Disability & Mental Health Supports for LGBTQ+ Youth

87% LGBTQ+ youth report harassment or assault in school-based settings on personal characteristics, including sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, and disability status.

65% LGBTQ+ youth report disproportionate amounts of school-based disciplinary action based on their sexual orientation, gender expression, and/or gender identity.

35% LGBTQ+ youth report missing at least one day of school in the previous month because of feeling unsafe at school.

An estimated 3-5 million LGBTQ people have a disability.	**Gender diverse people are 3-6 times more likely to be autistic than cisgender people.**	**2 out of 5 transgender people have a disability.**

LGBTQ students are greatly impacted by unique challenges as a result of their disability status, which can be intensified by systemic bias related to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Educators, school psychologists, school staff, caregivers, parents, and other adult allies play an important role in providing safe and inclusive learning environments.

Actions for Staff & Teachers

- Use students' preferred name and pronouns.
- Develop LGBTQ inclusive and affirming curriculum that avoids bias and uses LGBTQ people in instructional exemplars.
- Validate LGBTQ students' existence and experiences.
- Address name-calling, bullying, or harassment immediately.
- Empower student speech.
- Provide access to LGBTQ media.
- Ensure sexual health education is relevant to LBGTQ students.
- Support or create a Genders & Sexualities Alliance (GSA) in your school.

Actions for Schools

- Ensure your school's anti-bullying/harassment policy or code of conduct includes protecting LGBTQ students.
- Create professional development opportunities for staff, teachers, and administration to increase awareness of LGBTQ issues and to ensure adults in the building are contributing to a safe environment for each other and students.
- Enforce dress codes equally across all genders and gender expressions.

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