



# **SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ STUDENTS IN RURAL SCHOOLS: A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FACILITATOR MANUAL FOR EDUCATORS**

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## About the Centers

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Great Lakes Equity Center (Center) is an educational research and service center located in Indiana University's School of Education at IUPUI. The Center engages in equity-focused technical assistance and related research with educational and community agencies focused on systemic improvements to serve all learners with particular focus on educational access, participation, and outcomes for those who have been historically marginalized. Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center is a project of the Center and provides technical assistance related to educational equity based on student race, national origin, sex, and religion at no cost to public educational agencies throughout its 13-state region in the Midwest and Plains.



## Introduction

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Rural LGBTQ+ youth experience victimization, mental health issues, and negative school experiences (Palmer, Kosciw, & Bartkiewicz, 2012). As a result, they find it more difficult to come out (De Pedro, Lynch, & Esqueda, 2018) and report feeling uncomfortable talking with school staff about concerns related to their LGBTQ+ identities (Palmer, Kosciw, & Bartkiewicz, 2012). While students are reluctant to speak to school staff, so, too, are staff reluctant to speak with students about related issues because they have not been trained to do so. In fact, rural school staff report even higher levels of inadequate preparation, awareness, and comfort than those in urban and suburban communities and schools (Page, 2017). They have, however, expressed a willingness to gain further training and education to support LGBTQ+ students in rural communities (Page, 2017).

Research shows that education on resources and where to find them, models of inclusive teaching practices and methodologies, and professional development sessions would assist school staff in learning how to support LGBTQ+ youth (Blackburn & Thomas, 2019; Page, 2017; Palmer et al., 2012). This Equity Tool strives to support this effort by offering an introductory professional learning session for school personnel to engage in order to learn about the experiences, assets, and needs of LGBTQ+ youth toward becoming better allies and educators. This session should be used in conjunction with other efforts across schools and communities to create a safer and more supportive environment for LGBTQ+ youth. For example, explicit and comprehensive anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies that address LGBTQ+ needs and concerns, unfortunately rare in rural schools (Kosciw et al., 2016), would further promote preparation, awareness, and comfort among school staff while offering practical—and essential—protections for LGBTQ+ youth. Further,



## Introduction (Continued)

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ongoing education is necessary. No single session can accomplish the work that needs to be done.

The purpose of this *Equity Tool* is to provide explicit guidance and resources for the facilitation of a professional learning experience to educate staff in schools about LGBTQ students in rural communities.

The **goals** of this session are:

- To educate school staff about the challenges experienced by LGBTQ youth in rural communities.
- To teach school staff to respond carefully and effectively to students enduring such challenges.
- To encourage school staff to be committed to making their school safe, enriching, and empowering for all students, including but not limited to LGBTQ students.

The **objectives** of this session are:

- To facilitate discussion regarding LGBTQ+ youth and their needs by introducing vocabulary and language.
- To provide school personnel with a list of resources for rural LGBTQ+ youth, so that they might connect youth with resources.
- To prepare school personnel to serve as allies for rural LGBTQ+ youth.
- To assist teachers in implementing an inclusive curriculum by introducing potential materials for lessons and units.

The **anticipated outcomes** of this session are:

- School staff will be prepared to recognize the challenges experienced by LGBTQ youth in rural communities.
- School staff will be prepared to respond to students enduring such challenges.
- School staff will be prepared to make their school safe, enriching, and empowering for all students, including but not limited to LGBTQ+ students.



## Preparing for the Session



### Session Schedule



15 min:	Introductions & Group Expectations	10 min:	Break
45 min:	Vocabulary & Language	15 min:	Being an Ally
15 min:	Facts & Figures	50 min:	Action Planning
15 min:	Coming Out	10-15 min:	Unpinning
50 min:	Scenarios	10-15 min:	Wrap Up & Feedback

**Total time: 4 hours**

### Setting Up

1. This professional learning session should be facilitated by a school staff or community member who is familiar and knowledgeable about the needs, concerns, and strengths of LGBTQ+ youth, schools, and rural communities, especially the community in which the school resides.
2. Seek support from the administration for implementing the session. The session should be scheduled during a day and time and in a space that encourages attendance.
3. In order to facilitate discussion, this program works best if tables and/or desks are set into a circle or U shape. It may be helpful to have packets of the materials printed and placed at each seat before participants arrive.
4. It is also helpful if the materials for the first activity, *Vocabulary & Language*, are already in place around the room, especially the sticky flip chart pages for vocabulary words. This will save time during the program.
5. Make it your own! This program is designed to be flexible, with the ability to be tailored to your school or community's specific needs and contexts.
6. Don't forget to do an evaluation of the program. Feedback will help improve the program for the future.



## Introductions and Group Expectations (15 minutes)

**Materials:** White board or sticky flip chart paper, markers, glossary

**Introductions process:** Introducing yourself and the participants to one another is important for the group to get to know one another and begin to build a learning space.

1. Introduce yourself briefly, perhaps including why this program is important to you and how it came to be implemented at this school.
2. On the whiteboard or sticky flip chart paper, write the topics participants should share in introductions.
3. Suggested: Name, gender pronouns, role/position, one thing you hope to learn today. Refer to the Glossary (Appendix E) for definitions of potentially new topics and terminology, including but not limited to gender pronouns.
4. Model the introduction.
5. Start with a participant on right or left and go around until everyone has had a chance to share.

### Group expectations process:

1. Frame the activity. For example, “Before we go any further, we are going to set up group expectations. This will help us build community and a foundation for trust.”
2. Introduce the concept of “Brave Spaces” (Cook-Sather, 2016). This space has risk, and it takes bravery to enter, as we will all be vulnerable. Painful or difficult experiences will be acknowledged and supported. We all work together to create this brave space.
3. Ask participants to contribute some group expectations. Write them on the whiteboard or sticky flip chart paper.
  - **Suggested expectations include:** respect, honesty, permission to make mistakes and apologize for them, recognizing hurts
4. Before moving on, ask if there are any more expectations, different ideas, or disagreements with the current list. Make adjustments, if appropriate, based on feedback.



## Vocabulary & Language Activity (45 minutes)

**Materials:** Post-it sticky notes; sticky flip chart paper hung around the room, each with one vocabulary word. Words may include the following: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, cisgender, queer, pansexual, intersex, heterosexism, homophobia, questioning. Refer to the Glossary (Appendix E).

### Process:

1. Frame the activity. For example, “It is important to know important vocabulary and language in order to support our students.”
2. Emphasize that language is fluid and ever-changing. These words are not set in stone, especially for youth, who may be seeking and trying out different language.
3. Emphasize the need for people to self-identify, and not make assumptions about language uses or “labels.”
4. Give directions for the activity: Participants will write their ideas for definitions, questions about the terms, or stereotypes they may have heard about the people included in a term on sticky notes and place them on the posters. Then have a discussion about the various terms.
5. Participants should take 7 minutes to write their thoughts and post their sticky notes. At 7 minutes, ask if anyone needs more time. Provide up to 3 more minutes if necessary.
6. Bring group back together for discussion. Discussion should take about 30 minutes. Go to each vocabulary term and read participants’ ideas.
  - Leave space for participants to ask questions.
  - Emphasize that language is fluid and personal. For example, a woman you might assume identifies as “lesbian” may prefer “queer” or even “gay” in some situations. Some people do not like the word “queer” and do not wish to be called that.
  - Address potential stereotypes and concerns. Remind the group that it is ok to make mistakes and to apologize for them. For example, someone might say “a gay” or “a transgender,” rather than “a gay person” or “a transgender person.” Someone might say “it” instead of “they” when referring to someone. Identify the mistake.
7. The knowledge, beliefs, understandings, and comfort of the participants will vary widely based on life experiences as well as community and social identities. The facilitator may experience push-back or resistance from participants. The following are potential items that may arise during this, or future, sections of the

session and potential responses. The facilitator can also refer participants to the resource list.

- a. *Religious pushback, or concerns about religion*: Explain that in a public school, all freedoms are honored, which includes religion but also sexual orientation and gender identity. It is a responsibility of school staff to support these freedoms.
- b. *Some version of “what made gay people gay?”*: Misconceptions about sexual abuse causing individuals to be gay may be brought up. Explain that these are misconceptions, no one can be “made” gay.
- c. *An adult can make a child gay, or a gay adult might abuse children*: reinforce that no one can be “made” gay, and identity is different than pedophilia. There is no record of LGBTQ+ people experiencing or perpetrating abuse at a higher rate than non-LGBTQ+ people.
- d. *Children don’t need to learn about sex and/or sexuality*: Emphasize that LGBTQ+ issues are not just about sex and sexuality. These concerns are about people’s identities and lives. No one wants to be reduced to sex.
- e. *Some version of “I don’t want gay people hitting on me”*: Stress that just because someone is gay doesn’t mean they want to be with you or are attracted to you. Do you want to be with every man/woman you see?
- f. *Some version of concern about transgender people and restrooms*: Emphasize there is no record of transgender folks assaulting or harassing others in restrooms, but a lot of evidence of the opposite. Transgender people are often attacked in restrooms. If someone is uncomfortable, they can choose to use a family/gender-neutral restroom.

8. Before moving on, address any pressing questions or concerns. If they will be addressed in a future part of the session, tell the participant you will “put a pin in it.” Write it down on the whiteboard or a sticky flip chart paper.



## Facts and Figures (15 minutes)

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**Materials:** *Facts & Figures* handout (Appendix A)

**Process:**

1. If not already included in a packet for participants and placed at tables, pass out *Facts & Figures* handout.
2. Frame the activity. For example, “Rural LGBTQ+ youth consistently experience higher levels of victimization, mental health issues, and negative school experiences than their urban and suburban peers. Further, rural LGBTQ+ youth have limited access to community resources and supports, including health and mental health services.”
3. Ask participants to volunteer read a bullet point.
4. Discuss the facts and figures for 10 minutes. Ask participants to share reactions, thoughts, and questions. For example, “Is there a particular fact that stood out to you and why? How do these facts affect our own students? Where do we see these facts and figures in action in our school and community?”
5. Before moving on, ask if there are any pressing questions or concerns. If they will be addressed in a future part of the training, tell the participant you will “put a pin in it.” Write it down on the whiteboard or a sticky flip chart paper.



## Coming Out (15 minutes)

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**Materials:** *Coming Out* handout (Appendix B)

**Process:**

1. If not already included in a packet for participants and placed at tables, pass out *Coming Out* handout.
2. Frame the activity. For example, “Now that we have a common language and understanding of the climate for LGBTQ+ youth, let’s talk about coming out, which some of our students may be experiencing.”
3. Introduce the meaning of “coming out.” Coming out refers to the process of recognizing, accepting, and/or disclosing one’s sexual and/or gender identity. Often called “coming out of the closet.” Coming out is a never-ending process, because it continues each time a person interacts with new people, new communities, and new contexts.
4. Give directions for activity: Participants pair and share the *Coming Out* handout. This will take approximately 12 minutes.



- a. For half of the time, pairs should read together and discuss the DOs and DON'Ts of coming out.
  - b. For the other half of the time, bring the group back together. Participants should share with the whole group items that resonated with them or surprised them, or insights their partner had that resonated with them. Suggested discussion questions:
    - What might coming out look like in our school or community?
    - How would coming out be different in our school or community than in others?
    - Why is understanding the coming out process important?
5. Before moving on, ask if there are any pressing questions or concerns. If they will be addressed in a future part of the training, tell the participant you will “put a pin in it.” Write it down on the whiteboard or a sticky flip chart paper.



## Scenarios, Speed Networking Style (50 minutes)

**Materials:** *Scenarios* (Appendix C), time keeping device

### Process:

1. Frame the activity. For example, “Now we will look at some scenarios that students and teachers may experience. In some scenarios, you will have the perspective of the teacher, and in some you will have the student perspective.”
2. If not already included in a packet for participants and placed at tables, pass out the *Scenarios*.
3. Give directions for Speed Networking activity:
  - a. The whole group should split into two groups. Group one should form a circle facing out. Group two should pair up with someone from group one, forming a larger circle facing in. If there are an uneven number of people, have two people in group one form a pair.
  - b. Read aloud the first scenario to the group. Then, using a timer, give each pair two minutes to discuss the scenario.
  - c. Call time. Direct each person in group two to move one person to the left. Repeat step B for all 8 scenarios (this will take approximately 25-30 minutes).
4. Bring the group back together to discuss (10-15 minutes). Start by asking questions, such as:
  - a. Was there a particular scenario and/or response that really struck you?
  - b. Did one of your partners say something that really resonated with you?
  - c. Have you experienced one of these scenarios at our school or in our community?

5. Before moving on, ask if there are any pressing questions or concerns. If they will be addressed in a future part of the training, tell the participant you will “put a pin in it.” Write it down on the whiteboard or a sticky flip chart paper.



## Break (10 minutes)

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Announce ten-minute break. Invite participants to write questions, comments, or concerns that have not yet been addressed on sticky notes and give them to facilitator. Facilitator will keep notes with “pinned” items.



## Be(com)ing an Ally (15 minutes)

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**Materials:** *Being an Ally* handout (Appendix D)

### Process:

1. If not already included in a packet for participants and placed at tables, pass out *Being an Ally* handout.
2. Give direction for activity: Have participants pair and share the *Being an Ally* handout, 11 minutes.
  - a. Pairs should read together and discuss the handout. This should take 3-4 minutes.
  - b. Bring the group back together for whole group discussion. Suggested discussion questions:
    - How are these aspects of being an ally used (or not) in our school? In our community?
    - What items resonated or surprised you?
    - Did your partner share anything that resonated with you?
    - Other questions, comments, or concerns (this should take 7-8 minutes).
3. Before moving on, ask if there are any pressing questions or concerns. If they will be addressed in a future part of the training, tell the participant you will “put a pin in it.” Write it down on the whiteboard or a sticky flip chart paper.



## Action Planning (55 minutes)

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**Materials:** Sticky flip chart paper, markers

### Process:

1. Frame the activity. For example: “Now that we’ve learned some language, what our students may be experiencing, and a bit about how to be an ally, let’s create action plans.”
2. Write guiding questions on whiteboard or sticky flip chart paper.
  - a. How can we be allies?
  - b. What can we as teachers/school staff do to support LGBTQ+ students?
  - c. What do we need in our school to better affirm and support LGBTQ+ students?
  - d. What do we need in our community to better affirm and support LGBTQ+ youth?
3. Give directions for activity: Participants will form groups of 3-5. Each group will take a sticky flip chart paper and markers. Groups will form. Each group will brainstorm an issue or concern. They may get inspiration from the scenarios discussed earlier. Together, they should craft an action plan, using the questions (in step 2) as a guide.
4. Groups engage in creating action plans. Facilitator should check in at 20 minutes and ask if groups need more time to work. Provide up to 5 minutes more time, if necessary.
5. Facilitator should divide remaining time evenly among groups.
  - Groups should stick their papers on the wall. Each group should present their action plan, then invite questions and comments from other groups.



## Unpinning (10-15 minutes)

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### Process:

1. Turn group’s attention to the “pinned” items. Read each and ask if the item has been addressed. If the item has not, discuss it briefly. You may encounter questions or comments that you consider to be offensive. Rather than spend a lot of time on such items, simply explain why you find it offensive and move on.
2. If you are willing and comfortable, you can invite lingering questions and concerns outside of the program via e-mail, for example.



## Wrap-Up and Feedback (10-15 minutes)

**Materials:** *Resources & Supports* handout (Appendix F), program evaluation sheet (Appendix G)

### Process:

1. If not already included in a packet for participants and placed at tables, pass out *Resources & Supports* handout.
2. Give a brief explanation of handout and ask participants to keep the handout available for themselves and students. Emphasize importance of connecting LGBTQ+ youth to supports and resources.
3. Thank participants for participating and offer any closing comments.
4. If not already included in a packet for participants and placed at tables, pass out program evaluation.
5. Participants can use remainder of time to complete and turn in an evaluation of the program.

**Closing Thoughts and Further Implications:** Professional learning sessions like this *Equity Tool*, when implemented alongside other efforts, like establishing a student organization and comprehensive anti-bullying and discrimination policies, can assist rural school staff in creating a safe and supportive school environment for LGBTQ+ youth. Research shows that when teachers, administrators, and school staff are informed about and supportive of LGBTQ+ youth, they feel safe and empowered (Blackburn, Clark, & Schey, 2018). This is especially important in rural schools and communities, where LGBTQ+ youth report higher levels of victimization and mental health issues, with lower academic achievement than their urban and suburban peers (Palmer et al., 2012). Commitment to education and practical action in supporting LGBTQ+ students is imperative.

This session is just a start. Teacher inquiry groups, such as the Pink TIGers (Blackburn, et al, 2010), are a model for ongoing efforts to engage in this work, The Pink TIGers are a group of educators and school staff who have met for over a decade to investigate and promote learning about LGBTQ+ youth and create sustainable change through teacher and professional development that go beyond one-time or short-term programs and training (Blackburn et al., 2018). The professional learning session described in this *Equity Tool* should similarly be part of long-term and sustainable efforts to foster safe, supportive, and empowering schools for LGBTQ+ youth, especially in rural communities where such efforts may be resisted or difficult to sustain (Blackburn & Thomas, 2019). While rural LGBTQ+ youth consistently report more concerns and less safety than their urban and suburban peers, rural school staff can implement strategies like these and more to begin to address hostile and disempowering school environments.



## Appendix A: Facts & Figures

### Facts & Figures

- 81% of rural LGBTQ+ students felt unsafe during the past year, more likely than urban or suburban students.
- 94% of rural LGBT students heard homophobic language, while 87% reported being the target of homophobic language and verbal harassment in the past year.
- 86% of rural LGBT students heard someone wasn't "masculine" enough, while 69% heard someone wasn't "feminine" enough. Further, 68% reported being the target of verbal harassment for gender expression in the past year.
- 45% of rural LGBT students were physically harassed in the past year for sexual orientation, 31% for gender expression.
- 2 in 5 rural LGBT students experience cyberbullying, significantly higher than urban or suburban youth.
- Only 6% of rural LGBT students reported their peers intervening in instances of victimization based on sexual orientation, while only 5% based on gender expression.
- In 2012, students heard staff make homophobic remarks (25%), sexist remarks (30%), or negative remarks about a student's gender expression (35%).
- Only 13% of rural LGBT students reported that school staff intervened most or all of the time when in instances of homophobic language, while only 11% said teachers intervened on behalf of students being verbally harassed for gender expression.
- 60% of rural LGBT students don't report harassment or assault to school staff or family members.
- 68% of rural LGBT students said that when instances of victimization are reported, the responses are ineffective.
- Rural schools typically have a lack of affirming and supportive LGBTQ+ policies, resources, and supports.
- Though *Genders and Sexualities Alliances* (GSAs, also sometimes called *Gay-Straight Alliances*) in schools provide a variety of benefits for LGBTQ+ youth and lead to a safer, more affirming climate, rural schools are much less likely to have a GSA (Page, 2017).
- Local supports and community organizations are more effective and sustainable for rural communities and LGBTQ+ youth (Gray, 2009).

Data gathered from Palmer et al., 2012, *Strengths and silences*, unless otherwise indicated



## Appendix B: Coming Out

### *Coming Out (of the closet):*

is the process by which someone accepts and identifies with their sexuality and/or gender identity and shares their identity with others

- It is a continuous process as LGBTQ+ people must make decisions about sharing each time they meet new people or are in a new setting or context.
- Some people are out in some spaces, but not in others; for example, a young man who identifies as gay may be out at school and to his friends, but not at home to his family.
- Coming out is risky and people who are coming out may feel vulnerable; a decision to come out to a person or group is one of trust.

### **If Someone Comes Out to You:**

#### **DO:**

- Know this is a sign of trust and vulnerability; thank them for having the courage to share this part of themselves with you.
- Check in on how confidential this is: Do other people know? Is this a secret?
- Remember that sexuality and/or gender identity is one dimension of many of this person, they are still the same person you befriended or loved before.
- Be interested and curious; ask them questions that are sensitive, and understand that they may not have all the answers.
- Ask them how you can best support them.
- Check in with them during the time after coming out to you to show your support and care.

#### **DON'T:**

- Downplay the significance of their sharing with you: "I always knew it!" Or, "Oh, it's no big deal."
- Show or mention disappointment: "Oh, your parents must be disappointed they won't have grandchildren."
- Tell anyone they have not given you permission to tell, this is called *outing*.
- Ask how they know they are that identity.
- Ask questions that cross personal barriers you wouldn't have crossed before.
- Assume you know why they came out to you.
- Rush the process of trying to understand their sexuality or gender identity.
- Make it about you or tell them you know exactly how they feel.



## Appendix C: Scenarios

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**Scenario 1:** You are a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student. While doing makeup work during lunch in your teacher's classroom, you overhear a conversation between two teachers about your friend. These teachers believe you cannot hear them. "I'm telling you, Ginger," Mrs. Sherman whispers, "that boy is *funny*. Like too-much-estrogen funny." You see Mrs. Thatcher nod, "Well Jean, I don't know what's wrong with him. His family's a good Christian family. He's got a father figure, and they go to church every Sunday." (True story; see Shelton & Lester, 2016).

How does this make you feel? What assumptions are these teachers making? How do you think your friend would feel if he had heard it? What can you, as a student, do in this case?

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**Scenario 2:** You are an 11<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher. You have assigned students to read *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, an award-winning young adult novel that explores race, gender, intellectualism, and a relationship between two young men. The day after you assigned the book and handed out the directions for the unit project, your principal calls you to the office. A parent has come to the school and is extremely angry you have assigned a book that "promotes a homosexual lifestyle."

How does this make you feel? What would you do? What support would you need in this situation?

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**Scenario 3:** You are a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student. During lunch, you realized you left something in your locker. Down the hallway, hidden from view under the stairs, you see two older students looming over a classmate, Pete. As you get closer, you can hear them calling Pete a "fag" and a "pussy." They are making fun of him for not making the baseball team. You want to go for help, but you know another student had complained about homophobic harassment, and nothing was done.

What would you do? How would the scenario be different if Pete was gay or straight? What does the scenario suggest about the school personnel?



## Appendix C: Scenarios (Continued)

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**Scenario 4:** You are a 10<sup>th</sup> grade student. You have recently come out to your group of close-knit friends as bisexual. You are still struggling to understand what this means for you and have turned to your friends for support. However, your friends have made a few comments that make you uncomfortable. One friend laughed and said, “Oh, so you just want to have sex with everyone!” Another friend seemed disbelieving and told you, “Whatever, you’re full-on gay and you don’t want to admit it.” These comments and a few others have made you increasingly upset.

How does this make you feel? What would you do? What assumptions have your friends made? What support would you need in this situation?

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**Scenario 5:** You are a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher and new this year to your school. You have been getting close with the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, Ms. Harrison. A few months into the school year, you felt comfortable enough to come out to her. She seemed surprised and hesitant but accepting. This week, the other teachers seem to be avoiding you. The principal calls you to his office, and the superintendent is there as well. The principal informs you they are thinking of placing you on administrative leave while they decide “what to do with you,” since the school staff and some of the parents are uncomfortable with an LGBTQ+ person teaching their children. There were even hints of losing your job!

How does this make you feel? What would you do? What support would you need in this situation?

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**Scenario 6:** You are an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student. You feel close with your math teacher, and so you share with them that you think you might be gay. Surprisingly, your teacher gets angry and tells you it is a sin, then marches you to the principal’s office. As a punishment, the principal says you are required to stay after school for detention and read and copy passages from the Bible. You are afraid they are going to call your parents, so you stay. (True story: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/16/us/oregon-school-lgbt-students-bible.html>)

How does this make you feel? What would you do? What assumptions are the school personnel making? What support would you need in this situation?





## Appendix C: Scenarios (Continued)

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**Scenario 7:** You are a 12th grade student. You have known for as long as you can remember that you are “different” because you have been bullied and teased, especially on social media. You know you are transgender, but you have never told anyone. A few years ago, a man in your small town came out as gay and was harassed so badly that he moved away. As far as you know, no one has ever been out as transgender in your community, let alone your small school. You don’t know where to go or how to begin to figure out how to become your true self.

How does this make you feel? What would you do? What support would you need in this situation? How can you find support and resources?

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**Scenario 8:** You are an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student. Your small rural town has recently been rocked by the suicide of a 9-year-old boy you went to school with. His parents insist he died from suicide because of bullying after he came out. They are calling for a change of culture and policies in your community. Though you didn’t know him well, his death has really hit you hard, and you want to help make your school and community a safer place for your LGBTQ+ classmates.

What would you do? What support would you need in this situation? How can you find support and resources?



## Appendix D: Being an Ally

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### What is an Ally?

An ally is a member of a dominant social or cultural group who takes a stand against injustice directed against targeted or oppressed groups. An ally:

#### DOES:

- Understand that they do not and cannot know everything about being an ally and supporting LGBTQ+ people.
- Consider how the culture and context of their community affects LGBTQ+ people.
- Take responsibility for learning about their own and LGBTQ+ history, culture, and experiences, and how oppression works in everyday life.
- Acknowledge their unearned privileges received as a result of being a member of a dominant group and works to eliminate or change privileges to rights for LGBTQ+ people.
- Listen to and respect the perspectives and experiences of LGBTQ+ people.
- Remember that LGBTQ+ people are a diverse group, within and across identities.
- Make mistakes, own up to them, learn from them, and try again.
- Accept feedback about their own behavior and attitudes and reflect on it.
- Believe they can make a difference by acting and speaking out against injustice.
- Cultivate support from other allies.

#### DOES NOT:

- Assume.
- Believe they know exactly how an LGBTQ+ person feels and what they experience.
- Speak for an LGBTQ+ person or attempt to define another person's identity or experiences in their own terms.
- Expect an LGBTQ+ person to speak for the entire LGBTQ+ community.
- Think LGBTQ+ people all have the same needs and goals.
- View LGBTQ+ people as needing to be pitied, saved, or rescued.
- Ignore or deny the connections among all forms of injustice.
- Use targeted language, like "I'm straight but..." or "My lesbian friend..."



## Appendix E: Glossary

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**BISEXUAL**—“A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to two genders” (GLSEN, 2014, p. 2).

**CISGENDER**—“A person whose gender identity and expression are aligned with the gender they were assigned at birth” (GLSEN, 2014, p. 2).

**GAY**—“A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some members of the same gender” (GLSEN, 2014, p. 2).

**GENDER EXPRESSION/PRESENTATION**—“The way a person acts, dresses, speaks, and behaves (i.e., feminine, masculine, androgynous). Gender expression does not necessarily correspond to assigned sex at birth or gender identity” (National LGBT Health Education Center, 2016, p. 2).

**GENDER NON-CONFORMING**—“Describes a gender expression that differs from a given society’s norms for males and females” (National LGBT Health Education Center, 2016, p. 3).

**HETEROSEXISM**—“A system of oppression that benefits straight/heterosexual people at the expense of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Heterosexism may take the form of **Homophobia** or **Biphobia**, bias and discrimination towards lesbian, gay, and bisexual people” (GLSEN, 2014, p. 2).

**HOMOSEXUAL**—“A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some members of the same gender. Many people prefer the terms ‘lesbian’ or ‘gay’, instead” (GLSEN, 2014, p.3).

**INTERSEX**—“An umbrella term used to describe a variety of conditions in which a person is born with reproductive and/or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the medical definitions of female or male” (GLSEN, 2014, p. 3).

**LESBIAN**—“A person who is female-identified and who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some other females” (GLSEN, 2014, p. 3).

**LGBTQ+** —“LGBTQ+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/ Questioning, and others. It refers to a population of people united by having gender identities or sexual orientations that differ from the heterosexual and cisgender majority” (Social Justice and Advocacy, n.d.).

**PANSEXUAL**—“A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some people, regardless of their gender identity” (GLSEN, 2014, p. 3).



## Appendix E: Key Terms (Continued)

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**QUEER**—“An umbrella term used to describe a sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression that does not conform to dominant societal norms. While it is used as a neutral, or even a positive term among many LGBT people today, historically ‘queer’ was used as a derogatory slur” (GLSEN, 2014, p.3).

**QUESTIONING**—“A person who is in the process of understanding and exploring what their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and gender expression might be” (GLSEN, 2014, p.3).

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION**—“The inner feelings of who a person is attracted to emotionally and/or physically, in relation to their own gender identity” (GLSEN, 2014, p.1).

**STRAIGHT OR HETEROSEXUAL**—“A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some members of another gender (specifically, a male-identified person who is attracted to some females or a female-identified person who is attracted to some males)” (GLSEN, 2014, p. 3).

**TRANSGENDER**—A “broad term that can be used to describe people whose gender identity is different from the gender they were thought to be when they were born. ‘Trans’ is often used as shorthand for transgender.” (<https://transequality.org/issues/resources/understanding-transgender-people-the-basics>)



## Appendix F: Resources & Supports

### General Training and PD for Educators

- Information about a variety of language, issues, concerns, and strengths of LGBTQ+ communities: <http://www.revelandriot.com/resources/>
- Links for fostering an inclusive climate in schools:
  - ◇ <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/supporting-lgbtqia-youth-resource-list>
  - ◇ <http://www.welcomingschools.org/resources/school-tips/lgbtq-inclusive-schools-what/>
  - ◇ <https://www.gsafewi.org/wp-content/uploads/Best-Practices-for-Supporting-LGBTQ+-Youth-as-They-Return-to-School.pdf>
- Free training materials and curriculum for the Safe Zone program:
  - ◇ <https://thesafezoneproject.com/>
- Tips and assistance for starting a training program like Safe Zone:
  - ◇ <https://thesafezoneproject.com/teach/>
  - ◇ <https://www.hrc.org/resources/establishing-an-allies-safe-zone-program>
  - ◇ <https://www.campuspride.org/resources/resources-to-help-create-a-safe-zone-training/>
- Teaching Tolerance website toward LGBTQ+ professional development: <https://www.tolerance.org/topics/gender-sexual-identity>

### Getting a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Off the Ground

- GLSEN: <https://www.glsen.org/participate/student-action/gsa>
- GSAnetwork: <https://gsanetwork.org/>
- Teaching Tolerance: <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/10-tips-for-starting-a-gsa>
- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU): <https://www.aclu.org/other/how-start-gay-straight-alliance-gsa>
- Open letter of support for GSAs by the US Department of Education: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/110607.html>
- gSafe: <https://gsafewi.org/resources/for-educators/creating-sustaining-a-gsa/>

### Finding Support for LGBTQ+ Youth

- Gay and Lesbian Student Education Network (GLSEN): <https://www.glsen.org/>
- Gays and Lesbians Against Defamation (GLAAD): <https://www.glaad.org/resourcelist>
- CenterLink, finding the nearest LGBTQ+ center: <https://www.lgbtcenters.org/LGBTCenters>
- Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), finding the nearest chapter: <https://pflag.org/needsupport>
- Safe online community for LGBTQ+ youth: <https://www.lgbtcenters.org/QChatSpace>



## Appendix F: Resources & Supports (Continued)

- Hotlines and chat support for LGBTQ+ youth: <http://www.glbtnationalhelpcenter.org/>
- It Gets Better Project: <https://itgetsbetter.org/>
- Lambda Legal, understanding LGBTQ+ rights and a legal help desk: <https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights>
- Family Equality Council, learning about federal, state, and local policy regarding LGBTQ+ communities: <https://www.familyequality.org/>
- Health and mental health resources:
  - ◇ From the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm>
  - ◇ National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), finding an LGBTQ+ affirming mental health provider: <https://www.nami.org/find-support/lgbtq>
  - ◇ Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA), finding an LGBTQ+ affirming healthcare provider: <http://www.glma.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageId=939&grandparentID=534&parentID=938&nodeID=1>
  - ◇ Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Healthcare Equality Index: <https://www.hrc.org/hei/about-the-hei>
  - ◇ The Trevor Project, crisis intervention and suicide prevention: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org>

### Resources for Rural LGBTQ+ Youth

- <http://www.lgbtmap.org/rural-lgbt>
- <http://www.nclrights.org/our-work/rural-communities/>
- <https://www.glsen.org/blog/experiences-rural-lgbt-youth>
- <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/resources/topics/lgbt>
- <https://www.futurity.org/rural-lbgtq-youth-1187552/>
- <http://vov.com/blog/how-to-support-lgbt-students-in-rural-america>

### Creating and Implementing LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curricula

- GLSEN: <https://www.glsen.org/educate/resources/curriculum>
- Lesson plan databases:
  - ◇ GLSEN: <https://www.glsen.org/educate/resources/lesson-plans>
  - ◇ Share My Lesson: <https://sharemylesson.com/collections/lgbtq-resources>
  - ◇ Safe Schools Coalition: <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-lessonplans.html>
  - ◇ Teachers Pay Teachers: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Browse/Search:lgbt>
  - ◇ Anti-Defamation League: [https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/lesson-plans?ed\\_cat\\_id\[193\]=193](https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/lesson-plans?ed_cat_id[193]=193)



## Appendix F: Resources & Supports (Continued)

- ◇ Human Rights Educators USA: <https://hreusa.org/hre-library/topics/lgbtq-rights/lesson-plans/>
- Podcasts and radio segments: <https://safespaceradio.com/?s=lgbtq>
- Elementary curricula and lessons:
  - ◇ <http://www.welcomingschools.org/resources/lesson-plans/lgbtq-inclusive-schools/lgbtq-with-books/>
- Secondary curricula and lessons:
  - ◇ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/tag/lgbt/>
- Information for online schools: <https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/education-teaching-degree/lgbtq-youth/>
- Content specific:
  - ◇ Just click on your subject or grade level: <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/blackboard-teachers.html>
  - ◇ GLSEN regarding STEM: <https://www.glsen.org/blog/why-and-how-stem-curriculum-needs-be-lgbt-inclusive>
  - ◇ STEM: <https://eic.rsc.org/ideas/four-tips-to-make-your-curriculum-lgbt-inclusive/3009218.article>
  - ◇ Example: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Curriculum: <https://fishyteaching.com/curriculum/>
  - ◇ Lambda Literary, writing project partnership: <https://www.lambdaliterary.org/lgbt-writers-in-schools/about-lgbt-writers-schools/>
  - ◇ History: <https://gsafevi.org/resources/for-educators/books-and-curricula/lgbt-history-materials/>
- LGBTQ+ children's and young adult literature lists and links:
  - ◇ Checklist for inclusive children's and young adult literature: <https://www.joinkidmap.org/digchecklist/>
  - ◇ <https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/lgbtq/>
  - ◇ <https://blog.leeandlow.com/category/diversity-race-and-representation/genderlgbtq-diversity/>
  - ◇ <https://sfpl.org/index.php?pg=2000154901>
  - ◇ <https://glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks/rainbow-books-lists>



## Appendix G: Program Evaluation

Please respond to the following statements by circling the number that best represents your response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
I now have a greater knowledge of language and vocabulary pertinent to LGBTQ+ people.	5	4	3	2	1	
I now have a greater knowledge of the issues and experiences of LGBTQ+ people in rural communities.	5	4	3	2	1	
I can apply what I learned in this program to my practice of teaching coaching, counseling, nursing, administering, etc.	5	4	3	2	1	
The facilitator communicated information well.	5	4	3	2	1	
This program encouraged me to become an ally.	5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Point Total:</b>						<b>/25</b>





## Appendix G: Program Evaluation (Continued)

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1. Please circle one of the following options. Overall, I would rate this program:  
Excellent    Good    Average    Fair    Poor
2. What motivated you to attend this program?
3. How do you plan on using this information in your professional and personal life?
4. Which portion of the program was the most useful to you? Which was the least useful?
5. What would you change about the program?
6. Other comments, questions, concerns:



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## About the Authors

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**Meg Thomas** is a PhD candidate in Multicultural and Equity Studies in Education in the Department of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education and Human Ecology at the Ohio State University. Her research focuses on language and identity of rural youth, particularly at the intersections of race, class, and geography. She has served on research teams regarding teacher autonomy under NCLB, writing instruction for English Language Learners, and LGBTQ youth in rural communities.

# IMPACT:

*Educate, Engage, Empower — For Equity*



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