



Creating a Safe Learning Environment for LGBTQ Students:

A School Counselor's Responsibility

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Agenda

- Welcome/Introductions
- Commons Statistics re LGBTQ students in school
- Our Role/Responsibility as a School Counselor
- What We Can Do to Make Our Schools Safer



INTRODUCTIONS

Challenges in School

- Victims of Harassment
 - Verbal
 - Sexual
- Victims of bullying
 - Direct
 - Physical (kicking, punching, pushing, name calling stealing property etc.)
 - Indirect
 - Spreading rumors, exclusion from groups
 - Cyber-bullying
- Exposed to anti-gay comments at school
- Alcohol/drug use and abuse



Challenges in School

- Increased number of suicide attempts
- Completed suicides
- Homelessness
- Victims of homicide
- Truancy
- Dropping out of school
- Repeating grades



Role of the School Counselor

- Professional school counselors serve a vital role in **maximizing student success** (Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2007; Stone & Dahir, 2006).
- Professional school counselors **support a safe learning environment** and work to **safeguard the human rights** of all members of the school community (Sandhu, 2000)

Ethical Standards for School Counselors (ASCA)

Preamble:

- Each person has the right to be respected, be treated with dignity and have access to a comprehensive school counseling program that advocates for and affirms all students from diverse populations including: ethnic/racial identity, age, economic status, abilities/disabilities, language, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression, family type, religious/spiritual identity and appearance.

Ethical Standards for School Counselors (ASCA)

Preamble

- Each person has the right to feel safe in school environments that school counselors help create, free from abuse, bullying, neglect, harassment or other forms of violence.



Ethical Standards for School Counselors (ASCA)

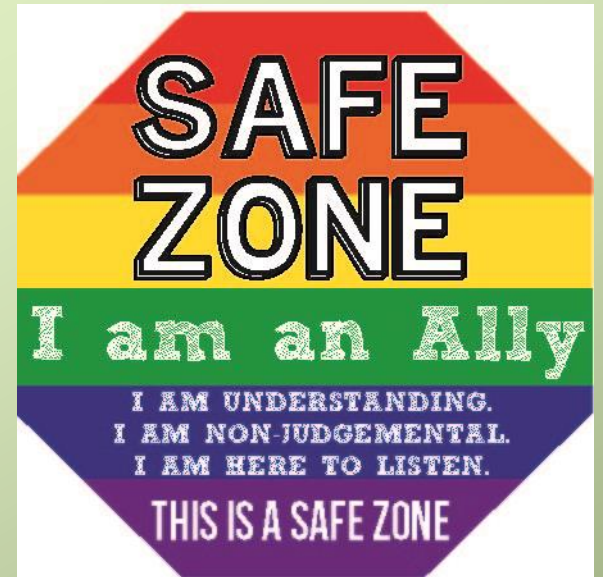
A.1. Responsibilities to Students

Professional school counselors:

- a. Have a primary obligation to the students, who are to be treated with dignity and respect as unique individuals.
- c. Respect students' values, beliefs and cultural background and do not impose the school counselor's personal values on students or their families.

What We Can Do To Make Our Schools Safe

- Talk to teachers, parents and students about possible struggles
- Make sure that the library and teachers have accurate info
- Let students know you are open
- Be a good role model
- Address LGBT issues in school/support LGBT issues



What We Can Do To Make Our Schools Safe

- Encourage students to report harassment, bullying or threats
- Help create LGBTQ and Ally groups/Gay Straight Alliances on your campus.
- Advocate for strong, comprehensive bullying/harassment policies at your school (Zero Tolerance).



What We Can Do To Make Our Schools Safe

- Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) Safe Space Kit:
 - Support
 - Educate
 - Advocate
- NYC's PFLAG Safe Schools Program
- Campus Pride Index
- Spectrum (LSU)



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