Improving the School Experiences of LGBTQ+ Students

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The views, opinions, and content expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
The Southeast MHTTC is located at Emory University in the Rollins School of Public Health.

Our Mission: To promote the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based mental health services in the Southeastern United States.

Our Vision: Widespread access to evidence-based mental health services for those in need.

Our Services: We use a public health approach to build leadership capacity and to provide mental health trainings and resources to providers, agencies, and communities across the Southeast.
Please visit our website at www.southeastmhttc.org for upcoming trainings as well as archived recordings of past trainings.
The GLSEN Research Institute, GLSEN Education and Youth Programs, and its staff completed this work while on the ancestral home of the Munsee Lenape.

The GLSEN Public Policy offices are located on the ancestral homes of the Piscataway and Nacotchtank.

We encourage you to learn more about the indigenous territories on which you reside.
GLSEN is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established in 1990, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes to creating a more vibrant and diverse community.

- Leading Research
- Educational Resources & Training
- Student Leadership

- Policy Advocacy
- Public Awareness
- 40+ State & Local Chapters
GLSEN supports the organization's mission by conducting original research on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression in K-12 education and evaluating GLSEN programs and initiatives.

The Research Institute also assists chapter and student leaders and other safe school advocates in conducting local research and evaluation to document, promote and improve local efforts.
GLSEN: Education & Youth Programs

- Educator Resources
- Professional Development
- Educator & Student Engagement Opportunities
- Student Resources
- Student Leadership
  - National Student Council
  - GSAs (Gender & Sexuality Alliances)
  - SHINE Teams
GLSEN NATIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL
GLSEN’s Public Policy Office works with policymakers at all levels to ensure that the best and most inclusive policies and laws are considered, passed, and implemented.

Public Policy’s team works with advocates to push for such laws at the federal, state, and local level.
Overview

• GLSEN Research on LGBTQ-Related School Supports and Resources

• Best Practices

• Voices from LGBTQ+ Youth

• Policies that Support LGBTQ+ Youth

• Q&A
GLSEN Research on LGBTQ-Related School Supports and Resources
National School Climate Survey
Methods

- Online survey
- Outreach to constituents and national, regional, and local organizations & groups
- Social media outreach
- Targeted advertising on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat
Sample Characteristics

- 16,713 LGBTQ student responses
- From all 50 states, D.C., and U.S. territories
- 69.2% White, 30.8% students of color
- 51.4% cisgender, 28.2% transgender, 15.1% nonbinary
- Average age: 15.5 years
Experiences of Harassment and Assault

- **Over 4 in 5** LGBTQ students (86.3%) experienced identity-based harassment & assault

- **Sexual orientation & gender expression** were the most commonly targeted characteristics
• We asked students about whether they experienced any of several discriminatory school policies or practices related to their LGBTQ identity.

• The majority of LGBTQ students (59.1%) reported experiencing anti-LGBTQ discriminatory policies or practices at school.
School Resources and Supports

- Supportive Educators
- Student Clubs (GSAs)
- Inclusive Curricular Resources
- Inclusive Policies

- Decreased negative school experiences (homophobic remarks, feeling unsafe, victimization)
- Improved mental health (self-esteem, depression)
Most LGBTQ students do not have access to the resources and supports that create safer, more LGBTQ-affirming school environments.
School Resources and Supports

- **Supportive Educators**
  - 97.7% had at least 1 supportive school staff member
  - 66.3% had 6+ supportive staff
- **Student Clubs (GSAs)**
  - 61.6% had a GSA
  - 19.4% were taught positive representations
- **Inclusive Curricular Resources**
  - 13.5% had an anti-bullying policy including sexual orientation & gender identity/expression
- **Inclusive Policies**
  - 10.9% had official policies or guidelines supporting transgender & nonbinary students
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Recommendations

• Support student clubs, such as GSAs.

• Provide staff trainings to increase number of supportive educators & staff available to students

• Increase student access to accurate & appropriate information regarding LGBTQ people, history, and events
• Ensure that school policies & practices do not discriminate against LGBTQ students

• Enact & implement affirming policies & practices for transgender & nonbinary students

• Adopt & implement anti-bullying/ harassment policies that enumerate sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as protected categories
Best Practices
GLSEN’s 4 SUPPORTS TO CREATE INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS:

- **Comprehensive Policies**
  Implement comprehensive anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies that specifically includes protections based on sexual orientation or gender identity/expression among a list of enumerated categories.

- **Supportive Educators**
  Educators who show their support for LGBTQ+ students. Educators who have had staff trainings on how to address anti-LGBTQ+ bullying and bias behavior.

- **Student-led Clubs**
  Support for student interventions such as Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA) clubs and participation in events such as GLSEN’s Day of Silence.

- **Inclusive Curriculum**
  Positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, and events in school curriculum.
GLSEN Days of Action

October
- Solidarity Week

January
- No Name-Calling Week

April
- Silence Speaks Volumes Day of Silence
SUPPORTS FOR LGBTQ+ INCLUSION

• Encourage professional development for educators that specifically focuses on:
  1. LGBTQ+ students, educators, and families
  2. interrupting anti-LGBTQ+ comments and harmful gender stereotype reinforcement
  3. LGBTQ+ -inclusive curriculum.

• Communicate a commitment to LGBTQ+ diversity, equity, inclusion that is visible to students, educators and families.

• Read and Share GLSEN’s Policy Recommendations for district and school leaders.

• Promote GLSEN’s Days of Action, LGBTQ+ History Month (October), and Pride Month (June).

• Read GLSEN’s National School Climate Survey to consider what foundations of understanding and support you can offer proactively in schools across the country.
SUPPORT FOR COMING OUT

- Follow the student's lead
- When a student discloses their LGBTQ identity to you, respond in an affirming, supportive way.
- Respect your student's privacy. Allow them to decide when to come out and to whom.
- Students are their own experts...
- Use the name and pronoun (he/she/they) your students prefers (If unclear, ask).
- Don’t assume what worked for one student will work for another with the same or similar identities
- Hold an open, honest space where each individual student can guide their own journey with your support.
BEST PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ STUDENTS

- Create a safe and affirming environment where students can freely express their gender.
- Display LGBTQ+-affirming signs or stickers
- Interrupt anti-LGBTQ+ language and mispronouning/misgendering
- Support the GSA
- Keep learning about LGBTQ+ identities
- Avoid double standards regarding rules for LGBTQ+ and heterosexual students
- Connect students with LGBTQ+ presenters, organizations, resources, and events.
- Consider seeking an LGBTQ+ adult role models for students.
- Reach out for education, resources, and support to deepen your understanding of LGBTQ+ student experiences.
- Align policies with your practice
- ONGOING Trainings
Voices From LGBTQ+ Youth
Policies that Support LGBTQ+ Youth
Executive Order on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation

January 20, 2021 - Presidential Actions

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. Every person should be treated with respect and dignity and should be able to live without fear, no matter who they are or whom they love. Children should be able to learn without worrying about whether they will be denied access to the restroom, the locker room, or school sports. Adults should be able to earn a living and pursue a vocation knowing that they
Funding for LGBTQ+ inclusive services during the pandemic

• Ensure focused outreach and follow-up to address the unique needs of LGBTQ+ students who are also low-income, students with disabilities, English language learners, experience homelessness, or who have been placed in foster care.

• Conduct adequate follow-up to ensure marginalized students have and can use technology for distance learning and afterschool programs.

• Retain, hire, and contract as needed with additional school counselors and psychologists to address the heightened level of mental and behavioral health needs of students.

• Provide high-quality, culturally affirming, and accessible professional development for educators and mental health providers to address heightened traumas that students, including LGBTQ+ and other marginalized students, may be facing because of the pandemic, and barriers they may face in distance learning and returning to school buildings.

• Support and encourage the virtual continuation of afterschool programs, including GSAs (Gay Straight Alliances or Gender and Sexuality Alliances), during distance learning.
Community Collaborations

Examples of Additional Partners:

- LGBTQ+ service providers and community centers
- Other national organizations such as the Trevor Project, PFLAG, and True colors United
Q & A
## Contact Us

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• Our funding comes from SAMHSA, which requires us to evaluate our services. We appreciate your feedback about this event, which will provide information to SAMHSA and assist us in planning future meetings and programs. Your feedback counts!

• Please click on the link to complete the SAMHSA required survey:

  https://ttc-gpra.org/P?s=835498
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