

Getting Jazzed About Creating Safe, Supportive, and Healthy Schools for LGBTQ Students

A Blueprint for Action

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Using research and data, we plan, transform, and evaluate policies and practices and design new studies to measure impact and generate new knowledge. We engage stakeholders and consumers, enabling their voices to shape the policies and services that affect them.



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Objectives for Today: You Will Be Able to...

- ✓ Define key terms related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) identity.
- ✓ Describe some challenges LGBT students and those questioning (Q) their sexual orientation/gender identity experience in schools.
- ✓ Describe a blueprint to create physically, emotionally safe, supportive, and healthy schools for all students.



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Foundations for Today



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American Psychological Association and National Association of School Psychologists Resolution

- Resolution on Gender and Sexual Orientation Diversity in Children and Adolescents in School (2014):
 - ✓ Same-sex sexual and romantic attractions, feelings, and behaviors are normal and positive variations of human sexuality regardless of sexual orientation identity
 - ✓ Diverse gender expressions, regardless of gender identity, and diverse gender identities, beyond a binary classification, are normal and positive variations of the human experience
 - ✓ Access the full resolution [online](#)

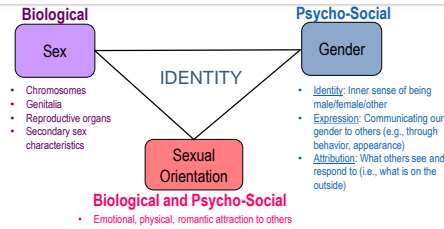


Conditions for Learning: Key Aspects of School Climate That Support Enhanced School Academic Outcomes

Students Are Safe <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physically safe• Emotionally and socially safe• Treated fairly and equitably• Avoid risky behaviors• School is safe and orderly	Students Are Supported <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meaningful connection to adults• Strong bonds to school• Positive peer relationships• Effective and available support
Students Are Challenged <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High expectations• Strong personal motivation• School is connected to life goals• Rigorous academic opportunities	Students Are Socially Capable <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emotionally intelligent and culturally competent• Responsible and persistent• Cooperative team players• Contribute to school community



Separate but Intersecting : Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation



Reflection and Discussion: Heterosexual and Gender Privilege

1. How has your involvement in heterosexual relationships been encouraged, rewarded, acknowledged, and supported by family, friends, and society?
2. Have you ever had to defend your heterosexuality to gain acceptance among your peers or colleagues? Your gender identity?
3. Have you ever worried that you might be "outed" as heterosexual?

* Adapted from Garner and Emens (2013)

Coming Out

- The process of accepting one's own sexuality, gender identity, or status as an intersex person—and the process of disclosing this to others.
- Is an ongoing process.
- Is multidimensional: coming out to family, to peers, at school, at work, in one's community.
- Is unique/not the same for every person.
- Can be a vulnerable time for a young person.

Transgender (Trans*)

- An umbrella term for someone whose gender identity or expression doesn't fit social or cultural expectations for gender expression based on the person's assigned sex at birth
- This term should only be used with people who self-identify with the term



- A transgender person "transitions" to express gender identity through various changes (e.g., clothes)
- Some related terms: gender diverse, gender nonconforming, gender variant
- "Gender dysphoria" rather than "gender identity disorder" is now used in mental health diagnoses

Some Other Terms

- **Heterosexism:** Bias and discrimination that stigmatizes non-heterosexual identity
- **Heteronormativity:** The assumption — in individuals, systems, or organizations — that everyone is heterosexual
- **Cisnormativity:** The assumption that a person's gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth
- **Internalized Stigma:** Shame or self-hatred because of one's attraction/identity

Ally

- Person with a genuine, strong concern for the well-being of LGBT people
- Someone who confronts heterosexism, biphobia, transphobia, and heterosexual privilege in themselves and others—and believes these are social justice issues
- All school staff can be allies!

Some Terms to Avoid

- Lifestyle
- Choice
- Sexual preference
- Homosexual
- Queer (although increasingly used by youth in an affirming way)
- Transgendered
- Transvestite
- Transsexual (although some older adults may use this, it is not an umbrella term for transgender individuals)

Experiences of LGBTQ Students

Some Basics from the Research

Social Influences on LGBTQ Student Well-Being



Experiences such as chronic stress associated with...

- Peer rejection
- Bias and stigma
- Disparities in quality of care
- Violence, including abuse and assault
- Loss of connection to culture/community
- Rejection from (or loss of) family and other adults

Lead to risky behaviors and negative outcomes such as...

- Substance abuse
- Risky sexual behavior
- Running away and homelessness
- Self-harm as well as suicide attempts/completion
- Entry into child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems
- School failure or poor school outcomes (e.g., absenteeism)
- Poorer psychological well-being (e.g., anxiety, depression, lower self-esteem)

2013 National School Climate Survey

- GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) survey of 7,898 students aged 13-21 found:
 - 71% reported hearing "that's so gay" and other anti-gay remarks often or frequently; 56% heard negative remarks about gender expression; 33% heard negative remarks about transgender people.
 - 52% heard anti-gay remarks from school staff
 - Of students who reported incidents of assault and harassment to school staff, 62% indicated that staff did nothing in response.
 - Students experiencing victimization had poorer attendance, lower grade-point averages, higher levels of depression, and lower self-esteem.

Source: <http://glsen.org/nscl>

Family Acceptance Project Findings

- Compared to youth experiencing no family rejection or only a little rejection because of their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, youth experiencing high levels of family rejection are more likely to:
 - Have attempted suicide? **8 times**
 - Report high levels of depression? **6 times**
 - Use illegal drugs? **3 times**
 - Be at risk for STDs? **3 times**

Improving Well-Being

Positive Outcomes

- Increased resilience
- Reductions in bias and stigma
- Improved permanency with families
- Improved connection with other adults
- Peer support and healthy connections
- Improved school attendance and outcomes
- Lower recidivism (or no system involvement)
- Decreased homelessness and likelihood of running away
- Fewer health, mental health, and substance abuse challenges

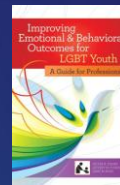
Decreased Stress and Improved Policy, Services, and Social Supports



Discussion

- Please share stories of students or staff that you have worked with to address LGBTQ issues in your schools.
 - What concerns emerged?
 - How did you respond?
 - What resources/information would have been helpful?
 - What questions/concerns remain?

Standards and Practices to Foster Safe, Supportive, and Affirming Schools



About the Standards

- Based on recommended/best practices
- Are applicable to all child-, youth-, and family-serving systems (e.g., schools, child welfare, juvenile justice)
- Grounded in four guiding principles:
 - Fostering shared responsibility and commitment across service systems
 - Creating an inclusive organizational culture
 - Implementing a family-centered approach
 - Promoting positive youth development

Standards for Supporting LGBTQ Students

1	Assessment & Improvement	6	Practices to Affirm Identity
2	Nondiscrimination Policies	7	Peer Connections
3	Professional Development	8	Family Connections
4	Forms & Data Collection/Sharing	9	Community Services
5	Safe, Supportive Environments	10	Community Outreach

1 Assessment & Improvement

- ✓ Conduct a needs assessment or readiness survey to understand capacity to provide inclusive, affirming educational services and supports to LGBTQ students and their families
- ✓ This assessment/survey should aim to determine strengths and needs
- ✓ Where possible, infuse into other improvement efforts
- ✓ Use this data to develop (and then monitor) school improvement efforts...

Sample Questions to Guide this Process

- How has the school developed staff knowledge and skills for creating an inclusive school environment for LGBTQ students and their families?
- What are the school's outcomes for LGBTQ students?
- What challenges has the school encountered in meeting the needs of LGBTQ students and their families?
- What action steps are necessary to address the issues identified?

2 Nondiscrimination Policies

- ✓ Enumerate sexual orientation and gender identity/expression
- ✓ Inform students and staff about formal grievance procedures
- ✓ Align process for addressing concerns with other school disciplinary procedures
- ✓ Require contractors/external service providers to have inclusive policy protections and practices

3 Professional Development

- ✓ Understand:
 - Differences between sex, sexual orientation, and gender; also, sexual and gender identity terms
 - Myths, bias, and stereotypes—and how to address them
 - Coming out process; how to support a young person in understanding their LGBT identity
 - Experiences of LGBTQ young people and their families
 - How to create an inclusive classroom/school culture, including safe spaces
 - Approaches to working with families of LGBTQ students

Staff Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills

School staff should:

- Be aware of the oppression and challenges that LGBTQ students may experience
- Engage in self-exploration to examine their beliefs about varying expressions of sexual and gender identity
- Explore their assumptions about sexual orientation and gender identity

Staff Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills

- ✓ Also understand:
 - School, district, and community resources
 - Significance of allies
- ✓ Be aware of challenges LGBTQ students experience, but do not assume they are at risk—talk with them!
- ✓ Actively address misinformation too
- ✓ Teachers know how to effectively incorporate LGBTQ-inclusive supplemental instructional materials

Reflect on and Respond to Your Attitudes/Behaviors, Too...

Repulsion: LGBTQ people are strange and aversive.
Pity: LGBT people are somehow born that way and it is pitiful.
Tolerance: Life for LGBTQ people is hard; anti-gay attitudes just make things worse.
Acceptance: LGBT identity is a fact of life that should neither be punished nor celebrated.
Support: The rights of LGBTQ people should be protected and safeguarded.
Admiration: Being LGBTQ in our society takes strength.
Appreciation: There is value in diversity. Anti-LGBTQ attitudes should be confronted.
Nurturance: LGBTQ people are an indispensable part of society.

Group Reflection and Discussion 3: Explore Heterosexual and Gender Privilege

1. How has your involvement in heterosexual relationships been encouraged, rewarded, acknowledged, and supported by family, friends, and society?
2. Have you ever had to defend your heterosexuality to gain acceptance among your peers or colleagues? Your gender identity?
3. Have you ever worried that you might be "outed" as heterosexual?

* Adapted from Garner and Emery (2013)

Access and Share Resources to Support Staff Development and Practice

- [Building Support for Schools that Openly Affirm the Diversity of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#) (Groundspark, 2014)
- [A Guide for Understanding, Supporting, and Affirming LGBTQI2-S Children, Youth, and Families](#) (AIR & SAMHSA National Workgroup, 2014)
- [Interactive video on 10 standards of care](#) (AIR, 2014)
- [An Introduction to Welcoming Schools: An Inclusive Approach for Addressing Family Diversity, Gender Stereotyping and Name-Calling in K-5 Learning Environments](#) (HRC, 2009)
- [Safe Space Kit: Guide to Being an Ally for LGBT Students](#) (GLSEN, 2013)
- [Strengthening the Learning Environment: A School Employee's Guide to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgender Issues](#) (National Education Association, 2006)

4 Forms & Data Collection/Sharing



- ✓ Forms and screening procedures
 - Gender neutral language?
 - Ask for pronouns and name used?
- ✓ Confidentiality in data collection and information sharing
 - Never intentionally “out” a young person unless required by law (e.g., safety or health risk to self or others)

5 Safe, Supportive Environments



- ✓ Create a safe space/zone in your offices...
 - Affirm all forms of diversity—and do not tolerate anti-LGBT bias/harassment
 - Ensure all staff can talk about sexual orientation and gender identity and address LGBTQ bias in a respectful way
 - Do not confuse sexual orientation with sexual behaviors
 - Display symbols and materials that positively represent the LGBTQ community
 - Do not refer to sexual orientation or gender identity/expression as “just a phase”

Safe Space Symbols



6 Practices to Affirm Identity

Creating an inclusive school environment should be a community-wide effort:

- ✓ Effectively address stigma and bias
- ✓ Allow students to express their gender identity openly
- ✓ Refer to students using their preferred pronouns and names (rather than legal names)
- ✓ Use inclusive language (e.g., “good morning everyone”)
- ✓ Never “out” someone unless required by law (e.g., threatening harm to themselves)

Affirming School Counseling Interventions

- Individual (e.g., coming out process, suicidal ideation, depression, relationship challenges)
- Small group (be cautious about location and confidentiality—do not want to “out” students)
- Classroom (include LGBT content in instruction related to human development, individual differences, and sexuality)
- Note: Important to understand sexual identity development and the coming out process

For example, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/piic/summer2007/rainey.htm>

For Students Who Are Questioning Their Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

- Be an ally by listening, being genuine, supporting them, talking with them (e.g., asking questions) in a respectful way
- Respect the process and timeline that is most appropriate for them
- Connect them with resources (e.g., written information, Trevor Project)
- **Never** bring up religion, use inappropriate language, or pressure them to tell others
- Remember that it can be dangerous for young people to come out in unsafe situations

Tips to Share with Elementary School Educators



- Teach students how to be allies to address harassment/bullying:
 - Talking with/befriending targeted student
 - Confiding in an adult
 - Talking with student showing problem behavior
 - Creating a distraction to help stop harassment
 - Speaking up in the moment
- Engage families
- Use books to engage students and expand understanding of gender and families *from Welcoming Schools Project

Engage Teachable Moments



- Has anyone called you a name that made you feel bad? How did that make you feel?
- Why did you think it was okay to make fun of the way someone looks?
- Do you know what the word (offensive term) means?

*from Welcoming Schools Project, HRC

Tips to Address Bias

- That was a stereotype. Stereotypes are a kind of lie and they hurt people's feelings. Everybody is different with their own strengths and own way of being.
- It's unacceptable to say that to a classmate. All students should be respected.
- It is not ok to call someone a "girl" to insult them. When you call someone a girl as a putdown, you are insulting ALL girls.

*from Welcoming Schools Project, HRC

Support Youth Who Are Gender Diverse



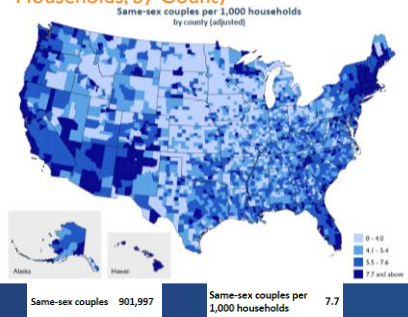
7 Peer Connections

- ✓ Foster:
 - Opportunities for LGBTQ students to meet and support one another
 - Personal development
- ✓ Provide opportunities to access affirming recreational activities (e.g., afterschool services)
- ✓ Participate in or sponsor gay-straight alliances and similar clubs in your schools
- ✓ RESOURCES:
 - [GLSEN Jump-Start Guide](#); [GSA Advisor Handbook](#)

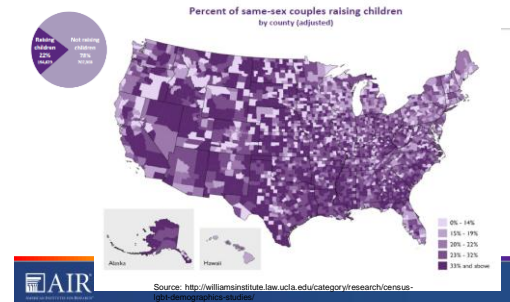
8 Family Connections

- ✓ Work with families to improve youth permanency with their families
- ✓ Build professional and family understanding about behaviors that can negatively affect youth well-being—and behaviors that can build youth resilience and prevent these issues.
- ✓ RESOURCES:
 - Family Acceptance Project: familyproject.sfsu.edu
 - [A Practitioner's Resource Guide: Helping Families to Support Their LGBT Children \(2014\)](#)

U.S. Same-Sex Couples per 1,000 Households, by County



Williams Institute Data on Percent of Same-Sex Couples Raising Children, by County



Family Acceptance Project: Behaviors to Avoid

http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/files/FAP_English%20Booklet_ppt.pdf

- Verbal harassment or name-calling because of their child's LGBT identity
- Excluding LGBT youth from family and family activities
- Blocking access to LGBT friends, events, and resources
- Blaming their child when they are discriminated against because of their LGBT identity

Family Acceptance Project: Behaviors to Avoid

http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/files/FAP_English%20Booklet_ppt.pdf

- Pressuring their child to be more (or less) masculine or feminine
- Telling their child that God will punish them because they are gay
- Telling their child that they are ashamed of them or that how they look or act will shame the family
- Making their child keep their LGBT identity a secret in the family and not letting them talk about it

Family Acceptance Project: Behaviors That Help

http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/files/FAP_English%20Booklet_ppt.pdf

- Talk with their child or foster child about their LGBT identity
- Express affection when their child tells them or when they learn that their child is gay or transgender
- Support their child's LGBT identity even though they may feel uncomfortable
- Advocate for their child if they are mistreated because of their LGBT identity

Family Acceptance Project: Behaviors That Help

http://familyproject.csu.edu/files/FAP_English200booklet_gst.pdf

- Require that other family members respect their child
- Talk with clergy and help their faith community to support LGBT people
- Welcome their child's LGBT friends and partners to their home
- Believe their child can have a happy future as an LGBT adult

9 Community Services

- ✓ Create collaborative partnerships and coordinate supports to increase the array of and access to services needed to meet specific needs of students:
 - Primary care
 - Mental health and counseling
 - Family outreach
 - Housing
- ✓ Identify and distribute resource lists and community contacts for LGBTQ-affirming services and information
- ✓ Access national resources, such as thetrevorproject.org
 - Trevor Project lifeline (866.488.7386), Trevorchat, Trevorspace, Ask Trevor

National Organizations to Support You

- Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN): www.glsen.org
- Gender Spectrum: www.genderspectrum.org
- GSA Network: www.gsanetwork.org
- Safe Schools Coalition: www.safeschoolscoalition.org
- TA Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health: <http://tapartnership.org/COP/CLC/lgbtqi2s.php>
- The Trevor Project: www.thetrevorproject.org
- Welcoming Schools Project at the Human Rights Campaign: www.welcomingschools.org
- Youth.gov: <http://youth.gov/youth-topics/lgbtq-youth>

LGBTQ Youth Updates

- Three easy steps....
 1. Address an email to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.AIR.ORG with a blank subject line
 2. In the body of the email, write **SUBSCRIBE LGBTQ_Youth**
 3. Send the email

10 Community Outreach

- ✓ Consider learning events focused on these topics (e.g., how to talk about gender for younger grades; importance of supporting LGBTQ young people)
- ✓ Facilitate dialogue with service providers and families
- ✓ Collaborate with LGBTQ-affirming organizations and community leaders
- ✓ Include youth as speakers

A Strategic Planning Tool to Inform School Practice

Standards	Priority	Goals	Strategies/Action Steps	Who should be involved?	Measures of Success
EXAMPLE Standard 1: Self-Assessment and Ongoing Continuous Quality Improvement Efforts	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand agency's strengths, needs, and areas of improvement for providing supportive services for LGBT youth and their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop or find an evaluation tool Implement survey/tool with staff and children/youth Accessing agency services 	Planning: Executive Director, Program Director Survey: All staff and children/youth receiving agency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on organizational capacity and needs are available leading to implementation of new practices
Standard 1: Self-Assessment and Ongoing Continuous Quality Improvement Efforts					
Standard 2: Non-Discrimination Policies					



Moving Forward...

- Identify an area of interest to gather more information...
- Identify one piece of information or practice to share with a colleague at your school...
- Identify one strategy you will implement and develop in your own practice...



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