



Positive
Prevention
PLUS

Positive Prevention *PLUS:*

Sexual Health Education for America's Youth

Appendix C

Resources for LGBT Youth and Gender Equity



What Works for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQQI) Students in Adolescent Health Education

It is important that all youth find sexual health education to be relevant, meaningful and engaging. Given that LGBTQQI young people face disproportionately higher rates of HIV, STIs, and teen pregnancy, it is vital that their health promotion and prevention education needs are met by sexual health education they receive at school. Furthermore, studies show that LGBT curriculum inclusion correlates with greater feelings of safety for students and reduced rates of anti-LGBT harassment.

When we include information and examples that resonate with LGBTQQI students, we not only provide accurate, meaningful tools to help them make healthy choices, but we create an environment that acknowledges the sexual health complexities that ALL youth face. For example, it is not only LGBTQQI youth who experience harassment and bullying in schools, it is also students who are perceived to be LGBTQQI based on their gender expression or any other attribute that may not be the social norm. Similarly, we know that gender non-conforming youth often receive the brunt of harassment and bullying in schools. But gender stereotypes that teach girls to be passive or encourage boys to hide their emotions affect every young person's ability to communicate effectively, self advocate and ultimately make healthy choices. For these reasons and others, it is absolutely imperative that we make a concerted effort to present sexual health curriculum in a way that is fair, accurate, and inclusive.

To ensure that your sexual health education efforts are inclusive and relevant for LGBTQQI youth, Gay-Straight Alliance Network has reviewed this curriculum guide and helped the Red Cross make updates to ensure that 1) the curriculum is inclusive of the sexual health information needs of LGBTQQI youth, 2) the terminology used is inclusive of LGBTQQI youth, and 3) the curriculum does not have a heterocentric bias, that is a bias towards heterosexual relationships as the only valid or normal relationships. Additionally, there are a few things to remember. First, since LGBTQQI students may not be forthcoming about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, you should always assume that your audience includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning and/or intersex students. Do not rely on stereotypes about heterosexuality or homosexuality to decide whether or not to teach for/about LGBTQQI students/subjects, since often those stereotypes are damaging and/or inaccurate. Second, be mindful that your ability to successfully teach inclusive LGBTQQI curriculum can significantly reduce harassment and bullying, and increase safety, especially for LGBTQQI students.

¹ See Russell, S.T., Kostroski, O., McGuire, J.K., Laub, C. and Manke, E. (2006). 2001-2002 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) and the 2003, 2004, 2005 Preventing School Harassment Survey (PSH) LGBT Issues in the Curriculum Promotes School Safety. (California Safe Schools Coalition Research Brief No. 4). San Francisco, CA: California Safe Schools Coalition.

² and/or since some students may be (now or later) in a process of questioning their current sexual orientation and/or gender identity



Suggested Adaptations and Resources for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex (LGBTQQI) Youth

Learn the Language:

Using respectful and appropriate language is an important benchmark to set a tone of respect and understanding.

Language is important but don't let it become a barrier. Learn the following words and definitions and you will be able to have conversations and put people at ease. As long as you are respectful, do not be afraid to ask if you are unfamiliar with a word or how it is used.

Sex – A biological and physiological term dividing a species into male or female, usually based on sex chromosomes; hormone levels, secondary sex characteristics, and internal and external genitalia may also be considered criteria. Also, another term for sexual intercourse.

Sexual Orientation: Sexual orientation refers to one's sexual and romantic attraction. All people have a sexual orientation. You can be attracted to people of the opposite sex (straight) or people of the same sex (gay or lesbian). You can also be attracted to people of either sex (bisexual). Orientation does not equal action – you do not need to have had a sexual experience to know your orientation. Avoid using sexual preference, as it implies a choice, or homosexual, as it is a dated term that focuses on only sex rather than love and relationships.

Intersex – is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female and male. For example, a person may be born appearing to be female the outside, but having mostly male typical anatomy on the inside. (Source: Intersex Society of North America)

Gender Identity: Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female, or something in between. For many people, one's gender identity corresponds with their biological sex (i.e., a person assigned female at birth identifies as female or a person assigned male at birth identifies as male), but this is not always the case.

Gender Expression: Gender expression relates to how a person chooses to communicate their gender identity to others through clothing, hair, styles, mannerisms, etc. This communication may be conscious or subconscious. While most people's understandings of gender expressions relate to masculinity and femininity, there are countless permutations that may combine both masculine and feminine expressions.

Gay: A man whose primary romantic and sexual attraction is to other males. Gay is also used as an inclusive term encompassing gay men, lesbians, and people who identify as bisexual.

Adapted from Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbian and Gays (PFLAG)
<http://community.pflag.org>



Lesbian: A woman whose primary romantic and sexual attraction is to other females. However, many women who are attracted to other women may choose to use the terms “gay” or “queer” to call themselves.

Bisexual: Men and women who have sexual and romantic attraction to both men and women. Depending on the person, his or her attraction may be stronger to women or men, or they may be approximately equal.

Transgender: A broad term describing the state of a person’s gender identity which does not necessarily match his/her given gender at birth.

Queer: Some, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender young people use the word queer as an umbrella term to embrace all the members of the community including the children of LGBT parents and other allies. There are still plenty of people in the community who find this term offensive or degrading.

HELPFUL HINT: It is important to hear and understand terminology from the perspective of those you are engaging in conversation with. For young people, the terminology presented here is often about romantic notions, ideas of identity and self-discovery, rather than the political or sexual context these words may evoke for older audiences. Using the chosen term, without judgment, can make all the difference in the world to a struggling youth.

Learn the Facts:

School officials often believe there are no lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender students in their classrooms, and as a result, often fail to take action to protect young people. In reality, however, students report being frequently targeted, bullied and harassed based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

As a result of the teasing and harassment that students face they are at higher risk for depression, suicide, and dropping out of school.

The reality LGBT students face, on a daily basis, is striking:

73.6% heard derogatory remarks such as “faggot” or “dyke” frequently at school.

86.2% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, 44.1% reported being physically harassed, and 22.1% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation.

More than half (60.8%) of students reported that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation, and more than a third (38.4%) felt unsafe because of their gender expression.

The consequences of a negative classroom environment are real and far-reaching:

31.7% of LGBT students missed a class and 32.7% missed a day of school in the past month because of feeling unsafe, compared to only 5.5% and 4.5%, respectively, of a national sample of secondary school students.

The reported grade point average of students who were more frequently harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender expression was almost half a grade lower than for students who were less often harassed (2.8 versus 2.4).



Stop Bad Behavior:

LGBT youth, and those perceived to be LGBT, endure constant bullying and harassment: in the classroom, hallways, locker rooms and on the bus. But bullying is more than disturbing, it is also dangerous and disruptive.

When students feel unsafe at school, they are also unable to learn. It is imperative that adults in the school community stop bullying whenever, and wherever, it happens.

Three Key points to Remember:

- **Don't ignore discriminatory behaviors:** Unchecked behavior will repeat itself again and again.
- **Don't excuse discriminatory behaviors:** they need to be addressed.
- **Don't be immobilized by fear:** Not taking action can endanger kids and make the classroom unsafe.

Managing Harassment DO'S . . .

DO deal with the situation immediately.

DO confirm that the particular type of abuse is hurtful and harmful and will not be tolerated.

DO value everyone's feelings by listening carefully.

DO take those involved aside and discuss the incident.

DO impose consequences consistent with school or classroom policy.

DO use it as a "teachable moment" if appropriate, so all students learn what is acceptable and what is not in your classroom.

... and Managing the DON'TS

DON'T let harassment pass unchallenged.

DON'T overreact with a put-down to the offender.

DON'T impose consequences before finding out exactly what happened from all involved.

DON'T embarrass either party publicly.

DON'T assume the incident is isolated.

HELPFUL HINT: Casual comments can have unintended consequences. While young people may use phrases such as "that's so gay" or "faggot" in circumstances where they are not meant to be destructive, other students receive such remarks with offense. Regardless of whether there is a specific target, or a specific, malicious intent, behind such words, it is important that adults step in, stop their use and explain why they are harmful.



Set the Policy:

A strong and inclusive anti-harassment policy not only protects students; it also protects the school. To avoid possible legal action, school systems should have concrete policies and back policies up with training and education for the entire school community.

Sample policy (Model policy of NCLR, National Center for Lesbian Rights):

The [Your School District] School District is committed to providing all students, teachers, employees and staff with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect.

It is hereby the policy of the [Your School District] School District to prohibit harassment based on real or perceived race, color, religion (creed), national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or on the basis of association with others identified by these categories. This policy is intended to comply with [Your State] state as well as federal requirements. The School District shall act to investigate all complaints of harassment, formal or informal, verbal or written, and to discipline or take other appropriate action against any member of the school community who is found to have violated this policy.

School Wide Activities:

Once the school has developed and adopted the appropriate policies, they must provide assistance with the challenge of implementing the new or improved policy.

It is critical that every member of the school community – including students, parents, teachers and administrators – understand the school’s commitment to protecting students, and what is expected of both young people and adults in order to live up to that commitment. There are numerous tools available, and numerous ways to convey your message.

Films:

Showing a film, and conducting a discussion after, is an effective way to reach every member of the school and get every stake holder – including youth, parents and teachers – involved in the discussion. Groundspark Films offers three highly-acclaimed films with associated curriculum guides, available at www.groundspark.org

- *It's a Family* (for elementary schools)
- *Let's Get Real* (for middle schools)
- *Straightlaced* (for high schools)

Books:

Providing books and resources in your school library is a critical step toward educating everyone. Find out what the policy is for placing books in the library. Select books that will reflect the needs and diversity of your community. To get started, the Safe Schools Coalition (www.safeschoolscoalition.org) has book recommendations by age. For more lists and suggestions contact PFLAG.



Programs:

School-wide programs offer an opportunity for everyone to learn and participate. These programs help build community, empathy and understanding:

- **Use Another Word** (www.safeschoolscoalition.org/UseAnotherWord.pdf) This program, appropriate for students of all ages, can be tailored to meet the specific needs of diverse school communities. The program includes posters making activities and offers creative and positive alternatives to put-downs and teasing.
- **Mix It Up** (www.mixitup.org) Started in 2006, Mix It Up is a nationwide campaign conducted each November – geared to elementary and middle school students – that supports students who want to identify with, question or cross social boundaries that separate them from each other. Free resources are available for using the program in your school.
- **Day of Silence** (www.dayofsilence.org) The Day of Silence is a student-led day of action when concerned students – from middle school through college – take a vow of silence in solidarity with their LGBT classmates. The program highlights name-calling, bullying and harassment experienced by LGBT students and their allies.

HELPFUL HINT: Remember not to allow gender stereotypes or norms to unnecessarily impact your responses to students who are LGBT. It is important to understand that, in most situations, behavior that is appropriate for opposite sex couples is also appropriate for same-sex couples. For example, if you would condone a male and female student walking hand-in-hand, also understand that similar behavior is appropriate for two female, or two male, students. Appropriate behavior is almost always gender-neutral.

Be Public:

Taking public stands will send a message to students that their safety is more than just a policy, but a practice emulated by the school community, safety is more than just policy, but adults, especially, should “go public” with their support for diversity, and opposition to bullying and harassment. Signs, stickers and other public displays that reiterate a strong commitment to every student’s safety are important reminders - to students and adults – that being vigilant about curbing inappropriate behavior is a daily task.

To find out how to get Safe Schools posters and stickers, email Suzanne Greenfield (sgreenfield@pflag.org) today!

Come Out as a Public Ally:

Make sure your library has LGBT friendly, age appropriate books and resources.

Have “teachable moments” – not every language correction, bullying prevention, or calling out of stereotypes needs to be behind closed doors.

Counselors, teacher, nurses, social workers – have some symbol of your willingness to talk and listen to issues of diversity. Sometime all a student needs to open up is a sign that you are willing to listen. Try using the PFLAG safe schools stickers! • Establish an anti-bullying task force and be sure to include parents, students and staff. A task force gives the school community a way to have an impact of school safety and establishes that stopping bullying and harassment is a priority in the school.



Cyber Bullying:

Cyber bullying has been defined by the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use to mean “being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material using the Internet or a cell phone.”

According to Pew Research, about one third (32%) of all teenagers who use the Internet say they have been targets of some form of cyber bullying ranging from receiving threatening messages and having their private e-mails or text messages forwarded to having an embarrassing picture posted or rumors about them spread online. Cyber bullying is the new frontier in bullying and anti-gay rumors, messages, and threats are often at the center of this high-tech harassment.

Terms you should know:

Flaming—online verbal attacks or fights via electronic messages.

Harassment—repeated messages of an offensive or derogatory nature.

Cyberstalking—repeated messages of an intimidating character that make a person feel afraid for his or her physical safety.

Denigration—online “put-downs,” including sending or posting hurtful gossip or rumors to cause the target embarrassment.

Impersonation—using someone’s e-mail account to send out messages, supposedly from the account holder, that reflect badly on that person and may cause trouble, shame, or embarrassment.

Outing and Trickery—disclosure of someone’s private information online, sending or posting embarrassing images, or deceptions leading another person to reveal personal details about him or herself.

Exclusion—deliberately keeping someone out of an online group, such as a buddy list.

What students should understand:

- There can be consequences to actions you take online (schools, jobs, personal).
- You do not always know who you are talking to.
- Your messages can be re-broadcast to others.
- Tell an adult immediately if you receive a threatening, harassing, or upsetting message.
- Remember: never give out personal information online.
- Items that are posted online or texted can be traced to their original source.

What schools should do:

- Add cyber bullying to existing anti-harassment or bullying policies.
- Provide training and education for students, teachers and parents.
- Take cyber bullying seriously.



Train and Educate Everyone:

It is imperative that the faculty is trained to respond to bullying in ways that support every student. Some faculty may not be familiar with LGBT topics, or may feel uncomfortable handling situations that arise.

Every adult, however, has a responsibility to keep students safe, and there are several simple steps each person can take in accomplishing this goal.

Begin with a school survey that presents an opportunity to faculty to review the school environment, and gives administrators an important perspective on what is happening in your particular school community.

Let's Get Real, a national safe schools curriculum created by Groundspark as part of the film by the same name, provides an effective, simple survey for use in schools.

It is important that after evaluating the school environment, administrators develop and implement a training that meets concerns raised by the survey. Remember that most harassment and bullying does not take place in classrooms, but rather in the hallway, cafeteria, playground or locker room. Adults who supervise these areas must be included in trainings in order to effectively address the reality students are encountering every day.

There are many locally-based organizations that can provide trainings. Contact PFLAG (www.PFLAG.org) and let them help you find one.

Comprehensive Health:

Harassment can also be the result of an incomplete or inaccurate education. Comprehensive sexuality education that includes age-appropriate, and medically sound, education is of paramount importance.

Youth must have a clear understanding of their bodies, and health, in order to respect themselves and their classmates.

It is particularly important that schools avoid abstinence-only education, which excludes LGBT youth from important information and lessons.

- Funding for abstinence-only education is provided only for programs where marriage is strictly defined as a union between one man and one woman, leaving LGBT youth feeling isolated and excluded.
- In abstinence-only programs, LGBT youth are told they simply cannot have healthy, safe or valid sexual experiences, a dangerous myth with far-reaching, negative consequences

An appropriate, comprehensive curriculum should:

- Include age-appropriate, medically accurate information;
- Not teach or promote a religious perspective;
- Teach that abstinence is the only certain way to avoid pregnancy or STDs;
- Stress the value of abstinence while not ignoring young people who have had, or are having, sexual experiences;
- Provide accurate information about the health benefits of condoms and other methods to reduce the risk of STDs.



Remember when developing your curriculum that parents overwhelmingly support teaching about sexual orientation at school. Three out of four parents feel comfortable speaking to their children about sexual orientation, but are unlikely to raise the topic on their own.

To overcome bias against LGBT youth, sexuality education programs must consider and include information about sexual orientation.

- 79% of parents want their children to learn about sexual orientation in sexuality education classes at school.
- 67% of parents believe their children should be taught that gay people are just like other people.
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For more information, see: *What Does Gay Mean: How to Talk with Kids about Sexual Orientation* (San Francisco, CA: Horizons Foundation, 2001)

Resources, Resources, Resources:

In addition to PFLAG, there are many other organizations and resources available to assist schools as they address issues surrounding harassment, bullying, safe spaces and LGBT youth.

Safe Schools Materials:

The Safe Schools Coalition is an international public-private partnership that provides free resources categorized by age, audience and activity. It is comprehensive and easily navigated, an excellent source for ideas and materials. <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org>

Groundspark produces educational videos including: *It's Elementary, It's Still Elementary* (about teaching kids about LGBT people and issues), *Straightlaced* (about the impact of anti-LGBT attitudes and gender stereotypes on teenagers), *That's a Family* (about the diversity of families), and *Let's Get Real* (about middle school bullying). <http://www.groundspark.org/>

Teaching Tolerance provides free educational materials to teachers and other school practitioners. Web-exclusive offerings including curricula, activities and materials for youth, teachers and parents. <http://www.tolerance.org>

The Trevor Project operates the only nationwide, around-the-clock crisis and suicide prevention helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth.

Lambda Legal provides legal counsel and court analysis of legal protections and for students and schools. <http://www.lambdalegal.org/>

Advocates for Youth is a youth led movement to help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/glbqtq.htm>

Cyberbullying Resources

A program of the *Anti-Defamation League (ADL)* that helps schools develop a comprehensive



approach to confront harassment and bullying through electronic media.
<http://www.adl.org/education/cyberbullying/>

This cite focuses on text-messaging and the ways to address this type of bullying. <http://www.stoptextbully.com/help/15/advice-for-parents-and-teachers>

An interactive web site for parent, teachers, and youth about internet safety. <http://www.netsmartz.org/>

Sex Ed Resources

A community action kit for establishing comprehensive and age-appropriate sex education in school. <http://www.communityactionkit.org/index.cfm?pageid=882>

SIECUS – the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States-provides education and information about sexuality and sexual and reproductive health. <http://www.siecus.org>

Comprehensive sexuality education guide written by the Seattle and King County Public Health Department in Washington State. <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/personal/famplan/educators.aspx>

Gender Spectrum <http://www.genderspectrum.org/about>

Trans Youth Family Allies <http://www.imatyfa.org/>

COLAGE <http://www.colage.org/>

Make It Better Project <http://makeitbetterproject.org/>

Advocates for Youth <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org>

Please see the CDC website for a list of very important resources for young people, teachers and administrators. <http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm>



What Can You Do?

10 Things Teachers and Schools Can Do to Create Safer Environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered (LGBT) and Gender Equity Students

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered (LGBT) and Gender Equity students face tremendous discrimination and harassment in schools on a daily basis. In 2007, 86.2% of LGBT students in the U.S. experienced at least one incident of harassment and 60.8% reported feeling unsafe.¹ Despite good laws in California that protect LGBT students against harassment and discrimination (the California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000) most schools have yet to fully create safe learning environments for all students. Below are 10 things that schools and school districts can do.

1. Stop behavior when you see it, each and every time. Then, talk about and process why you stopped the behavior with the participants of the incident.
2. Train teachers and staff to intervene when they hear slurs or negative comments based on sexual orientation and sex, including gender identity, appearance and behavior and other protected groups.
3. Develop nondiscrimination policies in your district that include sexual orientation and gender identity. This is necessary for districts to be in compliance with California law.
4. Inform through verbal and written notice, all students, teachers and staff of existing processes for filing complaints against homophobic and transphobic harassment and discrimination.
5. Ensure that administrators and teachers treat all reported incidents of homophobic and transphobic harassment and discrimination equally as other serious violations of school policies.
6. Support the establishment of a Gay Straight Alliance student club at your school.
7. Ensure that students and staff know where to get information and support related to sexual orientation and gender identity.
8. Introduce school curriculum that includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and age-appropriate information about sexual orientation and gender identity.
9. Recognize and acknowledge that passing a non-discrimination policy is only the first step in creating a safe and non-discriminatory school environment. Verbal and written notification of existing state law, mandatory training for staff and students, and inclusive curriculum are the keys to fully implementing a non-discrimination policy.
10. Utilize available community-based trainers and support staff, parents, and students who are interested in conducting trainings.

For support making these changes at your school, contact GSA Network at info@gsanetwork.org or 415.552.4229.

GLSEN 2007 National School Climate Survey.

<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/2340.html?state=research>



For More Information:

California Safe Schools Coalition

<http://www.casafeschools.org/>

National Safe Schools Coalition

<http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/>

California Department of Education's Guide on Filing Complaints

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cp/uc/>

California Department of Education's AB 537 Recommendations

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/ss/se/documents/ab537report.pdf>

San Francisco Unified School District – School Health Programs Department

Exercise for Establishing Classroom Rules

<http://www.healthiersf.org/LGBTQ/GetTheFacts/pol-antisur.html>

Creating a Safe Classroom

<http://www.healthiersf.org/LGBTQ/InTheClassroom/safeClassroom.html>

What do you say to “That’s So Gay”

<http://www.healthiersf.org/LGBTQ/InTheClassroom/safeClassroom-whatsay.html>

Gay Straight Alliance Network

www.gaystraightalliance.org

GSANetwork.org

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

PFLAG.org

Step In Speak Up

On line teacher training program

www.kognito.com

