

# Understanding and Supporting Gender Diverse Students

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Pronouns: He/Him/His

October 26, 2023



Mountain Plains (HHS Region 8)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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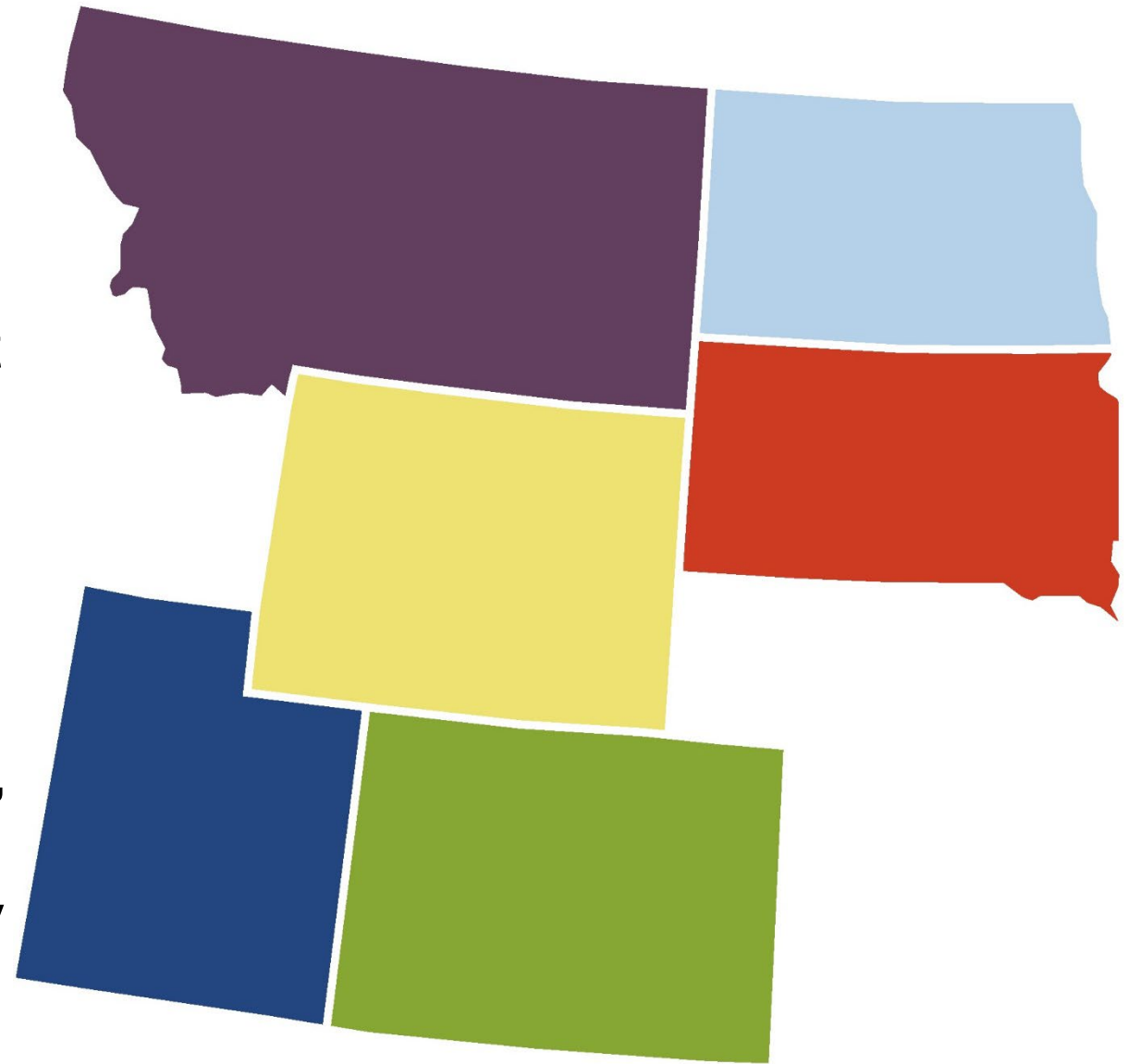
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# The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (Mountain Plains MHTTC) provides training and technical assistance to individuals who serve persons with mental health concerns throughout Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming).

We belong to the Technology Transfer Center (TTC) Network, a national network of training and technical assistance centers serving the needs of mental health, substance use and prevention providers. The work of the TTC Network is under a cooperative agreement by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).



# Land Acknowledgement Statement

Today, the University of North Dakota rests on the ancestral lands of the Pembina and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwe and the Dakota Oyate - presently existing as composite parts of the Red Lake, Turtle Mountain, White Earth Bands, and the Dakota Tribes of Minnesota and North Dakota. We acknowledge the people who resided here for generations and recognize that the spirit of the Ojibwe and Oyate people permeates this land. As a university community, we will continue to build upon our relations with the First Nations of the State of North Dakota - the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.



The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED  
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCEPTING OF  
DIVERSE CULTURES,  
GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND  
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH  
OUR ACTIONS,  
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

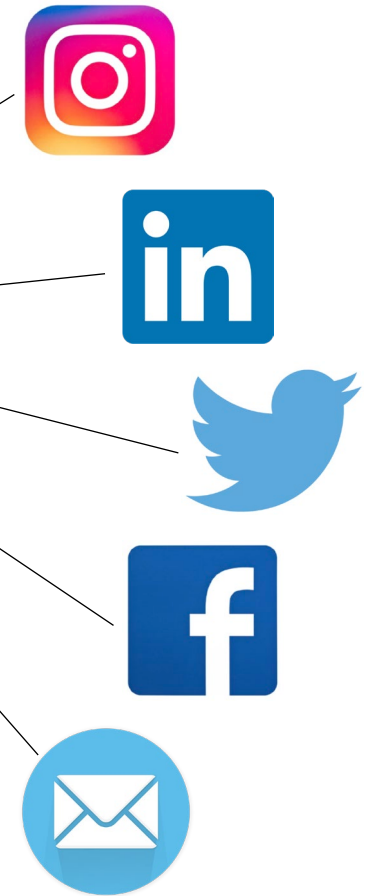
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# Session Objectives

- To enhance participants' awareness of gender identity and gender diversity matters in schools;
- To augment participants' knowledge base related to gender diversity as well as the impact of trauma and other factors on gender diverse students;
- To highlight strategies participants can employ to support gender diverse



# NASP Practice Model (2020)



# NEA's Position

“NEA believes that a great public school is a fundamental right of every child - free from intimidation and harassment, and safe for all students, including those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered.”

“There is only one real issue for educators: We are responsible for our students' safety and education. We must ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to achieve and thrive.”

<http://www.nea.org/tools/30420.htm>



# Principal Professional Associations

## National Association of Elementary School Principals

<https://www.naesp.org/communicator-may-2016/new-resource-supporting-transgender-students>

## National Association of Secondary School Principals

<https://www.nassp.org/who-we-are/board-of-directors/position-statements/transgender-students?SSO=true>

# National Association of School Psychologists

## Position statement (2022):

### [Safe Schools for Transgender and Gender Diverse Students](#)

“The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) supports the civil, human, and educational rights of transgender and gender diverse (TGD) students. NASP further asserts that to optimize TGD students’ academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and development potential, schools must be safe, secure, equitable, and inclusive environments for *all* students. NASP’s longstanding commitment to policy that calls for nondiscrimination and the promotion of equal opportunity, fairness, justice, and respect for all persons is reflected not only in NASP’s Professional Standards (NASP 2020b) but is reflected in its collection of position statements focused on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/gender diverse, queer (LGBTQ+), and other minoritized youth throughout the past 30 years (NASP, 1999).”

# Additional Statements

American School Counselor Association  
[ASCA: The School Counselor and  
Transgender/Gender-nonconforming Youth](#)

School Social Work Association of America  
[SSWAA Resolution Statement: School Social Work  
Supports the Educational and Civil Rights of  
Transgender Students](#)

American School Nurses  
Association  
[NASN: LGBTQ Students](#)

# Think, Pair, Share

- What is your understanding of what it means to identify as 'transgender' or 'gender diverse'?
- How is 'gender identity' distinct from 'sexual orientation'?
- When do individuals become aware of their gender identity?

# Definitions

## Sex

Think biology – Female/Male

## Gender

Social construction that is culturally-mediated – Girl/Woman, Boy/Man

## Gender Identity

Lived/defined by the individual

## Gender Expression

How people communicate their gender identity to others

## Gender Role

Culturally-mediated ways people live out gender – Feminine/Masculine

## Sexual Orientation

One's primary psychological, social, emotional, and erotic attractions to other people

# Definitions

## **Cisgender**

Gender identity matches the sex and gender one was assigned at birth

## **Transgender**

Gender identity does not match the sex and gender one was assigned at birth

Consistent, persistent, insistent

## **Gender Diverse**

Broader category that captures the range of gender identities and expressions



# Transgender Youth

- 80% of TG-identified adults knew they were 'different' before leaving elementary school
- Less than 4% of TG-identified persons realized they were TG after the age of 18
- Average age of trans-spectrum self-realization: 7.9
- Average age of learning the 'words' to communicate feelings: 15.5
  - Consistent, Persistent, Insistent
- Transitions pre-puberty are social in-nature; some persons make seek medical transitions around puberty or later

# Gender Diversity & ASD

- Numerous anecdotal observations and emerging research are demonstrating an association between gender diversity and autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Children and adolescents on the autism spectrum are seven (7) times more likely to be gender diverse
- Children and adolescents appearing at gender clinics are 6-15 times more likely than their same-aged peers to have ASD

*Strang et al. (2017)*

# Mental Health Issues

- Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5-TR)
  - Gender dysphoria
- Higher rates of depression and anxiety; lower levels of self-esteem; high rates of substance use/abuse and risk-taking behaviors
- Suicide attempt rate
  - 82% of TG/GD youth report having considered suicide
  - 40% of TG/GD youth report having attempted suicide
  - 10-20% of LGB-identified persons
  - 3-5% of the general population

# School Issues

## School Climate Matters

- 43% (GE) and 40% (GI) reported feeling unsafe at school because of the climate; online learners least likely to feel safe
- 43% (GE) and 39% (GI) reported avoiding gender-specific spaces or classes because of the climate
- 79% of LGBTQ+ students reported avoiding extra-curricular activities and/or school functions
- 16% of LGBTQ+ students changed schools because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable at school

# School Issues

## School Climate Matters

- 32% of LGBTQ+ students missed at least one entire day of school in the past month because of negative school climates and 11% missed four or more days in the past month
- 92% of LGBTQ+ student heard negative gender expression remarks
  - 56% heard these remarks frequently
- 83% of LGBTQ+ students heard negative trans-specific remarks
  - 40% heard these remarks frequently

# School Issues

## School Climate Matters

- 72% of LGBTQ + students heard negative gender expression remarks from adults
- 57% (GE) and 51% (GI) verbally harassed at school
- 20% (GE) and 25% (GI) physically harassed at school
- 54% LGBTQ+ students reported being sexually harassed at school

[GLSEN 2021 National School Climate Survey](#)

# School Issues

## School Climate Matters

- )
- 32% (GE) and 30% (GI) reported being cyber-bullied based on their identities
- 62% LGBTQ+ did not report such incidents
- 60% of LGBTQ+ students reported school staff did not respond when negative gender identity/expression remarks were made by other students. Students learning via online means reported the lowest level of intervention by teachers.

# School Issues

## Discriminatory School Policies and Practices

- 59% experience anti-LGBTQ+ policies and practices
- 16% of LGBTQ+ students were prohibited from discussing or writing about LGBTQ+ topics in school assignments, and 17% were prohibited from doing so in extracurricular activities
- 25% of LGBTQ+ students reported being disciplined for PDA

[GLSEN 2021 National School Climate Survey](#)



# School Issues

## Discriminatory School Policies and Practices

- 12% restricted from forming or promoting GSA's
- 29% prevented from using declared name and/or pronouns
- 27% prevented from using restrooms and 24% prevented from using locker rooms that aligned with their gender identities

[GLSEN 2021 National School Climate Survey](#)

# School Issues

## Discriminatory School Policies and Practices

- 20% prevented from wearing clothes considered “inappropriate” based on gender
- 12% of LGBTQ+ students were prevented from wearing clothing or items supporting LGBTQ+ issues
- 16% were prevented or discouraged from participating in school sports because of their LGBTQ+ identity

[GLSEN 2021 National School Climate Survey](#)

# Effects of a Hostile School Climate

## ***Gender diverse students were...***

- Three times more likely to have missed school in the past month
- Reported a lower sense of belonging at school
- Had lower GPAs than their non-harassed peers
- Twice as likely to report not looking to pursue PSE
- Twice as likely to have been disciplined at school
- Considering leaving school (31% to 51%)

# Legal & Policy Matters

## **Title IX (Patsy Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act, 2002)**

- U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights considers gender identity and gender expression as protected classes under Title IX
- The DOE-OCR and the U.S. DOJ have filed and won lawsuits in this regard

## **FERPA**

- According to Lambda Legal, students (ages 18+) and/or parents or legal guardians have the right to request a school change the name and gender marker on a student's records if they are incorrect, misleading, or violate one's privacy [34 C.F.R. section 99.7(a)(2)(ii)]

## **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

- Gender identity is not a disability
- If a gender diverse student has a disability, the focus of the 504 plan would be to address the disability, not the student's gender identity

# Raising Ryland



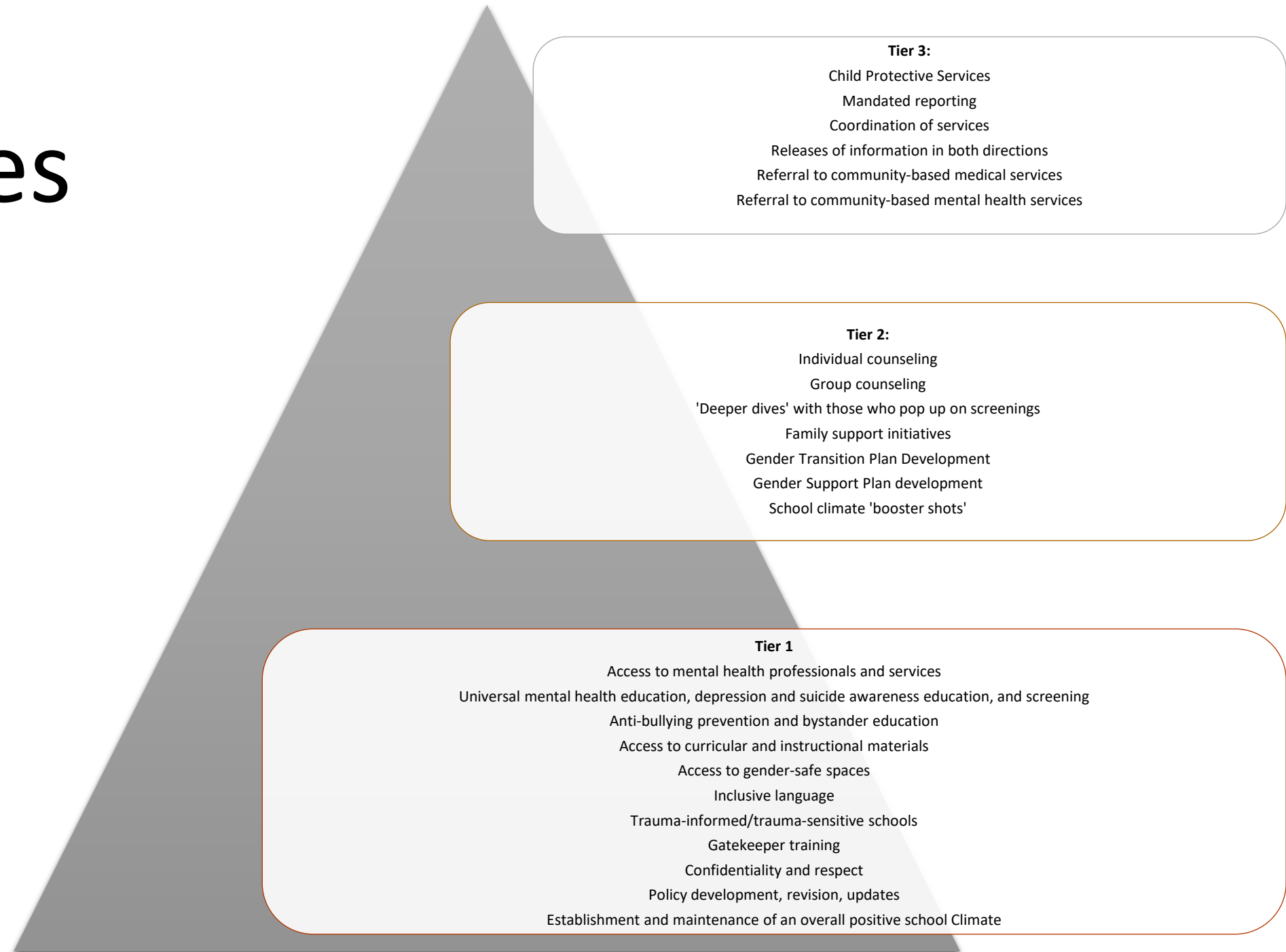
- <http://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2015/03/17/digital-shorts-parenting-transgender-child-orig.cnn?sr=fbdwtransp>

# Schuyler Bailar



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niBM3li662>  
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# Strategies



# Resources

[National Association of School Psychologists \(NASP\)](#)

[Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network \(GLSEN\)](#)

[Transparenthood \(Blog\)](#)

[TransActive Gender Center](#)

[Welcoming Schools](#)

[Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center](#)

[TransYouth Family Allies](#)

[Philadelphia Trans-Health Conference](#)

[TNET – PFLAG's Transgender Network](#)



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# Questions?

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