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Hot Trends In Home Heating

A More Energy- And Cost-Efficient Heating And Cooling Solution



Ductless mini-split systems can save homeowners up to 25 percent on their utility bills and allow for individual, room-by-room temperature control.

(NAPSA)-As the temperature plummets, homeowners will crank up the heat to keep warm and toasty-quickly burning through money and energy. In fact, home heating uses more energy and costs more money than any other system in your home, typically making up nearly half of your utility bill. So what's the best way to keep the cold out, the heat in, and your energy bill down?

There are several types of heating systems that range from blowing hot air through ductwork to piping hot water through your floor. Forced-air systems, the most common type, heat quickly and evenly, but many are not energy efficient and some users complain that moving air is noisy and blows allergens around the house. In addition, they require ductwork, which many older homes don't have.

Americans are largely unaware of one heating option called ductless mini-split systems, distributed by several companies including Fujitsu General America. While the majority of HVAC systems in Asia and Europe are already ductless, they are rapidly gaining traction in North America, with mini-split systems projected to enjoy an annual growth rate of 14 percent each year through 2020.

Energy Bill Savings Up To 25 Percent

The high energy efficiencies of mini-split systems can save homeowners up to 25 percent of utility bills simply because they eliminate wasteful ducts. In fact, duct losses can easily account for more than 30 percent of energy consumption, especially if the ducts are not sealed tightly or are located in an unconditioned space such as an attic or crawl space. Ductless mini-splits forgo those energy losses typically associated with forced-air systems. This is particularly good news for older homes, homes without existing duct-

work or homes with seasonal additions, such as a sunroom. Installing ductwork is expensive and requires cutting holes in walls, floors and ceilings, or decreasing closet space. Ductless systems require only a two- or three-inch hole just outside the wall and are also whisper quiet.

End Energy Waste And Thermostat Wars

Mini-splits feature custom zone control, enabling homeowners to connect two to eight indoor units to a single outdoor unit. Since each of the zones has its own thermostat, you heat only the areas you want and disregard those that are unoccupied. This can represent a significant savings considering the kitchen, dining room, living room and bedrooms are left unoccupied for at least 40 percent of the time. In addition, everyone can adjust each room to the temperature he or she wants-year-round-virtually eliminating the "thermostat wars," with family members fighting for their personal climate preferences.

Extra Low Temperature Protection

It's important to choose a reputable heating and cooling system that is equipped to handle your individual requirements. Fujitsu General's line of mini-split systems have a performance success rate of more than 99 percent and come in numerous sizes, styles and rated outdoor temperatures. The Extra Low Temperature Heating (XLTH) Series features outdoor condensing units engineered to operate in temperatures down to -15° F, lower than any other mini-split available today.

Mini-split systems may take as little as a day or two to install, depending on how many units you put in. To learn more or find a contractor nearby, call (888) 888-3424 or visit www.constant-comfort.com or www.fujitsugeneral.com.

Connectedness And Acceptance: Improving Mental Health Among LGBTQ Youths

(NAPSA)-As a young boy, James knew that meeting with his therapist should not be making his depression worse. His therapist used conversion therapy-a practice meant to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. These sessions only made him feel shameful and isolated. James had known he was gay since he was very young. But because he wanted to be accepted by his family and friends who were not supportive of a gay identity, he continued with conversion therapy. Unfortunately, denying a piece of his identity was harmful to his mental health.

Now, as an adult, James is a therapist who helps youths who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity (LGBTQ youths) with their mental health and well-being.

LGBTQ youths are more likely to suffer from mistreatment and discrimination, compared to their counterparts who are heterosexual and cisgender (in other words, not transgender). At school, LGBTQ youths are more often the target of bullying and harassment than other students. They are at higher risk for anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation and attempt, and mental health problems. However, LGBTQ youths do not struggle with mental health issues because of their identities. They are put at risk for mental health issues because of how people who are unaccepting of LGBTQ identities, which may include family members and peers, treat them.

In an effort to eliminate stressors and improve LGBTQ youths' health, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a federal government agency focused on mental health and well-being, has recommended against health professionals using conversion therapy. Rather than providing the support that LGBTQ youths need, according to SAMHSA, "conversion therapy perpetuates outdated gender roles and negative stereotypes that being a sexual or gender minority or identifying as LGBTQ is an abnormal aspect of human development. Most importantly, it may put young people at risk of serious harm."

When LGBTQ youths are rejected by their family or peers, it negatively impacts their well-being. Therefore, rejected youths need adults who are supportive, including health care professionals. As a therapist for LGBTQ people, James can give his patients what he was not given as a young boy: an adult who accepts them, regardless of identity.

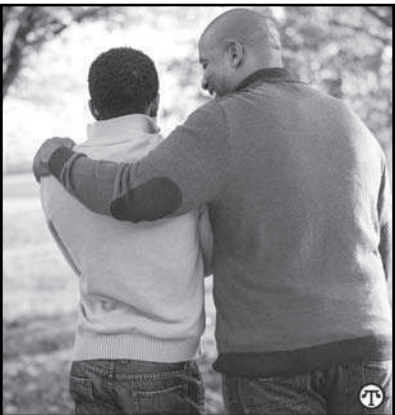


Photo credit: Thinkstock/digitalskillet

Mental health experts say LGBTQ youths need support from the adults in their lives.

SAMHSA offers helpful advice to mental health professionals like James, as well as to parents, teachers and any other adults committed to serving youths, in order to help make the lives of LGBTQ youths healthy and successful. Researchers have discovered that "connectedness" can help promote healthy development in youths. "Connectedness" is just what it sounds like; feeling connected and supported by important adults and institutions, like schools, leads to well-being.

Here are some important ways that adults can help LGBTQ youths get the "connectedness" they need:

- Parents and family members can make sure to express affection for LGBTQ children or adolescents, showing them that they are accepted regardless of identity.
- Talk and listen respectfully, to understand a child's experiences.
- Stand up for a child or adolescent if he or she is hurt or mistreated or experiences discrimination. Knowing that a parent or caring adult is committed to ensuring that an LGBTQ youth is safe, and providing an open and accepting place, is a powerful support.
- Teachers and other educators can encourage all students and staff to stop any bullying or harassment and make schools a welcoming place for all students.

These simple actions can make a life-changing difference for LGBTQ youths. Learn more by reading SAMHSA's report, entitled "Ending Conversion Therapy: Supporting and Affirming LGBTQ Youth," available for free at <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/SMA15-4928>.

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Good Luck

BENITA JEFFERIS found the Computer Security Day graphic on page 6C (Flag – in the A in Coast) She has won a gift certificate to The Chicken Coop.

Gift Certificates must be picked up within 2 weeks of winning
Deadline for today's paper: Monday by 3:00 PM



Wednesday's Graphic



Saturday's Graphic
Bingo's Birthday Month