

The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance presents:

Safety for All:

Addressing Anti-Gay and
Anti-Transgender Violence
in Illinois Schools

Today's Training Facilitators

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Objectives

- ④ To educate on child & adolescent development and the effect of homophobia and heterosexism on youth.
- ④ To educate on the level of violence toward gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth in schools, and the effect on learning.
- ④ To provide tools to school personnel for the safety and support of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth as well as other students affected by homophobia and heterosexism.

Talking About LGBT Issues

- ④ Wide range of beliefs, values and opinions
- ④ Often can be a sensitive subject
- ④ Ground rules are important

Ground Rules

- ④ “I” statements
- ④ One diva, one mike
- ④ Respect others
- ④ Ask questions
- ④ The Parking Lot
- ④ Others from the audience?

Universal Values in Public Schools

- ④ Every student deserves to feel safe and included in his/her school.
- ④ Every family deserves to feel respected by and included in its school community.
- ④ All school employees deserve to feel safe and respected in their work environment.
- ④ Schools have an obligation to provide a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all staff, learners and their families.

Terminology

- ④ A brief introduction to concepts and terms used to discuss sexual orientation and gender identity
- ④ Definitions of specific terms are often subjective
- ④ “Golden Rule” is to allow everyone to self-identify

Sexuality & Sexual Identity in Adolescence

Sexual Orientation

Who you are attracted to sexually, emotionally, romantically, and/or intellectually

- Attaining a sexual orientation identity is a key developmental task of adolescence
- Not uncommon for middle school students to question and try to understand their attractions

Gender & Gender Identity

Gender Identity

A person's sense or experience of belonging to a particular gender category of man (boy), woman (girl), all of the above, some of the above, or none of the above

-Most kids develop a gender identity between the ages of 3 and 5

-Gender identity in the form of gender roles becomes important again with the onset of puberty

Terminology

- ④ Lesbian: a woman who is attracted to *some* other women emotionally, physically, spiritually, etc.
- ④ Gay: a man who is attracted to *some* other men emotionally, physically, spiritually, etc.
- ④ Bisexual: a person for whom gender is not the first criteria in being attracted to someone emotionally, physically, spiritually, etc.
- ④ Transgender: an umbrella term for people whose gender identity or expression does not match the cultural “norm” for their sex

Terminology

- ④ Queer: currently used as an all-encompassing label for any person who believes that their gender identity/sexual orientation is not reflected by the standard model of straight or LGBT.
- ④ Questioning: used to refer to those questioning what their sexual orientation/gender identity is
- ④ Heterosexual/Straight: feeling emotional, physical, spiritual attraction to some members of the opposite sex

Gender Variance in Children

- ④ Refers to interests and behaviors that are outside of typical cultural norms for each of the sexes
- ④ Children with gender-variant traits have strong and persistent behaviors that are typically associated with the other sex. Sometimes they reject the physical appearance (clothing and hairstyle) typical of the child's own sex
- ④ Gender variance does not apply to children who have a passing interest in trying out the behaviors and typical interests of the other sex for a few days or weeks

Working with GV Children & Their Families

- ④ “Golden Rule”-schools make every effort to coordinate with children and their families regarding education and awareness
- ④ Introduce gender variance & gender identity broadly, as topics, before any discussion of an individual student

Forms of Oppression

- ④ **Homophobia:** An aversion to gay, lesbian and bisexual people and behavior or an act based on this aversion
- ④ **Heterosexism:** An ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community

Sexual Orientation/ Gender Identity Issues in Schools

- ④ School Atmosphere/Climate
- ④ Access to Resources and Support
- ④ Harassment and Violence
- ④ Academic Achievement and Engagement
- ④ Mental Health and Physical Health

School and Community Atmosphere

- ④ Thirty-five percent (35%) of Illinois students report that sexual orientation is the most common reason students are bullied or harassed
- ④ Thirty-four percent (34%) of Illinois students report that gender identity is the most common reason students are bullied or harassed

GLSEN, 2006, *From Teasing to Torment: A Report on School Climate in Illinois*

School and Community Atmosphere, cont'd

- Nearly three quarters (74%) of Illinois students report hearing homophobic remarks such as “faggot” or “dyke” from other students in school¹
- ⓘ More than three quarters (83%) of Illinois students report hearing homophobic remarks such as “that’s so gay” or “you’re so gay” from other students in school¹
- ⓘ Lesbian, gay, or bisexual students are three times more likely than their non-gay peers (33% vs. 11%) to miss school because they feel unsafe²
- ⓘ Lesbian, gay, or bisexual students are nearly three times more likely than their non-gays peers to attempt suicide ²

¹GLSEN, 2006, *From Teasing to Torment: A Report on School Climate in Illinois*

²The Centers for Disease Control and the Chicago Public Schools Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2003

Access to Resources and Support

- ④ Fewer than a quarter (22%) of Illinois students reported that their school had a GSA or other type of student club addressing LGBT student issues
- ④ Less than half (45%) of Illinois students reported that they were protected by a school anti-harassment policy that specifically mentioned sexual orientation or gender identity/expression
- ④ Students in schools with GSAs or other supportive clubs reported that teachers and other school staff intervened more often when homophobic remarks were made than students in schools without such clubs
- ④ The frequency of biased remarks such as “that’s so gay” or “you’re so gay” as well as negative remarks about nontraditional gender expressions was higher at schools without comprehensive anti-harassment policies

GLSEN, 2006, *From Teasing to Torment: A Report on School Climate in Illinois*

Harassment and Violence

- ④ Lesbian, gay, or bisexual students are nearly four times more likely than their non-gay peers (15% vs. 4%) to be a in a physical fight that requires medical attention¹
- ④ For every one (1) gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender student who reports being bullied or harassed, four (4) straight students report being harassed or bullied for being perceived as gay or lesbian²

¹The Centers for Disease Control and the Chicago Public Schools Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2003

²National Mental Health Association, 2002

Why Schools Need to Address Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity Issues

GLB students in comparison with peers...

2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

<u>Violence</u>	<u>L&G</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Other</u>
Carried a weapon	33.3%	30%	17.8%
Threatened at school	16.7%	20%	8.1%
Had their property damaged	38.5%	60%	28.3%
Required medical treatment from a fight	23.1%	10.5%	4.2%
Experienced dating violence	18.2%	45%	14.2%
Sexual Assault	16.7%	36.8%	8%

Academic Achievement and Engagement

- ⓘ LGBT youth who experience violence and harassment report lower GPA's than LGBT youth who rarely or never experience violence and harassment
- ⓘ LGBT youth who experience violence and harassment are three times less likely to report that they plan on attending post-secondary education than a national sample

Unchecked Bullying → More Violence

- ④ Harassment and bullying have been linked to 75% of school-shooting incidents, including the fatal shootings at Columbine High School near Littleton, Colorado, and Santana High School in Santee, California
- ④ Nearly 60% of boys who researchers classified as bullies in grades 6–9 were convicted of at least 1 crime by the age of 24; 40% of them had 3 or more convictions by 24

Source: www.groundspark.org

LGBT Parents: Involved at School

Compared to a national sample of K-12 parents, LGBT parents are more likely to:

- ⓘ Volunteer at their child's school (67% vs. 42%)
- ⓘ Be members of the parent-teacher organization (41% vs. 26%)
- ⓘ Contact school personnel about their child's education (68% vs. 38%)

Involved, Invisible, Ignored. GLSEN, 2008. www.glsen.org

Students of LGBT Parents

- ④ 40% verbally harassed in school because of their family
- ④ 23% mistreated by parents of other students due to their family
- ④ 30% could not fully participate in school specifically because they have an LGBT parent
- ④ 15% received negative comments from teachers due to their family

Involved, Invisible, Ignored. GLSEN, 2008. www.glsen.org

Notes for Elementary Schools

- ④ Supportive school staff: students of LGBT parents who reported having 6 or more supportive staff at school had a higher GPA average (3.4 vs. 2.9) than those who reported none
- ④ Training: LGBT parents whose schools implemented trainings were less likely to report (14% vs. 31%) their child was bullied or harassed

Involved, Invisible, Ignored. GLSEN, 2008. www.glsen.org

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

Along with tests and highly qualified teachers, the NCLB aims to prevent violence and promote school safety so that

“students and school personnel are free from violent and disruptive acts, including sexual harassment and abuse, and victimization associated with prejudice and intolerance

...

through the creation and maintenance of a school environment that () fosters individual responsibility and respect for the rights of others.”

NCLB, 20 U.S.C. § 7161

Equal Protection and the Legal Responsibility to Address Bullying and Harassment

In 1995, in *Nabozny v. Podlesny*, the Seventh Circuit ruled that school districts must treat the bullying of LGBT students with the same level of concern as the bullying of other students.

In 2007, in *L.W. v. Toms River Regional Schools*, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that students are entitled to as much protection from anti-gay discrimination and harassment as their adult counterparts in the workplace.

Sources:

The Youth at Risk Project, ACLU of Illinois

The Midwest Regional Office of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund

The First Amendment and the Legal Responsibility to Permit Free Expression

In 2001, in *Doe v. Yunits*, a Massachusetts court ruled that a middle school may not discipline a transgender student for expressing her gender identity even if that expression does not conform with her biological sex.

In 2002, a landmark settlement in *Henkle v. Gregory* sent the message that students have right to be out at school without fearing unaddressed retaliation.

In 2005, in *Nguon v. Wolf*, a federal district judge rejected the school district's argument that it was within its rights when it outed a student to her parents.

Sources:

The Youth at Risk Project, ACLU of Illinois

The Midwest Regional Office of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund

Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Bullying Policies at the School District Level

“Best practices” include:

- ④ Policies that enumerate all forms of prohibited conduct, including discrimination and bullying on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression and clear procedures for making complaints
- ④ Professional development for faculty and staff
- ④ Institutional support for student groups that promote acceptance and understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression

Source:
The Youth at Risk Project, ACLU of Illinois

How is heterosexism inherent in:

- ⤴ School forms
- ⤴ History Class
- ⤴ Themes in classic literature
- ⤴ Discussions about authors, artists, politicians, etc.
- ⤴ Word math problems
- ⤴ Scenarios
- ⤴ Major world events
- ⤴ Sex/health education
- ⤴ Library content

- ④ Gender segregated activities
- ④ Addressing classes/students
- ④ Male and female only locker rooms/bathrooms
- ④ Gender specific dress codes

Tools for School & Curricular Inclusion

Professional Resources

- ④ [Against Common Sense: Teaching and Learning Towards Social Justice](#) - Kevin Kumashiro
- ④ [A Radical Rethinking of Sexuality and Schooling: Status Quo or Status Queer](#)-Eric E. Rofes
- ④ [Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Anti-Oppressive Education](#)-Kevin Kumashiro
- ④ [The New Gay Teenager](#)-Rich Savin-Williams
- ④ [The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals](#) - Stephanie A. Brill & Rachel Pepper
- ④ [The Therapist's Notebook for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients: Homework, Handouts, and Activities for Use in Psychotherapy](#)-Joy S. Whitman & Cynthia J. Boyd

Tools for School & Curricular Inclusion

LGBTQ Books

- ④ Geography Club-Brent Hartinger
- ④ Luna-Julie Ann Peters
- ④ Tough Love-Abby Denson
- ④ So Hard to Say-Alex Sanchez
- ④ From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun-Jacqueline Woodson
- ④ Loose End -Ivan E. Coyote
- ④ The Laramie Project-Moises Kaufman

Tools for School & Curricular Inclusion

New & Classic Literature with LGBTQ Themes

- ④ The Wars-Timothy Findley
- ④ The Giver-Lois Lowry
- ④ The Color Purple-Maya Angelou
- ④ Cat on a Hot Tin Roof-Tennessee Williams
- ④ The Great Gatsby-f. Scott Fitzgerald
- ④ Giovanni's Room-James Baldwin
- ④ Rubyfruit Jungle-Rita May Brown
- ④ Maurice-E.M. Forrester

Tools for School & Curricular Inclusion

Historical Reference Books

- ④ [A Queer History of the United States](#)-Michael Bronski
- ④ [Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution](#)-David Carter
- ④ [Gay Warriors: A Documentary History from the Ancient World to the Present](#)-B. Burg
- ④ [Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in America](#)-Harry M. Benshoff
- ④ [Becoming Visible: A Reader in Gay and Lesbian History for High School and College Students](#)-Kevin Jennings

Tools for School & Curricular Inclusion

Movies

- ④ Out of the Past
- ④ Straightlaced
- ④ Bullied
- ④ Brother Outsider
- ④ Let's Get Real
- ④ Stonewall

Tools for School & Curricular Inclusion

Websites with Curricula & Resources

 www.safeschoolscoalition.org

 www.groundspark.org

Tools & Resources

Guidelines for Schools

Bathroom and Locker Rooms

Name & Pronouns

Dress Code

School Activities

School Records

Local Resources (Chicago Area)

- ④ Illinois Safe Schools Alliance:
www.illinoissafeschools.org
- ④ About Face Youth Theatre:
www.aboutfacetheatre.com
- ④ ACLU of Illinois: www.aclu-il.org

National Resources

- ④ GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) National: www.glsen.org
- ④ Safe Schools Coalition:
www.safeschoolscoalition.org
- ④ Lambda Legal: www.lambdalegal.org
- ④ Children's National Medical Center:
<http://www.dcchildrens.com/dcchildrens/about/subclinical/subneuroscience/gender.aspx>
- ④ Trans Youth Family Allies: www.imatyfa.org

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Closing

- ④ The Parking Lot
- ④ Further issues and questions
- ④ Plans for the future
- ④ Further resources needed
- ④ Acknowledgement of work and time

Evaluating Today's Session

- ⤴ Please take a few moments now to complete the evaluation of today's session you'll find in your training materials—these evaluations helps us to continually improve the services we provide
- ⤴ Please turn the evaluation over and leave it at the front of the room on your way out

Questions? Resources?

- ⤴ Please contact:
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