

Beyond the **Rainbow**: WAIPER Schools for LGBTQIA+ Youth

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Disclaimers



Advocacy – "public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy,"

- Legal, moral, ethical, and needed
- Advocacy work entails pushing for something that others are against

NASP

- I support and condone NASP's positional statements on LGBTQIA+ youth
- I do not speak on behalf of or represent NASP
- The following slides and presentation are my own

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Group Agreements

- Wherever you are in your understanding or acceptance is okay.
- Take responsibility for your own learning
- Delay distractions
- Assume positive intentions
- Step up, Step back
- Listen to understand, not judge
- Stories stay, lessons go
- **No screenshotting**
- **No social media tagging/posting**



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The Legal Landscape



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NASP's Long-Standing Commitment to LGBTQ+ Youth

NASP has supported LGBTQIA+ youth for the last 30 years (NASP, 1999).

"School psychologists are guided by an ethical code that calls for **beneficence**, through which they respect the rights and dignity of all persons, and **nonmaleficence**, which requires that they do no harm." (NASP, 2022)

"NASP's ethical guidelines require school psychologists to promote **fairness** and **justice**, help to cultivate **safe** and **welcoming** school climates, and work to identify and reform both social and systems-level patterns of injustice," (NASP, 2010, pp.11-12. as cited in NASP, 2017)

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Safe and Supportive Schools for LGBTQ+ Youth Position Statement (NASP 2017)

School psychologists adopt an affirmative approach to working with LGBTQIA+ youth which "emphasizes the acceptance of youth exactly as they are, and which enables youth the opportunity to explore and develop at their own pace." (APA & NASP, 2015, as cited by NASP, 2017)

1. **Knowledge** – key elements in the provision of culturally competent services to queer and trans youth (Crisp & McCave, 2007)
2. **Attitudes** – culturally-responsive service provision requires the assessment, examination, and addressing of one's attitude BEFORE working with students
3. **Skill** – there are necessary culturally-competent skills for the creation of therapeutic environments

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Safe and Supportive Schools for Transgender and Gender Diverse Students Position Statement (NASP, 2022)

- "School psychologists are ethically obligated to **speak up** for the interests and rights of students and families even when it may be difficult to do so." (NASP, 2020b, Standard III.2.3, p. 50)
- "School psychologists are ethically obligated to **advocate** for positive school policies and practices to **protect the legal rights of students and parents.**" (NASP, 2020b, Standard IV.1.2, as cited by NASP, 2022).
- "School psychologists are ethically obligated to **foster safe and supportive schools** for all students, specifically, transgender and gender diverse students."

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What do you see?

Can you find the breadcrumb?



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Learning Objectives

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults."

- Frederick Douglass

1. Learn the **Knowledge**, **Skills**, and Attitudinal shifts needed to provide appropriate and accessible school environments for LGBTQIA+ youth
2. Develop skills to provide **Welcoming**, **Affirming**, **Inclusive**, **Proactive**, **Equitable**, and **Responsive** school environments for LGBTQIA+ youth
3. Develop a basic understanding of **affirmative practices** (counseling approach for LGBTQIA+ youth)

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My First Crush



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Affirmative Practice - KNOWLEDGE

1. **Terminology** – Be familiar with proper terminology/slang/symbols and terms used to harass; utilize gender-neutral terms such as “partner” and “date”
2. **Demographics and Diversity** – part of a diverse group with many commonalities but also a multitude of cultural differences (Ryan & Futterman, 1998)
3. **Symbols, Historical Dates, and Contemporary Figures** – can bridge a connection between client and practitioner; also helps to counter feelings of being “messed up,” alone, and different
4. **Experiences with Oppression and Policies that Impact Youth** – understand institutionalized oppression and social pressures
5. **Community Resources** – be familiar with available community resources; understand that they are often lacking. Also helps to promote self-sufficiency and independence
6. **Culturally Sensitive Practice Models** – disregarding the youth’s culture/experiences increases possible feelings of alienation
7. **“Coming Out” Models and Identity as LGBT** – Recognize that every transition is unique to the individual

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Learning the Lingo – LGBTQQIAA(A)PP2SGNC

It’s very easy to look at me and tell that I am gay and it makes me feel afraid to walk around knowing there are people here in my hometown that hate me, and people like me, enough to attack me.

Abbreviation	Meaning	Abbreviation	Meaning
L	Lesbian	A	Asexual
G	Gay	A	Agender
B	Bisexual	(A)	(Ally)
T	Transgender	P	Pansexual
Q	Queer	P	Pangender
Q	Questioning	2S	Two-spirited
I	Intersex	GNC	Gender Non-conforming

Note: A person’s sex is only one of the dimensions that constitute an individual’s gender. Gender ≠ Sex

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Sexual Orientation

I've always known I was gay, but it wasn't confirmed until I was in kindergarten. It was my teacher who said so. It was right there on my kindergarten report card:
PAUL IS DEFINITELY GAY AND HAS VERY GOOD SENSE OF SELF.
 - David Levithan

Sexual Orientation

Attraction – who and how much you feel attracted to someone

Self-identification – how one labels him/her/themself

Fantasy – what is your fantasy when it comes to sexual orientation and how it affects your life

Behavior – how you act (in public/private)



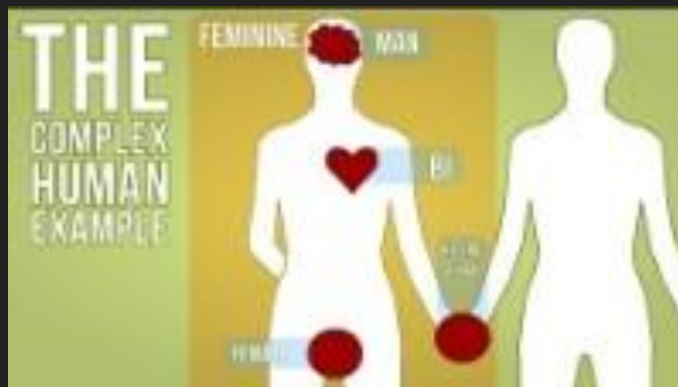
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“Human Sexuality”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXAoG8vAyZl>

So as long as LGBT youths sleep on the street, transgender people fear for their lives, and queer people of color live in poverty, my new right to marry will be diminished.

- Colin Walmsley, 7/21/2015



“With ignorance comes fear- from fear comes bigotry. Education is the key to acceptance.”

– Kathleen Patel

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Gender Development



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Gender Development in Gender Diverse Youth



Age 7.9



Age 15.5

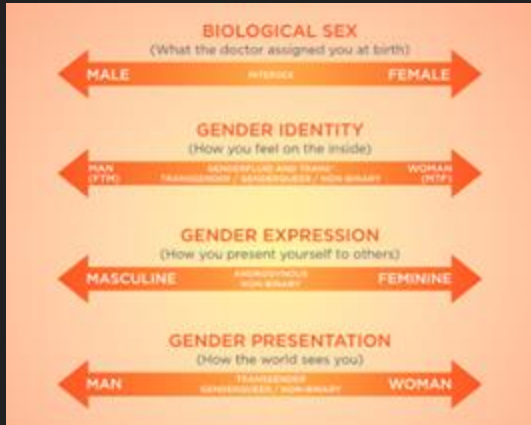


Age 18

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Gender Identity

The problem with gender is it prescribes how we should be, rather than recognizing how we are
 - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



The Genderbread Person v3.3 *pronounced METROsexual*

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. The confusion, gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. It's many, open, it's fluid, it's a mix of that. This video guide is meant to be an essential tool for gender understanding. It's also a place for you to figure the issue, in fact, that's the idea.

Gender Identity
 Woman-mis
 Man-mis
 Trans-mis
 Non-binary

Gender Expression
 Feminine
 Masculine

Biological Sex
 Female-mis
 Male-mis

Sexually Attracted to
 Women/Trans/People
 Men/Trans/People

Emotionally Attracted to
 Women/Trans/People
 Men/Trans/People

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Range of Gender Identity



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Facts and Stats

Increased Risk	Decreased
Abuse and Neglect	Grades
Homelessness and Running Away	On-time Graduation
Intimate Partner/Dating Violence	College Attainment
Substance Use/Abuse	Parental Support/Acceptance
Self-Harm/Suicidal Ideation	Religious Organization Acceptance
Disproportionate Discipline and Incarceration	Access to Medical/Mental Health Assistance
Social Services/Foster Home Involvement	Attendance

FAST FACTS: LGB Youth

While many **lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth*** thrive during adolescence, stigma, discrimination, and other factors may put them at increased risk for negative health and life outcomes.



16% experience sexual dating violence

About **one third** are bullied at school



They are **MORE** likely to have been tested for HIV (13% LGB students vs. 9% heterosexual students)

They are nearly **twice** as likely as other students to use illegal drugs



47% have seriously considered suicide

Source: National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019

Michigan

GLSEN's school climate research has surfaced **four core supports that schools can use to promote young people's ability to thrive and reach their full potential**: comprehensive policies that prohibit victimization, supportive educators and other adult allies, inclusive curriculum, and access to GSAs (Gender and Sexuality Alliances or Gay-Straight Alliances). When these **Four Supports** are in place, LGBTQ+ students, particularly those who are transgender, nonbinary, Black, Indigenous, people of color, and people with disabilities, experience less harassment and discrimination, report better academic achievement via indicators such as GPA, report better mental health and emotional well-being, and experience more positive and welcoming school climates overall. For information about the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in Michigan, refer to this [state research snapshot](#), which contains Michigan data from the 2019 National School Climate Survey.

GLSEN advocates for **public policies** that establish the four core supports in schools. This scorecard shows how this state's policies compare with many of GLSEN's policy recommendations to cultivate affirming and inclusive schools.

OVERALL STATE POLICY SCORE

1/7

Michigan has adopted less than half of GLSEN's policy recommendations for affirming and inclusive schools

REMOVING BARRIERS TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Total Score: Athletics policies	0	(+) For each policy that supports LGBTQ+ students, the state receives one point (1)
(+) Friendly state athletic association guidance	0	
(-) Unfriendly state athletic association guidance	0	(-) For each discriminatory policy, the state receives a negative point (-1)
(-) Anti-trans athletics law and/or executive order	0	
Total Score: Enumerated anti-bullying and harassment laws	0	For each instance where a state has no policy, the state receives zero points (0)
(+) Enumerated LGBTQ+ law or regulation	0	
(-) Prohibits LGBTQ+ protections from bullying and harassment	0	
Total Score: Student nondiscrimination policies	1	
(+) LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination law or regulation	0	
(+) Additional State Education Agency guidance	1	
(-) Prohibits SOGI protections from discrimination	0	

GLSEN calculated the state's overall score based on the following policies with the highest possible score being 7 and the lowest possible being -6.

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AFFIRMING YOUTH

Total Score: Inclusive curricular standards	0
(+) LGBTQ+ inclusive curricular standards laws	0
(-) "No promo homo" laws	0
(-) Laws censor teaching race/gender/LGBTQ+	0

ADVANCING EQUITY

Total Score: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)	0
(+) ESSA state plan or guidance describes actions to advance LGBTQ+ equity (recommended action: include LGBTQ+ students in state accountability system)	0
(+) ESSA state plan or guidance communicates laws, regulations, or commitments that advance LGBTQ+ equity	0



GLSEN calculated the state's overall score based on the following policies with the highest possible score being 7 and the lowest possible being -6.

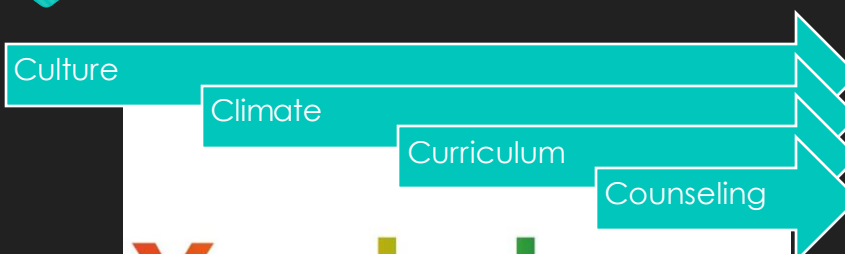
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Moving from the 3'R's to the 4 C's

Old School	Today's School
Reading	Culture
Writing	Climate
Arithmetic	Curriculum
	Counseling

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The 4 C's of School



You belong.

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WAIPER Schools



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WELCOMING Schools



- EVERYONE feels welcome – *all* students, parents, staff
- No one feels cast aside or shunned or judged
- The website and walls are welcoming
- Are inviting
 - Dear Parent/Guardian/Provider/Caregiver
 - Greet families/students by name
 - Showcase diversity visually
 - Remove barriers to diversity



If you're "accepting" but not "affirming" people think that all they deserve is tolerance and not appreciation.

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HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN
FOUNDATION



Welcoming Schools Film: What Do You Know?

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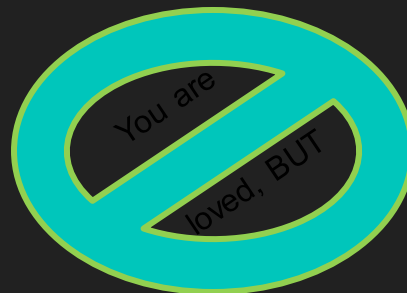
AFFIRMING Schools



- Schools recognize that LGBTQIA+ persons deserve respect



- That LGBTQIA+ persons are equally valued regardless of *who* they love or *how* they identify their gender
 - Use 'chosen' names and pronouns
 - Listen to understand, not respond to question



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Ways to Be Affirming

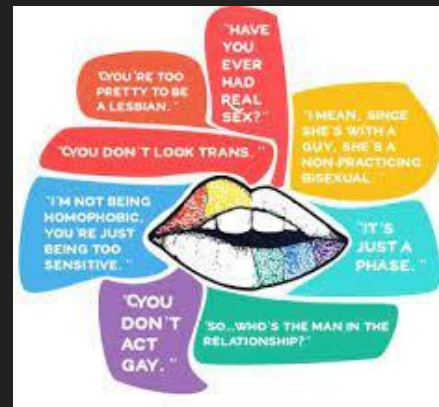
1. Normalize (but do not mandate) Sharing and Listing Pronouns
2. Use Inclusive, Non-Presumptive Language

Instead of	Try
Girls and Boys	Students, Scholars, Folx, Friends
Ladies and Gentleman	Everyone, We, Us
"The girls' bathroom is to the left"	Our school has gendered and non-gendered restrooms. The girls' bathroom is to the left, the boys' is to the right, and the single stall non-gendered restroom is just down the hall. Students are welcome to use whatever makes them the most comfortable.

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Ways to Be Affirming

3. Interrupt Microaggressions and Harmful Language, Behavior, and Attitudes
4. Know the policies, resources, and services available for LGBTQ+ students and families in your school, district, and community
5. Use and expect use of students'/staffs'/parents'/guardians' correct names, pronouns, and honorifics
 - * Don't use individuals as educators.*



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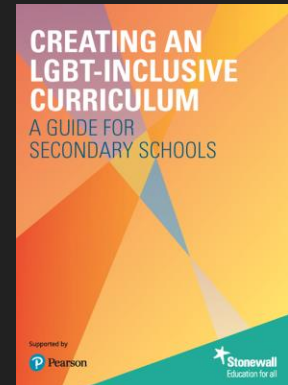
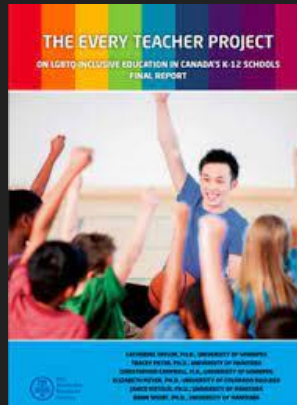
INCLUSIVE Schools



Advocate for FULL inclusion of ALL people regardless of race, ethnicity, ability, gender, and or/sexual orientation

- ❖ Integrates, not segregates
- ❖ Includes, not divides
- ❖ Embraces, not tolerates
 - Does your school curriculum het/cis wash events/people
 - Is your Sex Ed inclusive?
 - Does your school have events which exclude people? (ex. Muffins for Mom)

<https://www.glsen.org/inclusive-curriculum>

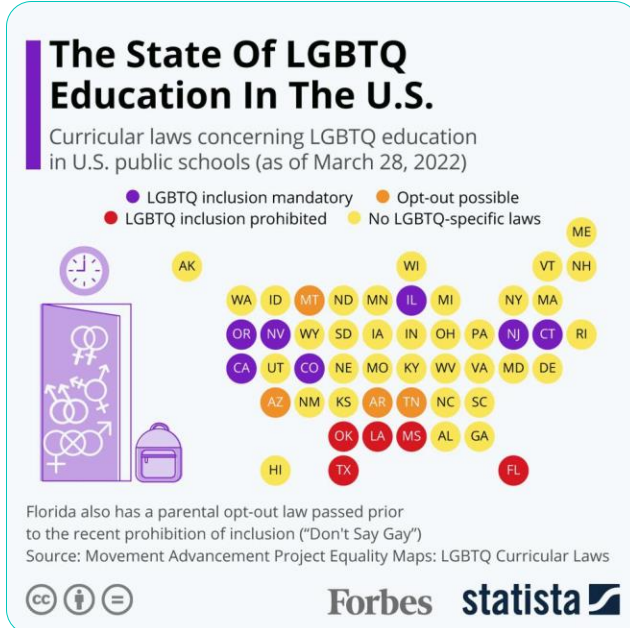


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Creating Gender Inclusive Schools Trailer



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Inclusive
Education
goes
beyond Sex
Ed.

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Inclusive School Resources

- *Bending the Mold: An Action Kit for Transgender Students* (2009)
- *Schools In Transition A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools* (2015)
- *Speak Up at School: How to Respond to Everyday Prejudice, Bias, and Stereotypes* (Teaching Tolerance, 2012)
- *Transgender Students and School Bathrooms: Frequently Asked Questions* (Gender Spectrum, n.d.)
- *Examples of Policies and Emerging Practices for Supporting Transgender Students* (US Department of Education, May 2016)

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PROACTIVE Schools

"If you build it, they will come."
– *Field of Dreams*

- ❖ Don't wait to serve the LGBTQIA+ Community; presume you already do
- ❖ Create welcoming, affirming, and inclusive spaces whether or not they are "needed" (because they already are)
- ❖ Understand that someone wanting to feel included will not wait to see if they will ever feel included
- ❖ Hire out LGBTQIA+ staff
- ❖ Talk to focus groups of queer and trans students about their needs before failing to meet said needs



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PROACTIVE Schools

- ❖ GLSEN and NCTE [*Model School Policy on Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students: Model Language, Commentary, and Resources*](#) (2018)
- ❖ [*A Silent Crisis: Safe Schools for Sexual Minority Youth*](#) (Michigan DOE, 2000)
- ❖ GLSEN's [*Respect for All*](#)
- ❖ [*State Policy Guidance for Transgender and Gender Diverse Students*](#) (Gender Inclusive Schools) and [*Gender Inclusive Schools Policy Builder*](#)

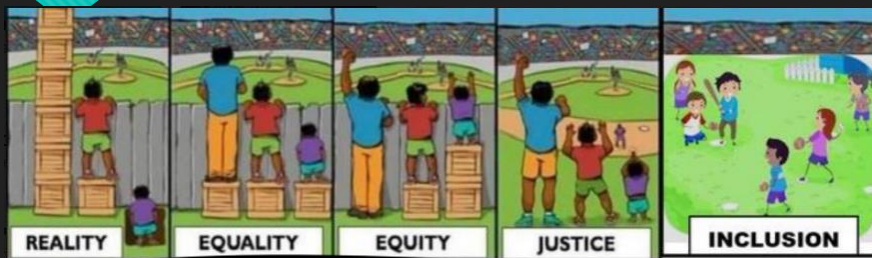
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PROACTIVE Schools – Professional Development

- [American Counseling Association](#) (in partnership with HRC)
- [Garden State Equality](#) (New Jersey)
- [Gender Conference East](#) (Professional and Family Tracks available)
- [GLSEN](#)
- [HRC's Welcoming Schools Training](#)
- [HRC's Time to Thrive](#) (Education and Mental Health Conference)
- [NEA Blending Learning Courses](#)
- [Rainstorms to Rainbows](#) (LGBTQ+ Consulting and Counseling)
- [Safe Spaces and Affirming Faces: Supporting LGBTQ Youth in Schools](#) (Grades 5-12)
- [Safe Schools Project](#) (Santa Cruz)
- [Safe Zone Project](#) (free, virtual)
- [Side by Side, Inc.](#)
- [Teaching Tolerance](#) (now *Learning for Justice* webinars)
- [Understanding and Overcoming the Challenges Faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Intersex Youth](#) (Webinar Series by the National Training and Technical Assistance Center)

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EQUITABLE Schools



- ❖ Non-stigmatizing Spaces
- ❖ Provide people with what they need to feel included and valued
- ❖ Remove barriers to inclusion
- ❖ Have equal rates of disciplinary and special education referrals between minoritized and non-minoritized populations

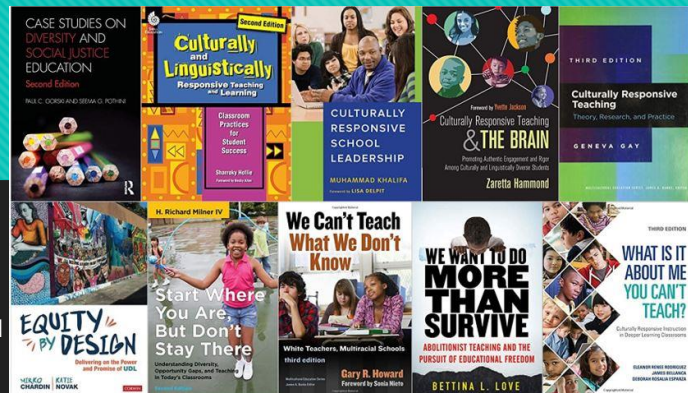
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EQUITABLE Schools



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RESPONSIVE Schools



- ❖ Recognize that sexuality and gender are important, integral, undeniable, and valued aspects of one's life (including children's)
- ❖ Understand that there are LGBTQIA+ individuals, families, and people who may one day be LGBTQIA+
- ❖ Listen when people report feeling unsafe or unwelcome or unseen
- ❖ Address and correct inequities as they occur

SOURCE: <https://perpich.mn.gov/culturally-responsive-teaching-resources-for-educators/>

- Don't just collect data, use it
- Look at Climate Studies and revised Culture accordingly
- Listen to understand and respond to grow

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The Role of School Psychologists in Supporting LGBTQIA+ Youth

- Develop and implement comprehensive antibullying policies
- Provide professional development
- Support Gender Sexuality Alliances (GSAs)
- Consult with teachers to develop inclusive curricula
- Provide affirmative counseling
- Collaborate with families
- Support transgender and gender diverse students
- Be an ally

NASP, 2017



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The Role of the School Psychologist in Supporting TGD Youth

1. **INFORM** – educating oneself and others on cultural humility.
2. **ADVOCATE** – “... getting others to understand an issue from your perspective and then take appropriate action.” (NASP, 2019, p. 7)
3. **AFFIRM** – “School psychologists work to ensure the protection of the educational rights, opportunities, and well-being of ALL children, especially those whose voices have been muted, identities obscured, or needs ignored” (NASP, 2019, p. 53)
4. **PROTECT** – foster protective factors which mediate risk factors for higher suicidal ideation and deleterious actions
5. **CONNECT** – connect youth to an affirming network of resources and other transgender youth

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What Schools Can Do

A hostile school climate affects students' academic success and mental health. LGBT students who experience victimization and discrimination at school have worse educational outcomes and poorer psychological well-being.

- Kosciw et. al., 2014

Schools can implement evidenced-based *policies, procedures, and activities* designed to produce healthy environments:

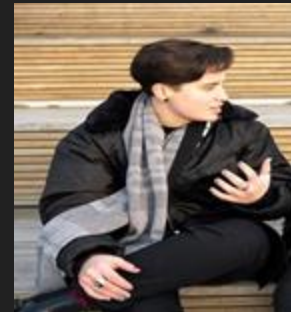
- o **Encourage respect** for all students and prohibit bullying, harassment, and violence against all students.
- o Identify "**safe spaces**," where youth can receive support from administrators, teachers, or other school staff.
- o Encourage student-led and student-organized school clubs that promote a safe, welcoming, and accepting school environment (e.g., **GSAs**)
- o Ensure that health curricula or educational materials include HIV, other STD, and pregnancy prevention information that is relevant to LGB youth (e.g., **inclusive** language and terminology as well as behaviors)
- o **Provide trainings** to and encourage attendance by school staff on how to create safe and supportive school environments for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity
- o **Facilitate access** to community-based, affirming providers (i.e., those who have experience providing health services, including HIV/STD testing and counseling, social, and psychological services to LGBTQ youth).

As cited by CDC, June 21, 2017

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Case Study Example

15 year old Rachel's school attendance has been decreasing. In the fall, she attended school more regularly, dressed in oversized baggy hoodies. She was shy and did not participate much in class. By the end of 3rd quarter, she has become more withdrawn. She completes all of her schoolwork, but doesn't turn it in. The attendance specialist calls home to check on Rachel and Rachel's mother reports that she has buzzed her hair short and spends all her time in her room. She insists on wearing the same baggy sweatshirts despite the heat and hygiene has become a concern. Rachel's mother has found scribbled notes in her room in which she has crossed out her name over and over and has been tearing up/throwing out feminine clothing. Her mother is worried about her and doesn't know how to help.



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	Society		School level		
	Public	Families & Communities	Schools & Districts	Classrooms & Groups	Students
DIRECT INTERVENTIONS	Contact state representatives to share updated information on LGBTQ+ students (infographics, etc.). Advocate for inclusive and affirming school policies.	Provide Rachel's mother with resources from The Family Acceptance Project and information about local parent support groups.	Collaborate with school mental health practitioner (e.g. school counselor) to assess available, affirming resources for Rachel and the teacher.	Consult with the teacher to encourage him/her to reach out to Rachel and offer accommodations for the missing work. Suggest that the teacher re-issues the beginning of the year "get to know you card."	Talk to Rachel. Introduce yourself and provide your pronouns, inviting the student to do the same.
INDIRECT INTERVENTIONS	Join mailing lists from UNESCO, The Trevor Project, etc. and other affirming organizations to stay informed.	Plan and conduct parent education groups discussing gender identity and sexuality.	Review school policies to ensure that they are inclusive and supportive; provide model "best practice" policies	Evaluate the classroom climate - are there LGBTQ+ inclusive/diversity posters on the walls? Is there shaming/bullying?	After learning that the student enjoys reading, offer to lend them some books (include some queer/trans fiction).

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Group Activity on Intervention

	Society		School level		
	Public	Families & Communities	Schools & Districts	Classrooms & Groups	Students
DIRECT INTERVENTIONS					
INDIRECT INTERVENTIONS					

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Best Practices

A hostile school climate affects students' academic success and mental health. LGBT students who experience victimization and discrimination at school have worse educational outcomes and poorer psychological well-being.

- Kosciw et. al., 2014

- **Inclusive** policies, programs, and practices within the educational environment (NASP, 2010a; NASP 2010b; NASP 2011)
- Promote the development of **healthy personal identities** (which includes sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity)
- Develop **cross-agency collaboration** to create policies that directly affect the health and wellbeing of gender and sexual orientation diverse adolescents and children
- Develop policies that **respect the privacy** of students, parents and colleagues with regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, or transgender status (and obtain permission before disclosure)

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Best Practices

I need feminism because I intend on marrying rich and I can't do that if my wife and I are making .75 cents for every dollar a man makes.

- Caitlyn Cannon,

high school senior

- Schools with **Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs)** lead to greater feelings of safety and belonging, better attendance, and lower rates of harassment (Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, & Russell, 2011)
- Promote academic success and **resiliency** for all students
- **Support the decisions** of children, adolescents, and their families regarding a student's gender identity or expression (discourage school personnel from requiring proof of medical treatments as a prerequisite for such support)
- LGBTQ students should have equal access to school counseling resources – school-based mental health staff should be **knowledgeable, approachable, accessible, accommodating**, and willing to **advocate** for the needs of sexual and gender minority youth.

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Best Practices

APA and NASP affirm that gender diverse expressions, regardless of gender identity, and diverse gender identities, beyond a binary classification, are normal and positive attributes of the human experience.

- Look for kids who are not connected (*it's not what we think is "connected" but what the **student** perceives to be connected.* - Leslie Lagerstrom, 2015)
- Be **accepting** and **affirming**
- Be **available**
- Work with youth's **families** to help them become more accepting
- **Learn** from the youth – they usually know more than we ever will!
- **Be a safe place** in a sea of unsafe

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Affirmative Practice

Within limits and without much consequence or penalty, social and sexual experimentation is expected at this stage of life. A range of adolescent behavior is tolerated in the belief that young people can benefit from the opportunity to make their own decisions and live with their consequences, especially in light of the fact that they are at a time in their lives when they are not required to make lifelong commitments.

- Developed by Van Den Bergh and Crisp (2004)
- Culturally-sensitive model of working with LGBT youth
- Consists of three dimensions that when practiced in a professional setting create a supportive environment (*consistent with multicultural literature*):
 1. **Knowledge** (Crisp and McCave, 2007) - key element in the provision of culturally competent services to LGBT youth
 2. **ATTITUDES** – examine and address before; no time in the moment
 3. **Skill** (Crisp and McCave) – ten skills to create a culturally competent therapeutic environment

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Affirmative Practice - ATTITUDES

I say "se la vie", let her be a **Lesbian!** There are other fishies in the sea..."
- Rent, 1994

American Psychological Association Division 44 (2000) encourages that *practitioners self-examine their beliefs, values, and attitudes... to ensure that they are striving for what the client needs in order to be a successful individual.*

- Even the slightest hint of negative body language or speech can affect the therapeutic process (Ryan & Futterman, 1998)
- If personal biases are not controlled it can *harbor self-hatred in the client and lead to denial about challenging issues* (Crisp & McCrave, 2007)
- If a negative feeling occurs in an established relationship, referral to another provider may be difficult and require extra sensitivity and compassion

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Inherent Bias and Privilege

It always felt like he was fighting something. Fighting life. Fighting, fighting, never quite able to fit in. He was bullied, rejected, he was marginalized.

- Don't demand that those you are supporting produce **proof of the inequality** they are working to resist
- Do recognize that the **shield of your privilege** may blind you to the experience of others' injustice
- **Don't offer up your relationship** with a member of the marginalized group as evidence of your understanding
- Do be open to **learning and expanding your consciousness** by listening more and talking less

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Affirmative Practice

"I need to know that I am loved and accepted and believed in and that life has a point and I will find it someday. That's just getting harder and harder to believe."
HRC, 2013

- Developed by Van Den Bergh and Crisp (2004)
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 1. **Knowledge** (Crisp and McCave, 2007) - key element in the provision of culturally competent services to LGBT youth
 2. **Attitudes** – examine and address before; no time in the moment
 3. **SKILL** (Crisp and McCave) – **ten skills to create a culturally competent therapeutic environment**

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Affirmative Practices SKILLS

Who can one turn to when they see a society that does not foster multicultural understanding for LGBTQ populations? For this reason, the role of the mental health practitioner is vital. - Edward M. Johns

1. **Create a Safe Environment for LGBT Youth** – allows for youth comfort in disclosing sensitive information; stay current with sensitivity trainings
2. **Assess, Don't Assume, Sexual Orientation** – allow youth to self-identify rather than verbalize your own assumption
3. **Help Youth Work Through the Stages of the Coming Out Process** – youth may need assistance in integrating sexual identity and sense of self; help youth foresee consequences (+/-) of coming out
4. **Determine How "Out" a Youth is and Who Supports the Youth's Sexual Orientation** – be aware of youth's choices and work with them to build a support network which can be relied upon in challenging times
5. **Treat the Presenting Challenge, not the Youth's Sexual Orientation** – don't assume the youth's problems are due to their sexual orientation

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Affirmative Practices SKILLS

Who can one turn to when they see a society that does not foster multicultural understanding for LGBTQ populations? For this reason, the role of the mental health practitioner is vital. - Edward M. Johns

1. **Create a Safe Environment for LGBT Youth** – allows for youth comfort in disclosing sensitive information; stay current with sensitivity trainings
2. **Assess, Don't Assume, Sexual Orientation** – allow youth to self-identify rather than verbalize your own assumption
3. **Help Youth Work Through the Stages of the Coming Out Process** – youth may need assistance in integrating sexual identity and sense of self; help youth foresee consequences (+/-) of coming out
4. **Determine How "Out" a Youth is and Who Supports the Youth's Sexual Orientation** – be aware of youth's choices and work with them to build a support network which can be relied upon in challenging times
5. **Treat the Presenting Challenge, not the Youth's Sexual Orientation** – don't assume the youth's problems are due to their sexual orientation

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Affirmative Practices SKILLS

Hiding consumes a great deal of energy and produces undue stress.

6. **Examine the Presenting Challenge in the Context of their Lives as Both Youth and LGBT Individuals** – important to understand the dynamics between multiple identities (sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ethnicity, etc.)
7. **Work with Family Members to Accept LGBT Youth and Support their Identities** – “Coming out” affects the youth **and** their family. Families need to adjust expectations for their child (Savin-Williams, 1996); help keep connections between youth and their families by developing strategies because family can be an important support for the youth
8. **Refer Youth to Gay Affirmative Resources** – by encouraging clients to look up and utilize these resources, can increase client’s self-awareness and self-esteem about identity; foster pride and security
9. **Acknowledge Negative Feelings about LGBT Youth and Work to Address these Feelings** – be aware of personal and local biases
10. **Engage in Ongoing Training and Continuing Education Around LGBT Issues** – stay up-to-date with literature, news, trainings

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Sample Group Activities

“Realizing that I don’t want to have to choose between being female and being male really scares me and I am afraid to tell even the people I trust the most.”
- HRC, 2013

	Topics	Sample Activities
1	Intro, icebreakers, group rules	Intro, rules, icebreakers
2	Developing a Common Language (subsequent years Bias and Privilege)	Alphabet Soup (Minority Stress Theory or Bias of Privilege)
3	Identifying strengths	Needs and Misconceptions
4	Reviewing significant life events	Lifelines
5	Identifying positive role models	Coming Out Stories
6	Identifying values and life beliefs	Support Systems/Coping Strategies
7	Identifying coping strategies	Personal Boundaries/College
8	Relationships	Loaded Questions/Relationship Games
9	Recognize growth and celebrate	Celebration of Growth

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Maintaining Youth Confidentiality

Johnny told me he's gay and his parents will never understand. He's suicidal. What do I do? What are my obligations for disclosure and can I break confidentiality?

- We are obligated to report the youth's risk, but not why the youth is experiencing SI... the focus should be on stabilization – their identity/orientation will be relevant for long-term care, but not their acute needs
- We can disclose a youth's SI without outing them... we could honestly say when a parent queries us that the student does have concerns about living up to the expectations of others or that they feel unsupported; the focus should be on the suicidal ideation and not on the LGBTQ status
- While we should work to help the youth be accepted, that process might take time, and outing them isn't necessary to inform the parent of the kid's risk which needs to be more immediately addressed
- Though it is possible that the parents may be accepting, it's also possible that the youth's fear is justified and outing them could cause endangerment – physical safety at the hand of their parent, and physical safety at their own hands

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Importance of LGBTQ+ Support Groups

Since schools have an **ethical, moral, and legal obligation** to provide support and protection for all students (Weiler, 2004), training on LGBTQ+ issues is an important part of... training and outreach within schools. (Byrd, 2012)

- LGBTQ+ youth often have little or no chance to take part in dating relationships, friendships, or develop intimate relationships in the same manner in which heterosexual adolescents do (Deisher, 1989; Schneider, 1989); Often "forced to explore sexuality secretly" (Macgillivray, 2000, p. 309)
- *"Schools have a unique position as one of the few institutions that almost all LGBTQ students must attend.... [We] have an opportunity to facilitate growth, awareness, and knowledge and understanding so that both sexual minority and heterosexual individuals can learn and develop in a positive school environment."* (Black & Underwood, 1998; Weiler, 2004).
- 20+ years ago, 50% of LGBTQ+ persons were unsatisfied/displeased with counseling received (Rudolph, 1988)
- Current research suggests that conditions have not changed much – SMY, esp. lesbians, report not viewing counselors as competent clinicians in terms of sexual orientation (Hunt, Matthews, Milson, Lammel, 2006)

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Importance of Working with LGBTQ+ Students

I'm still trying to figure out who I am; I just know who I am not.

- Courts have ruled that clients can be harmed emotionally when a counselor refuses to counsel them because of concerns about homosexuality (Hermann & Herlihy, 2006)
- Courts have upheld universities dismissal of school counseling majors who refused to counsel homosexual students due to their own conflicting religious beliefs (Shallcross, 2010).
- Coming out process can be detrimental and can lead to increased feelings of rejection that can increase mental and emotional distress leading to risky behaviors (Gagne, Tewksbury, & McGaughey, 1997; Lemoire & Chen, 2005; Harrison, 2003)
- ***"The relational aspect of individual counseling allows for a restoration of the capacity for interpersonal authenticity in adolescents who may have presented false selves to the world for some time."*** (DePaul, Walsh, & Dam, 2009, p. 38)

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Safe Space Signs for Restricted Environments

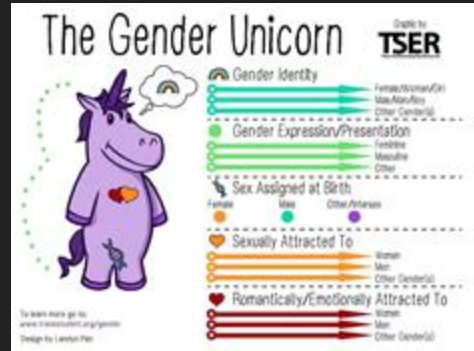
"It's who you go to bed *with* not what you go to bed *as*."
- Sexuality vs. Identity



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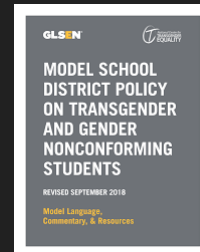
Safe Space Signs for Restricted Environments

If I haven't done anything wrong, why don't my parents love me?



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Resources for Inclusive Schools



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Final Thoughts

The degree to which LGBTQ adolescents have supportive and understanding relationships with others and develop positive coping skills will impact their success in adapting to the stigmas they will inevitably face.

- Lemoire & Chen, 2005

- Offer support but don't assume a student needs any help
- Be a role model of acceptance (inc. inclusive language)
- Appreciate the student's courage
- Assure and respect confidentiality
- Ask questions that demonstrate understanding, acceptance, and compassion
- Remember the student has not changed
- Challenge traditional (hetero- and cisnormative) norms
- Be prepared to give referrals (for mental health and community support)
- **LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN.**

- GLSEN, 2009

Without you, an LGBTQIA+ youth may have no one.

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"love is all you need?"

With hope in my heart and a tear in my eye, basically I said this girl is your son.

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Coming Out Resources

Open the closet, and open hearts and minds.
Open the door and others will follow behind.
- Nikki Greenway

The Trevor Project: Coming Out Guide (<http://www.thetrevorproject.org/section/YOU>)

HRC's Coming Out Resources (<http://www.hrc.org/resources/category/coming-out>)

Safe Schools Coalition (http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-coming_out.html)

Amplify (<http://amplifyyourvoice.org/youthresource/youthresource-comingout>)

GLSEN (<http://bit.ly/1NjFB26>)

Inside Out Youth Services (<https://www.insideoutys.org/programs/resources/coming-resource/>)

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LGB++ Resources for Students

I've slowly been figuring out who I really am,
and every step of the way I like who I find
more and more.
- Hayley, 16

- National Center for Lesbian Rights (<http://www.nclrights.org/>)
- The Trevor Project Support Center (<http://bit.ly/1Ev5gOg>)
- Asexuality Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) (<http://www.asexuality.org/en/>)
- CenterLink (<http://www.lgbtcenters.org/>)
- GLAAD (<http://www.glaad.org/>)
- GLBT National Help Center (<http://www.glbtnationalhelpcenter.org/>)
- GLBT National Resource Database (<http://www.glbtnearme.org/>)
- Loudoun Out Loud (PFLAG) (<https://www.facebook.com/LoudounOutLoud>)
- PFLAG National (www.pflag.org)

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LGB++ Resources for Students (Continued)

There's nothing wrong with you.
There's a lot wrong with the world
around you.

- Chris Cotter

- Mazzone Center – GSAs (<https://mazzonicenter.org/publications/building-fierce-gsa>)
- SMYAL (<http://www.smyal.org/index.php>)
- Advocates for Youth (<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/>)
- Ambien Joven (Spanish) (<http://www.ambientejoven.org/>)
- Born This Way Foundation (<https://bornthisway.foundation/>)

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LGB++ Resources for Schools

Whenever one person stands up and
says, 'Wait a minute, this is wrong,' it
helps other people to do the same.

- Orr, A. & Baum, J. (2015) *Schools in transition: A guide for supporting transgender students in K-12 schools*. <http://tinyurl.com/olb9msu>
- The Trevor Project – Model School Policy <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/modelschoolpolicy>
- The Trevor Project – LGBTQ Training Simulations (<http://www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/step-in-speak-up>)
- Safe Schools for Transgender and Gender Diverse Students (2015). National Association of School Psychologists. <http://tinyurl.com/klh3vb7>
- HRC Welcoming Schools (<http://www.welcomingschools.org/>) – Elementary
- National Association of School Psychologists "Dignity for All" (<http://bit.ly/1MuyXaC>)

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Trans and GNC Resources

We all must remember that gender is different than sex. Sex is the physical, while gender is the spiritual.

- Anon (Tumbler User)

- Trans United Family and Friends (<http://tufforg.wix.com/tuffnew>)
- GLSEN (<http://www.glsen.org/article/educators-support-trans-and-gnc-students>)
- Gender Diversity (<http://www.genderdiversity.org/>)
- Gender Spectrum (www.genderspectrum.org)
- TransActive (<https://www.transactiveonline.org/education/>)
- TransYouthFamilyAllies (TYFA) (<http://www.imatyfa.org/>)
- Trans Youth Equality Foundation (<http://www.transyouthequality.org/>)
- International Federation for Gender Education (IFGE) (www.ifge.org)
- Children's National Medical Center (<http://bit.ly/1Naslhc>)
- National Center for Transgender Equality (<http://transequality.org/>)
- Life Outside the Binary (<http://lifeoutsidethebinary.com/resources>)
- Nonbinary (http://nonbinary.org/wiki/Main_Page)
- Transgender Law Center Trans Youth (<http://transgenderlawcenter.org/>)
- Jim Collins Foundation (<http://jimcollinsfoundation.org/>)

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LGB++ Resources for Families

Sending my son, a joyful, gender creative child, off to school this year filled me with anxiety... and with a hug and a kiss, I sent him into his day. As a parent, one feels like you are very alone at a moment like this. You feel like it is you and 'them'... [they] don't understand your child for who he is.

- The Parents Project (<http://theparentsproject.com/>)
- True Colors (<http://www.ourtruecolors.org/>)
- HRC's listing on LGBT Parenting Families (<http://bit.ly/1ULvuVW>)
- Families Like Mine (<http://familieslikemine.com/>)
- Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) (<https://community.pflag.org/>)
- EqualityVirginia (<http://www.equalityvirginia.org/>)
- Family Acceptance Project (<http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>)
- Out & Proud Families (<http://www.outproudfamilies.com/>)

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Lifeline and Online Crisis Resources

Gay teenagers are four times as likely to attempt suicide as straight ones. I wish they knew that there's nothing wrong with them; that they are just a different shade of normal.
- Jodi Piccoulf



1-877-565-8860



866-488-7386



3-9 PM 7 days a week for
Ages 13-24
Trevorchat.org



4-8 PM Fridays
Ages 13-24
Text the word "Trevor" to
1-202-304-1200



Monitored Social Networking
<https://www.trevorspace.org/>

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Tolerance is archaic. Who wants to be 'tolerated'?
Teach love, values, acceptance.
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At 12 or 13, I didn't know. I knew basically that I was a lesbian when I got to high school, when people were talking about dating and I thought it was silly and it didn't work for me. Then I met a woman and we started dating and then I thought – "Oh, that's what everyone's talking about." – then it felt right. - Tina

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I always had to make sure I was not acting too butch or dressing too much like a dyke. I always felt like I was trying to be someone I wasn't, always trying to fit in where I knew I didn't fit... - Brigid, 17

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