE

## Sexual Orientation

A person's emotional, sexual, and/or romantic attraction to others. Everyone has a sexual orientation, which is a part of their identity.

## Gender Non-Conforming or Non Binary

A person whose gender expression differs from how their family, culture, or society expects them to express or behave; gender expression does not conform to binary (man/woman) gender expectations.

## Transgender

A person whose gender identity and/or expression does not match the cultural expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may identify in various ways publicly or not. Gender identity is distinct from sexual orientation.

Cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

## Gender Expression

How a person expresses their gender to the world. It can include appearance, dress, mannerisms, speech and interactions, which might or might not match their gender identity.

## Gender Identity

A person's internal, deeply-felt sense of being a man, woman, or neither. Gender identity can be internal and personal, where it is not necessarily visible to others.

## Intersex

A person born with physical or biological sex characteristics, such as sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns, and/or chromosomal patterns, which do not fit the typical definitions of male or female. These characteristics may appear at birth or later in life, often at puberty. Intersex people can have any sexual orientation and gender identity.

## LGBTQI+

The acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and intersex - often used as a shorthand term to refer to sex and gender diversity as a group/community. Sometimes LGBT+ or LGBTQ+ is used.





# IN THE KNOW

In Trinidad & Tobago, the 2019 *National School Climate Survey Report on Bullying and Gender-Based Violence in Secondary Schools* provides clear evidence that homophobia contributed to a rise in bullying behaviour. For young people, the experience of bullying and discrimination is mentally harrowing and often an experience that is hard to discuss. The inability of children and adolescents to find forms of expression or solace during these times can impact them throughout their lives and become a scar carried into adulthood. Gaining more knowledge about the discrimination and violence young LGBTQI+ people face, supporting them, and giving them tools to advocate for themselves are essential for creating better social environments and obtaining the justice youth deserve.

## In Trinidad & Tobago



**31.9% OF STUDENTS BELIEVE THAT LGBTQ PEOPLE THEY KNEW OR SAW WERE NOT TREATED WITH RESPECT**

**60.1% RECOGNIZE THE PRESENCE OF LGBTQ STUDENTS AT THEIR SCHOOL**



**HOMOPHOBIA SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED BULLYING ACTS OF HARM AND VIOLENCE**

*Source: Trinidad & Tobago National School Climate Survey Report 2019 - Bullying and Gender-Based Violence in Secondary Schools.*



# KEEP AN EYE OUT

Discrimination against LGBTQI+ people can be found in many places including the very institutions that shape our society. Awareness allows us opportunities to better prepare and keep an eye out for the way inequalities may manifest themselves.

## WORKPLACE

This is often a site of structural discrimination for LGBTQI+ people, particularly in places where there are currently no legal forms of protection from discrimination (in Trinidad & Tobago). Discrimination can take the form of late wages, wrongful dismissals, and workplace harassment due to sexual orientation, sexuality, and gender identity or expression.

## HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

For LGBTQI+ people, access to essential health services is often a challenge. This is based on stigma and discrimination within the healthcare system and a lack of protection against discrimination.

See CAISO's *Mind Yuh Business* toolkit for more information on stigma and discrimination, as well as support for the health and well-being of the LGBTQI+ community. Visit [caisott.org/resources/](http://caisott.org/resources/) to access the toolkit.

## SCHOOL

The school environment can be a central point of contention for children during their late childhood and early adolescence, as this is when bullying is most likely to occur. Bullying in this setting is usually in the form of harassment and cyberbullying. Gender-based bullying is prevalent in secondary schools particularly based on perceived or real LGBTQI+ identity.

## THE STREET

Street harassment is commonplace in Trinidad and Tobago - and even a cultural norm - for women and for LGBTQI+ people. Street harassment can range from unwanted advances to aggression, to verbal and physical violence.

Although there are laws that address harassment commonly experienced on the street (see Offences Against the Person Act), LGBTQI+ face challenges when reporting incidents to the police. Stigma and discrimination are often perpetuated making it difficult to access justice.

## FORMS OF BULLYING & HARASSMENT

**PHYSICAL** - Use of physical harm or violence: kicking, punching, slapping, shoving and other physical attacks.

**SEXUAL** - Use of sexual comments or actions to harm: from body shaming to gesturing, or non-consensual touching, to any form of sexual violence.

**VERBAL** - Use of words verbally to demean or harm: from making comments to name calling.

**CYBERBULLYING** - An increasingly prevalent form of bullying, this involves the use of technology to bully or intimidate an individual via messaging.



## CAISO HOTLINE

Is this just a phase? Weren't they straight before?  
Can't I change their mind to keep them safe?

Seen

Like many parts of becoming self-aware, this is a process of growth. Young people who identify as LGBTQI+ become aware of their sexuality and identity usually with much fear and worry because of the pressures of society and family to conform to gender and sexual norms – i.e. being heterosexual/straight and conforming to the sex/gender assigned at birth. If a young person has shared their identity or feelings with you about sexuality and/or gender identity, listen and offer support. This is not a phase and likely won't go away.

What if I say the wrong thing?

Seen

You might, but this is often a part of life and learning. You can prepare yourself to have better conversations by learning and educating yourself on particular issues, and by actively listening to young people. There will be hurdles, but improving your understanding should lead to better communication with the children and/or young people in your life. If you are compassionate, as they learn they should return the sentiment.





What about this whole changing gender on a whim?

Seen

Different forms of expression and love, as well as variation in identity, are normal and have existed throughout history and across cultures including our own! It is likely that if your child has made this decision, they did not do so lightly or without turmoil. Take time to listen to them and learn why this is important to them. Read up on others who have had similar experiences.

Is it my fault they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, intersex, or queer?

Seen

Sexual orientation or sex/gender identity is no one's fault and can be a very wonderful part of your young person's identity, growth, and community. You cannot make or turn someone gay or straight, queer, trans, or intersex.

What if my community disapproves of my child? What do I do?

Seen

We understand the importance of community and having an extensive support system. However, our thoughts and experiences may differ from those in our community. Discrimination and stigma are learned behaviours based on cultural and societal norms. If you have the power to inform your community, you should. This is due to no fault of your own, nor is it the fault of your children or young people in your life.



# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



In Trinidad and Tobago, there are no laws that specifically include or protect LGBTQI+ people from violence experienced on the basis of this status. However, depending on the nature of the experience, some laws have been useful to community members who have experienced violations. They include:

- **The Computer Misuse Act (Chap. 11:17)**
- **Offences Against the Person Act (Chap. 11:08)**
- **Equal Opportunity Act (Chap. 22:03)**

The Wholeness and Justice Programme uses some of these laws to assist LGBTQI+ people seeking redress. LGBTQI+ people who have experienced violations are encouraged to seek legal advice. **You can contact Wholeness and Justice via phone 868-282-2476 or email [wholenessandjustice@caisott.org](mailto:wholenessandjustice@caisott.org).**

The following scenarios show how bullying, harassment, or discrimination may occur. We provide suggestions to help you address these issues.

Talking with your child (in age-appropriate ways) about the issues they are facing and the ways you can work on these together is an important first step in all of these cases. Remember, it's important to create and maintain an open and trusting relationship with your child, where their boundaries are respected, and they feel safe to confide in you.

## SCENARIOS

Alex is a teenager attending secondary school. He is being verbally insulted by his classmates and being called slurs. The insults are based on his perceived gender and sexual orientation.

### LAWS

#### Harassment

Causing distress by following or confronting an individual to cause intimidation or to offend.

#### Discrimination in Education

The educational institution should not cause harm to the student, nor can they limit access to services, facilities and benefits.

Create a space at home for Alex to talk about his feelings and possible next steps. If school counseling is available and supportive, Alex should talk to the counselor. If this is not available and/or not considered a safe space, it is in the best interest of the parent(s) to find counseling services that are supportive or LGBTQI+ sensitive (see *recommendations at the end of this guide*). Also, you might encourage Alex to talk with a friend, family member who he feels safe talking to. Encourage him to bring this issue to trusted teachers with your support. If there are no changes, the parent(s) should talk directly to the school administration. Consider the possibility of filing an official report based on the nature of this issue. It may fall under Harassment.

**What if it were Alex's teacher?** In this situation, it would be hard for Alex to defend himself, but his parents must remind him that there is nothing he did wrong to warrant this treatment. If Alex can, he should record the cases of harassment with dates and details. His parent(s) should speak to the school's administration, stating clearly their expectations, and continue monitoring the situation. If no change is made, it is in their interest to seek legal action or file a police report. This is both a form of harassment and a case of discrimination in an educational institution.

Sasha is a lesbian employee at X store. Her fellow employees have shared and sent intimate videos and pictures of her through social media that they have taken without her consent.

LAWS

**Computer Misuse Act**

10(2) Sharing of data from a computer with persons who were not granted access to this data.

**Offences Against the Person Act**

(Harassment 30A) - making visual recordings of the person.

There are no laws pertaining to acts of voyeurism and distribution of unsolicited imagery. However, this falls under the Computer Misuse Act and the Offences Against a Person Act. Legal action can be taken on these bases. Under these circumstances, a complaint and/or a police report can be filed.

It is in Sasha's best interest to make records of these incidents, taking note of the perpetrators. This evidence can be taken to the manager, with extra copies kept for future use. It is also within Sasha's rights to file a police report. Further, if trusted counseling support is available, it should be used in this difficult situation - or find supportive and LGBTQI+ sensitive services.

**TIP**

**While the EOA does not include sexual orientation or gender identity as protected categories, it offers protection on the basis of sex. This may provide a route for redress.**

Henry is walking along the street in his neighbourhood when they are harassed for their appearance. The situation becomes violent, and Henry is harmed.

## LAWS

### Offences Against the Person

Unlawful and malicious wounding, with or without a weapon, that causes harm to the person; choking or suffocation of the person; assault occasioning actual bodily harm; common assault.

If Henry can, they should try to find a space that is safer - this may include a friend or parent's home, a busy store or the nearest police station.

Making a police report is within their right as this is an act with the intent to cause bodily harm or danger to life under the Offences Against the Person Act.

### SAFE SPACES

While we know that many spaces are often not completely safe, safer spaces tend to be ones where your physical and mental well-being are not in danger. For example, a space where your identity is accepted or not the reason for harassment. It can also be a space where you are in community with others who are like-minded, or where you can be left alone. It may be helpful to identify safer spaces that exist in areas that you frequent.

### TIP

You can find additional information about police reporting in CAISO's *Navigating the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service as an LGBTQI+ Person* at [caisott.org](http://caisott.org).

### TIP

If you need legal assistance regarding a violation or you have questions about your rights, contact the Wholeness and Justice Programme for support.

Email us at: [wholenessandjustice@caisott.org](mailto:wholenessandjustice@caisott.org)  
Call or message us at: (868) 28-CAISO (282-2476).

David goes to the health centre for a check-up, and the nurses refuse to attend to him because his gender presentation and expression does not match his identification or sex assigned at birth.

## POLICY

### Charter of Patient Rights

You have the right to always receive respectful treatment from providers of health care and under all circumstances.

A complaint can be filed to the medical board as this falls under discrimination in the medical space (see [Mind Yuh Business](#) for more information about filing a complaint to the Medical Board). Make note of those who participated and what was said to include in the complaint. If it is possible, David should find another centre where they can feel safe for care. Friends or organisations may be able to help with recommendations.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

In these situations, you can often feel lost about what you can do for your children to help them. The first step is acknowledging that feeling overwhelmed and unsure is normal. It is okay not to have all the answers. Remember, you are not alone in this. Seek support from other parents, teachers, or even professionals if needed.

The suggestions listed are not a one-size-fits-all all solution; the solution may lie in a combination of methods. Be patient and determined!

### What to do:

**In Schools** - When protecting your children, you must work together. Talk to them, and get an understanding of how they want to seek justice. It is important to incorporate their perspective in your decisions. It is also important not to 'out' your child if they have asked you to keep their sexuality private. You can still advocate for their safety without doing this, if this is what they have asked.

- Talk to the teachers and the parents of the children harming your children.
- Talk to the school's dean and principal. If these steps do not decrease bullying, it is best to take it further.
- You are under your right to file a police report. Call or visit any local police station to file a report.



## NOTE

Insights from Wholeness & Justice Programme reveal that too often police officers do not take bullying complaints as seriously as they need to. Police officers have also been found to be the perpetrators of LGBTQI+ harassment.

**In the Workplace** - if your teenager's work environment poses a mental or physical risk, talk to them and ensure that you discuss the best course of action to take. Sometimes, they may want to handle things themselves. In this scenario, you can still ensure they understand the courses of action they can take.

- Ensure that they collect and retain all forms of evidence of harassment, including the date and details of the alleged act of discrimination.
- They can talk to the manager – explain the situation to them, and if there are any forms of evidence, offer to present them.
- If support through on-site or work-designated counseling is available, recommend that they use it.
- They can file a complaint to the Equal Opportunity Commission. In this complaint, they must fill out their contact information and the contact information of the person they are complaining against. However, this may not provide a solution that is responsive to the particular circumstances and your child's need (See note below).

## IMPORTANT

**Disclaimer** - the Equal Opportunity Commissions (EOA) does not protect LGBTQI+ persons who experience discrimination and harm based on their LGBTQI+ status. The EOA covers discrimination pertaining to sex, race, ethnicity, geographical origin, religion, marital status, and disability. Sometimes, a case may have overlapping areas of complaint.

**On the Streets** - File a police report. Follow the provided [link](#) to learn how to file a police report: [caisott.org/resources/](https://caisott.org/resources/). Sometimes it is important to remind police that you know which laws or rights support your claim. Additionally, if you have acquired legal support for these cases, it may be helpful to note this.

## Preventative Measures

Introducing your children to LGBTQI friendly spaces can provide a safe, external environment for them to build community. This can increase their sense of safety and prevent bullying and discrimination, while also promoting understanding and support.

Talking to the teachers and administration about LGBTQI+ issues can be an important avenue for advocating for your child. Whether you do this through expanding their understanding of terminology or directing them towards resources that help them understand LGBTQI+ discrimination, engaging with them directly helps to promote understanding of LGBTQI+ issues that affect your child / young person in your life.

### **Advocate for LGBTQI+ rights and protection**

Keep track of your local LGBTQI+ civil society organisations (CSOs) fighting for safety and equality in these spaces. There are often options to join campaigns or volunteer with them. You can call or email them to ask questions about how you can best advocate for rights, protection, and justice.

### **Support group creation**

Creating support groups for parents and/or young people may be helpful. Support groups foster connectedness and understanding and have the subsequent benefit of decreasing bullying.

### **Talk to them about bullying and discrimination**

Spend time with your child and discuss harassment, bullying, and gender-based violence. Let them know that people that try to make them feel badly about themselves, make fun of them or degrade them are not their friends, even if they offer them things or are nice to them at other times. Helping them understand what bullying looks like and how they can address it is important.

### **Technology safety**

With the rise of cyberbullying, it is important to help your child navigate social media. Talk to them about using site safety features to better protect themselves and help them decide whom or what they should engage with online. It may be important to block, delete, or unfollow certain people or words. Additionally, it may be important to keep a record of cyberbullying. It may also help for you to understand the safety measures available on the internet to protect their well-being.

### **Creating a safe space in the home**

Allow your child to talk and be themselves. Listen, affirm and ask questions. This is often overlooked due to its simplicity, but allowing your child to be, while showing love and support is powerful. Learn how they feel most supported by observing and asking them what is best. It is an excellent way for them to gain confidence and will help you better handle more difficult discussions.

## Advocacy Corner

- Start a parent organisation or online parent group that can come together to discuss ways to improve conditions and advocate for LGBTQI+ protection.
- Encourage your children's school system to distribute more information on bullying and discrimination through assemblies and workshops. Support calls for comprehensive sexuality education and GBV awareness in schools.
- Become involved through legislative advocacy. Understand that change can start from the top to allow for justice to be sought.
- Have conversations with friends and family to create an enabling and positive environment for your children to feel included and protected.

## FAMILY MATTERS

Home is where the heart is, and it has been found that family support is a major promotive factor in an adolescent's life. A lack of support and guidance from one's family can impact the life course of children and adolescents, leaving them more open to harm. They need love and help, especially when they feel the most isolated. The inclusion of family in a child's journey is associated with positive physical and mental health.

### FAMILY EXCLUSION



**CHILDREN ARE 6  
TIMES MORE LIKELY  
TO HAVE DEPRESSION**

**8 TIMES MORE LIKELY  
TO COMMIT SUICIDE**



**3 TIMES MORE LIKELY  
TO USE DRUGS**

### FAMILY INCLUSION



**DECREASED RISK OF  
DEPRESSION AND  
HIGHER SELF-ESTEEM**

**LOWER SUICIDE RATES**



**REDUCED RISK OF  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Source: Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults

Imagine a world with no discrimination toward LGBTQI+ youth. There would be many opportunities laid out for their future, and their ability to prosper.

When LGBTQI+ youth are able to fully explore their potential and chase their dreams, there is a positive effect on other areas of their lives. Access to quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, can help them achieve their goals, contribute positively to society, and lead fulfilling lives.

**Start**

**Job Security**

**Financial Security**

**Housing Security**

**Improved self-esteem**

**Increased life quality**

The domino effect of discrimination collapses, allowing youth to acquire jobs that provide them with stable incomes. As more and more young people are given opportunities to succeed, they are able to advocate for the inclusion of others. With access to education and job training programmes, these youths are able to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to secure a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

## IMPACTS

Start

Paths taken are not only based on individual choice. Your life journey can be impacted by how society perceives you and chooses to act towards you. Discriminatory practices can be found in many spaces for LGBTQI+ persons, barring access to resources.

### Institutional discrimination

Studies show that bullying in schools may impact the survivor's academic performance negatively or prompt them to drop out. This has a direct impact on employment and subsequent financial stability.

Job Insecurity

Your child may experience discriminatory practices at school, accessing health care or at work, with harmful, long-term impacts on their life course.

Financial Insecurity

Food Insecurity

Those who are bullied lose confidence in themselves, lowering self-esteem. This in turn can lead to depression, anxiety, and feelings of isolation.

Lowered self-esteem  
Increased depression  
Decreased self-confidence

Denial of housing

Decreased quality of life

# HELP GUIDE

## THE SIGNS

Remember that discrimination and harassment can make youth feel helpless. They may fear backlash and repercussions from their peers. Fear of rejection and social isolation are genuine fears for your children, so consider that when trying to communicate.

- Behavior change – withdrawal, loss of interest in hobbies
- Discipline and behavioral problems
- Declining grades
- Engagement in risk behaviour\*
- Shift in friendship groups
- Unexplained Injuries
- Lost or destroyed items
- Not wanting to go to school
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Doesn't want to go to school
- Frequent headaches and stomachaches

Distress in children can look different from child to child. Talk to your children about visiting a therapist that caters to their age group. This may allow you to determine their state of mind while giving them an outlet for communication.

\*Risk behaviour like substance abuse, unprotected sex, and reckless driving are acts that increase the chance of disease, injury, and death. The pros and cons of these actions are usually not considered.

## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Emotional support is important during difficult times. This looks like different things depending on the needs and personality of your child. No matter what, it is important that your child knows you care.

- Let them know you love them - this may seem simple, yet is so important! As they try to understand the world around them and the harm they may face, they should know that the people they hold closest - their family - loves them, and will continue to support them as they grow and change.
- Talk - getting your children to open up may feel like one of the hardest things but it is a process filled with patience and reward.
- Additional Resources - Acknowledge when you need support beyond what you can offer by yourself. If your child needs professional support, be open to helping them secure mental health providers that are LGBTQI+ sensitive. Let them know it is okay to ask for help from their teachers, and other family members who are supportive.
- Remind them that you are there.
- Listen – pay attention to non-verbal forms of communication. How do they act around you? What is their body language saying? Are they more withdrawn?

## CONVERSATION TIPS

### DO NOT SAY

What did you do to start this?

You need to toughen up!

Fight back!

Why can't you be more normal.

It's not a big deal.  
Everyone gets bullied.

Don't be dramatic.

Just ignore it.

### DO SAY

Its not your fault.

Would you be okay with us talking to your teacher about this?

That sounds like it hurt. Can you tell me more about what's happening?

Let's make sure this doesn't happen again.

How do you want to handle it?

You're not alone.

### HOW TO GET THEM TO OPEN UP

- Role play with them.
- Encourage them to journal their feelings.
- Let them come up with a plan of action.
- Make this an ongoing conversation.
- Remind them that they matter.

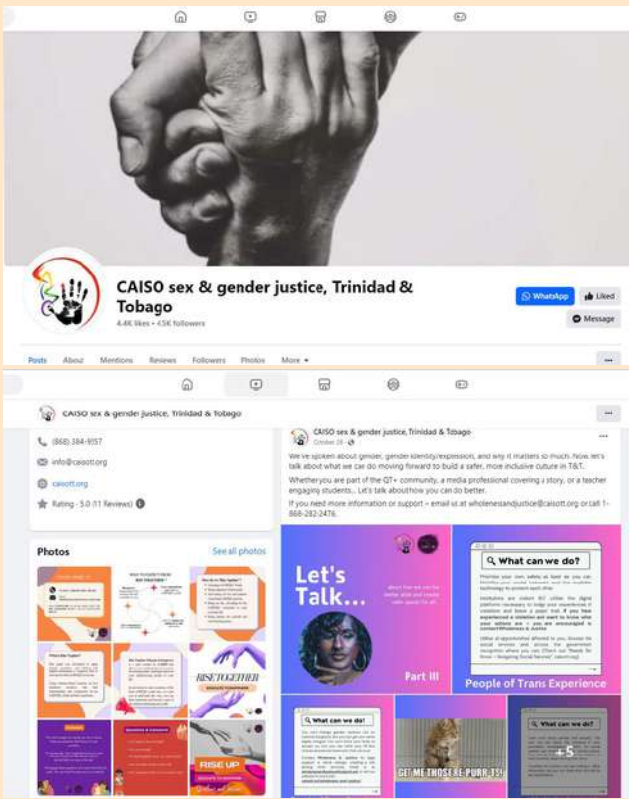
# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



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**Defining Sexuality the Basics**

In Depth With Dike Rostant...

TTT is a Trinidadian...

Watch on YouTube

youtube.com/@caisott

Find us on facebook.com/caiso

There are many resources that can provide you with additional insights. Learn more about relevant language and terms, LGBTQI+ advocacy, and avenues for empowerment on this journey. Explore other guides, resources, and LGBTQI+ support spaces. Follow website links provided and stay tuned to CAISO.



## WHERE TO SEEK HELP & GET SUPPORT

### CAISO's Wholeness & Justice Programme

Email: [wholenessandjustice@caisott.org](mailto:wholenessandjustice@caisott.org)  
Call/message: (868) 28 CAISO (282- 2476)

LGBTQI+ ORGANISATION

Legal Services

Clinical Services

Information

### The Silver Lining Foundation

Email: [thesilverliningfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:thesilverliningfoundation@gmail.com)  
Call/message: +1-868-470-1967

LGBTQI+ ORGANISATION

Information

Support

### Womantra

Email: [admin@womantra.org](mailto:admin@womantra.org)  
Call/message: +1 (868) 463-4653

LGBTQI+ ORGANISATION

Information

Support

### TT Trans Coalition

Email: [tttranscoalition@gmail.com](mailto:tttranscoalition@gmail.com)

LGBTQI+ ORGANISATION

Support

### Families in Action

Email: [fia@familiesinaction.net](mailto:fia@familiesinaction.net)  
Call/message: +1 (868) 622-6952/5365

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Support

### Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Email: [cadvtt@gmail.com](mailto:cadvtt@gmail.com)  
Call/message: 1-868-624-0402

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Information

### FPATT

Email: [fpattrep@tfpa.org](mailto:fpattrep@tfpa.org)  
Call/message: 1 (868) 623-4764

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Information

Support

### Rape Crisis Society

Email: [rapecrisisnt@yahoo.com](mailto:rapecrisisnt@yahoo.com)  
Call/message: +1 (868) 471-1268

LGBTQI+ ALLY

Support

# REFERENCES

## CAISO Resources

Trinidad and Tobago National School Climate Survey Report 2019

CAS Toolkit: LGBTQ+ Parents Edition.

Free to Be Me: A Toolkit to Protect LGBTQIA+ Students' Rights.

Social Isolation and Connectedness as Determinants of Well-Being:  
Global Evidence Mapping Focused on LGBTQ Youth.

"Protect Your People" Harvard Law School LGBTQ+ Advocacy  
Clinic Toolkit

Homophobia in Higher Education: Untold Stories from Black gay  
men in Jamaican universities

Discrimination and Barriers to Well-Being: The State of the LGBTQI+  
Community in 2022

Overlooked and at Risk: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender  
Youth in the Caribbean.

Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young  
Adults.

A Sexual Culture of Justice: Strengthening LGBTQI and GBV  
Partnerships, Capacity and Efficacy to Promote and Protect Rights in  
Trinidad and Tobago.



## **CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice**

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**Phone:** +1 (868) 384-9557

## **Wholeness and Justice**

**Email:** [wholenessandjustice@caisott.org](mailto:wholenessandjustice@caisott.org)  
**Phone:** +1 (868) 282-2476