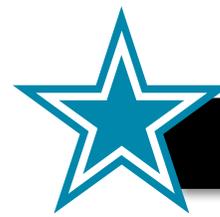




New Brunswick LGBTQ Inclusive Education Resource

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES TEAMS



RESOURCES FOR ESST



diversity = possibility

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INTRODUCTION

LGBTQ inclusive education acknowledges and includes LGBTQ realities and issues by making room for these within the curriculum in age-appropriate and meaningful ways. It encourages awareness of and discussion about LGBTQ diversity—and by extension creates safer and affirming environments for everyone, but especially students, staff and families who identify as LGBTQ, and their allies. According to *School-Based Education Support Services Teams to Support Inclusive Education* (2014)... “it is the expectation that every person, within the scope of their roles and responsibilities, will act to support excellence and equity.”(page 1) Within that team, Education Support Teachers-Guidance Counsellors (EST-Guidance Counsellors) have a unique role in helping to promote and support LGBTQ inclusive education. Since EST-Guidance Counsellors work with all staff (supporting or assisting with the delivery of the Comprehensive Guidance Curriculum) as well as assisting students, consulting with parents/guardians and referring students and families to community agencies, EST-Guidance Counsellors have many opportunities to create, support and enhance LGBTQ inclusion in a variety of ways.

More than ever before, students are “coming out” at younger ages, making LGBTQ inclusion necessary in elementary schools as well as middle and high schools. While some students question their gender identity or sexual orientation over time (due to a variety of factors, including fear of rejection, isolation and homelessness as a result of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia among family and friends) some students know quite early on in life that they are gay, lesbian or transgender. In the early grades, gender creative behaviour *may* be a clue to sexual orientation or gender identity, but not necessarily. The earlier LGBTQ inclusive education exists, the more opportunities all students have to learn about and respect diversity.

In addition to the younger ages at which students are recognizing and talking about their gender identity or sexual orientation, students in all grades may be part of

LGBTQ families— where one or more of their parents or guardians is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two Spirit or queer. These students also experience homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in schools through bullying and harassment (Egale’s *Every Class in Every School* report and Can T Association, AIDS Moncton Evaluation 2013-2014), as well as through the exclusion of LGBTQ realities in the curriculum. Further to the realities of their children, LGBTQ parents and guardians can also experience homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Discounting parentage, using incorrect pronouns, not taking concerns about the lack of LGBTQ inclusion seriously, and homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments and language are some of the barriers that LGBTQ families face.

Creating LGBTQ inclusive educational environments and Gay Straight Alliance groups (GSAs) are ways to support all students. The reality is that many students have not felt supported in the past. Overall, current research has indicated where inclusive educational practices are applied the resiliency factor for all students is higher (Canadian School Counsellor Magazine, Spring 2014).

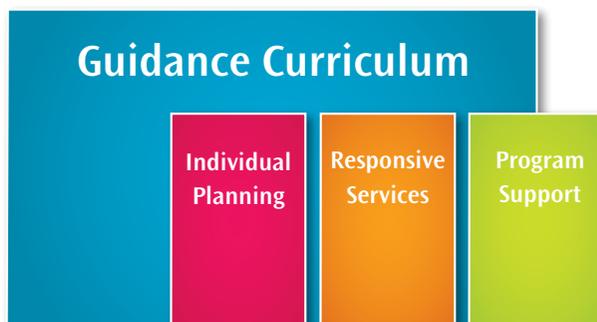


Cisgender/Cisgendered:
Refers to someone whose gender identity corresponds with their assigned sex.

Research has shown that rates of substance abuse and depression are higher among LGBTQ youth, and reported suicide attempts among LGB youth are about 4 times higher than for their heterosexual peers (Saewyc, 2007). In the past year alone, over half of trans youth report having seriously thought about suicide, and 19% have attempted suicide (Bauer et al., 2013). This is not because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, but because of the numerous impacts of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia on their mental health and access to supports (Stewart and Dyck, 2013). For more information about this, see Part 5 of this section: The Health Impacts of Homophobia on GLBTTQ Persons on page 64, and LGBTQ Youth Suicide – Risk Factors and Protective Factors on page 91.

EST-Guidance Counsellors are in a unique position to promote, support and exemplify LGBTQ inclusion. However, not every student will feel comfortable speaking with EST-Guidance Counsellor, social worker or psychologist, nor will they necessarily express the need or desire to speak with someone. LGBTQ inclusive practices must be present in all aspects of education, including the language that is used by staff, the visuals in the school, the books available in the library, examples used in class as well as LGBTQ inclusion in text books. In addition, adult role models play a critical role in helping to reduce anxiety as well as supporting a healthy self concept among LGBTQ students, gender creative students and their peers. This can be accomplished by being aware of how gender norms and stereotypes are perpetuated and a commitment to breaking these down (for more information, see Part 2 of this section as well as the *Information and Resources for Educators* section).

EST-Guidance Counsellor support is woven into the school environment in many ways. The four pillars of the New Brunswick Comprehensive and Developmental School Counselling Program provide a platform to support LGBTQ inclusive environments and support the broader school community.



Guidance Curriculum

- The personal development section of the curriculum lends itself to the introduction of LGBTQ inclusion in age-appropriate ways. Providing resources, leadership and assistance to teachers regarding this curriculum (as well as team-teaching) means that EST-Guidance Counsellors should be familiar and comfortable with the concept and execution of LGBTQ inclusion in age appropriate ways. Part 2 in this section (page 15) outlines specific curriculum outcomes that provide opportunities for the inclusion of LGBTQ realities.

Individual Planning

“Within this component, school counsellors help students clarify their goals, values, abilities, aptitudes and interests, i.e. their self-knowledge, and use this information in their personal, educational and occupational decision-making” (*Implementing a Comprehensive and Developmental School Counselling Program*, 2002, page 3). Within this scope, EST-Guidance Counsellors should have a coming out plan. See *What to do if a Student Discloses* on page 44 for more information.

Responsive Services

Responsive services seek “to help students who experience problems related to personal identity, drugs, peer and family relationships, for example, which can influence their academic learning” (*Implementing a Comprehensive and Developmental School Counselling Program*, p.3). Four areas within Responsive Services lend themselves to LGBTQ inclusion. Parts 2, 4 & 5 of this section will provide you with additional information to assist you in your capacity as a counsellor.

In a counselling role, EST-Guidance Counsellors must be aware of and comfortable with LGBTQ issues for several reasons:

- Unless a student tells us explicitly that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, Two Spirit, queer, questioning, straight or

cisgender we should never assume. Unfortunately, it is often the case that we assume someone is heterosexual or cisgender until we are told otherwise. The result for students (and adults alike) can be devastating, as it is one more place where they feel invisible, where their realities are not just discounted but not acknowledged, and where they may not feel safe. Safety and non-judgement is of paramount importance in a counselling relationship. If a counsellor is LGBTQ inclusive, it provides a safe space for students to share their feelings, ask questions, talk about challenges with friends or family as well as mental health issues, and discuss any harassment, bullying and discrimination if they are occurring. It is important to remember that students who are *perceived to be* LGBTQ are also the victims of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, and so an LGBTQ-inclusive approach to counselling helps *all* students. (*Every Class in Every School*, 2011).

- Students who are gender creative, who identify as LGBT or Q, or who come from LGBTQ families may need support navigating their realities in a heteronormative and/or cisnormative environment.

The Foreword of *Implementing a Comprehensive and Developmental School Counselling Program*, states that “school counsellors help to enhance and promote student learning when students feel that their concerns are being listened to and understood, and when they receive help to overcome and move beyond such issues.”



Heteronormativity: A cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are straight and so privileges heterosexuality and ignores or underrepresents same-gender relationships.

Cisnormativity: A cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are cisgender and so privileges cisgender identities and ignores or underrepresents gender creativity.

Cisgender (adj): Refers to someone whose gender identity corresponds with their birth-assigned sex (e.g., a cisgender male is someone whose gender identity is man and was assigned male sex at birth).

As someone who actively promotes LGBTQ inclusion in the school, an EST-Guidance Counsellor becomes a safe person for students to talk to.

Consultation with parents/guardians and teachers:

- Parents/guardians and teachers of gender creative children (as young as pre-kindergarten) may need help and support as they support the child and help create a safe classroom and home environment.
- Parents/guardians may seek help in the coming out process to support their child.
- Parents/guardians may approach a counsellor who they know to be LGBTQ inclusive if they are coming out to their children.
- Teachers may seek help for how to support LGBTQ students in their classrooms and how to address bullying and harassment, or how to make their curriculum more LGBTQ inclusive.



For more information, check out this resource: *Therapeutic Conversations with Queer Youth* by Julie Tilsen

Counselling

- School counselling services are available for students who are experiencing homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic bullying, who are struggling with coming out, whose parents/guardians are coming out, or thoughts of suicide. LGBTQ sensitivity and awareness are even more crucial in these situations.

Referral to other professionals when appropriate

- It is important that EST-Guidance Counsellors be aware of whether the agencies and professionals in the community that could be involved in supporting students are LGBTQ inclusive so that they continue to be cared for in the same respectful and supportive manner that they have come to expect at school— regardless of the sexual orientation or gender identity of the student.



DID YOU KNOW...?

- LGBTQ-specific services should also be on EST-Guidance Counsellors radar for LGBTQ students and LGBTQ families who may need them. This includes support groups including groups for parents/guardians of LGBTQ youth, as well as groups that help individuals who identify as LGBTQ to feel a sense of community and groups for youth who want to be allies. You will find a list of such resources in the *New Brunswick Policies and LGBTQ Resources* section of this resource.

Program Support

Two components of Program Support lend themselves to LGBTQ inclusion: Professional Development and Community Outreach.

- Professional development must include LGBTQ awareness training, and LGBTQ-inclusion training. The EST-Guidance Counsellors' role of support and counselling means that awareness of and comfort with LGBTQ issues is crucial. Their role as leaders, assistants and co-deliverers of the Guidance Curriculum means that there must also be an understanding of, and comfort with, LGBTQ inclusion and why it is important. Updating professional knowledge and skills includes regular LGBTQ training since language and issues change over time.
- EST-Guidance Counsellors must be knowledgeable about community resources that are not only LGBTQ specific (for LGBTQ families as well as students) but also mainstream services that are LGBTQ inclusive. It is crucial when referring any student or family that the environment they are being sent to is also affirming and aware of LGBTQ identities and realities. You will find a resource list in the *New Brunswick Policies and LGBTQ Resources* section of this resource. Both of these are crucial components of providing inclusive, responsible and respectful care— not just for LGBTQ students and families, but for all students in a school community that is committed to a positive learning and working environment.

References:

Stewart, Kent, and D. Ryan Dyck. "LGBTQ Youth Suicide: Coroner/Medical Examiner Investigative Protocol." Conference of Chief Coroners and Chief Medical Examiners of Canada, 2013.

Egale is Canada's only national charity promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans human rights through research, education and community engagement. Through our *Safer and Accepting Schools* program, we are committed to supporting LGBTQ youth, those perceived as LGBTQ, as well as students with LGBTQ families and friends. Additionally, this program seeks to assist educators as they work to make Canadian schools safer, more inclusive learning and working environments for all members of the learning community. *Safer and Accepting Schools* resources include the national LGBTQ safer schools and inclusive education website, *MyGSA.ca*; Provincial LGBTQ Inclusive Education Resource kits; and workshops. The statistics below clearly demonstrate that these resources are essential.

According to Egale's *Every Class in Every School : Final Report on the First National Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in Canadian Schools* (2011):

- Three-quarters of LGBTQ students and 95% of trans students feel unsafe at school.
- Over a quarter of LGBTQ students and almost half of trans students have skipped school because of feeling unsafe.
- Many LGBTQ students would not be comfortable talking to their teachers (four in ten), their principal (six in ten), or their coach (seven in ten) about LGBTQ matters.
- Only one in five LGBTQ students can talk to a parent very comfortably about LGBTQ matters.
- Over half of LGBTQ students do not feel accepted at school, and almost half feel they cannot be themselves at school. School attachment—the feeling that one belongs in the

school community—is a crucial issue because of its connection to lower suicidality rates (suicide attempts and suicidal thinking) in the general school population and among LGBTQ students.



The *Executive Summary* of Egale's report can be found at the end of the *Information and Resources for Administrators* section. To read the full report, go to: www.MyGSA.ca/YouthSpeakUp

According to GLSEN's *Playgrounds and Prejudice* (2012) report:

Biased Remarks at School

- About half of students (45%) report that they hear comments like “that’s so gay” or “you’re so gay” from other kids at school sometimes, often or all the time.
- Half of teachers (49%) say they hear students in their school use the word “gay” in a negative way sometimes, often or very often.
- Four in ten students (39%) say they hear other kids at their school say there are things that boys should not do or should not wear because they are boys at least sometimes.
- One third of students (33%) say they hear other kids at their school say there are things that girls should not do or should not wear because they are girls at least sometimes.
- Half of teachers (48%) report that they hear students make sexist remarks at least sometimes at their school.
- One quarter of students (26%) and teachers (26%) report hearing other students make comments like “fag” or “lesbo” at least sometimes.

Bullying and School Safety

- Three quarters (75%) of elementary school students report that students at their school are called names, made fun of or bullied with at least some regularity (i.e., all the time, often or sometimes).
- Slightly more than half (59%) of elementary school students say they feel very safe at school.
- Over one third (36%) of elementary school students say they have been called names, made fun of or bullied at least sometimes this year at school.

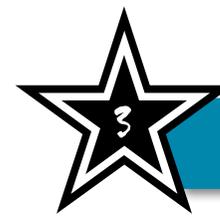
The most common reason for being bullied or called names, as well as feeling unsafe at school, is physical appearance.

- 23% of students attribute the bullying and name-calling that they witness at school to being a boy who acts or looks “too much like a girl” or a girl who acts or looks “too much like a boy”.
- Seven in ten teachers say that students in their school are very often, often or sometimes bullied, called names or harassed because they are a boy who acts or looks “too much like a girl” (37%)

Gender Norms

Students who do not conform to traditional gender norms are more likely than other students to experience incidents of bullying or name-calling at school and to feel less safe at school.

- Almost one in ten of elementary school students (8%) report that they do not conform to traditional gender norms – i.e., boys who others sometimes think act or look like a girl, or they are girls who others sometimes think act or look like a boy.
- Students who do not conform to traditional gender norms are more likely than others to say they are called names, made fun of or bullied at least sometimes at school (56% vs. 33%).
- Students who do not conform to traditional gender norms are twice as likely as other students to say that other kids at school have spread mean rumors or lies about them (43% vs. 20%) and three times as likely to report that another kid at school has used the internet to call them names, make fun of them or post mean things about them (7% vs. 2%).



LGBTQ INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WITHIN THE GUIDANCE CURRICULUM

- Students who do not conform to traditional gender norms are less likely than other students to feel very safe at school (42% vs. 61%) and are more likely than others to agree that they sometimes do not want to go to school because they feel unsafe or afraid there (35% vs. 15%).



Excerpts from: *Playgrounds & Prejudice*, GLSEN <http://glsen.org/learn/research/national/playgrounds-and-prejudice>

In addition to the specific outcomes listed below and the examples of LGBTQ inclusive education provided for each, Career Planning can also be LGBTQ inclusive by including professional role models who identify as LGBTQ (and letting students know that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two Spirit or queer as part of their introduction). This further normalizes sexual orientation and gender identity as a component of who we are as human beings, and helps students expand their awareness and appreciation of diversity.

Personal Development - Uniqueness of the Individual Grades K-2

Outcome # 1.1

Having completed the New Brunswick K-5 Personal Development and Career Planning Curriculum, each student will be expected to demonstrate respect for the uniqueness of individuals.

Elaboration:

Students will discuss why all people are unique and special in order to increase their awareness of and respect for individual differences.

By the end of grade 2, students will be expected to

- identify unique characteristics of others
LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about different types of families including LGBTQ families.
- demonstrate respect towards others
LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about ways to respect other people's families including LGBTQ families, as well as Two-Spirit people

This outcome is also connected to the social studies curriculum:

- give examples of stereotypes, discrimination and pressures to conform and how they affect an individual. LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about gender norms and stereotypes as well as the bullying and pressure that one might feel if one was gender creative.

Outcome # 1.3

Having completed the K-5 Personal Development and Career Planning Curriculum, each student will be expected to demonstrate an awareness of the need for safety and self-protection in school and in the community, and will be able to act accordingly to ensure personal safety.

Elaboration:

Research on bullying indicates that it can occur only in an environment that supports abuse of power. If students become aware of the factors that contribute to that sort of environment and learn how to counteract them, they can begin to foster a healthy environment and ensure their own personal safety.

By the end of grade 2, students will be expected to:

- identify components of a safe and healthy school
- demonstrate an ability to access help when in abusive or potentially abusive situations
- identify hazardous behaviours in the home, school, and community
- demonstrate behaviours that contribute to a safe and healthy school
- describe appropriate solutions for hazardous situations in the home, school, and community

LGBTQ inclusion could mean including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying when discussing bullying and the school's anti-bullying policy and how to stay safe. Include respect for everyone, including LGBTQ people, and families (make sure to include Two Spirit) when discussing what contributes to a safe and healthy school.

Outcome # 1.4

Having completed the K-5 Personal Development and Career Planning Curriculum, each student will be expected to understand, value, and practice responsible behaviour in the home, school, and community.

Elaboration:

Students must learn appropriate behaviours in order to become productive citizens. Students will be provided with a variety of opportunities to think about, discuss, and practice responsible behaviours. Students will learn to demonstrate self-control in various situations. Understanding how actions affect others, and how we fit into the different roles at home, at school, and in the global community is integral to the development of personal success in life.

By the end of grade 2, students will be expected to

- describe a variety of roles and responsibilities within a family, and note changes in responsibilities
LGBTQ inclusion could mean including LGBTQ families in examples of families when discussing roles and responsibilities.
- understand that expectations vary according to settings, and develop strategies to meet these varied expectations

This outcome is also connected to the New Brunswick social studies curriculum:

- demonstrate an understanding of equality, human dignity and justice & identify examples of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. *LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about equality for everyone and including LGBTQ families, as well as gender creative peers.*

This outcome is also connected to the New Brunswick Health Curriculum for grade 2:

- describe how we can contribute to making the community a healthier and safer place to live and work. *LGBTQ inclusion could mean including what a safer community looks like for gender creative children and youth as well as students with LGBTQ families.*

Personal Development – Effective Communication and Conflict Resolution – Grades 3-5

Outcome # 1.1

Having completed the K-5 Personal Development and Career Planning Curriculum, each student will be expected to demonstrate respect for the uniqueness of individuals.

Elaboration:

Students will discuss why all people are unique and special. Respecting individual differences allows students to accept and understand varying backgrounds and cultural diversities.

By the end of grade 5, students will be expected to

- show respect for and attempt to understand the ideas, opinions, and feelings of others
LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about gender expression and gender creativity and the feelings and opinions that go along with expressing gender in different ways and being different. Include Two Spirit in this discussion.
- describe positive characteristics about self as seen by self and others
- identify personal interests, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses

These outcomes are also connected to the New Brunswick Health Curriculum:

- Grade 5 – Identify changes that occur as a result of puberty. *LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about intersex people and how puberty could look different for them than we think it should look based on what they look like. It could also mean talking about attraction and including same sex attraction.*
- explore and demonstrate awareness of different cultures and lifestyles
Although being LGBT or Q is not a lifestyle, it is an aspect of who a person is and could be talked about here.

This outcome is also connected to the New Brunswick Language Arts Curriculum:

- detect examples of prejudice, stereotyping, or bias in oral language; recognize their negative effect on individuals' cultures; and attempt to use bias-free language.

LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about prejudice and stereotyping due to sexual orientation or gender identity and identifying biased language (like “that’s so gay”), it’s negative effects and bias-free substitutes.

Outcome # 1.3

Having completed the New Brunswick K-5 Personal Development and Career Planning Curriculum, each student will understand and value the use of various approaches to solving social problems.

Elaboration:

Every day students are presented with opportunities to make decisions and exercise social problem-solving skills. A sense of personal competence can be achieved only after a number of successful experiences. Problem solving involves being able to make appropriate decisions with regard to the effective use of skills and available resources. Students exhibiting competence in problem solving will accept more responsibility for their own actions and find it easier to make decisions and attain goals. Students will therefore examine and practice various approaches to solving age-appropriate social problems.

By the end of grade 5, students will be expected to

- identify problems families and communities might have
LGBTQ inclusion could mean including specific issues that LGBTQ families and communities may have.

This outcome is also connected to the Social Studies Curriculum:

- Identify causes, consequences, and possible solutions to universal human rights and other global issues. *LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about homophobia, biphobia and transphobia (and as they relate to people who identify as Two Spirit) and what these look like at school and in the community.*

Outcome # 3.2

Having completed the New Brunswick K-5 Personal Development and Career Planning Curriculum, each student will develop an awareness of how interests, beliefs, and attitudes relate to various occupations.

Elaboration:

By providing students with the opportunity to discuss interests, values, and attitudes and their relation to the world of work, the curriculum will better equip students to recognize the factors involved in career preparation. Owing to a rapidly changing world of work, students must acquire a realistic view of career possibilities.

By the end of grade 5, students will be expected to

- explain how others influence our career choices
LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about gender norms and stereotypes and how they impact career choices.

This outcome is also connected to the New Brunswick Social Studies Curriculum:

- Discuss why and how stereotyping, discrimination, and pressure to conform can emerge and how they affect the individual. *LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about careers considered to be for men or for women and how stereotypes and discrimination regarding sexual orientation and gender identity can impact our choices to do work that is considered to be gendered. Talk about the pre-colonization history of Two Spirit people.*

Outcome # 3.3

Having completed the New Brunswick K-5 Personal Development and Career Planning Curriculum, each student will be aware of and value the development and maintenance of a healthy lifestyle.

Elaboration:

We live in a complex society where many demands are made on our time and energy. This may lead to stress and illness. An important part of the world of work is our ability to learn what to do with our free time and how to live a healthy lifestyle in order to minimize stress and maximize our personal well-being.

- set personal lifestyle goals to enhance effective learning and working habits

This outcome is also connected to the New Brunswick Health Curriculum:

- Grade 3: describe how we can contribute to making the community a healthier and safer place to live and work. *LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying as undermining safety.*

Personal Development – UNIQUENESS OF INDIVIDUALS – GRADES 6-8

Outcome # 1.2

Having completed the New Brunswick 6-8 Personal Development and Career Planning Curriculum, each student will be expected to demonstrate the ability to assume responsibility for his/her personal behaviour.

Curriculum Connections: All subjects

Elaboration:

Students must be able to make informed decisions and accept the consequences for their personal behaviour. Opportunities that show the link between decision making and behaviour will be provided.

By the end of grade 8, students will be expected to

- describe the role of a peer/bystander in bullying situations
LGBTQ inclusion could mean including examples of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying as some of the situations talked about.
- discuss how each student contributes to a safe school and community
LGBTQ inclusion could mean explicitly talking about LGBTQ safer spaces and what and LGBTQ safer school and community look like.
- develop a plan for a safe school and classroom environment
LGBTQ inclusion could mean explicitly talking about what makes a classroom safe for LGBTQ students, teachers and families.
- evaluate school and community resources that support mental well-being
LGBTQ inclusion could mean considering LGBTQ inclusion as part of the criteria for evaluation.

Outcome # 1.3

Having completed the New Brunswick 6-8 Personal Development and Career Planning Curriculum, each student will be expected to demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of the similarities and differences among people.

Curriculum Connections: Social Studies

Elaboration:

In our multicultural society, students are faced with a vast array of issues and situations. Students will be provided with opportunities to reflect on the differences and similarities among people, and will acquire the necessary skills needed to function successfully in today's diverse society.

This outcome provides the opportunity to stretch beyond culture to include sexual orientation and gender identity as well as ability, religion, etc. If we are expecting students to respect others, though they may be different, we have to be prepared to talk about what makes us different, as well as what respect looks like.

By the end of grade 8, students will be expected to

- respect other people, though they may be different
LGBTQ inclusion could mean making sure that sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are explicitly included in how people are different.
- demonstrate positive interactions with both genders
LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about people who are Two Spirit, transgender, gender creative and genderqueer within the context of positive interactions Not only is it more inclusive, but it also challenges the notion of gender as binary.
- recognize that all people, regardless of individual differences, have rights and responsibilities
LGBTQ inclusion could mean explicitly including sexual orientation, being Two Spirit, gender identity and gender expression/gender creativity in the discussion about individual differences and rights.

- identify the forms bullying takes in ethnic and gender-related relationships

LGBTQ inclusion could mean including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in this discussion.

- discuss body-image issues that may impact teens of both genders

This provides the opportunity to discuss gender norms regarding body image, as well as stereotypes that govern our choices for gender expression as well as our behaviour and self image. It also presents the opportunity to challenge the notion of gender as binary.

Teachers will:

- have students research family trees

LGBTQ inclusion could mean that a family with two mothers or two fathers would be given as an example of someone's family tree to expand students' awareness and understanding of family. For a poster about broader understandings of family trees see: <http://www.lgbtqparentingconnection.ca/socialchange/queeringthefamilytree.cfm>

- brainstorm with students stereotyping in school, family, community, and work place

LGBTQ inclusion could mean including stereotyping with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

- have students examine stereotyping in the media

LGBTQ inclusion could mean including stereotyping with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

- invite speakers from the different cultural communities in the area

LGBTQ inclusion could mean expanding this to include LGBTQ speakers and speakers who identify as Two Spirit.

- explore individual uniqueness with students

LGBTQ inclusion could mean exploring gender expression or attraction as an aspect of individual uniqueness.

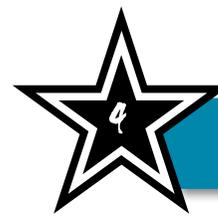
Personal Development – SUICIDE PREVENTION – GRADE 10

3.2 Demonstrate skills that enhance mental health, including stress management and suicide prevention techniques.

Suggested Instructional Strategies

Trained facilitators will

- increase students' awareness of the extent of teen suicide
LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking explicitly about the higher rates of attempted suicide for LGBTQ teens and the even higher rate for Trans youth, Aboriginal youth, and LGBTQ teens with unsupportive families - and exploring what this means.
- help students to become familiar with school and community resources for teens engaged in suicide related behaviours.
LGBTQ inclusion could mean including LGBTQ specific and Aboriginal-specific resources, or mentioning the mainstream resources that are LGBTQ inclusive and why this is important given the statistics about teen suicide.
- help students to recognize typical stresses faced by teenagers
LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about the particular stresses faced by teens who identify as LGBT or Q, or those perceived to be.
- help students to understand the basis of drug and alcohol use by teenagers
LGBTQ inclusion could mean talking about the higher rates of drug and alcohol use among LGBTQ teens and why this is.



Personal Worth, Potential and Autonomy - Grades 11 & 12

Outcome # 1.1

Having completed the New Brunswick 11-12 Personal Development and Career Planning Curriculum, each student will be expected to develop an appropriate sense of personal worth, potential, and autonomy.

In an LGBTQ inclusive environment, a student's sense of their personal worth wouldn't be compromised by having an LGBT or Q identity.

By the end of grade 12, students will be expected to:

- develop a personal statement which includes their concept of a preferred future – dreams, lifestyle, relationships, leisure, and work

In an LGBTQ Inclusive environment, students who identify as LGBTQ would be able to speak easily and openly about their future dreams, lifestyle and relationships as they relate to being lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, Two Spirit or queer.

A Checklist for Creating a Supportive School Environment for LGBTQ Students

Adapted from *A Checklist for Creating a Supportive School Environment for Transgender and Transsexual Students* in the Canadian Teachers' Federation document: *Supporting Transgender and Transsexual Students in K-12 Schools* (2012)

- Develop explicit policies and student codes of conduct, which expressly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
- Provide professional development opportunities to further knowledge on sexual orientation and gender identity issues and concerns.
- Infuse sexual and gender minority perspectives in the curriculum, school, and classroom discussions.
- Develop inclusive library collections and open access to age-appropriate online information and community supports and services.
- Support and sustain gay-straight alliance (GSA) – or similar – clubs in schools, which are inclusive of trans and gender creative students (see Wells, 2006).
- Require all teachers and adults to intervene, prevent, and report harassment, bullying, and violence in schools.
- Designate and make gender-neutral bathroom and change room facilities publicly available.

- ❑ Identify in-school allies, advocates, and mentors for LGBTQ students.
- ❑ Require all school staff, parents/guardians, and students to respect and use a student's preferred name and chosen pronouns.
- ❑ Ensure that a student's preferred or chosen name is used in all school records.
- ❑ Respect the confidentiality of all LGBTQ students and their families.
- ❑ Educate parent councils about sexual orientation and gender identity issues (McGuire & Conover-Williams, 2010).

Resources

McGuire, J.K., & Conover-Williams, M. (2010). Creating spaces to support transgender youth. *The Prevention Researcher*, 17(4), 17-20.

Wells (2006) not available in the resources section of the CTA resource.

Recommendations for Professionals Working with LGBTQ Youth

Adapted from the Toronto District School Board

There are many ways that you can be supportive of LGBTQ youth. Here is a list of ideas to get you started, or keep you going. These can work well as conversation starters during a staff meeting or small group discussion points during a workshop.

1. Examine your own feelings and attitudes toward Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Two Spirit identities, queerness, and the state or process of questioning. Develop insights into possible fears and misconceptions. Books and lectures as well as consultations with LGBTQ agencies and professionals may assist you with this process.
2. Begin the never-ending process of questioning the assumptions associated with ableism, ageism, biphobia, classism, heterosexism, homophobia, lesbophobia, misogyny, racism, sexism, transphobia, and other oppressions. These are all related to one another and intersect in various ways.
3. Become aware of the oppression that LGBTQ individuals face constantly. For instance, imagine how you would feel if your romantic, sexual, and love feelings were the cause of derision, disgust, hatred, and/or violence from the people around you, very frequently from your own friends and family.
4. Do not presume that someone is heterosexual or cisgender unless it is so stated.



5. Increase your awareness of LGBTQ resources in your community (like the ones listed in this section). LGBTQ communities are frequently the greatest source of support for LGBTQ individuals. A list of provincial resources is available on page 99.
6. There are unique, positive aspects about being LGBTQ. Become aware of them and develop the capacity to help others to discover them. For example, it takes great strength and mental health for LGBTQ people to function in a heterosexist, cissexist, homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic society.
7. Do not base your notion of mental health on sex and gender role stereotypes.
8. In addition to working with LGBTQ adolescents, work on addressing heteronormativity, cisnormativity, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in the school and community.
9. Encourage your school to display pamphlets and other materials listing resources for LGBTQ individuals.



Heteronormativity: A cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are straight and so privileges heterosexuality and ignores or underrepresents same-gender relationships.

Cisnormativity: A cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are cisgender and so privileges cisgender identities and ignores or underrepresents gender creativity.

Cisgender (adj): Refers to someone whose gender identity corresponds with their birth-assigned sex (e.g., a cisgender male is someone whose gender identity is man and was assigned male sex at birth).

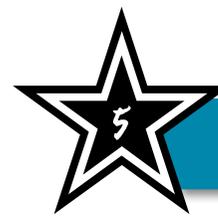
10. Do not simply try to help LGBTQ people cope with harassment and prejudice. Be their advocate and help them to obtain their rights. Talk about the many ways to be an ally (for more information see the [GSA Guide](#) for Middle Schools and High Schools section of this resource).
11. Ensure that you follow counsellor codes of conduct and ensure confidentiality and privacy of LGBTQ students as set out in the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) and also the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). In addition, follow your professional code of conduct as identified by your licensing board/agency.

Summary of Suggestions From Kids with LGBTQ Parents/Guardians about What Helps at School

Adapted slightly from the document by the same title, created by the LGBTQ Parenting Network.

Often there will be kids in school who are not LGBTQ, but whose parents/guardians are. They have a unique experience, and are also affected by homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexism and cissexism, because there is an impact on their families. Here are some suggestions from them about what is helpful.

- Facilitate ways of having kids with LGBTQ parents/guardians connect with other kids with LGBTQ parents/guardians to share experiences and strategies.
- Discourage shame in kids with LGBTQ parents/guardians.
- Develop strategies for community anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia education that recognizes that homophobic and transphobic attitudes are often learned in heterosexual and cisgender families and communities.
- Establish anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia education for students from kindergarten to high school, with special emphasis on elementary grades.
- Implement compulsory pre- and in-service teacher education on anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia and other equity issues, with explicit inclusion of the experiences of kids with LGBTQ families.
- Include LGBTQ-led families and recognition of the particular experiences of kids with LGBTQ families in school curriculum, beginning in elementary school.
- Solicit commitment from school staff to intervene in the everyday use of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and insults in school environments.
- Consult and empower students who are the targets of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic harassment when intervening in youth peer-to-peer conflicts.
- Encourage the formation and work of gay-straight alliances and equity committees.



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Display LGBTQ positive symbols in classrooms and schools.
- Create or modify school forms to recognize diverse family configurations.
- Promote a school environment which encourages teachers, administrators, and students to be “out.”
- Create a school environment of openness, respect, and support.



As you can see, most of the items on this list are just as important for the children of LGBTQ parents/guardians as they are for students who are themselves LGBTQ. Creating safe and caring environments where all members of the school community can be all of who they are, without fear of discrimination or harassment, and where they are embraced and respected as part of the school community benefits everyone. Environments that confront homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, cissexism and heterosexism as well as heteronormativity and cisnormativity create a positive school environment that is safe and inclusive, and where members of the school community are accepted and respected.

Mental Fitness

According to the New Brunswick Wellness Strategy (2009):

Mental fitness refers to a state of psychosocial well-being that goes beyond the absence of disease or sickness. It means having a positive sense of how we feel, think and act which improves our ability to enjoy life. It also implies the ability to efficiently respond to life’s challenges, and to effectively restore and sustain a state of balance. Having a higher level of mental fitness enables us to more fully enjoy and appreciate our environment and the people in it. When mental fitness needs are sufficiently met, people adopt behaviours that contribute to their own personal wellness and that of others, and they make healthier choices.

The New Brunswick 2012-2013 Student Wellness Survey analysis confirms that “high levels of mental fitness were associated with:

- higher levels of pro-social behaviours and fewer oppositional behaviours;
- engagement in competitive physical activities; and higher levels of school connectedness (Morrison & Peterson, 2010)

Mental fitness is fostered in environments and relationships that address three interrelated psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competency.”

New Brunswick’s 2014-2021 Wellness Strategy outlines the importance of these three psychological needs.

When our environments provide opportunities for us to satisfy our three basic psychological needs, we are more motivated and engaged, our overall wellness is improved and we are more apt to make healthy lifestyle choices. We have stronger supportive social networks, we are more ready to take advantage of opportunities that arise, and we are able to make

positive choices for ourselves and our families. These three basic psychological needs are foundational, regardless of the person.

These three basic psychological needs are competence, autonomy and relatedness.

Competence refers to our need to be recognized for our talents and skills, and to have opportunities for using our own strengths in achieving personal and collective goals. Fulfillment of this need provides us with a sense of purpose, achievement and accomplishment.

Autonomy refers to the need to have a choice, express ideas and opinions (a voice), and have the ability to make decisions about things that are important to you. When this need is satisfied, in conjunction with other need areas, people tend to make choices that demonstrate respect for themselves and the people around them.

Relatedness refers to the need for connection to and closeness with family, peers and other significant individuals. Fulfillment of this need is met through interaction with others, membership in groups, and the support and encouragement received from others.

GSAs and LGBTQ inclusive education also play a significant role in promoting a sense of autonomy, relatedness and school connectedness. Both provide an opportunity for students who identify as LGBTQ, who come from LGBTQ families, or who are allies to express ideas and opinions about educational matters. GSAs provide the opportunity for membership and interaction. Membership in a GSA provides an opportunity for connection and closeness with peers, as well as significant and supportive teachers, administrators and parents/guardians. They can also be a supportive place for students who identify as LGBTQ, as well as promoting a more positive and supportive environment in the school as a whole. LGBTQ inclusive education enables students

who identify as LGBTQ or who come from LGBTQ-identified families to see themselves and their realities in the curriculum in positive and affirming ways. LGBTQ inclusive education also helps create an environment of acceptance and support, which can help connection with peers and teachers.

For more information about New Brunswick 2012-2013 Student Wellness Survey see: file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/Anglophone_South_School_District.pdf and specifically pages 26-31.

For more information about New Brunswick's 2014-2021 Wellness Strategy see <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/hic-csi/pdf/Wellness-MieuxEtre/NewBrunswickWellnessStrategy2014-2021.pdf> and specifically pages 11-12.

Building Resiliency among LGBTQ Youth

This piece is a merger of two documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada resources: *Questions and Answers: Sexual Orientation in Schools* (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/rp/so-os/index-eng.php>) and *Questions and Answers: Gender Identity in Schools* (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/rp/gi-is/index-eng.php>)

* This document originally used gender variant. In keeping with our choice of language for this resource, we have replaced these words with trans or gender creative – with the exception of direct quotes or research.

Resiliency is a person’s ability to overcome adversity and effectively cope with and adapt to stressful and challenging situations in life. While the school setting can often be a stressful environment for gender creative youth, schools can take steps to become a safe and respectful place for them.

Resiliency (or protective factors) can be considered as the internal and external influences that can have a positive impact on healthy youth development. They help to protect youth from engaging in unhealthy behaviours or destructive coping mechanisms. Individuals are born with an innate resiliency and the capacity to work to develop protective factors.

Research identifies the following key attributes that are often exhibited by resilient children and youth⁴⁵:

- Ability to solve problems proactively and think for themselves;
- Capacity to understand complex emotions and deal with frustration;
- Strong internal sense of control and sense of personal autonomy;

- Awareness of the structures of oppression, such as a hostile or homophobic school environment;
- Healthy self-concept and positive vision for the future;
- Resist internalizing put-downs and negative self-labeling;
- Have a sense of humour and a tendency not to hold grudges;
- Feel they have the ability to live a meaningful and rewarding life; and
- Work to develop and build friendships based on mutual support and trust.

 **QUEER:**
Historically, a negative term for homosexuality. More recently, the LGBTQ community has reclaimed the word and uses it as a positive way to refer to itself.

Based upon these attributes, “schools, institutions, and community groups can foster these qualities by helping young people establish relationships with caring adult role models and by providing environments that recognize achievements, provide healthy expectations, nurture self-esteem, and encourage problem-solving and critical thinking skills”⁴⁶.

Teachers and schools can do several key things to build the resiliency of LGBTQ youth, including:

- Creating a support or social group where they feel part of a community can lead to greater sense of self-worth and increase the likelihood that they will remain in school. Research conducted in Canadian schools indicates that low behavioural attachment and high feelings of alienation within school leads to greater risk of dropping out^{47 & 90}.

- Making resources on sexual orientation and gender identity available in the school libraries and introducing LGBTQ inclusive education. Exposing students to LGBTQ issues will not cause students to question their sexual orientation or gender identity. Rather, it provides assurance to the student who already knows that they are different and who often suffers the consequences of that difference (i.e., name-calling, harassment, etc.) that they are not alone.^{91, 92 & 93}

While some LGBTQ youth experience significant negative school and life experiences because of prejudice and stigmatization, other LGBTQ youth do not experience these negative mental health and educational outcomes. The difference between those youth at-risk and those who are resilient is often the differing levels of support they receive from important adults in their lives, such as their parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, coaches, or faith leaders.

Although many LGBTQ youth experience risk and protective factors which are the same as their heterosexual peers, several critical factors have been identified to help support these youth in the development of a “resilient mindset”⁴⁸. These protective factors include:

- supportive and caring teachers and adults;
- a sense of belonging and safety at school;
- a strong sense of family connectedness; and
- access to community resources⁴⁹.

And

- access to material resources (i.e., availability of food, clothing, shelter, education and health services);

- access to supportive relationships (i.e., relationships with family, peers and community);
- development of a desirable personal identity (i.e., having a sense of purpose, aspirations and beliefs);
- experiences of power and control (i.e., ability to affect change in social and physical environment);
- adherence to cultural traditions (i.e., adherence to or knowledge of cultural practice and values);
- experiences of social justice (i.e., finding a meaningful role, acceptance and social equity in the community); and
- experience of a sense of cohesion with others (i.e., balancing personal interests with a sense of responsibility for the larger community).⁹⁴

All of these factors are critical targets for interventions designed to help LGBTQ youth move from feeling at-risk to becoming resilient in their schools, families, and communities. Targeted interventions should also include dedicated work with families and caregivers of LGBTQ youth to help them positively address issues of sexual and gender identity. In doing so, families and caregivers will be able to support the enhanced mental health, safety, emotional well-being, and personal resiliency of LGBTQ youth in their care.

Resources

- ⁴⁵ Thompson, R. A. (2006). *Nurturing future generations: Promoting resilience in children and adolescents through social, emotional, and cognitive skills* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid p. 71
- ⁴⁷ Archambault, I.; Janosz, M.; Fallu, J-S.; & Pagani, L.S. (2009). Student engagement and its relationship with early high school dropout. *Journal of Adolescence*, 32(3), 651-670.
- ⁴⁸ Goldstein, S., & Brooks, R. B. (2005). Why we study resilience? .In S. Goldstein and R. B. Brooks (Eds.), *Handbook of resilience in children* (pp. 3-15). New York: Kluwer, p. 3
- ⁴⁹ Eisenberg, M. E., & Resnick, M. D. (2006). Suicidality among gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth: The role of protective factors. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 39, 662-668; Fenaughty, J., & Harré, N. (2003). Life on the seesaw: A qualitative study of suicide resiliency factors for young gay men. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 45(1), 1-22.; Russell, S. T. (2005). Beyond risk: resilience in the lives of sexual minority youth. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 2(3), 5-18.
- ⁹⁰ Archambault, I.; Janosz, M.; Fallu, J-S.; & Pagani, L.S. (2009). Student engagement and its relationship with early high school dropout. *Journal of Adolescence*, 32(3), 651-670.
- ⁹¹ As cited in Chen-Hayes p. 10: Chen-Hayes, S.F. (2001). Counseling and advocacy with transgendered and gender-variant persons in schools and families. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development*, 40(1), 34-48.
- ⁹² Swartz, P.C. (2003). It's Elementary in Appalachia. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 1 (1), 51-71.
- ⁹³ Ibid.
- ⁹⁴ Ungar, M.; Brown, M.; Liebenberg, L.; Cheung, M.; & Levine, K. (2008). Distinguishing differences in pathways to resilience among Canadian youth. *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*, 27(1), 1-13.

Counselling and Sexual Orientation School Practitioners Supporting LGBTQ Students

By Michael Bochenek

Sections taken directly from the article found at: <http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0206-bochenek.html>

Original article: Bochenek, M. (2002) School practitioners supporting LGBTQ students. *Journal of Child and Youth Care*, 15 (3), PP.69-80.

Overview:

Counsellors and child and youth care practitioners in schools are in a position to provide LGBT students with valuable support and guidance. To assist them to be a resource for LGBT and questioning youth, school districts should provide specialized training for school counsellors on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Schools should also ensure that students may approach these practitioners for confidential information or advice. Reflecting the importance of confidentiality, school policies should include a prohibition on disclosing students' sexual orientation or gender identity to their classmates, parents or guardians, or local communities.

- As the first school officials to whom students may turn for information on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, counsellors and child and youth care practitioners working in schools have a special role in providing support to LGBT and questioning youth. In some cases, LGBT youth have credited their school counsellors with providing them with guidance and support at critical points in their lives.
- Unfortunately, too many youth hear misinformation and perceive bias from their school counsellors. In large part, the failure of many counsellors to serve LGBT youth stems from a lack of training.

- For youth grappling with issues of sexual orientation or gender identity and social stigmatization, harassment, and violence, confidentiality is critical. Counsellors should always advise students of the parameters of counsellor-student confidentiality. When counsellors (or any school staff member) disclose a student's sexual orientation to his or her parents without the student's permission, they violate professional standards and potentially place the youth at risk of rejection, abandonment, or violence by parents or guardians or local communities.

Counsellors need to acquire written permission in order to disclose personal information about a student when referring to outside agencies. For students less than 16, for whom parental/guardian consent is required, keep in mind that we never “out” a student. For more information see *What to do if a Student Discloses* on page 44, as well as ASCA School Counsellor Magazine May/June 2014.

- Perhaps because many experience such abuses on a daily basis, LGBT youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to use alcohol or other drugs, engage in risky sexual behaviours, leave home (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000; DuRant, Krowchuk, & Sina, 1998; Mallon, 1998). In addition, researchers in Canada and the United States have found that although most LGBT youth never consider or attempt suicide, a disproportionate number do (Dorais, 2000; Garofalo, Wolf, Wissow, Woods, & Goodman, 1999; Remafedi, French, Story, Resnick, & Blum, 1998)

- Providers should be aware that the decision to disclose one's lesbian or gay identity, particularly to parents/guardians, may have long-term consequences. Most adolescents are dependent on parents/guardians for financial and emotional support. Although coming out can reduce stress and increase communication and intimacy in relationships, disclosure during adolescence may result in abandonment, rejection, or violence when parents/guardians abruptly learn or discover that their child is lesbian or gay. (Ryan & Futterman, 1997, p. 220)

References cited in these excerpts:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2000). HIV/AIDS surveillance report. Washington, DC: Author.
- Dorais, M. (2000). *Mort on vif- La face cachee du suicide chez les gar~ons*. Montreal: VLB.
- DuRant, R.H., Krowchuk, D.P., & Sinal, S.H. (1998). Victimization, use of violence, and drug use among male adolescents who engage in same sex sexual behavior. *Journal of Pediatrics*, 133, 113-118.
- Garofalo, R., Wolf, C., Wissow, L.S., Woods, W.R., & Goodman, E. (1999). Sexual orientation and risk of suicide attempts among a representative sample of youth. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 153, 487-493.
- Mallon, G.P. (1998). *We don't exactly get the welcome wagon: The experiences of gay and lesbian adolescents in child welfare systems*. New York: Columbia. Massachusetts Department of Education. (2000).
- Radowsky, M., & Siegel, L.J. (1997). The gay adolescent: Stressors, adaptations, and psychosocial interventions. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 17, 191.
- Remafedi, G., French, S., Story, M., Resnick, M.D., & Blum, R. (1998). The relationship between suicide risk and sexual orientation: Results of a population-based study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 88, 57-60.
- Ryan, C., & Futterman, D. (1997). Lesbian and gay youth: Care and counseling. *Adolescent Medicine: State of the Art Review* US, 8, 207-374. Sears, J.T. (1992). Educators, homosexuality, and homosexual students: Are personal feelings related to professional beliefs? *Journal of Homosexuality*, 3/4, 29-80.

What to Do If a Student Discloses Their Sexual Orientation?

Excerpt from *Questions and Answers: Sexual Orientation in Schools* by the Public Health Agency of Canada. Available at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/rp/so-os/index-eng.php>

If a student discloses their sexual orientation to you, you should respect that disclosure and honour the student's right to confidentiality²⁷. Confidentiality is a major concern for many youth who may be questioning their sexual orientation, have concerns for their safety, and/or are afraid of their parents'/ caregivers' potential reaction to disclosure. A student's decision to come out is strongly influenced by issues of safety, vulnerability, individual comfort, and perceived levels of support and acceptance by significant people in their lives. If a student discloses their sexual orientation to you, they trust that you will receive this information in a positive and/or supportive way. Failing to protect a student's confidentiality may pose significant risks to the student if he or she is "outed" to their family, friends, teachers, coaches, or faith leaders before they themselves are ready and willing.



HOMOPHOBIA: Fear and/or hatred of homosexuality in others, often exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, or acts of violence. Similarly, "transphobia" refers to the fear and/or hatred of transgender individuals and is exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, or acts of violence. "Biphobia" refers to the fear and/or hatred of bisexual individuals and is exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, intimidation or acts of violence.

HETERONORMATIVITY: A cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are straight and so privileges heterosexuality and ignores or underrepresents same-gender relationships.

HETEROSEXISM: Prejudice and discrimination in favour of heterosexuality. This includes the presumption of heterosexuality as the superior and more desirable sexual orientation.

Researchers suggest that the coming out and coming to terms processes impact the mental health and emotional well-being of all sexual minority youth.²⁸ If sexual minority youth perceive their school environment as a threatening or hostile space, they may experience a profound sense of isolation, alienation, and fear of exposure, which may impact their feelings of self-worth, academic achievement, and sense of school connectedness. The coming out experience is also just the beginning of a larger process of learning, understanding, negotiation and acceptance, which involves both the individual who discloses their non-heterosexual identity and the recipient of that disclosure (i.e. parents and caregivers).

These students can be supported by creating a safe space for youth to explore and express their sexual diversity. This could start by paying attention to and addressing instances of homophobia when, and if, they occur and demonstrating an attitude of acceptance for sexual minority youth. When acts of homophobia are observed and/or reported, educators and administrators have a duty to react immediately and to create an environment where disrespect of any kind will not be ignored, and to build an understanding among all students of how both words and actions can hurt others.²⁹ There are many different ways for educators to deal with situations of homophobia in the school, including³⁰:

- addressing assumptions that being a sexual minority is a bad thing and reinforcing that everyone in the school environment deserves to be respected;
- confronting the stereotypes and misinformation behind the insults and abuse; and,
- making a plan with students to develop more appropriate responses to insults rather than physical violence or reverse name-calling.

Educators can also do a number of other things within their school environment to help support sexual minority youth. First, they can inform themselves about issues affecting sexual minority youth in their school environment. Second, teachers can help to support the formation of a gay-straight student alliance³¹. Another way to support sexual minority youth is through the provision of inclusive sexual health programming, in which students can access age-appropriate information about issues impacting their lives.

A student's sexual orientation is not a "lifestyle" choice and under no circumstances should a student be counselled to change or attempt to "repair" their sexual orientation. These kinds of "conversion" or "reparative" therapies have been criticized and discouraged by the American Psychological Association³² and by many teacher associations across Canada³³. Clinical research has demonstrated that these approaches are largely ineffective, ignore the impact of social stigmatization on mental health, and in some cases, can be extremely dangerous, particularly for vulnerable youth³⁴. Instead of attempting to change a student's sexual orientation, educators, administrators, and health care professionals should focus on helping the youth and their family to develop active coping mechanisms to address issues related to internalized homophobia, stigma, prejudice and discrimination. Access to age-appropriate and non-judgmental information will help students work towards positively integrating their sexual orientation into their sense of self.

Resources

- ²⁷ Wells, K., & Tsutsumi, L. M. (2005). *Creating safe and caring schools for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-identified students: A guide for counsellors*. Edmonton, AB: The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities.
- ²⁸ Herek, G.M.& Garnets, L.D. (2007). Sexual Orientation and Mental Health. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 3, 353-375; Ryan & Futterman.
- ²⁹ Goodman, J.M. (2005). Homophobia Prevention and Intervention in Elementary Schools: A Principal's Responsibility. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 3(1), 111-116.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Canadian Teachers' Federation. (2006). *The gay-straight student alliance handbook: A comprehensive resource for Canadian K-12 teachers, administrators, and school counsellors*. Ottawa, ON: Author
- ³² APA Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation. (2009). *Report of the task force on appropriate therapeutic responses to sexual orientation*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- ³³ Canadian Teachers' Federation. (2004). *Policy on Anti-homophobia and Anti-heterosexism*. Accessible from: <http://www.galebc.org/CTFPolicy.pdf>. Accessed on: 5 February 2010; Grace, A. P. (2008). The charisma and deception of reparative therapies: When medical science beds religion. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 55(4), 545-580.
- ³⁴ APA Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation. (2009). *Report of the task force on appropriate therapeutic responses to sexual orientation*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association; Ryan, C., & Futterman, D. (1998). *Lesbian and gay youth: Care and counseling*. New York: Columbia University Press.

What to Do If a Student Discloses a Trans or Gender Creative Identity?

Excerpt from *Questions and Answers: Gender Identity in Schools* by the Public Health Agency of Canada. Available at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/rp/gi-is/index-eng.php>

* This document originally used gender variant. In keeping with our choice of language for this resource, we have replaced these words with trans or gender creative – with the exception of direct quotes or research.

If a student discloses to you their trans/gender creative identity, it is important to support the student's self-definition and to ensure that they know they are valued.⁶¹ Listen to what the student has to say about how they are feeling and what their gender identity means to them and ask them what they would like you to do (if anything). It is important to not attempt to 'fix'

the trans/gender creative youth by attempting to convince them to abandon their trans/gender creative identity. This is not effective and actually leads to low self-esteem and mental health issues such as depression, self-harm and suicide.⁶²

Current research indicates that trans/gender creative individuals consciously select people to disclose to who they trust and who they believe will be supportive and sympathetic to their gender identity⁶³. Maintaining the trust and confidentiality of the trans/gender creative youth is, therefore, paramount. For example, when a student discloses their gender identity, ask them what name they would prefer to be called, what pronouns they would prefer you to use with them, talk to them about who they have disclosed to, who is and is not supportive, and who they would like help disclosing to. Do not talk to anyone about their identity, including parents/caregivers, to whom they have not already disclosed their gender identity.



CISNORMATIVITY: A cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are cisgender and so privileges cisgender identities and ignores or underrepresents gender variance.

CISEXISM: Prejudice and discrimination in favour of cisgender identities and expressions. This includes the presumption that being cisgender is the superior and more desirable gender identity.

TRANSPHOBIA: Fear and/or hatred of any perceived transgression of gender norms, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence—anyone who is trans (or assumed to be) can be the target of transphobia.

The disclosure of their gender identity is one of the most challenging and important pronouncements trans/gender creative individuals share with others. For many, it may signify the end point of a very long internal struggle to be secretive with their identity because of fear or shame.⁶⁴

Disclosure of one's identity is a milestone that may signify self-acceptance of their identity and the beginning of a 'new life'.⁶⁵ It is important, however, to talk to the trans/gender creative youth about the potential range of reactions to this disclosure within the school community and within the family. Discuss with them the possibility of rejection, harassment, verbal abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse, and aid the gender variant youth in developing coping mechanisms.⁶⁶ Assist them in identifying resources where they can get information and support (see also the list of resources at the end of this document). Become actively involved in the creation of the school as a safe space for the gender variant student by addressing instances of bullying and harassment immediately, providing inclusive sexual health education programming and educating the entire school community about gender identity issues. For example, organize guest speakers at school assemblies who are gender variant, show films about gender identity issues in the classroom, and ensure that there is literature in the school library related to gender identity.

Resources

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Supporting Trans and Gender Creative Children and Their Families

These sections are taken from Rainbow Health Ontario's Fact Sheet: *Supporting Gender Independent Children and their Families*. The terms gender independent and gender non-conformity have been changed to gender creative to remain consistent with the language used in this resource. To access the complete RHO Fact Sheet: http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/admin/contentEngine/contentDocuments/Gender_Independent_Children_final.pdf

Understanding Gender Creativity in Children

- Gender creative children are very diverse. Some may strongly and consistently identify with a gender role which differs from their natal sex. Others may express a gender identity which blends aspects of multiple genders and is fluid or changing. And others may be comfortable in their assigned sex, but behave in ways which do not conform to social norms, for example preferring clothing and activities typically associated with the other gender.^{3,4}
- Being gender creative is not intended as defiant behaviour on the part of a child nor is it caused by parenting style or experiences of abuse.⁵ Only in very rare circumstances will a child alter their gender expression in response to a traumatic event⁶. In the overwhelmingly majority of situations, gender creative behaviour is simply a natural expression of the diversity of human experience^{2,5,6,7}
- The meaning attached to gender creativity varies across cultural contexts. Historically, the existence of a social role for two-spirit people (those seen to possess both a male and female spirit) was documented within over 130 Indigenous nations in North America⁸ and there is much evidence to suggest that two spirit children were often regarded as blessings to their families.⁹ Diverse expressions of gender have been and continue to be valued in some cultures, including but not limited to Indigenous people in the South Pacific region,^{10, 11} Indonesia,¹² and other areas of Southeast Asia.¹³

- Social expectations shape the interpretation of, and response to, trans and gender creative children. Prior to puberty, the range of behaviour considered socially acceptable for girls tends to be broader and feminine behaviour among boys tends to elicit more concern.²

One gender identity clinic reported a referral rate of 6 times higher for feminine boys than masculine girls, even though what was deemed ‘cross-gender behaviour’ was more common among girls.¹⁴

- Of the research which has sought to establish the prevalence of gender creativity in children, results vary widely since what is considered to be masculine or feminine is generally not objective nor quantifiable. One study found that 2-4% of boys and 5-10% of girls behaved as the “opposite sex” from time to time.¹⁵ Another study found that 22.8% of boys and 38.6% of girls exhibited 10 or more different “gender atypical behaviours”.¹⁶
- The societal stigma which accompanies trans/gender creative children may lead some families to require additional services and support. In addition, for some children there are unique medical care considerations. Families often seek support either when the child is first entering school or first entering adolescence.⁷

Social Stressors on Trans and Gender Creative Children and Their Families

- Trans and gender creative children can face a high level of social rejection from peers³⁸ and this may increase through their years in school.² Parents/Guardians of trans and gender creative children may also face rejection from friends and family members who are intolerant of their decisions regarding their child’s gender expression.^{3,4}

- In a survey of Canadian LGBTQ high-school students, 95% of trans youth reported feeling unsafe at school.⁴⁰ Many parents cite bullying and safety in schools as their biggest concern.⁴
- In some cases, child welfare authorities have attempted to apprehend gender creative children out of a misguided belief that parental support for gender diversity constitutes child abuse.⁴¹
- Some parents are intolerant of gender diversity and may contribute to a child’s stress with negative attitudes.¹ A recent study found children who were gender creative were more likely than gender typical children to be targeted for abuse and violence from their own family members.⁴²
- Despite these concerns, social rejection and abuse is not inevitable and many resources are being developed to support children within their families,^{4,5,26,27,28} schools^{4,43,44} and social service organizations such as child welfare agencies.²⁹

Transition: Social and Medical Options

- Many gender creative children will not want or need to transition to a new gender role. If provided the space to explore a range of activities and gender identities, many will place themselves comfortably on a spectrum between male and female or will grow to feel comfortable in their assigned gender role.
- For others however, their cross gender identification remains certain and consistent and living in their assigned gender role may be too distressing to be consistent with their healthy growth. It is important for parents and providers to pay close attention to what young people communicate about their needs, in particular, to signs of distress. If a young person is in distress regarding their gender role, the adults in their life may need to consider, together with the young person, options for social and/or medical transition to improve mental health and reduce self-harm risks.^{3,4}

Social Transition

- Social transition consists of a change in social gender role and may include a change of name, clothing, appearance, and gender pronoun. For example, a male-born child wishing to socially transition would likely begin using the pronoun “she”, change her name, begin to present herself as a girl, attend school as a girl and live her daily life as a girl. Families in this situation may make a variety of decisions regarding privacy and how open they wish to be about the child’s history.⁴ For pre-pubertal children, social transition is the only option as medical intervention is not recommended prior to puberty.⁵⁸
- The decision for a child to socially transition is not a simple one and should be made jointly between the child, the parents, and supportive professionals if available. Some clinicians recommend encouraging parents of trans and gender creative children to follow their child’s lead and avoid imposing their own preferences.⁷
- Experienced clinicians have reported that in some children, the need for transition presents itself clearly as there is obvious distress in the original gender role and obvious wellbeing in the new role. In contrast, other children are clearly comfortable with their assigned sex and desire only to express themselves in ways which are considered less common for their gender role. These clinicians state that for children who are in between these two experiences, the path is less clear.^{6,7}
- Social transition in young children is a relatively new practice and long-term research in this area is lacking. Parent and clinician reports indicate that children’s comfort and happiness can improve dramatically with this option.^{3,4,6} Clinicians have indicated that there may be children who choose to transition back to their original gender role at the onset of puberty.^{7,53} In one study, young people in this position found it difficult to explain this choice to their

friends and families.⁵³ Thus, children pursuing social transition should be reassured that they can return to their original gender role at any time and parents/guardians are best advised that another transition may be possible.⁷

- Social transition is becoming more common for pre-pubertal children and those families beginning this process can greatly benefit from peer contact with others and a strong support system to assist them in facing social stigma and advocating for their rights within schools and other institutions.⁷

Information about medical transitioning as well as outcomes, gaps in research and implications for health care providers is available on the RHO fact sheet, at: http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/admin/contentEngine/contentDocuments/Gender_Independent_Children_final.pdf.

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Trans and Gender Creative Students at Risk

Adapted from *Transgender and Transsexual Students at Risk* in the Canadian Teachers' Federation document: *Supporting Transgender and Transsexual Students in K-12 Schools* (2012).

This document originally used transgender and transsexual. In keeping with our choice of language for this resource, we have replaced these words with trans or gender creative – with the exception of direct quotes.

Research demonstrates that homophobia and transphobia are common in most schools in North America (Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz; Taylor, Peter, et al., 2011). In 2011, Egale Canada Human Rights Trust released results from the first national school climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools. This survey, completed in 2009, involved over 3,700 youth from across Canada (with the exception of the province of Quebec). The average age of youth with respondents was 17.4 years of age. Overall, 71% of the youth participants identified as heterosexuals; 26% as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or questioning; and 3% as transgender or two-spirit (Taylor et al., 2011).

Of the trans and gender creative youth surveyed:

- 79% reported feeling unsafe at school;
- 74% reported being verbally harassed because of their gender expression;
- 49% reported being sexually harassed at school at least once during the past year; and
- 37% reported being physically harassed or assaulted in their schools.

In addition to trans and gender creative youth, the lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth survived identified change rooms (49%), washrooms (43%), and hallways (43%) as unsafe spaces in their schools. On every measure of Egale's national climate survey, trans and gender creative youth reported the worst health, safety and educational outcomes.

Likewise, as GLSEN, the largest LGBTQ educational organization in the United States, reports, “transgender students face much higher levels of harassment and violence than lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. And these high levels of victimization result in these students missing more school, receiving lower grades, and feeling isolated and not part of the school community” (Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz 2009, p. vi). For example, in their most recent national school climate survey, GLSEN found that:

- 90% transgender students experienced verbal harassment at school in the past year;
- More than 50% experienced physical harassment; and
- More than 25% were physically assaulted (Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz 2009).

For trans and gender creative youth, the coming out and coming-to-terms processes are complex and often wrought with physical, verbal, and symbolic violence. For example, Wyss's (2004) in-depth qualitative research study explored the lived experiences of 23 “out” transgender and queer high school students in the United States. Her research revealed that:

- 23 (which is *all* of the transgender youth surveyed) reported being victimized to varying degrees in their high school;
- 11 reported being “shoved, pushed, smacked, and/or kicked by others in school” (p. 716);
- 6 reported being sexually assaulted or raped;
- 7 reported dropping out of high school because of the violence and harassment they endured; and
- 3 youth reported being suicidal

As Wyss relates, “These experiences, especially when coupled with a belief that one’s oppression is justified, often leads to a low self-esteem, anxiety, rage, social withdrawal and depression, as well as to self-destructive behaviors like hitting or slashing one’s body, the abuse of prescription or illegal drugs, dropping out of school, unsafe sex and suicide” (p. 718).

Despite these risk factors, many trans and gender creative youth learned to develop protective strategies and personal resiliency in the face of daily adversity. For example, Wyss reported that the transgender and transsexual youth she studied engaged in various coping mechanisms and defensive strategies, which included:

- Avoidance: staying away from students who threatened to assault them, cutting classes, and skipping school;
- Invisibility: hiding during lunch and break, arriving early, and leaving late after school;
- Hyper-masculinity: projecting dominance by acting tough and/or developing a reputation of fearless and mean;
- Vigilance: constantly monitoring the behaviors and actions of their peers and the imminent possibility of attack or danger; and
- Preparedness: wearing steel toe boots and chains, working out at the gym, using profanity, and threatening to counter attack as survival strategies to deal with impending violence that could not be prevented (pp. 720-721).

Once these youth had suffered an attack, they had to face the difficult decision to determine how best to deal with the trauma and its aftermath. For many, they internalized the victimization, remained silent, and withdrew inward. Often they felt as though they could not confide in their friends because they would not understand the level of brutality and violence they experienced

as a direct result of the rampant homophobia and transphobia they experienced. Most were unwilling to confide in teachers or school staff, which further alienated them from crucial support systems. Some youth even went back into the closet by reverting back to gendered appearances that would most closely be associated with their natal (birth) sex. Many felt they had to act “hyper-straight”, overtly “masculine/feminine”, or “normal” to achieve some semblance of safety and security within their school environments (p. 273).

These experiences are not limited solely to high school students. Students in elementary and junior high school may also experience significant transphobia. For example, gender creative and trans children who have not had their experiences of gender cared for by significant adults in their lives may learn to hide their identity and live in, or escape to, an imaginary play land. These hidden gender issues can cause frustration, depression, and elevate the risk of suicidal thinking and behaviour. The pre-pubescent and teenage years can be difficult for trans and gender creative children and youth as they increasingly sense their differences from their peers. As these children and youth grow older, many will try and fit into a traditional heterosexual and cisgender mold and will marry and have children, hoping this will take away or alleviate their frustrating gender issues. Other children and youth may be so sure of whom they are that they begin to transition while in school (Luecke, 2011). The fortunate children and youth who have understanding parents/guardians and professional assistance may begin to live as the gender of their inner being while still in their school-aged years.

In the case of many older trans students, the most perilous time may be when they begin to present as a different gender without having had much time on hormone replacement therapy, which may be necessary to physically appear or “pass” as a different gender. It is often at this time that many transsexual youth experience multiple forms of discrimination. For example, if a girl has a masculine gender expression, and is sexually attracted to other girls, she may experience transphobia or homophobia. Managing these differing aspects of identity can be complex for many youth, especially those youth from diverse ethnocultural, racialized, or religious backgrounds. These youth should be provided with supports that are culturally appropriate while recognizing the unique needs related to their gender identity.

At a certain point in their transition, some individuals stop referring to themselves as trans at all, rather stating their preference to be identified as men or women. Others prefer to continue to identify as trans in an attempt to continue to question and challenge a normalized gender binary.

Results from these research studies and surveys are clear: Trans and gender creative students face extremely hostile and discriminatory school environments. Across North America, trans and gender creative students have poorer educational outcomes, report less attachment to their school environment, and identify far greater experiences of harassment, homelessness, discrimination, and verbal, physical, and sexual abuse and assault than *both* their heterosexual and sexual minority peers (Grossman, D’Augelli, & Frank, 2011; Marksamer, 2011). Educational interventions for school educators, administrators, and EST-guidance are needed to help these students move from feeling at-risk to developing the resilience necessary to adapt to often hostile and uninviting school, family, and community environments.



“A child’s experience at school can significantly enhance or undermine their sense of self. Furthermore, children needed to feel emotionally safe in order to learn effectively. A welcoming and supportive school where bullying and teasing is not permitted and children are actively taught to report and celebrate difference is the ideal environment for all children.

This is especially true for gender creative and transgender children, who frequently are the targets of teasing and bullying. A child cannot feel emotionally safe, and will most likely experience problems in learning, if they regularly experience discrimination at school”.

-Brill & Pepper, 2008, pp 153-154

Resources:

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The Health Impacts of Homophobia on GLBTTQ Persons

Adapted from: Around the Rainbow, a Toolkit for Educators and Parents by Family Service Ottawa / Services à la famille Ottawa <http://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Parent-Toolkit-2006-EN.pdf>

A Canadian review of literature on the human costs of homophobia,²⁰ specifically about gay, lesbian and bisexual (GLB) people, found that:

- GLB people suffer higher rates of depression than the general Canadian population.
- GLB people are victims of physical violence at a much higher rate than heterosexuals.
- Homophobia results in substandard health care for GLB people, and they do not access and use the health care system because of homophobia.

This issue intensifies the problems faced by GLB people and undoubtedly adds substantially to the number of homophobia-related deaths in Canada. The same study looked at premature deaths among GLB people in Canada. “Using the assumption that, without the existence of homophobia, the gay, lesbian, bisexual population and the heterosexual population would have equivalent rates of health and social issues, estimates of the annual number of deaths caused by homophobia were developed.”²¹ The estimated number of premature deaths caused by homophobia in Canada are:

- by suicide – 818 to 968 deaths per year
- by smoking – 1,232 to 2,599 deaths per year
- by alcohol abuse – 236 to 1,843 deaths per year
- by illicit drug use – 64 to 74 deaths per year

Other studies²² that have focused on gay, lesbian and bisexual youth have found that:

- 80% of lesbian and gay youth report severe feelings of isolation.
- 53% of students report hearing homophobic comments made by school staff.
- Gay, lesbian and bisexual youth are 4 times more likely than their heterosexual peers to attempt suicide.*

In general, there are large gaps in the research on LGBTQ people’s health, and these gaps are greater for trans, Two Spirit and queer people, where health risks are anecdotally observed as greater, yet are often completely absent in research consideration.

A context for the statistics on homophobia/transphobia in our health care system is provided in the following example. A trans person who identifies as male, with an undiagnosed heart infection, was refused care in a hospital emergency room. “After the physician who examined me discovered that I am female-bodied, he ordered me out of the emergency room despite the fact that my temperature was above 104° F (40° C). He stated I had a fever because ‘you are a very troubled person’.” Three weeks later the patient was hospitalized for the same condition. “I awoke in the night to find staff standing around my bed ridiculing my body and referring to me as a ‘Martian’.” The next day the staff refused to work unless “it” was removed from the floor. These and other experiences of hatred forced me to leave. Had I died from this illness, the real pathogen would have been bigotry.”²³

One of the key messages that can be found in research that looks at the impact of homophobia on GLB people in Canada, is that negative costs of homophobia are in no way inherent to sexual orientation, but are the result of “chronic stress and coping with social stigmatization and societal hatred.”²⁴

*Some studies report rates of LGBTQ youth suicide attempts to be as high as 8.4 times that of their heterosexual and cisgender peers.

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The Impact of Homophobia/Biphobia/Transphobia on Everyone

Adapted from: Around the Rainbow, a Toolkit for Educators and Parents by family Service Ottawa / Services a la famille Ottawa <http://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Parent-Toolkit-2006-EN.pdf>

Although LGBTQ people and their children bear the brunt of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia, it hurts all of us by:²⁵

- Locking all people into rigid gender roles that inhibit creativity and self-expression.
- Teaching heterosexual people to treat others poorly, using actions that go against our basic humanity, and pressuring peers to do the same.
- Stigmatizing, silencing and sometimes targeting people who are perceived or defined by others as LGBTQ, but who are in reality heterosexual or cisgender.
- Limiting the ability to form close, intimate relationships with members of one's own sex for fear of people thinking one is LGBTQ and not wanting to be stigmatized.
- Limiting communication with a significant portion of the population and, more specifically, limiting family relationships.
- Eliminating any discussion of the lives of LGBTQ people in the curriculum, keeping important information from all students.
- Preventing heterosexual people from accepting the benefits and gifts offered by LGBTQ people: theoretical insights, social and spiritual visions, and contributions to the arts and culture, to religion, to family life, indeed, to all parts of society.

- Obstructing a unified and effective governmental and societal response to AIDS (which affects all people), anti-harassment policies, inclusive family legislation, safe public spaces, etc.
- Inhibiting appreciation of other types of diversity: failing to recognize each person's unique traits because they may not fit the "norm".

Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, which stem from misunderstanding, discrimination and hate, harm individuals who hold and act on these views, impinging on their very understanding of what it means to be a 'good person'. Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia hurt everyone in our communities. It follows the old, and true saying: When one person is oppressed, we are all oppressed.

References:

- ²⁵ Adapted from: Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN), *A How-to Guide for Starting an Allies Program*, p.24, adapted from Warren J. Blumenfeld, ed., *Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price*.

The Family—an Evolving Definition

Part of this information is taken from: Around the Rainbow, a Toolkit for Educators and Parents by family Service Ottawa / Services à la famille Ottawa <http://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Parent-Toolkit-2006-EN.pdf>

Family Forms

Definitions of family have most often concentrated on the form that families take. Today's families come in an array of forms that differ from the "traditional" or "nuclear" family, consisting of a mother and a father married to each other with children, living together in one house.

Regardless of whether a family includes heterosexual, cisgender or LGBTQ parents/guardians:

- The family may consist of a single adult, two adults or a group of adults.
- Some adults may have been married in religious or civil ceremonies, or living in a common-law relationship.
- Some adults living together or in close community may be connected as siblings or as friends.
- The family may consist of several families or family members who share care of the child(ren).
- Families may be related by blood or not: for example foster families or chosen families

In 2014, the Canadian Human Rights Commission adopted the following definition of family:

Family is a broad and inclusive term. It includes family members who do not live in the same household, and relationships from bonds of blood or law, including common-law. It includes relationships between parents/guardians and children (including adoptive and foster children), and with spouses (marital and common law), siblings, in-laws, uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces, cousins, grandparents and grandchildren.

Families can also include relationships not defined by blood or legal bonds. This may include “chosen families,” such as strong friendships and communities where unrelated persons provide care normally provided by nuclear family members. These relationships may be particularly important for Aboriginal people or people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

Adoption of Children

- Adoption of children in Canada is governed by provincial and territorial legislation.
- Same-sex couples can adopt children in all provinces and territories.
- There are no formal, legal barriers inhibiting trans people from adopting in Canada. However, as gender identity is not explicitly included as a protected ground in every province and territory’s human rights legislation, trans people may encounter discrimination during the adoption process. (See www.egale.ca for an up-to-date list of where gender identity is protected.)

Same-Sex Couple Families

According to Canada’s 2011 Census:³⁰

64,575 couples identified themselves as living in same-sex relationships, up 42.4% from 2006. Of these couples, 21,015 were same-sex married couples and 43,560 were same-sex common-law couples.

Overall, same-sex couples accounted for 0.8% of all couples in Canada in 2011, a share which is consistent with recent data from Australia (0.7% in 2011), the United Kingdom and Ireland (0.4% for each country in 2011). Although not directly comparable, 0.6% of households in the United States were comprised of same-sex couples in 2010.

While 16.5% of same-sex couples were married couples in 2006, this share nearly doubled to 32.5% in 2011, reflecting the first five-year period for which same-sex marriage has been legal across the country.

Same-sex married spouses and common-law partners were relatively young, with one-quarter (25.3%) aged 15 to 34 compared to 17.5% of individuals in opposite-sex couples. In addition, there were fewer same-sex spouses or partners at older ages, with 6.2% aged 65 and over, compared to 17.8% of individuals in opposite-sex couples.

More opposite-sex couples had children at home than did same-sex couples, 47.2% and 9.4%, respectively. Female same-sex couples were nearly 5 times more likely to have a child at home (16.5%) than male same-sex-couples (3.4%). Overall, more than four-fifths (80.3%) of all same-sex couples with children were female couples.

No questions on the Census asked about bisexual, trans, Two Spirit or Queer parents/guardians.

Family Function

It is clear that defining family in terms of form excludes large segments of our society, including heterosexual, cisgender and LGBTQ families. When we try to put the boxes of family form around our actual families we will inevitably leave someone out. Defining family as form implies that certain people get to decide who is in and who is out, thus family form can become exclusionary. This relates to the concepts of heterosexism, heteronormativity, cissexism, cisnormativity and homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

To engage in a meaningful and reflective discussion of family, we need to understand family in terms of its function. We need to ask questions such as: How is this family working to care for and support each other? How does it contribute to the community?

If the family has children, how are children nurtured and supported? Family is defined by each person in terms of who you love and care for, and who loves and cares for you. It is based on who you ‘choose’ as your family. In this way, all of our definitions of family are included.

The LGBTQ community uses the term “family of choice” as an alternative equal to the traditional definition. The notion of choosing family based on those we love and those who love us, is life affirming and healthy as we strive to create loving and supportive families and communities.

What functions do families serve?

Our families play an important role in all of our lives: imparting societal norms, teaching family values, educating us about the world, and meeting basic physical, social, spiritual and emotional needs.

Ideally, all families, whether nurtured by heterosexual, cisgender or LGBTQ parents/guardians, are sources of consistent love, guidance and support. This nurturing environment provides the foundation from which children grow and learn to meet the world with confidence.

What do researchers have to say?

To date, there has been little research on Canadian LGBTQ families. Existing research has focused on health, child custody, parental fitness, the impact of same-sex marriage on society, and the implications of homophobia. Existing research has also focused on gay and lesbian parent issues, however the issues of bisexual, trans, Two Spirit and queer parents and their children are strikingly invisible.³³

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) has summarized the existing research on gay and lesbian family experience. In August 2003, the CPA found that:³⁴

- Contrary to “a popular misconception that gay and lesbian parents compromise the psychological and sexual development of their children, ...Psychological research into gay and lesbian parenting indicates that there is no basis in the scientific literature for this perception.”
- The stressors that may uniquely impact same-sex parents are due to perceptions and barriers created by our social systems, rather than any personal inadequacies as parents.
- There were no significant differences between children from gay and lesbian parents and children of heterosexual parents when considering social, emotional, and gender development and identity.

In addition, the Canadian Association of Social Workers declares that children do not need protection from same-sex parents; they need protection from discrimination, stigma, and prejudice.³⁵

The American Psychological Association (APA) has found that evidence to date suggests that home environments provided by gay and lesbian parents are as likely as those provided by heterosexual parents to support and enable children’s psychosocial growth.³⁶

References:

- ³⁰ Milan, Anne, and Nora Bohnert. *Portrait of Families and Living Arrangements in Canada: Families, Households and Marital Status, 2011 Census of Population*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, September 2012.
- ³³ Schwartz, Wendy, *Family Diversity in Urban Schools*, ERIC/CUE Digest, Number 148, 1999.
- ³⁴ Canadian Psychological Association, Press Release, 2003. www.cpa.ca/documents/GayParenting-CPA.pdf
- ³⁵ Canadian Association of Social Workers, Presentation to the Federal Justice Committee, April 2003.
- ³⁶ Patterson, Charlotte J., *Lesbian and Gay Parenting, Summary of research findings*, APA, University of Virginia, 1995. www.apa.org/pi/parent.html

Debunking Myths

Since there is still silence that surrounds sexual orientation and gender identity, it is possible to be misinformed about these topics and not know it. Below are a few myths and facts about families and LGBTQ people that may be useful in raising your awareness as you strive to create an LGBTQ inclusive environment.

Issues faced by GLBTTQ¹ Families

From *Around the Rainbow's Toolkit for Educators and Service Providers*

GLBTTQ parents/guardians with young children face all the challenging questions and situations that every new family faces. There are a number of additional barriers and challenges that must be confronted, however. Some of these issues include:

- ▶ the lack of legal recognition as a family and therefore greater vulnerability in family life situations such as separation, child custody, illness or death of a spouse.
- ▶ the challenges finding GLBTTQ-friendly support and services for reproductive alternatives, prenatal and birthing needs, childrearing, playgroups, etc.
- ▶ the increased questioning and scrutiny of decision-making, parenting styles and practices based on homophobic and heterosexist views on what constitutes a family.
- ▶ the isolation from both the mainstream and the GLBTTQ community.

Unfortunately, most of the issues facing GLBTTQ families, parents/guardians and their children result from discrimination in the community because of widely held societal myths and stereotypes. Some myths that are commonly heard include:

¹ The GLBTTQ acronym is used here as it appears in *Around the Rainbow's Toolkit for Educators and Service Providers* which has been reproduced with permission from Family Services à la Famille Ottawa.

Myth: GLBTTQ people do not value family.

Fact: GLBTTQ people value family. Within the GLBTTQ community there is recognition and nurturing of diverse family structures, from mono-nuclear families to other families of choice.

GLBTTQ people recognize friends, lovers and those involved in long-term relationships as family.

GLBTTQ people who are fortunate enough to have been accepted by their family of origin may have strong family ties. Those who have been rejected by their family of origin often work to try to re-establish these relationships, and to guard their right to raise their own children or adopt their partner's children. Rejection often causes deep pain from which many GLBTTQ people spend a good part of their life trying to understand and overcome.

Myth: GLBTTQ people do not make good parents/guardians.

Fact: Research has shown that, except for the fact that the children of GLBTTQ parents/guardians are often concerned about being stigmatized by their peers, they show no higher incidence of emotional disturbance than do children of heterosexual couples, nor are they confused about their own gender identity or sexual orientation. GLBTTQ people come from all kinds of families, as do heterosexual people, and there is no correlation between the sexual orientation or gender identity of parents/guardians and that of their children. The chances of a child being GLBTTQ are the same whether they are raised by GLBTTQ parents/guardians or by heterosexual parents/guardians.

Myth: GLBTTQ people cannot or do not have children.

Fact: GLBTTQ people have children in many different ways, just like everyone else: through adoption, alternative insemination, sexual intercourse, co-parenting, step parenting, fostering, etc.

Myth: Trans, Two Spirit and queer parents/guardians must resolve all issues of gender identity before coming out to their children. Children cannot deal with gender transition or gender fluidity. They need to be a certain age before they are ready to learn about a trans parent/guardian or family member.

Fact: We know families that have successfully dealt with and continue to deal with the issues of gender transition and fluidity with children of every age. Each age has unique needs that must be met, and it is up to the parent/guardian to meet those needs. The information we give our children must be age appropriate, and parents/guardians must set limits and boundaries. Coming out to children can dispel feelings of secrecy and dishonesty. It can increase feelings of closeness. But the decision to come out or not is highly personal and must be respected.

Myth: GLBTTQ parents/guardians stigmatize their children.

Fact: Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia stigmatize children. Being proud and honest about one's identity and orientation in a homophobic/transphobic society, while certainly not easy, makes children strong and more accepting of diversity. It is society's homophobia, biphobia and transphobia that need to change; GLBTTQ people need not remain closeted about who they really are.

Myth: Any gender experimentation by children of GLBTTQ parents/guardians is a direct result of having GLBTTQ parents/guardians

Fact: Experimentation with gender is natural and children should be allowed to do so. We know children of GLBTTQ parents/guardians who are questioning gender and others who express no such feelings. Many children have grown up to be trans, Two Spirit or queer in spite of their heterosexual parents/guardians' strong discouragement of any gender experimentation, and despite the presence of more rigid gender role-models. Children with GLBTTQ parents/guardians can grow up with the freedom to explore, to question roles and to choose their own identities and to get support for whatever they choose.

From Around the Rainbow's Toolkit for Educators and Service Providers. Around the Rainbow is a programme of Family Services à la Famille Ottawa. This document, as well as a Toolkit for GLBTTQ Parents/Guardians, can be found online at <http://www.aroundtherainbow.org>.

All gay men are like women. / All lesbians are like men.

Some gay men are effeminate and some lesbians are masculine, but many are not. A lot of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals are assumed to be heterosexual whether or not they are trying to do so. However, some lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, Two Spirit, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals choose to resist homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia by challenging normative rules about how women and men are supposed to look and behave, in which case they may adopt various gender expressions that disrupt gender norms. Other people do not necessarily do so for political purposes: some people just do and wear what makes them the most comfortable, with little regard for masculinity or femininity.

All lesbians are man-haters.

Being a lesbian has little to do with how one feels about men. It has much more to do with how one feels about women. Although lesbians are generally not sexually attracted to men, it is not uncommon to maintain many male friendships. Lesbians are women who predominantly love and are sexually attracted to women.



People become gay or lesbian because they are unattractive and have no success with the "opposite" sex.

You just have to look at the *LGBTQ Role Models and Symbols* section of this resource or on *MyGSA.ca*, the national LGBTQ safer schools and inclusive education website, to be reminded that many lesbians and gay men are considered attractive by normative standards and would have no trouble at all catching anyone's eye, regardless of gender.

All LGBTQ people have been abused in childhood or had some kind of negative experience to "make them that way."

There is no evidence whatsoever linking child abuse with sexual orientation or gender identity in adult life.



All gay men have AIDS and it is a curse from God.

While the gay community in North America and elsewhere has been hit hard by AIDS, the vast majority of gay men are not infected by HIV. Around the world, most people with AIDS are heterosexual. In Canada, women are infected with approximately 30% of all new cases of HIV and lesbians are the demographic with the lowest risk of contracting HIV.

LGBTQ individuals are predominantly white.

LGBTQ individuals come from all races, ethnicities, religions, and countries of origin. However, how one identifies or defines oneself is culturally shaped. Also, different cultural norms allow for different degrees of being out publicly. If it seems that more white people frequent public LGBTQ areas, this could simply mean that more white people are comfortable being out in these spaces.

All religious groups oppose homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, and trans identities.

There are a variety of religious opinions about being LGBTQ. Some religious groups consider it a sin, while others consider it a gift.

Sexual orientation is only about sex.

Being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is about a person's life. It is about who one loves, spends time with, chooses to raise children and have a family with, etc.

I don't know anyone who is LGBTQ.

Chances are you do. They just might not be out to you. Egale's First National Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Canadian Schools found that over 14% of students who completed the survey in class self-identified as LGBTQ. Since the "Q" stands for both "queer" and "questioning," this demonstrates that a proportionally large segment of youth in Canada today self-identify as sexual and/or gender minorities.

Queer people don't make good parents.

To date, there is no conclusive research demonstrating how one becomes heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, Two Spirit, or trans and nothing to indicate that it has anything to do with parental/guardian influence. The presence of open and out LGBTQ family members may make it easier, and less anxiety-ridden, for younger LGBTQ family members when they are coming out. A 2006 report by the Department of Justice Canada found that "Children raised in families with same-sex parents are at least as socially competent as children raised in families with opposite sex parents," and that lesbians and gay men are generally better at parenting than heterosexual parents/guardians. For more information, see http://www.samesexmarriage.ca/docs/Justice_Child_Development.pdf.

All gay men are pedophiles.

In fact, statistics show that most pedophiles are heterosexual men who abuse children within the nuclear family and are related to the children they abuse.

Homosexuality is a disease.

Because of prejudice, homosexuality was once listed as a disease but it was removed from the lists of mental illnesses by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973.

Transsexualism is unnatural.

Human sexuality exists on a spectrum of physiological and psychological characteristics. Research indicates that throughout history there have been people whose gender identity was different from their birth assigned sex. (OHRC)

Transgender people are gay or lesbian.

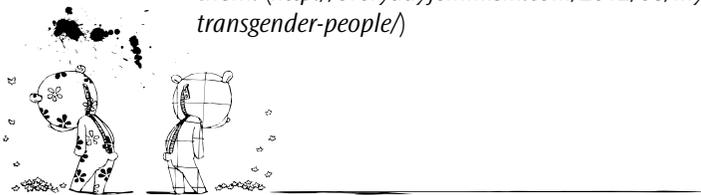
Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same thing. Transgender people can be straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual. (<http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/relationship/19234289.html>)

Transgender people hate their bodies.

This is a very common myth. It does make sense that a person who identifies as a woman might be uncomfortable in her male body, and vice versa. And some transgender people are uncomfortable and want to alter their bodies. Others choose to live with their bodies as they are.

Neither choice means that this person hates themselves. On the contrary, a transgender person can love themselves through the whole process of transitioning.

Each person's relationship with their body is unique and a transgender person should receive the support that works for them. (<http://everydayfeminism.com/2012/08/myths-about-transgender-people/>)



Check out MyGSA.ca for more information as well as resources and materials for debunking LGBTQ myths!



Adapted from the original developed by Vanessa Russell for the Toronto Board of Education

Myths and facts about Gender Identity

From: *The Gender Spectrum: What Educators Need to Know*. (2011). Pride Education Network, BC. <http://pridenet.ca/wp-content/uploads/the-gender-spectrum.pdf>

Myth: Children and teens are too young to know their gender identity.

Fact: Most people become aware of their gender identity between the ages of 18 months and 3 years. Many youth whose gender identities do not conform to the expectations of their families, peers, and schools are invisible out of fear for their safety.

Myth: Being transgender is just a phase.

Fact: Some children go through phases of gender creativity. The longer a child has identified as cross-gender, the easier it becomes to predict whether it is a phase. Regardless of the outcome, the self-esteem, mental well-being, and overall health of the child relies heavily on receiving love, support, and compassion from family and school.

Myth: Hormone blockers, used to delay puberty in transgender teens, are detrimental to one's health.

Fact: Hormone blockers are a safe way to "buy time" as the transgender teen decides whether to go on cross-hormones. This treatment prevents the (often traumatic) development of secondary sex characteristics that do not match the person's gender identity. It also prevents the need for painful and expensive surgeries to undo these changes later in life. This treatment is widely endorsed by family doctors, endocrinologists, psychologists, and other specialists involved in transgender health programs.

Myth: Being transgender is a sexual orientation.

Fact: Sexual orientation and gender identity are different. A person's sexual orientation is related to whether the person is romantically attracted to men, women, or both. Gender identity, on the other hand, is about the person's own internal identification as male, female, or a gender in between male and female. Just like non-transgender people, transgender people can be of any sexual orientation.

Myth: All transgender people will eventually take hormones and get sex reassignment surgery.

Fact: Some transgender people take hormones and/or have surgery. However, for a number of reasons, many transgender people do not take either of these steps. Some feel comfortable with their bodies the way they are. For others, hormones and surgery are inaccessible because they may be too expensive and/or require parental/guardian permission.

Violence based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In Canada, any criminal offence committed against a person or property which is motivated by hate, bias or prejudice based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor, can be deemed a hate crime at the time of sentencing. Hate crimes tend to be more violent than other crimes and are often committed with the intention of scaring an entire community. They increase feelings of vulnerability, victimization and fear for everyone. They are particularly horrible because they often occur in places where you feel safest: at home, school or religious institutions. Left unchallenged, hate crimes can easily lead to copycat incidents.

Statistics Canada has collected annual information on hate crime in Canada since 2006, which includes hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation—it does not include hate crimes motivated by gender identity. This data only includes incidents that are reported to police, and that police have recorded as either a “suspected” or “confirmed” hate-motivated crime, based on the evidence available at the time.

A significant portion of hate crime in Canada goes unreported. The 2004 and 2009 General Social Surveys found that only a little more than a third of those who believed they had been the victim of a hate crime had reported the incident to police (40% and 34% respectively). In addition, rates of reporting can change significantly year over year, reflecting both a police service's effectiveness in investigating and recording hate-motivated crimes and the comfort level of community members in reporting victimization to their local police service. This can be influenced by a variety of factors:

- Dedicated hate crime investigation and prevention units.
- Hate crime-specific training programs.
- Cultural diversity training programs.
- Public awareness programs.
- Community-specific police outreach initiatives and recruiting programs.

- Youth crime-prevention initiatives.
- Victim assistance programs and other supports.

Risk Factors

While hate crime rates often change significantly from year to year, consecutive annual reports between 2006 and 2012 have clearly demonstrated a number of general trends regarding police-reported hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation:

- Police-reported hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation have generally increased since 2006, peaking in 2011 at 240 incidents, representing 18% of all hate crimes.
- Crimes motivated by hatred against lesbian, gay and bisexual people are by far the most violent form of hate crime in Canada. Sexual orientation is the only motivating factor for which the majority of offences are classified by police as violent (between 65% and 75% of incidents), with between 39% and 63% resulting in injury to the victim.
- Most hate crimes in Canada are classified as mischief, whereas assault is the most common form of hate crime against LGB people.
- Male youth under the age of 25 are consistently over-represented among both the accused and the victims of hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation.

	2011		2012	
	Victims	Accused	Victims	Accused
Hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation				
Male	85%	92%	80%	77%
Under 25	50%	70%	56%	66%
Both male and under 25	N/A	N/A	42%	50%

- Between 1991 and 2012, there were 22 police-reported hate-motivated homicides in Canada. About half of all victims were killed because of biases related to sexual orientation and half due to race or ethnicity.

Risk Factors

Definitely I fear for my life every moment that I'm outside of my house; in my house. I've overheard my neighbors at one point in a drunken rage yell that the freak upstairs ought to be knifed. These were previous neighbors, but since that moment and while they were there, I slept with my doors barricaded. I didn't even feel safe in my own home. I didn't feel safe leaving my home; I didn't feel safe in my home.

—(Trans Women's Experiences of Violence, 2014)

Canada's *Criminal Code* does not explicitly recognize hate crimes motivated by gender identity or expression. As a result, police services across Canada do not routinely collect data on the number of hate-motivated crimes targeting trans and gender creative people, and no such data is collected or analyzed for Statistics Canada's annual hate crime reports. However, independent studies by Egale Canada Human Rights Trust and Trans Pulse indicate high rates of violent hate-motivated incidents targeting trans and gender creative people in Canada:

- 49% of trans students have been sexually harassed in school within the past year.
- 37% of trans students have been physically harassed or assaulted because of their gender expression.
- 20% of trans Ontarians have been targets of physical or sexual assaults because they are trans.
- 34% of trans Ontarians have experienced verbal harassment or threats because they are trans.

Impacts

The General Social Survey collects information on the impacts of crime, including the emotional consequences of victimization.

- Over 30% of LGBTQ students had skipped school because they felt unsafe at or on the way to school, in comparison to 11% of non-LGBTQ students.
- 15% of trans students had skipped more than 10 days because of feelings of unsafety, in comparison to 5% of LGB students, and 1% of non-LGBTQ students.

I've heard some of the angry, you know, "You f'in tranny" and those types of things, right? Now, it's already disconcerting that you hear that; you just get worried if that's how they're talking—and it's talking in a very hateful angry way. They're angry about something, it kind of, my perception is that if they let that anger carry over, it's going to get a lot worse on me.

– (Trans Women's Experiences of Violence, 2014)

Implications for Schools and EST-Guidance

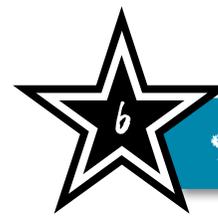
Hate crime in Canada, specifically that targeting LGBTQ people, is a significant issue among youth and young adults. That means schools can play a crucial role in challenging the attitudes, biases and prejudices that lead to hate crime before they begin. LGBTQ inclusive education addresses the homophobia, biphobia and transphobia that lie at the root of hate- a bias-motivated crime, such as harassment and assault, before they are allowed to grow.

Experiences with hate crime often contribute to feelings of internalized homophobia, biphobia and transphobia among LGBTQ people. This, in turn, has an impact on mental health, and can affect feelings of depression, negative self-image, lack

of safety and social isolation. In time, these experiences can increase risks for suicidal ideation and attempts, especially in the absence of LGBTQ inclusive supports. EST-Guidance should be especially conscious that mental health and suicidal ideation are affected by context, and ensure that resources and supports are inclusive of LGBTQ people and attentive to experiences of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

I think one of the real problems with safety, I don't know where it is safe...when I started my transition people could easily identify that I was trans all the time and I faced constant harassment and people staring at me, giving me dirty looks, talking to each other ridiculing and mocking me. I had to adapt to the experiences of nearly being physically assaulted and my feeling was that I was never safe anywhere and that led to being very reclusive, isolating, which then tied in with severe depression and suicide attempts. So there's the practical issue of safety, but then there's the subjective experience of safety that is radically altered by those experiences you have and without the involved balance, even just harassment, bullying, ridiculing and mocking takes a tremendous toll on us.

– (Trans Women's Experiences of Violence, 2014)



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New Brunswick EST-Guidance Counsellors have access to Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) which would be useful in this context. The LINK program may also be helpful.

LGBTQ Youth Suicide – Risk Factors and Protective Factors

Stewart, Kent, and D. Ryan Dyck. "LGBTQ Youth Suicide: Coroner/Medical Examiner Investigative Protocol." Conference of Chief Coroners and Chief Medical Examiners of Canada, 2013.

Risk Factors

Based on a review of 8 different population-based surveys in Canada and the United States, Saewyc has observed that, "At present, the majority of the evidence is in favour of common causes for suicide that affect all youth, but which LGB youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience (Saewyc 2007, 81).

Furthermore, the LGB youth in these 8 surveys also consistently reported markedly fewer supportive resources than their heterosexual peers.

It is important to note that being LGBTQ is not a risk factor in and of itself; however, the stressors that LGBTQ youth often encounter, such as discrimination, harassment and other negative reactions to their LGBTQ identity and/or expression, are directly associated with suicidal behavior as well as indirectly with risk factors for suicide (National Center for the Prevention of Youth Suicide 2012; Haas et al. 2010).

- One of the strongest risk factors for death by suicide is previous attempts and as indicated, LGBTQ youth attempt far more frequently than non-LGBTQ youth (33% vs. 7%).

- Victimization (verbal, physical or sexual harassment or assault) of LGBTQ youth from school, family and community settings significantly contributes to mental health and risk for suicide related behaviours:
 - ▶ 68% of trans students, 55% of LB students and 42% of GB students reported being verbally harassed about their perceived gender identity or sexual orientation.
 - ▶ 20% of LGBTQ students reported being physically harassed or assaulted about their perceived gender identity or sexual orientation.
 - ▶ 49% of trans students, 33% of lesbian students and 40% of gay male students have experienced sexual harassment in school in the last year (Taylor et al. 2011).
- Most people who die by suicide have experienced mental illness and/or a substance use disorder and LGB youth show higher rates of major depression, anxiety disorder, conduct disorder, and co-occurring psychiatric disorders than straight peers (Fergusson, Horwood, and Beautrais 1999).
- Family acceptance is important for LGB youth, in fact LGB youth who experienced severe family rejection were more than 8 times more likely to report having attempted suicide compared with peers from families with little or no rejection (Ryan et al. 2009).

There are far fewer data regarding suicide and suicide-related behaviour (SRB) among trans youth, and none that are population-based; however, a 2010 study by Trans PULSE—the first of its kind in Canada—revealed that in the preceding year alone, 47% of trans youth surveyed in Ontario had thought about suicide and 19% had attempted suicide (Scanlon et al. 2010).

Protective Factors

Far less is known about the protective factors against suicide for LGBTQ youth and, particularly, the degree of impact in relation to risk factors. The following are a few key points that have been demonstrated in the literature to date.

- Family connectedness, caring adults, and school safety are among the strongest protective factors for LGB individuals (National Center for the Prevention of Youth Suicide 2012).
- Studies among the general population suggest that suicide attempts among youth could be reduced by nearly 80% by eliminating verbal, physical and sexual violence (Saewyc and Chen 2013). Given that LGBTQ youth generally face a higher degree of violence than their non-LGBTQ peers, it is conceivable that reducing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic violence would have a significant impact on suicidal ideation and attempts among LGBTQ youth.
- For trans people generally, the most effective protective factors against suicide have been shown to lie in access to competent, effective and non-reparative medical care, so that they may safely transition, both physically and socially. While there were almost no attempted suicides in the past year among Trans PULSE survey participants who had completed a medical transition (involving hormones and/or surgery), those who wanted to medically transition but had not yet done so were at extraordinarily high risk. Among those who were planning to medically transition, but had not begun, 26.6% had attempted suicide within the past year. For those who had begun their process of transitioning, suicide attempts dropped to 17.7%, and for those who had completed transition, the numbers dropped further to 1.1% (Bauer et al. 2012, 31).

For relevant information about “mental fitness” as outlined in the New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey (2012-2013) and the links to relatedness and school connectedness, see page 33.

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Suicide and Two Spirit People

Excerpts from *Suicide Prevention and Two-Spirited People* written by the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO).

"Suicide rates among two-spirited gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered First Nations are not known, but the rates of related risk factors in these groups indicate that the suicide risk is greater than among heterosexual First Nations. Homophobia, isolation and rejection increase the risk of suicide. An individual's risk can be decreased if he/she is connected to his/her culture and traditions in a way that recognizes the impacts of colonization. First Nations communities can support two-spirited people by providing safe spaces that include and respect them, by standing up for them, and by speaking out about the discrimination they experience. The term two-spirit is used in this resource because it reflects the importance of First Nations culture as well as sex and gender orientation and diversity. However, it is important to respect that individuals may prefer to identify with other terms to reflect their sexual orientation, sex and gender identity, experiences, or preferences."

"A risk is a quality, characteristic or experience that increases the likelihood that something will occur. Violence, oppression and loss of culture are considered risk factors for suicide. Two-spirited First Nations experience double oppression; racism and heterosexism (Balsam et al., 2004). Two-spirited women who experience sexism in a male-dominated world experience a third type of oppression (Lehavot et al., 2009). In addition, transgendered people experience cissexism, which is the assumption that everyone should look, behave and identify as a stereotypical feminine woman or look, behave and identify as a stereotypically masculine man. Although there is protection in First Nations communities from the racism of the mainstream world, some two-spirited people may be sent away from the reserve or may feel they need to move away to find acceptance for their sexual orientation and gender identity, because of homophobia and transphobia in First Nations communities (Ristock, Zoccole,

& Passante, 2010). Unfortunately, this acceptance comes at a cost; loss of family, loss of community connections (culture), and racism (Brotman, Ryan, Jalbert, & Rowe, 2002; Walters, 1997; Walters, Horwath, & Simoni, 2001; Monette, Albert, & Waalen, 2001). Although they may find support in the GLBT community in the general population, these costs create new problems. Therefore, two-spirited people experience oppression and exclusion from three potential sources: their First Nations community because they are two-spirited, GLBT communities because they are First Nations and mainstream communities for both reasons (Brotman et al., 2002).”

“Suicide rates vary by First Nations community (Chandler and Lalonde, 1998), but the national rate is reported to be almost twice as high as that for the general population in Canada. In 2000, suicide was the leading cause of death among First Nations aged 10 to 44 years, and almost one quarter of all deaths among First Nations youth 10 to 19 years old were due to suicide (Health Canada, 2005).”

“In a study in Manitoba and Northeastern Ontario that included 74 transgendered and two-spirited people (20 of whom identified as Aboriginal), 28 per cent of study participants reported having attempted suicide at least once “because of the way [they were] treated with regards to [their] sex/gender identity” (Taylor, 2006, p.38).”

“In another large American study that included 5,602 American Indian and Alaska Native adolescent men, 65 identified as gay and 23 per cent of these participants reported having attempted suicide (Barney, 2003). The two-spirited adolescent males were twice as likely as their heterosexual counterparts to have thought about or attempted suicide. This finding of an increased risk for suicidality among two-spirited Native youths (compared with heterosexual Native youths) is consistent with the results of studies that show that non-Aboriginal gay, lesbian and bisexual people attempt suicide two to the three times as often as heterosexual non-Aboriginal people (King et al., 2008; Paul et al., 2002).”

Some Possible Warning Signs of Suicidal Ideation

From Living Works (2008) - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training ASIST Workbook.
Canada: LivingWorks Education Inc.

- giving away possessions,
- loss of interest in hobbies,
- feeling desperate,
- feeling lonely,
- feeling sad,
- feeling hopeless,
- saying things such as “I won’t need these things anymore”, or “ I just can’t take it anymore”, or “All of my problems will end soon”.

If you think a person is suicidal ASK.

Risk Assessment and Intervention

Risk Review	Intervention/Safe Action (if answer yes to the question)
Are you having thoughts of suicide?	Keep the person safe. Stay with him or her or have another trusted adult stay with the person while you seek help. Connect with local resources immediately.
Do you have a suicide plan? If so, how will you do it? How prepared are you? How soon?	Disable the suicide plan
Do you have pain that at times feels overwhelming?	Ease the pain
Do you feel you have few resources?	Link to resources
Have you attempted suicide in the past?	Protect against the danger and support past survival skills
Are you/have you received mental health care?	Link to mental health worker

New Brunswick

To access direct mental health services related to suicidal ideation contact any of the following New Brunswick community mental health centres, *but please ensure that these centres are LGBTQ inclusive or have access to LGBTQ inclusive services.*

Bathurst 506-547-2038	Miramichi 506-778-6111
Campbellton 506-789-2440	Moncton 506-856-2444
Caraquet 506-726-2030	Richibucto 506-523-7620
Edmundston 506-735-2070	St. Stephen 506-466-7380
Fredericton 506-453-2132	Saint John 506-658-3737
Grand Falls 506-475-2440	Sussex 506-432-2090
Kedgwick 506-284-3431	Woodstock 506-325-4419

Province-Wide

AIDS New Brunswick/SIDA Nouveau-Brunswick

Nicholas Scott – Executive Director
65 Brunswick St.
Fredericton, NB E3B 1G5

T: (506) 459-7518
F: (506) 459-5782
Toll Free Helpline: 1-800-561-4009 (anonymous and confidential)
E: info@aidsnb.com
<http://www.aidsnb.com>
Facebook: [facebook.com/aidsnb](https://www.facebook.com/aidsnb)

AIDS New Brunswick is a provincial organization committed to facilitating community-based responses to the issues of HIV/AIDS. The aim is to promote and support the health and well-being of persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS in New Brunswick.

Programs/Services: AIDS New Brunswick's office is open Monday to Friday, 8:30AM to 12:30PM and 1:30PM to 4:30PM. Many of our programs/services are accessible by telephone, walk-in and/or e-mail. After hours services are available by appointment only.

AIDS New Brunswick offers services in English and French. We also have a bilingual office in Bathurst.

Chimo Helpline

Toll Free: 1-800-667-5005

T: 450-4537 (in Fredericton)

<http://www.chimohelpline.ca/>

“To serve New Brunswick by providing a competent level of crisis intervention, referrals and vital information in a caring, confidential manner.”

Chimo is a provincial crisis phone line, that is accessible 24hrs a day, 365 days a year to all residents of New Brunswick in English and French.

Jeuness, J'ecoute

Toll Free: 1-800-668-6868

<http://jeunessejecoute.ca/Teens/Home.aspx?lang=fr-ca>

Jeuness, J'ecoute est un service de consultation professionnel pour les jeunes, par telephone et en ligne, gratuit, anonyme et confidentiel. Disponible 24/7, 365 jours par annee. Peu importe le probleme.

Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6868

<http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/teens/home/splash.aspx>

Kids Help Phone is a free, anonymous and confidential phone and on-line professional counseling service for youth. Big or small concerns. 24/7. 365 days a year.

Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance (Atlantic)

<http://w2sa.ca>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgG1o-JcKdw>

A group of two-spirited people and their supporters named the Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance. The alliance is comprised mostly of First Nations people from the Maritimes, Quebec and New-England who identify as two-spirited. First Nations people that embody both traditional male and female roles who also identify as part of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community are considered to be two-spirited. Organize gatherings where the main goal is to create a safe space, free of drugs and alcohol, where two-spirited people can connect with their peers and feel free of social constraints regardless of their gender or sexuality. Sweats, smudging, traditional singing and craft workshops are some of the activities that take place.

➔ Bathurst

Gais.es Nor Gays Inc.

P.O. Box 983

Bathurst, NB E2A 4H8

info@gngnb.ca

<http://www.gngnb.ca>

Gais.es Nor Gays Inc. is an association of gay, lesbian, and bisexual men and women in the Bay of Chaleur region and North-Eastern part of New Brunswick. The goal of the association is to create a bond among the gay, lesbian and bisexual community. The group believes that such a network will help to break the loneliness and solitude with which people are confronted. Knowing that friends and colleagues exist mitigates the isolation resulting from the lack of services available in this area. To achieve this, the association organizes

activities designed to involve the gay, lesbian and bisexual community to create greater communication and participation and, in doing so, strengthen the bond of the community.

Gais.es Nor Gays Inc. has an Executive Council that is elected at an annual general meeting. They operate a Bar in Petit-Rocher (GNG Dance Club) and dances are held on specific dates listed on their website. Dances are open to everyone 19 years of age and older. A quarterly newsletter is mailed to association members to keep them informed of news, activities and events. Gais.es Nor Gays Inc. holds an annual Gay Pride Camping Weekend on Labour Day weekend as well as other activities and events. The group has been in operation for about 10 years.

Gais.es Nor Gays Inc. offers services in French and English.

➔ Dieppe

TG Moncton

Meetings: Saturday 2-4pm
In Dieppe

To get in touch, email be_tgmoncton@live.com and put Transgender Canada in the subject line.

AIDS NB Office

➔ Fredericton

Nicholas Scott – Executive Director
65 Brunswick St.
Fredericton, NB E3B 1G5
T: (506) 459-7518
F: (506) 459-5782
Toll Free Helpline: 1-800-561-4009 (anonymous and confidential)

info@aidsnb.com
<http://www.aidsnb.com>
Facebook: [facebook.com/aidsnb](https://www.facebook.com/aidsnb)

AIDS New Brunswick is a provincial organization committed to facilitating community-based responses to the issues of HIV/AIDS. The aim is to promote and support the health and well-being of persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS in New Brunswick.

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AIDS New Brunswick offers services in English and French.

Fredericton Pride

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/frederictonpride>

Fredericton Pride was founded to celebrate diversity in who we love and how we show it. We are group of individuals spanning different ages, races, social/economic backgrounds, and represent a diverse assortment of sexual orientations and gender identities within the greater Fredericton area. Coming together as volunteers to plan and execute fantastic events and activities, we are proud to begin the processes for Fredericton Pride Week which happens in August.

Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Center

(24 hour crisis line)
T: (506) 454-0437

Free 2 Be Me

T: (506) 632-5532
For youth questions regarding sexual orientation.

Spectrum (UNB)

spectrum@unb.ca
<http://www.unbf.ca/clubs/spectrum>

Meets weekly on campus to provide social support for LBGTQ youth and their allies.

Spectrum is an organization that is involved with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, and questioning (LBGTQ) students, faculty members and staff at the University of New Brunswick and Saint Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick. This group also involves members of the community and aims to create a safe and supportive environment on campus open to all, regardless of sexual orientation or sexual identification. Spectrum aims at fostering a sense of community, and encouraging healthy social relationships within and outside the organization, and promoting a sense of belonging for all members.

Spectrum aims at providing educational materials and resource information. Spectrum also aims at being a central, visible, and available presence on campus for those interested or concerned with issues surrounding sexual orientation or sexual identity. Spectrum's intent is to advocate for equal rights and fairness in dealings with government, organizations, and the universities, both for the campus community and the community at large.

Spectrum meets every Friday night during the academic year at 7:00 PM in the Sexuality Center (Room 203) of the Student Union Building on the UNB campus. They do not take attendance at their meetings, nor keep a membership list. The names of non-executive Spectrum members are held in strict confidence and new members and allies are always welcome.

Spectrum offers services in English.

The UNB Safe Spaces Project

UNB Sexuality Centre
c/o The Paper Trail
P.O. Box 4400
21 Pacey Drive
Fredericton, NB E3B 5A3
T: (506) 453-4989

safespaces@unb.ca
<http://www.unb.ca/safespaces>

The UNB Safe Spaces Project involves the placement of stickers on doors, in offices, and in residence rooms. These stickers promote an area as a “safe place” so individuals can be open about their sexual orientation without fear of homophobia or harassment. Any student, staff, or faculty member is welcome. This initiative is intended to show gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, two-spirited, queer and questioning individuals (GLBTTQ) that support is all around them. It also shows those who display stickers that their support is an important and not uncommon thing. It also provides positive peer pressure towards homophobic individuals, showing them that their intolerance is not appropriate.

UNB Sexuality Centre

Sexuality Centre Coordinator
c/o The Paper Trail
PO Box 4400
Fredericton, NB E3B 5A3
Location: UNB SUB Room 203 (across from the Ballroom)
T: 452-6272

sexuality@unb.ca
Facebook: *Search UNB Sexuality Centre*

The UNB Sexuality Centre is dedicated to promoting understanding and positive attitudes through education on issues surrounding sexual health, sexual orientation and relationships. The centre strives to provide a safe space and supportive environment within the university community for people of all origins, religions, sexual orientations, genders, ages and abilities.

The UNB Sexuality Centre offers:

- A safe & supportive environment for students who self identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, queer, questioning, etc.
- Information on subjects such as safer sex, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), anti-violence, relationships, heterosexism and homophobia, etc.
- Referrals to campus and community services and organizations
- Workshops and presentations about sexual health, sexual orientation and other surrounding sexuality issues.
- A library of resources for students trying to understand sexual health, sexual orientation and relationships.

Services offered in English. Some volunteers may be able to converse in French but we do not officially offer services in French at this time.

➔ Moncton

PFLAG Canada – Moncton Chapter

Cherie MacLeod

execdirector@pflagcanada.ca

<http://www.pflagcanada.ca>

PFLAG Canada is a national voice that speaks for a more accepting Canadian society by providing support, education and resources on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. Through our PFLAG Chapter and Contact network, we actively assist in the recognition and growth of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, Two Spirit, intersex, queer and questioning persons and their families and friends, within their diverse cultures and societies.

Monthly meetings and consultations between and at meetings. English speaking meetings are held the 3rd Monday of each month from 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM, except for the month of December when it meets on the 2nd Monday. Contact persons are also available for information and support.

Programs & services in English, with some information in French.

River of Pride - Riviere de Fierthe Inc

Paul LeBlanc- Chairperson

riverofpridehotmail.com

www.fiertemonctonpride.ca

Facebook: *Moncton's River of Pride*

The mission of River of Pride is to guarantee the presence of the LGBT community in the Greater Moncton Area. We will defend our rights, advocate for equality and ensure greater acceptance and understanding for all. We will celebrate our gains every year by organizing festivities for our community and allies.

SIDA/AIDS Moncton

80 Weldon Street
Moncton, NB E1C 5V8
T: (506) 859-9616
F: (506) 855-4726

sidaidsm@nbnet.nb.ca
www.sida-aidsmoncton.com

SIDA/AIDS Moncton's focus and mission is to improve the quality of life of those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and to reduce the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

SIDA/AIDS Moncton - Safe Spaces Project

Safe Spaces is a project for gay, lesbian and bisexual, transgendered, Two Spirit and questioning (GLBTTQ) youth between 14 and 25 years old.

The Safe Spaces Project, educates you and the community in general about issues that GLBTTQ youth face. This project is for you, and your participation is necessary to be able to serve you better.

Safe Space offers: support groups, resources (books and videos), workshops/presentations and referral to other professional services. The support groups meet twice a month. The meetings are informal and confidential.

Transgender Support Group

ellisk@nbnet.nb.ca

Transgender Support Group promotes the health and well-being of transgendered persons, their families and friends through:

- support; helping them to cope with an adverse society and;
- education; helping to enlighten an ill-informed public to end discrimination and secure equal human rights.

Moncton Transgender Support Group provides opportunities for dialogue about gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

Monthly meetings and consulting between meetings. English speaking meetings are held the 3rd Sunday of each month from 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM., except in December when the meeting is held on the 2nd Sunday. Contact persons are available for information and support.

Programs & services in English with some information in French.

UBU Moncton

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ubumoncton?notif_t=fbpage_fan_invite

UN sur DIX

L'Université de Moncton

unsurdix@umoncton.ca

(support group): soutienlgb@umoncton.ca

www.umoncton.ca/unsurdix

Contribuer au mieux-être des étudiant(e)s gais, lesbiennes et bisexuel (le)s du campus de Moncton.

En participant à des discussions de groupe, en siégeant sur des comités pancanadiens et en contribuant à diverses activités communautaires, UN sur DIX cherche à éduquer et à sensibiliser les pouvoirs publics et la population en générale. Nous organisons sur le campus de nombreuses conférences portant sur une panoplie de sujets reliés à l'acceptation sociale de l'homosexualité et nous offrons l'occasion aux membres de participer à des colloques de niveau national à cet effet.

L'association mène aussi des campagnes de sensibilisation contre l'homophobie en créant des messages d'intérêt public qui sont diffusés ou publiés sur le campus et à travers la province.

Pour les étudiant(e)s qui éprouvent de la difficulté à accepter et à vivre leur orientation sexuelle, un service de soutien individuel et de groupe est offert sur le campus. Des sessions sont organisées par une personne formée en relation d'aide et se déroulent dans une atmosphère de respect et de confidentialité.

UN sur DIX offre des programmes and services en français.

➔ Sackville

PFLAG Canada- Sackville, NB/Amherst, NS Chapter

T: (506) 536-4245

Janet Hammock : jhammock@mta.ca

Marilyn Lerch : m1erch@nbnet.nb.ca

PFLAG is an organization that provides support, education and resources on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, Two Spirit, intersex, queer and questioning (GLBTT2IQ) persons and their families and friends.

We meet on the second Monday of every month (sometimes July and August are exceptions) from 7:30-9:30 pm. The meeting location alternates between the Sackville and Amherst; please call for location.

This Chapter of PFLAG Canada offers its services in English.

The Catalyst Society

c/o Students' Administrative Council

152A Main St.

Mount Allison University

Sackville, NB E4L 1B4

catalyst@mta.ca

<http://www.mta.ca/clubs/catalyst/index.html>

The Catalyst Society is Mount Allison University's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies (LGBTQA) organization in Sackville, NB. We provide support for LGBT students as well as non-labeled or undecided people, and their friends and allies who are students at Mount Allison University. Catalyst provides information about LGBT issues for its members and the university student community.

Catalyst has organized public forums on LGBT issues, social activities, and hosted guest speakers. Catalyst meets weekly during the school terms. The main focus is social contact and support meetings for LGBT students at Mount Allison University.

Catalyst is not active from April to September.

Meetings: The Catalyst Society meets every week as a group in the Manning Room (Chapel Basement) on campus. Each meeting starts with an opportunity for group discussion about GLBTQ current events and life events. The second part of each meeting varies and may include things such as a guest speaker, planning for an upcoming event, or a movie night. New days and times will be posted in the fall once they are determined.

For more information or to be added to our weekly mailing list (with any irregular times, dates, and updates), please email the president at catalyst@mta.ca. All are welcome.

The Catalyst Society offers its services in English.

➔ Saint John

AIDS Saint John

115 Hazen Street
Saint John, NB E2L 3L3
T: (506) 652-2437
F: (506) 652-2438

aidssj@nb.aibn.com
www.aidssaintjohn.com

Founded in 1987, AIDS Saint John is a non-profit community-based organization aimed at:

- a) Improving the quality of life of those infected and affected HIV/AIDS
- b) Striving to reduce the spread of HIV by promoting healthy choices in the community at large. This will be accomplished through education and public awareness, support and advocacy.

PFLAG Canada- Saint John Chapter

Mack MacKenzie, (506) 648-9227
Wayne Harrison (506) 648-9700

saintjohnnb@pflagcanada.ca
www.pflagcanada.ca/saintjohn.html

Meetings held at: Community Health Centre, 116 Coburg St., Saint John, NB

The first Friday of every month, 7:00-9:00pm (except July & August)

PFLAG Canada - Saint John NB is a Chapter of PFLAG Canada and it deals with sexual orientation and gender identity issues from a family perspective, providing support, education and resources in the Greater Saint John area. Our compassionate volunteers open their hearts and homes and give freely of their time to listen to people in their time of crisis. If you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, Two Spirit, intersex, queer or questioning (GLBTT2IQQ) or if you care about someone who is, let us help.

Monthly meetings, consulting between meetings and contact persons available for information and support.

PFLAG Canada - Saint John offers programs and services in English but we are always welcoming of members of the Acadian and other members of the francophone community to join us.

Port City Rainbow Pride Inc

Mahogany Manor
220 Germain St, Saint John, NB E2L 2G4

president@portcityrainbowpride.com
www.portcityrainbowpride.com

Port City Rainbow Pride Inc. is dedicated to supporting and empowering people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in participating in and contributing to the Greater Saint John Community, including celebrating diversity, educating the community on such issues as discrimination, violence and harassment, and promoting awareness, inclusivity and equality for all.

There is an annual PRIDE Week held in the city of Saint John. You can also become a member by contacting the group. Membership is free upon reviewing application.

Port City Rainbow Pride Inc. offers its services in English.

UNBSJ Q-Collective

University of New Brunswick, Saint John campus

Office: Oland Hall, Room G18

T: (506) 648-5737

qcollect@unbsj.ca

www.unbsj.ca/clubs/qcollective

Staff Contact: Kevin Bonner, Director of Student Services

T: (506) 648-5680

F: (506) 648-5816

kbonner@unbsj.ca

The UNBSJ Q-Collective is an inclusive social and support organization for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transidentified, Questioning (LGBTQ) students, faculty and staff at UNBSJ (University of New Brunswick Saint John). The purpose of this

group is to create a supportive and safe campus for anyone dealing with sexual orientation and/or gender identity issues at UNB Saint John. We work closely with the Administration, Student Services, the SRC, the Deans, many faculty members, staff, other student organizations, and the Greater Saint John LGBTQ community as well. The UNBSJ Q-Collective is what its members make it and is “open to everyone who is open”. We are proud to be a supportive and active member of for Saint John New Brunswick’s Port City Rainbow Pride Inc.

The UNBSJ Q-Collective offers some limited services and support material in languages other than English, thanks to PFLAG Canada’s Communities Encourage Campaign, www.pflagcanada.ca

➔ Atlantic Region

Healing Our Nations

31 Gloster Court
Dartmouth, NS Canada
B3B 1X9
T: (902) 492-4255

ea@accesswave.ca
<http://www.hon93.ca/>

Our purpose is to educate First Nation people about HIV disease and AIDS. Knowing the risks associated with the spread of HIV and defining the myths and facts about AIDS is the first step to healing our nations. Eliminating the spread of AIDS in First Nation communities is not the only focus of our organization because we see this disease as only a symptom of a greater problem. Our goal is to help First Nation people rediscover their pride, traditions, and spirituality in an attempt to improve child development and eliminate family violence, substance abuse, depression, and suicide.

Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance

<http://w2sa.ca>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgG1o-JcKdw>

A group of Two Spirit people and their supporters named the Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance. The alliance is comprised mostly of First Nations people from the Maritimes, Quebec and New-England who identify as Two Spirit. First Nations people that embody both traditional male and female roles who also identify as part of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community are considered to be Two Spirit. Organize gatherings where the main goal is to create a safe space, free of drugs and alcohol, where two-spirited people can connect with their peers and feel free of social constraints regardless of their gender or sexuality. Sweats, smudging, traditional singing and craft workshops are some of the activities that take place.

Wayves

P.O. Box 34090, Scotia Square
Halifax, NS B3J 3S1

E: submissions@wayves.ca
<http://wayves.ca/>

Wayves exists to inform Atlantic Canadian lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people of activities in their communities, to promote those activities and to support their aims and objectives. Programs/Services: Wayves is an independent publication, published 11 times a year, by a non-profit collective. Anyone who contributes to Wayves is automatically considered to be part of the collective and is welcome to participate in all meetings and discussions. Wayves reserves the right to refuse material that might be reasonably considered heterosexist, racist, sexist or an attack on individuals or communities.

Wayves publishes primarily in English but welcomes French articles; "Sports Briefs," a regular column, is bilingual.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Policies

Policies outline some of the ways LGBTQ issues and awareness should be taken into consideration when counselling. Clarity and the use of specific terminology is extremely important so that there is less room for personal interpretation.

We include them here as a guideline for some of the things EST-Guidance Counsellors should be thinking about and taking into consideration to help in the creation of LGBTQ safe and inclusive schools. If your district does not have a policy like this, suggest that they take a look at this one as a guide for writing their own. The comments in the boxes, and in coloured italicized font throughout are meant as guides as you read through the policy.



3.7. Guidance

The Toronto District School Board recognizes that informed counsellors, teachers, and staff in counseling roles can help remove discriminatory barriers for students in the school system and in work-related experiences. The Board shall respond effectively to the needs of lesbian and gay and other students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity by:

- 3.7.1. providing counselling services that are culturally-sensitive, supportive, and free of bias on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity;

This recognizes that the discrimination felt is not just because of the behaviour of others, but also because of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heteronormativity and cisnormativity that are embedded (unconsciously in) the system.



They have listed gay and lesbian, and mentioned gender identity. It would be even better if they had included bisexual, transgender, Two Spirit, and queer.

Cultural sensitivity is extremely important since culture plays an important role in how (and if) things are spoken about, named, understood and accepted. There are still many countries around the world where sexual orientations other than heterosexual are illegal and some where same-sex relationships are punishable by death. In most jurisdictions around the world transgender people face some form of discrimination, often including state-supported violence, intimidation, and a lack of access to medical care. This can affect how comfortable an individual will feel talking about their gender identity or sexual orientation as well as the language they use.

Bias is ingrained into our language and reactions. It is very important that EST-Guidance Counsellors be extremely aware of what their biases are in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity, so that they can catch the unconscious responses.



Proactive strategies are just as important as reactive in the creation of safe space, possibly even more important, as the hope is to prevent incidents of discrimination and harassment.

- 3.7.2. providing proactive strategies to ensure that lesbian and gay students, students from same sex families, and other students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity are not underestimated on the basis of stereotypical assumptions, and to assure all students experience personal growth and reach their full potential in academic and life paths;
- 3.7.3. eliminating discriminatory biases related to sexual orientation or gender identity in educational and life planning programs;

Biases about sexual orientation and gender identity are embedded into curriculum (often unconsciously) – sometimes

in covert ways, and often by omission. Both send a strong message about who and what is valued and accepted in our society that can have a negative effect on LGBTQ students.

3.7.4. encouraging and supporting lesbian and gay students, other students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, and their families in the identification of non-traditional career options and appropriate academic paths;

3.7.4.1. working with lesbian and gay students, other students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, and their families to identify career options that historically have excluded them and help them to choose academic paths that will allow them to reach their full potential and succeed in a traditionally heterosexist society;

3.7.5. ensuring that communication strategies are in place to keep all parents/guardians informed about their children's current educational achievement, progress, and their plans for the future, in a language they understand, and including the provision of translations where necessary;

3.7.6. recognizing the importance and ensuring the maintenance of confidentiality around matters of sexual orientation and gender identity for youth.



Given the reality of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in our communities and families, confidentiality is vital when working with LGBTQ students. When and if to come out is always a personal choice that depends on many factors.

From the Toronto District School Board's Equity Foundation Statement on Anti-Homophobia, Sexual Orientation, and Equity

REGARDING COUNSELLING AND STUDENT SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ STUDENTS

Vancouver School Board Policy

The Vancouver School Board is committed to maintaining a safe learning and working environment which actively provides counselling and support to students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. All counsellors provided by the board shall be educated in the knowledge and skills required to deal with LGBTTQ issues with students. Counsellors will be informed and familiar with all policies with respect to human rights, anti-homophobia, hate literature, discrimination, and harassment, and will alert their school community to these policies. Counsellors will be sensitive to lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, Two Spirit, bisexual, and questioning students as well as students from LGBTT-headed families.

Training (initial and on-going) is important as there are many issues and barriers that LGBTQ students face (as with any identity) that counsellors may otherwise not be aware of, think of, or "catch" that will be crucial to the counselling relationship and process.



These two groups of students have similar needs as well as very distinct needs for support in dealing with homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and heterosexism. In many ways, students from LGBTQ-headed families are often under our radar when it comes to the need for LGBTQ safe spaces.



**New Brunswick LGBTQ Inclusive
Education Resource is part of
Egale's Safer and Accepting
Schools.**

