

# **UCLA**

## **Policy Briefs**

### **Title**

Facilitating family acceptance through intervention programs to avert displacement

### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/80s2j3j3>

### **Author**

CHUNG, PATTY

### **Publication Date**

2012-12-01

### **Copyright Information**

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>



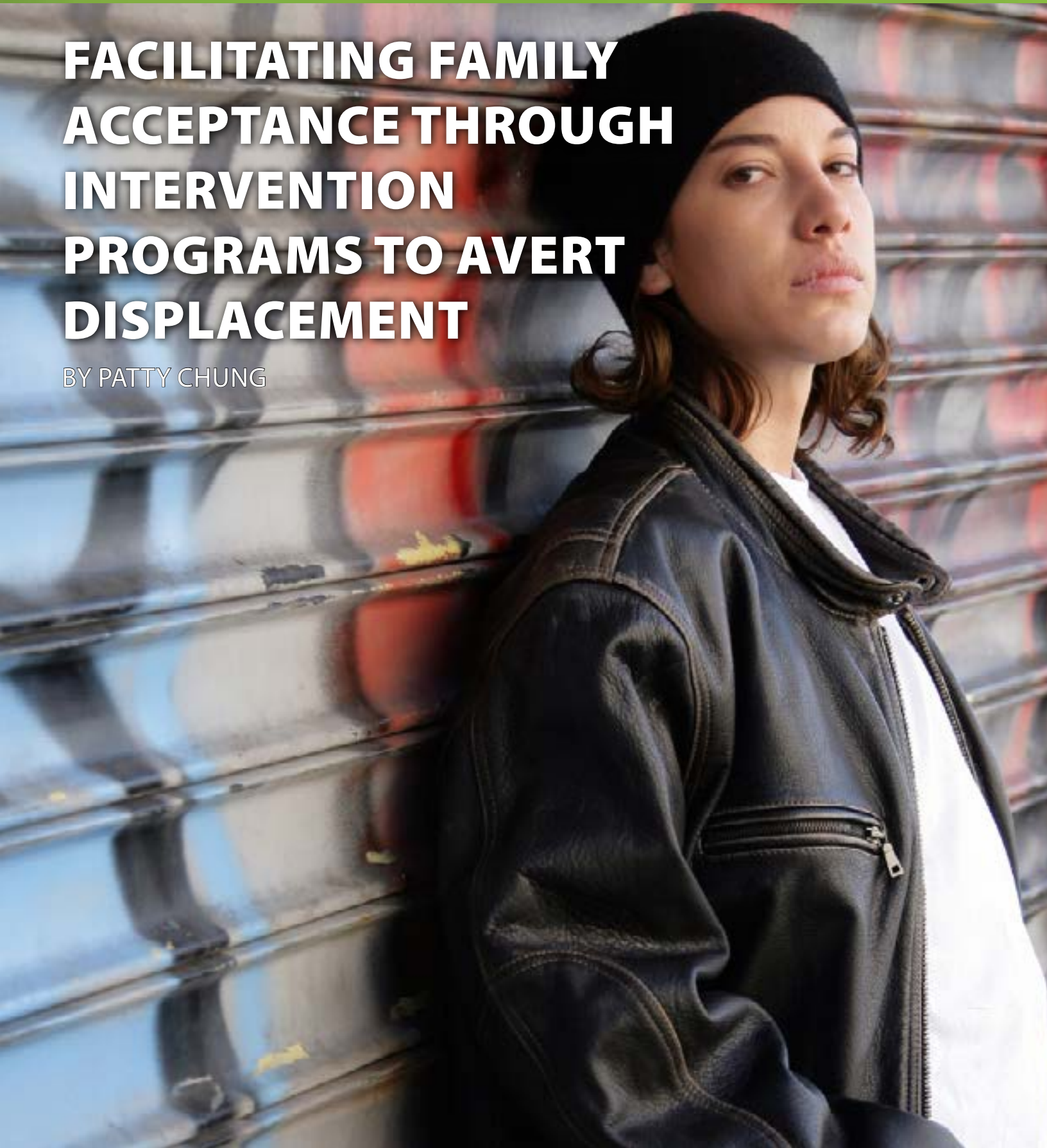
December 2012

# Policy Brief 10

*RETHINKING POLICY ON GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN'S ISSUES*

## **FACILITATING FAMILY ACCEPTANCE THROUGH INTERVENTION PROGRAMS TO AVERT DISPLACEMENT**

BY PATTY CHUNG



BY PATTY CHUNG

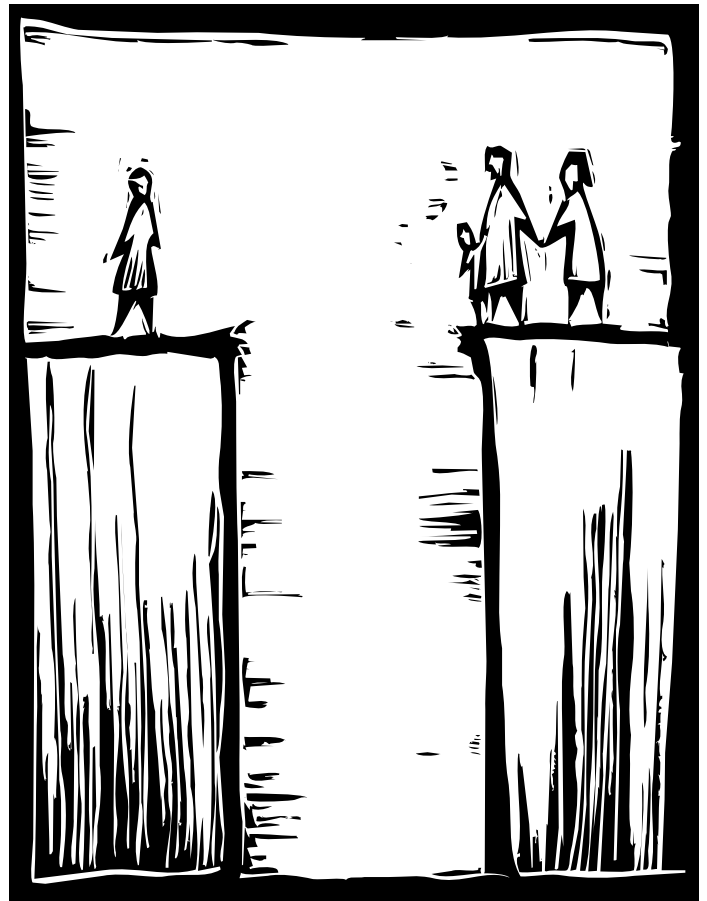
# FACILITATING FAMILY ACCEPTANCE THROUGH INTERVENTION PROGRAMS TO AVERT DISPLACEMENT

*Increasing the knowledge base of experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) homeless youth through aggressive research will enhance understanding of factors leading to LGBT youth homelessness and support service providers in delivering sound and culturally competent practice.*

LGBT HOMELESS YOUTH are at significant risk for suicide attempts, illicit drug use, and contraction of health conditions from risky sexual behavior (for example, HIV, STIs, and STDs).<sup>1</sup> Causes of homelessness among LGBT youth are connected to multiple risk factors, including physical, sexual, and substance abuse, neglect, poverty, and mental health disabilities.<sup>2</sup> One significant risk factor is family conflict. One study noted that 25% of LGBT homeless youth identified family rejection (for example, verbal and physical abuse) of their sexual identity as a primary motivator for leaving home.<sup>3</sup> Contributing factors to the high rates of homelessness in LGBT-identified youth include the systemic failure of child and youth welfare and juvenile systems, discriminatory practices in housing, and a lack of support in facilitating family acceptance of LGBT youths.<sup>4</sup> Action is needed to develop strategies and increase funding for intervention programs that avert displacement.

## CRITIQUE

Family acceptance is a major protective and mitigating factor on negative outcomes such as homelessness. Interventions promoting parental and caregiver acceptance toward LGBT youth is strongly associated with positive



**Causes of LGBT youth homelessness are connected to multiple risk factors, including physical, sexual, and substance abuse, neglect, poverty and mental health disabilities. One significant risk factor is family conflict.**

mental and physical health; yet there is no nationwide policy to combat the family rejection that so often precipitates LGBT youth homelessness.<sup>5</sup> Prevention programs that target parents of LGBT youth—through in-home counseling, community support services, mental health services, and family reunification programs—are underfunded and inadequate.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To effectively curtail rates of displacement among LGBT youth, lawmakers must enact policies that support more prevention efforts through family-based interventions. The Reconnecting Youth to Prevent Homelessness Act of 2011 is one of the first of its kind to properly identify LGBT youth as a population at risk, to seek family acceptance as intervention, and provides funding for the establishment of a federal program designed to target this epidemic. A provision mandates that “the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall establish a demonstration project to develop programs that are focused on improving family relationships and reducing homelessness for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth.”<sup>6</sup> Additionally, these “demonstration projects” would also include evidence-based interventions to identify and evaluate LGBT youth at risk of being forced from their homes, encourage increase of supportive behaviors from parents, decrease rejecting behaviors, and provide educational resources to help families identify risky behaviors. Educating a diverse range of families in how their behaviors impact their children is a first step.

*Patty Chung is an M.S.W. candidate in the Department of Social Welfare in the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. Before entering graduate school, Chung was a youth mentor in an arts enrichment program serving at-risk youth and providing direct service counseling to adolescent youth in residential treatment.*

CREDITS: Illustration by xochicalco; photo by Stockphoto4u/istockphoto.com

## NOTES

1. Family Rejection as a Predictor of Negative Health Outcomes in White and Latino Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Young Adults, Ryan, C., et al., *Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*, volume 123, pages 346-352, 2009.
2. Challenges Faced by Homeless Sexual Minorities: Comparison of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Homeless Adolescents with Their

- Heterosexual Counterparts, Cochran, B., et al., *American Journal of Public Health*, volume 92, issue 5, pages 773-777, 2002.
3. Age of Minority Sexual Orientation Development and Risk of Childhood Maltreatment and Suicide Attempts in Women, Corliss, H., et al., *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, volume 79, issue 4, pages 511-521, 2009; Parents’ Reactions to Transgender Youths’ Gender Nonconforming Expression and Identity. Grossman, A., et al., *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, volume 18, issue 1, pages 3-16, 2005; Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth and Their Families: Disclosure of Sexual Orientation and its Consequences. D’Augelli, A., et al., *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 68(3), page 361-382, 1998.
4. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth: An Epidemic of Homelessness*, Ray, N. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, 2006. <<http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/HomelessYouth.pdf>> URL accessed February, 2012.
5. Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults, Ryan, C., et al., *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, volume 23, issue 4, pages 205-213, 2010.
6. *On the Streets: The Federal Response to Gay and Transgender Homeless Youth*, Quintana, N., and Rosenthal, J. Americans for Progress, 2010. <<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/06/pdf/lgbtyouthhomelessness.pdf>> URL accessed February 2012; Text of S. 961: Reconnecting Youth to Prevent Homelessness Act of 2011. <<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=s112-961>> URL accessed February, 2012.

## MORE INFO

- Supportive Families, Healthy Children: Helping Families with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Children*, C. Ryan. Family Acceptance Project, 2009. <<http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/files/FAP%20English%20Version%202%20FINAL.pdf>>
- The Legal Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth in the Juvenile Justice System*, National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2006. <<http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-homeless.html#LITERATURETheEquityProject>>
- Homeless LGBT Youth and LGBT Youth in Foster Care*. Safe Schools Coalition, 2011. <<http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-homeless.html#LITERATURE>>
- Best Practices for Serving LGBT Homeless Youth*, National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2009. <<http://www.nyacyouth.org/docs/uploads/Recommended-Best-Practices-for-LGBT-Homeless-Youth-040909.pdf>>
- National Recommended Best Practices for Serving LGBT Homeless Youth*, National Alliance to End Homelessness, <<http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/general/detail/2239>>

For more information on CSW Policy Briefs, visit <http://www.csw.ucla.edu/publications/policy-briefs>. CSW Policy Briefs are also available at the California Digital Library: <http://escholarship.org/uc/csw>

UCLA CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN

Box 957222/Public Policy Bldg 1500

Los Angeles, CA 90095-7222

310 825 0590 • [cswpubs@csw.ucla.edu](mailto:cswpubs@csw.ucla.edu)

INTERIM DIRECTOR: Rachel Lee