

## Correlation between Suicide, Substance Abuse & Gay/Lesbian Conflict

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- Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among people.
- The statistics are at least three times greater among lesbian and gay men.
- Although recognized by clinicians in the gay and lesbian community, the relationship between homosexuality and youth suicide has been virtually ignored by the school system and the media.
- Substance abuse has consistently been linked to increased risk of suicide.
- Statistics indicate that lesbians and gay men are at much greater risk than the general population for substance abuse. Frequently cited reasons include attempts to cope with loss and depression through alcohol and drugs, resorting to abuse as a result of societal oppression, and the role of bars and social meeting places for lesbians and gay men.
- Traditional recovery networks are closed to this group; often the support groups such as the family, church, and school alienate gay men and lesbians by rejecting them, ostracizing them, or denying their existence.
- Taboos surrounding the free and open discussion of homosexuality impede people in the school environment from facing a major factor that is often involved. As a consequence, major school suicide prevention programs are not effective because the youngsters feel constrained in revealing their true feelings.

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