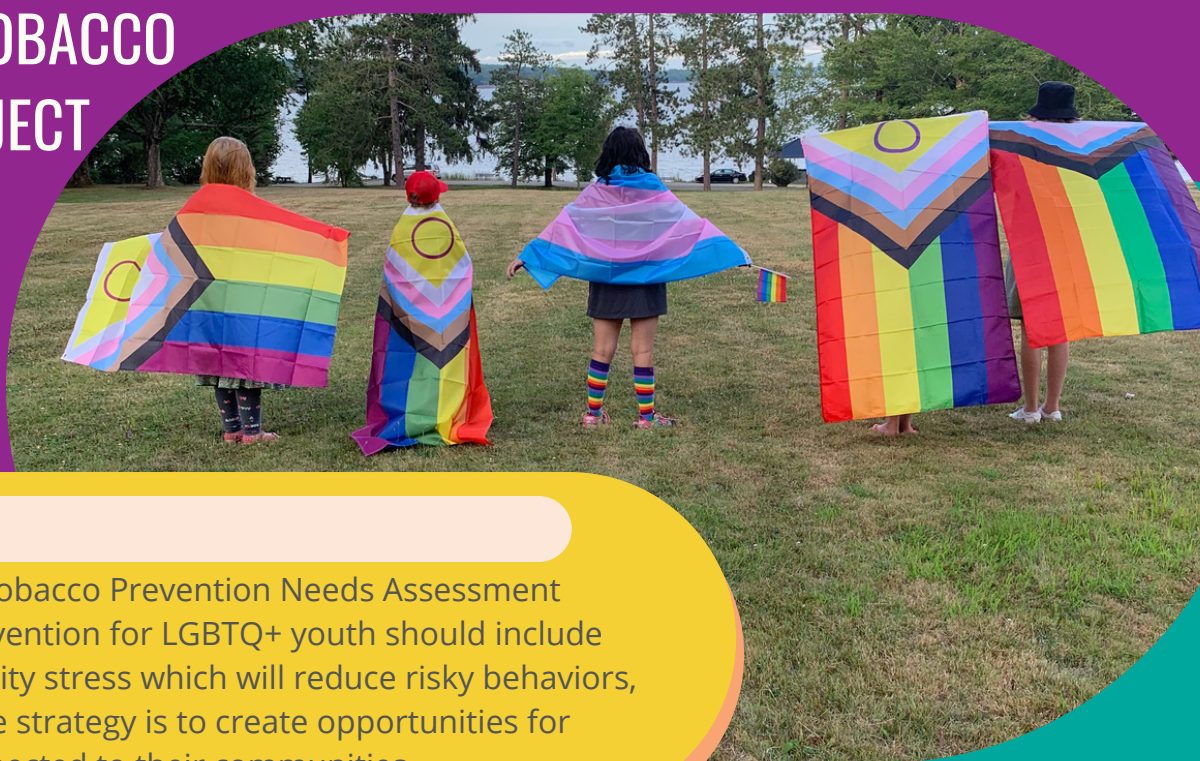


# LGBTQ+ YOUTH TOBACCO PREVENTION PROJECT

## SUCCESS STORY SEPTEMBER 2022



### SUMMARY

The 2021 LGBTQ+ Youth Tobacco Prevention Needs Assessment indicated tobacco use prevention for LGBTQ+ youth should include strategies to reduce minority stress which will reduce risky behaviors, including tobacco use. One strategy is to create opportunities for LGBTQ+ youth to feel connected to their communities.

66% of LGB youth and 25% of transgender youth in Maine report feeling like they do not matter to their community per the 2021 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey. In contrast, only 33% of non-LGBT students report feeling they do not matter to their community. Tobacco and substance use with peers is one of the most common ways youth seek to connect to the group.

### CHALLENGE

OUT Maine planned and hosted three "OUT in the Park" events during the summer for LGBTQ+ youth and allies to gather together and build relationships. We know protective factors such as a support system and caring adults are effective in the tobacco prevention strategy. At these events, youth made connections with their peers, allies, and OUT Maine staff in the role of caring adults.

### INTERVENTION

OUT Maine engaged with LGBTQ+ youth at three regional events, with a total of 15-20 youth participating. Youth who attended the events made friends and continue to engage in our weekly online programming. One particular youth had never attended any OUT Maine event or group and was immediately welcomed by the group and has developed genuine friendships. This kind of personal connection and feeling of safety builds resilience for youth and allows them to engage in fewer at-risk behaviors; building prevention factors for youth is critical, and allowing youth to build their own sense of community is part of that.

### RESULTS

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