



CULTIVATING RESPECT:  
**safeschools**  
for all

**THE TOP 10 WAYS TO  
MAKE SCHOOLS SAFER...  
FOR ALL STUDENTS**

## Everyone Can Do Something: A Message from PFLAG National



For too many of our youth, attending school can be a frightening experience. And for parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators, providing a safe environment for young people can seem like a daunting task, especially when working to make classrooms—and all school facilities and programs—fair and safe for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) students.

Most adults would agree that what they want is for all youth to have the same opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed as every other student in their school. But far too often, young people who are LGBTQ+ (or perceived to be) are taunted, harassed, and bullied, sometimes relentlessly. And for adults, it's often difficult to know where to begin tackling the issues that lead to bullying behavior and discrimination in school.

This guide—part of our *Cultivating Respect: Safe Schools for All* program—outlines, in easy-to-understand language and simple guidelines, the critical role that adults play in making schools a place to learn, rather than a place to fear. It also lays out a process of recognizing what steps to take to get there, and how to take them.

Anti-LGBTQ name-calling, derogatory remarks in the classroom, policies that prevent youth from using facilities that align with their gender, and taunts and threats against students have a very real impact on the entire school community. A student with an LGBTQ family member or friend is just as offended, uncomfortable, and unable to learn in such environments as students who are, themselves, LGBTQ+. No one is immune from attacks on their family, and everyone benefits when adults speak up and take action against those attacks.

Please take a moment to review the ten simple and powerful steps outlined here to help make your local school community safer. As adults and leaders in our communities, it is time to work for classrooms and schools where students can learn free from fear, and are protected from discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

To learn more, visit [pflag.org/safeschools](https://pflag.org/safeschools).

## The Top Ten Ways to Make Schools Safer...

These are ten things every adult should do to help keep students safe at school.



- 1 Learn the Facts:** Understand the alarming data reported by LGBTQ+ youth about their experiences in school.
- 2 Understand the Language:** Learn the terminology to set a tone of fairness and respect.
- 3 Stop Bad Behavior:** Take action to stop disruptive behavior and model respect.
- 4 Set the Policy:** Create a safe and inclusive environment with these critical components of an effective safe schools policy.
- 5 Plan School-Wide Activities:** Create opportunities to educate the school community about why respect for everyone must be the rule, and not the exception.
- 6 Be Public:** Let youth know that you are their advocate and ally.
- 7 Stop Cyberbullying:** Learn more about technology-based harassment and what to do to help those who are targets.
- 8 Train and Educate Everyone:** Ask for faculty to be trained to respond to bullying in the most effective, helpful way.
- 9 Support Comprehensive Health Education:** Help create comprehensive, inclusive, and age-appropriate health education for all students, including those who are LGBTQ+.
- 10 Resources...and More Resources:** Know where to go for help, support and more information.

## Learn the Facts:

On average, more than 50% of teachers surveyed reported they are uncomfortable intervening when a student is bullied about their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Greater knowledge about the incidence and prevalence of anti-LGBTQ+ bullying in schools can help teachers feel better prepared to address the behavior in the classroom.



LGBTQ+ students are at a higher risk for depression, dropping out of school, and self harm as a result of bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

### LGBTQ students face a striking reality on a daily basis...

- **95.8% of LGBTQ+ students heard anti-gay remarks (like “dyke” or “faggot”) at school, while 95.7% heard negative remarks about gender expression, and 85.7% heard negative remarks specifically about transgender people.**
- **85.2% of LGBTQ+ students reported being verbally harassed, 27% reported being physically harassed, and 13% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation, with 77% of those who were out or perceived as transgender experiencing mistreatment.**
- **48.6% of LGBTQ+ students experienced cyberbullying or some type of electronic harassment in the past year (via text or social media).**
- **57.6% of LGBTQ+ students reported feeling unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation, and more than a third (43.3%) felt unsafe because of their gender expression.**

### And the consequences of a negative school environment are real and far-reaching:

- **31.8% of LGBTQ+ students missed an entire day of school because they felt unsafe, with 17% of those who were out as transgender leaving a K-12 school due to severe mistreatment.**

2015 National School Climate Survey and From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, (New York, NY: GLSEN, 2015); and 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2015)

## Learn the Facts:

continued

- **The reported grade-point average of students who were more frequently harassed because of their perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender expression was almost half a grade lower than for students who were less often harassed (2.9 versus 3.3).**

2015 National School Climate Survey, (*New York, NY: GLSEN, 2015*); and 2015 U.S Transgender Survey, (*National Center for Transgender Equality, 2015*)

A 2017 study from the Institute of Education Sciences' (IES) Regional Educational Laboratory Program found that increases in a school's level of positive student-reported school climate were associated with simultaneous increases in that school's academic achievement. With the shared goal of attaining high-achieving, high-performing schools, it is truly in everyone's best interest to support and create an educational climate that is safe for all students.

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### HELPFUL HINT:

PFLAG National's safe-schools partner, GLSEN ([glsen.org](http://glsen.org)), conducts research on LGBTQ+ students and their experiences in schools. Their helpful studies include:

**2015 National School Climate Survey**—Reports on school experiences of LGBTQ+ students, including information on how inclusive policies positively affect school environments.

**Separation and Stigma: Transgender Youth and School Facilities**—Co-authored by GLSEN, Movement Advancement Project (MAP), National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), and the National Education Association (NEA), this 2017 report outlines how excluding trans students from school facilities that match their gender is not only unnecessary, but profoundly harmful.

Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) has conducted a vast national school-based survey. The data research and reports can be found at [cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/shpps/results.htm](http://cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/shpps/results.htm).



## Understand the Language:

Using respectful and appropriate language, and encouraging others to do the same, is important. It helps sets the expectation of respect and understanding in the hallways and classrooms where students may experience bullying.



Language is important but it doesn't have to be a barrier to creating a safe and respectful learning environment. Familiarize yourself with the following terms, and don't be afraid to ask if you are unfamiliar with a word or how it is used... just remember to be respectful when you do.

**Sexual Orientation**—Emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings toward other people. People who are straight experience these feelings primarily for people of a gender different from their own. People who are gay or lesbian experience these feelings primarily for people of the same gender; people who are bisexual experience these feelings for people of different genders, though not always at the same time; and people who are asexual experience no sexual attraction at all. One's sexual activity does not define who one is with regard to one's sexual orientation; it is the attraction that helps determine orientation.

**Gender Identity**— One's deeply held core sense of being a girl/woman, boy/man, some of both, or neither. One's gender identity does not always correspond to biological sex. Awareness of gender identity is usually experienced as early as 18 months old and reinforced in adolescence.

**Gender Expression**—The manner in which a person communicates about gender to others through external means such as clothing, appearance, or mannerisms. This communication may be conscious or subconscious and may or may not reflect their gender identity or sexual orientation. While most people's understandings of gender expressions relate to masculinity and femininity, there are countless combinations that may incorporate both masculine and feminine expressions—or neither—through androgynous expressions. The important thing to recognize and respect is that an individual's gender expression does not automatically imply their gender identity and that every gender expression is valid.

## Understand the Language:

continued

### Extra Credit

Avoid using outdated language like “sexual preference” or “lifestyle” (which imply choice) or “homosexual” (as it focuses on sex rather than love and relationships).



### More about the acronym “LGBTQ+”

**Lesbian**—A woman who is who is sexually, romantically, emotionally, or otherwise attracted to other women.

**Gay**—An adjective that describes people who are who is sexually, romantically, emotionally, or otherwise attracted to people of the same gender.

**Bisexual**—A person who is sexually, romantically, emotionally, or otherwise attracted to people with the same or different genders/gender identities as themselves. Sometimes referred to as bi or bi+.

*The above need not have had any sexual experience; it is the attraction that determines orientation.*

**Transgender**—An adjective that describes a person’s gender identity that does not match their assigned sex at birth. This word is also used as an umbrella term to describe those who transcend conventional expectations of gender identity or expression, such as people who are **Genderqueer**, which refers to a person whose gender identity goes beyond strictly female or male.

**Queer**—A term used by some—particularly youth—to describe themselves or their community. Reclaimed from its earlier pejorative use, the term is valued by some for its defiance and by others who find it an appropriate term to describe more fluid identities. Due to its varying meanings, **Queer** should only be used when self-identifying or quoting someone who self-identifies as queer.

**Questioning**, also represented by the “Q,” describes those in a process of discovery and exploration about their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The “+” refers to other identities within the LGBTQ community that don’t fit neatly into the L, G, B, T, or Q, such as asexual, aromantic, and more.

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### HELPFUL HINT:

Let youth tell you who they are. Ask how they identify, this will lead to the best outcome. Using their chosen terms, without judgment, can make all the difference in the world to struggling youth.

## Stop Bad Behavior:

More than half of LGBTQ+ students who were harassed or assaulted in school did not report the incident because they doubted that effective intervention would occur or felt the situation could become worse if reported. Of those who did report, more than half said that staff did nothing in response or told the student to ignore it. There are ways to stop bad behavior in its tracks...and ways not to do so.



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

### Managing Harassment DOs...

- **DO remind students experiencing bullying and harassment that it is not their fault.**
- **DO intervene right away when you hear derogatory language or see physical harassment happening.**
- **DO document the situation if it becomes a persistent problem. Keep a record of what, where, and when incidents happen.**
- **DO empathize, model respectful behavior, and work with students to find a solution.**

### ... and Managing the DON'Ts

- **DON'T ignore harassing or bullying behavior.**
- **DON'T think youth can take care of it without adult supervision.**
- **DON'T try to sort out the facts in the moment.**
- **DON'T require youth to say publicly what they saw.**
- **DON'T question the students involved in front of their peers.**
- **DON'T talk to the youth involved simultaneously, separate them first.**
- **DON'T make the youth involved apologize or patch things up on the spot.**



## Stop Bad Behavior:

continued

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### Remember these key points:

- **Ignoring harassing or bullying behaviors won't stop them. Unchecked behaviors will repeat themselves again and again.**
- **Don't excuse harassment or bullying. It is not a "right of passage" and no student should experience it.**
- **Intervene immediately. These behaviors must be addressed, if at all possible, in the moment or soon after.**
- **Don't let fear immobilize you. Not taking action can endanger youth and make classrooms unsafe.**

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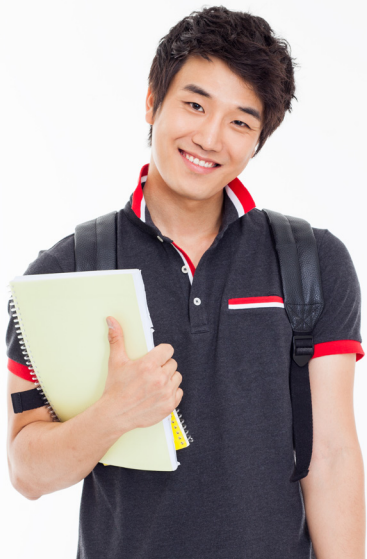
### HELPFUL HINT:

Casual comments can have unintended consequences. While young people may use phrases such as "that's so gay," "no homo," "tranny," or "faggot" in circumstances where they are not meant to be destructive, other students receive such remarks with offense. The vast majority of LGBTQ+ students report that such language caused them to feel distressed in some way. Regardless of intent, it is important that adults step in, stop their use and explain why they are harmful.



## Set the Policy:

Familiarize yourself with your school and your district's policy on bullying and harassment. Consider advocating for an update to the policy if it is not fully inclusive, does not provide for training and education, or does not have a clear mechanism for reporting and intervention.



### Two Critical Components for Every Policy:

1 Enumerate—or spell out—specific categories covered by the policy. Doing so is critical to ensuring that the policy is meaningful and “has teeth.” It is also a crucial guideline for proper training for school officials.

Students in schools with enumerated policies:

- **Were less likely to hear homophobic remarks such as “fag” or “dyke” (44.4% compared to 60.5% of students with a generic policy and 67.9% of students with no policy)**
- **Experienced less anti-LGBTQ+ victimization**
- **Were more likely to report victimization incidents to school staff**
- **Reported that staff were more likely to intervene when they heard anti-LGBTQ remarks, and to rate school staff’s response to such incidents as effective**

2 Include LGBTQ students and those perceived to be LGBTQ in your policy. LGBTQ youth are not the only targets of bullying. In many cases, students are targeted because of their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. By including terms such as “actual or perceived” with enumerated categories, every student is protected.

2015 National School Climate Survey, (New York, NY: GLSEN, 2015)

## Set the Policy:

continued

### Extra Credit

Research local, state, and federal efforts to ensure all youth are protected, and that policies are enumerated, including provisions for students who are, or are perceived to be, LGBTQ+.



There are numerous resources to work with when considering, recommending, and drafting policies for schools and school districts. Here are just a few:

- **GLSEN** has many helpful guides on a variety of topics including enumeration, a model district policy on transgender and gender-expansive students, a model anti-bullying and anti-harassment district policy, and more. [glsen.org/article/model-laws-policies](https://www.glsen.org/article/model-laws-policies)
- **National Center for Transgender Equality** has an excellent model district policy on transgender and gender-expansive students, co-authored with GLSEN. <http://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Trans%20Model%20Policy%202016.pdf>
- **The Trevor Project** has created a model school district policy for suicide prevention. [thetrevorproject.org/pages/modelschoolpolicy](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/modelschoolpolicy)
- **California Safe Schools Coalition** maintains a list of helpful model policies, including an anti-harassment policy, an anti-slur policy, and a hate-motivated behavior policy. [casafeschools.org/resourceguide/modelpolicies.html](https://www.casafeschools.org/resourceguide/modelpolicies.html)

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### HELPFUL HINT:

Policy change often happens at the district or county level. Consider working in coalition with other constituencies in your community like your local PFLAG chapter, the PTA, local LGBTQ+ groups, or local civil rights groups to communicate the need for updates to existing policies.

## School-Wide Activities:

Bullying and harassment should be discussed openly and actively year round. Consider ways to regularly reinforce your school's commitment to creating a safe learning environment for all students.

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 many tools available, and numerous ways to convey your message.

### Films:

Showing a film and conducting a discussion are effective ways to reach every stakeholder and get them all involved in the discussion. Here are a few suggestions for films, which also include study guides:

- **Creating Gender Inclusive Schools. From the Youth and Gender Media Project.** [youthandgendermediaproject.org/films/creating-gender-inclusive-schools/](http://youthandgendermediaproject.org/films/creating-gender-inclusive-schools/)
- **Let's Get Real. From New Day Films.** [newday.com/film/lets-get-real](http://newday.com/film/lets-get-real)
- **Bully from The Bully Project.** [thebullyproject.com/](http://thebullyproject.com/)

### Books:

Providing books and resources in your school library is a critical step toward educating everyone. Check with the librarian for the school's policy on placing books, and be sure to reflect the needs and diversity of your community with your selections. Each year, the American Library Association releases a Rainbow Book List, found at [glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks](http://glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks).



## School-Wide Activities:

continued



### Programs:

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

- **Day of Silence ([dayofsilence.org](http://dayofsilence.org))**  
**Day of Silence is a national, student-led day of action when concerned students—from middle school through college—take a vow of silence in solidarity with their LGBTQ classmates. The program illustrates the silencing effect of name-calling, bullying and harassment experienced by LGBTQ students.**
- **Ally Week ([glsen.org/allyweek](http://glsen.org/allyweek))**  
**Ally Week is a student-powered program where LGBTQ K-12 students and LGBTQ+ educators lead the conversation on what they need from their allies in school.**
- **No Name Calling Week ([glsen.org/nonamecallingweek](http://glsen.org/nonamecallingweek))**  
**This program celebrates kindness and educates about bullying and name calling. Celebrated annually—and nationally—for one week each January, it provides students and educators with the tools and inspiration to launch an on-going dialogue about ways to challenge bullying and name-calling in their communities.**

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### HELPFUL HINT:

Remember not to allow gender stereotypes or norms to unnecessarily impact your responses to students who are LGBTQ+. It is important to understand that, in most situations, behavior that is appropriate for opposite sex couples is also appropriate for same-sex couples. Appropriate behavior is gender neutral.

## Be Public:

Students who feel there are supportive teachers and school personnel to turn to report more positive and better learning environments. Do what you can to let students know that their safety is more than just policy for you by being visible and vocal.



## Take Action as An Ally:

- **Make sure your library has LGBTQ+ friendly, age-appropriate books and resources.**
- **Create “teachable moments” when you hear derogatory language being used or see physical harassment happening.**
- **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.**
- **Show your support for diversity and LGBTQ+-specific student clubs. Become a faculty advisor, provide space and materials, support events they are hosting, etc.**
- **Participate in activities like GLAAD’s Spirit Day by wearing purple, World AIDS Day by wearing a red ribbon, National Coming Out Day, and more.**
- **Learn more about inclusive resources from GLSEN ([glsen.org](http://glsen.org)), Teaching Tolerance ([teachingtolerance.org](http://teachingtolerance.org)), GroundSpark ([groundspark.org](http://groundspark.org)), and Gender Spectrum ([genderspectrum.org](http://genderspectrum.org)).**

Be Public:

continued

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### HELPFUL HINT:

Adults, especially, should go public with their support for diversity and inclusion, and their opposition to bullying and harassment. Signs; safe space/anti-bullying stickers and posters; rainbow/bisexual/transgender/asexual and other Pride flags; and other public displays where students can see them reiterate a strong commitment to every student's safety, and are important reminders—to students and adults—that being vigilant about curbing inappropriate behavior is a daily task. Sometimes all a student needs to open up to their teachers, counselors, nurses, social workers, or other trusted adults is a sign that they are willing to listen without judgment.



## Stop Cyberbullying:

Cyberbullying has been defined by the Cyberbullying Research Center to mean “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.” Learn how to talk to youth about online safety and familiarize yourself with the apps they are using so that you can intervene if necessary.



Cyberbullying is a serious and pervasive problem, one that grows each year as more and more youth are connecting online.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in the 2015 YRBSS, said that 15.5% of students reported that they were bullied electronically with 11.7% of those fearing physical harm at school. A 2015 study from GLSEN found that 48.6% of LGBTQ+ youth reported being harassed or bullied online—significantly more than the general youth population.

### Terms you should know:

**Blocking**—Denial of access to particular parts of the Internet. Usually an onscreen message will appear, stating that access has been denied. For example, deliberately keeping someone out of an online group.

**Catfishing**—The practice of setting up a fictitious online profile, most often for the purpose of luring another into a fraudulent romantic relationship.

**Cyberstalking**—Repeated harassment using electronic devices and networked technology that includes threats of harm, or that is highly intimidating and intrusive upon one’s personal privacy.

**Flaming**—Sending angry, rude, or obscene messages directed at a person or persons privately or an online group. A “flamewar” erupts when “flames” are sent back and forth between individuals repeatedly.

**Hacking**—The act of circumventing security and breaking into an authorized location (a network, computer, file, etc.), usually with malicious intent.

**Harassment**—Unsolicited words or actions intended to annoy, alarm, or abuse another individual. Often based on a protected status (e.g., sex, race, disability, or sexual orientation).



## Stop Cyberbullying:

continued



### What students should understand:

- **Bullying online through social media or message-sharing apps is just as serious as verbal and physical harassment in person.**
- **Block any individual(s) who are sending threatening, harassing, or upsetting messages as quickly as you can.**
- **Tell an adult immediately if you receive a threatening, harassing, or upsetting message.**
- **When online, remember you should not give out personal information because you do not always know who you are talking to.**
- **Think before you post. Your photos, messages, comments, and any other information that you share can be re-broadcast to others...and once online, they cannot be erased.**
- **There are real-world consequences to online actions.**

### What schools should do:

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

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### HELPFUL HINT

For many young people, and especially LGBTQ+ youth, their online community can be an important lifeline. If a student confides to you that they are experiencing cyberbullying, provide reassurance that you will not take away their device for reporting it to you.



## Train and Educate Everyone:

It is imperative that faculty is trained to respond to bullying and harassment in ways that support every student. There are a wide variety of options to provide this kind of education for staff, from engaging with a community group or national nonprofit organization to CEU programs and other professional resources.



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

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

*Let's Get Real*, a national safe-schools curriculum created by Groundspark in support of the film of the same name, provides an effective, simple survey for use in schools, found at [groundspark.org/download/LGR\\_guide.pdf](http://groundspark.org/download/LGR_guide.pdf) (see p. 61 in the publication for the list shown below).

**Let's Get Real SURVEY: What's Going on at our School?**

Place a check (✓) next to the things people get bullied or harassed about at our school.  
Put a star (★) next to the ones that you think happen the most or are the most serious at our school.

REASON	
Their race or color (or what someone thought their race was)	
Being a lighter or darker skin tone compared to others	
Being from another country	
Speaking with an accent	
Being new to the city/school	
Their mental or physical disability (or a disability someone thought they had)	
Their religion (or what religion someone thought they were)	
Their clothes	
How much money their family has	
Being in special education	
Getting good grades/doing well in school	
Getting bad grades/not doing well in school	
Being overweight	
Not being popular	
Boys making comments about girls' bodies	
Girls making comments about boys' bodies	
Being a boy who "acts like a girl"	
Being called a bad word related to being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender	
Their age (being younger)	
Being smaller or not being good at sports	
Other	
Being	

1. Are there different groups of students at our school? (circle one) YES NO: If so, what are they?

2. Which groups have conflicts with other groups?

3. If you were in charge, what would you do to stop what you have noticed above?

handout

## Train and Educate Everyone: continued

After evaluating the school environment, administrators should next 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, locker room, and en route to or from school. Adults who supervise these areas must be included in both the survey and all subsequent trainings in order to effectively address the reality students are encountering every day.

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### **HELPFUL HINT:**

Consider what kinds of resources and training will be most helpful to various stakeholders. While school counselors and social workers may be interested in learning about areas of increased risk for LGBTQ youth, school administrators may be interested in focusing on improving overall student performance and decreasing absenteeism and drop-out rates.



## Support Comprehensive Health Education:

Bullying and harassment based on real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity/expression can be the result of incomplete or inaccurate sexual health education. Find ways to advocate for comprehensive health education that includes age-appropriate and medically sound sex education.



Youth must have a clear understanding of their bodies and health in order to respect themselves and their peers. In order to do so, comprehensive health education, including comprehensive sex education, is key.

### What is comprehensive sex education?

Comprehensive sex education programs provide students with opportunities for developing skills as well as learning, and includes age-appropriate, medically accurate information on a broad set of topics related to sexuality including human development, relationships, decision making, abstinence, contraception, and disease prevention.

*Adapted from What The Research Says... Comprehensive Sex Education (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), 2009)*

### These programs:

- **Provide young people with tools to make informed decisions and build healthy relationships.**
- **Stress the value of abstinence while also preparing young people for when they become sexually active.**
- **Provide medically accurate information about the health benefits and side effects of all contraceptives, including condoms, as a means to prevent pregnancy and reduce the risk of contracting STIs, including HIV and AIDS.**
- **Encourage family communication about sexuality between parent and child.**
- **Teach young people the skills they need to make responsible decisions about sexuality, including how to avoid unwanted verbal, physical, and sexual advances.**
- **Teach young people how alcohol and drug use can affect responsible decision making.**

## Support Comprehensive Health Education:

continued

To overcome bias against LGBTQ+ youth, sex-education programs must consider and include information about sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. When advocating for inclusion of this subject matter, remember that parents overwhelmingly support teaching about sexual orientation at school.

- **75% of parents feel comfortable speaking to their children about sexual orientation, but are unlikely to raise the topic on their own.**
- **78% of parents of junior high students and 85% of parents of high-school students believe sexual orientation is an appropriate topic for sex education programs in schools.**

*A Call to Action: LGBTQ Youth Need Inclusive Sex Education, (Human Rights Campaign , 2015)*

**It is critical that schools avoid abstinence-only education, which excludes LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ youth feeling isolated and excluded.**
- **It is common for abstinence-only education programs to exclude LGBTQ+ youth from important information that will help minimize risk behaviors. Only 12% of millennials report that their sex education classes covered same-sex relationships.**
- **In abstinence-only programs, LGBTQ+ youth are told they simply cannot have healthy, safe or valid sexual experiences, a dangerous myth with far-reaching, negative consequences.**

*How Race and Religion Shape Millennial Attitudes on Sexuality and Reproductive Health: Findings from the 2015 Millennials, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health Survey (Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), Robert P. Jones and Daniel Cox , 2015)*



## Support Comprehensive Health Education:

continued

The resources in the next section of this publication includes a list of appropriate comprehensive sex-education programs that can be used by schools and school districts.

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### **HELPFUL HINT:**

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Institute for Adolescent Health & Medicine, the American Nurses Association and the American Public Health Association all support programs that provide comprehensive sex education. Use this information to help make the case for an inclusive program at your school.



## Resources...and More Resources

Learn more about nationally based organizations, like PFLAG, as well as community resources that can help you create a safe school environment for all youth.



### Safe Schools Materials and Supportive Organizations:

- **GLSEN**, PFLAG National's safe-schools partner, works to ensure that **LGBTQ+** students are able to learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment. [glsen.org](http://glsen.org)
- **Claim Your Rights** is a program of PFLAG National and GLSEN that supports youth, parents, educators, administrators and other trusted adults in filing reports of bullying, harassment or discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Education. [pflag.org/claimyourrights](http://pflag.org/claimyourrights)
- **Advocates for Youth** is a youth-led movement to help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. [advocatesforyouth.org/lgbtq-issues-home](http://advocatesforyouth.org/lgbtq-issues-home)
- **Gender Spectrum** helps families, organizations, and institutions increase understandings of gender and consider the implications that evolving views have for each of us. [genderspectrum.org](http://genderspectrum.org)
- **The Trevor Project** operates the only nationwide, around-the-clock crisis and suicide-prevention helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth. [thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org)
- **Groundspark** facilitates the development of inclusive, bias-free schools and communities by providing films, support, and training to youth, educators, and service providers. [groundspark.org](http://groundspark.org)
- **Teaching Tolerance** provides free educational materials to teachers and other school practitioners. Web-exclusive offerings include curricula, activities and materials for youth, teachers and parents. [tolerance.org](http://tolerance.org)

# Resources...and More Resources

continued



- **GSA Network** is a next-generation LGBTQ+ racial and gender justice organization that empowers and trains queer, trans and allied youth leaders to advocate, organize, and mobilize an intersectional movement for safer schools and healthier communities. [gsanetwork.org](https://gsanetwork.org)

## Cyber Resources:

- **Anti Defamation League (ADL)** helps schools confront harassment and bullying through electronic media. [adl.org/what-we-do/promote-respect/bullying-cyberbullying-prevention](https://adl.org/what-we-do/promote-respect/bullying-cyberbullying-prevention)
- **StopBullying.gov** provides information on what cyberbullying is, who is at risk, and how to respond to and prevent it. [stopbullying.gov](https://stopbullying.gov)
- **LGBT Technology Partnership and Institute** unites tech companies, nonprofits, policy makers, scholars and innovators to improve access, increase inclusion, and ensure safety for LGBTQ+ communities around technology. [lgbttech.org](https://lgbttech.org)
- **Netsmartz** is an interactive internet safety website for parent, teachers, and youth. [netsmartz.org](https://netsmartz.org)
- **Cyberbullying Research Center** is a clearinghouse of resources for parents, educators, law enforcement officers, and others who work with youth (as well as for youth themselves). [cyberbullying.org](https://cyberbullying.org)



Resources...and More  
Resources:

continued

### **Comprehensive Health and Sex Education Materials and Programs:**

- **Scarleteen** is a website that provides inclusive, comprehensive, and supportive sexuality and relationship information for teens and emerging adults. [scarleteen.com](http://scarleteen.com)
- **Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)** provides education and information about sexuality and sexual and reproductive health. [siecus.org](http://siecus.org)
- **Planned Parenthood** is the nation's largest provider of sex education, which is evidence based and delivered by trained professionals. [plannedparenthood.org/learn/for-educators](http://plannedparenthood.org/learn/for-educators)
- **Our Whole Lives (OWL)** is a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curricula from the Unitarian Universalist Association, providing accurate, developmentally appropriate information for ages K-adult about a range of topics, including relationships, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual health, and cultural influences on sexuality. [uaa.org/re/owl](http://uaa.org/re/owl)
- **Future of Sex Education (FoSE)** is a partnership between Advocates for Youth, SIECUS, and Answer that seeks to create a national dialogue about the future of sex education and to promote the institutionalization of comprehensive sexuality education in public schools. [futureofsexed.org](http://futureofsexed.org)



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