



EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth who believe they have just one school staff member with whom they can talk about problems are only 1/3 as likely as those without that support to report being threatened or injured by a weapon at school or report making multiple suicide attempts in the past year. Lower victimization rates and suicidality among LGBTQ youth has also been linked with peer support groups, the availability of non-academic counseling, anti-bullying policies a student judicial court system, staff training on sexual harassment and peer-tutoring systems (*Psychology in the Schools 2006;43(5):573-589*).

LGBTQ youth reporting higher levels of at-school bullying and victimization report higher levels of substance use, suicidal thoughts, feelings and actions, as well as engaging in increased risky behaviors than their heterosexual peers and/or those who are not bullied because of their sexual orientation (*Journal of Adolescent Health 2002;30(5):364-374*)

The increased risk for suicide is **not** a factor or product of identifying as a sexual minority or gender variant or non-conforming youth, but rather an outcome of the way that these young people are treated in their homes, schools, communities and religious institutions.

Bullying and victimization of LGBTQ young people and those perceived to be LGBTQ has life-threatening consequences.

Here are some tips to make your school safer for these (and all) young people:

- Be alert of signs of distress among those who may be bullied or harassed in school.
- Work with student councils and governments to have programs on respect, school safety and anti-bullying. Be an advocate for school policies that challenge bias and promote respect and safety.
- Ask school personnel to have a discussion at an assembly about the impact of language and actions on the experiences of LGBTQ youth in school.
- Arrange for groups such as The Trevor Project, the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and others to come to your school each year to talk about creating safer school environments.
- Encourage anyone who is the victim of bullying or harassment in school to report it to a teacher, counselor, coach, other school administrator or their parents/guardians. If the bullying persists, report it yourself.
- Use inclusive language that does not assume everyone is heterosexual (for example “date” instead of “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” and “spouse” instead of “husband” or “wife”).
- Become a visibly open and allied resource for young people. GLSEN has Safe Space Kits available, as well as a free Safe Space Guide at www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/1641.html?state=&type=antibullying. They also have “Jumpstart Guides to Starting a GSA” and other resources for students and educators about improving school climates for LGBTQ young people.
- Speak up and challenge students who make homophobic or anti-gay remarks in your presence (or if you overhear comments).
- Educate yourself and your fellow educators. Take a look at the resources on the reverse side of this page, as well as *The Trevor Project’s Guide to Books and Film for LGBTQ Young People*.

Five Books for Educators:

How Homophobia Hurts Children: Nurturing Diversity at Home, at School and in the Community by Jean M. Baker, PhD (2001)

Hatred in the Hallways: Violence and Discrimination Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students in US Schools by Human Rights Watch (2001)

Beyond Diversity Day: A Q&A on Gay and Lesbian Issues in Schools by Arthur Lipkin (2003)

Childhood Bullying, Teasing and Violence: What School Personnel, Other Professionals, and Parents Can Do by R.M. Ross (2003)

Our Place on Campus: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Services and Programs in Higher Education by Ronnie Sanlo, Sue Rankin, and Robert Schoenberg (2002)

Five Films for Educators:

Challenging Homophobia in Schools: A K-12 Resource, GALE-BC (2004)

Dealing With Difference: Opening Dialogue About Lesbian, Gay & Straight Issues, GLSEN (2002)

Gay Youth: An Educational Video, Pam Walton (1999)

I Just Want to Say, GLSEN (1997)

Youth OUT LOUD!: Addressing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Our Schools, Sun and Moon Vision Productions (2001)

***For more books and films for educators, as well as training guides and vital information, visit GLSEN's site for Educators at: <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/educator/index.html> and the Human Rights Campaign's list of books and films for school issues available at: www.hrc.org/issues/parenting/schools.5255.htm. ***

THE TREVOR PROJECT'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



Currently available in the New York City Tri-State area, the greater Los Angeles basin and the Albany-Capital District of New York, the free Lifeguard School Workshop program is facilitated by trained volunteers and staff in elementary through high schools as well as colleges and with youth groups. This program is designed to help youth (1) consider the impact of their language and actions on the experience of LGBTQ young people in schools; (2) recognize the warning signs of suicide and depression among their peers; and (3) respond to those warning signs as a Lifeguard for their friends.



Available free of charge to any educator or person who works with youth nationwide, The Trevor Project's Survival Kit closely mirrors the Lifeguard School Workshop program in that it is designed to help facilitators have a dialogue with young people about (1) the impact of our language and actions on the experience of LGBTQ young people in schools; (2) recognize the warning signs of suicide and depression among their peers; and (3) respond to those warning signs as a Lifeguard for their friends. It also includes posters, information on all of The Trevor Project's lifesaving resources and a copy of the film *Trevor*, should facilitators want to use it in conjunction with the Workshop Guide included in the Kit.

For additional information on making your school more inclusive and safe for young LGBTQ people and their allies, or for more information on our educational programs (including ordering a Survival Kit or scheduling a Lifeguard Workshop), please contact our Advocacy and Education Manager, Dave Reynolds, at Dave.Reynolds@TheTrevorProject.org.