



Diana  
Bruce

ADVOCATE  
for THRIVING  
STUDENTS

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# Supporting LGBTQ Diversity in School Based Health Centers





# Hello, I'm Diana.

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Diana Bruce (she/her) is a nationally recognized leader who works at the intersection of health and education equity. She advises schools, organizations and government on health policy and education equity, including school health, communicable diseases, immunizations, LGBTQ supports, bias reduction and sex education, and brings her clients 25+ years experience and expertise in the field. Proud board member, yoga teacher and parent of two young adults!



# Group Agreements

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**Risks – take them!**

**Pairs – only share for yourself.**

**Confidentiality – keep it in the room.**

**Stay present.**



# My approach

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Pair radical **empathy** with  
sound **public policy** to  
engage **communities** in  
creating **student-centered solutions.**

# My work

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**strategic planning & implementation**

**stakeholder engagement & facilitation**

**policy development & auditing**

**\* training & coaching \***

**speaking & commentary**





**Why do I do this?**

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**Our job is to ensure  
every student learns;  
to learn, *they* must thrive.**

# Why does MASBHC do this?

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School-based health care represents an essential strategy toward **improving the lives** of Maryland's children and their families and optimizing their ability to become contributing members of society.

School-based health care **addresses the unique needs** of children and youth and increases access to medical, mental, dental and/or other health related services.





Why do you do this work?

What's your North Star?



# Agenda

**1** What do we mean by LGBTQ, and why focus on these kids when so many kids need support?

**2** At what age is even appropriate to have these conversations, and how do I do it?

**3** When SBHCs support LGBTQ students, who supports them?



# Think About

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- Think about a time in your life when you felt at odds with the expectations of your family, peers or community regarding your gender.
- Think about a time when you were the “only” in a room. How did you feel, and how/if at all did it impact your experience?





What is a topic related to sexual orientation and gender identity that you want to gain a better understanding of today?



What do I mean by LGBTQ, and why focus on these kids when so many kids are in need?

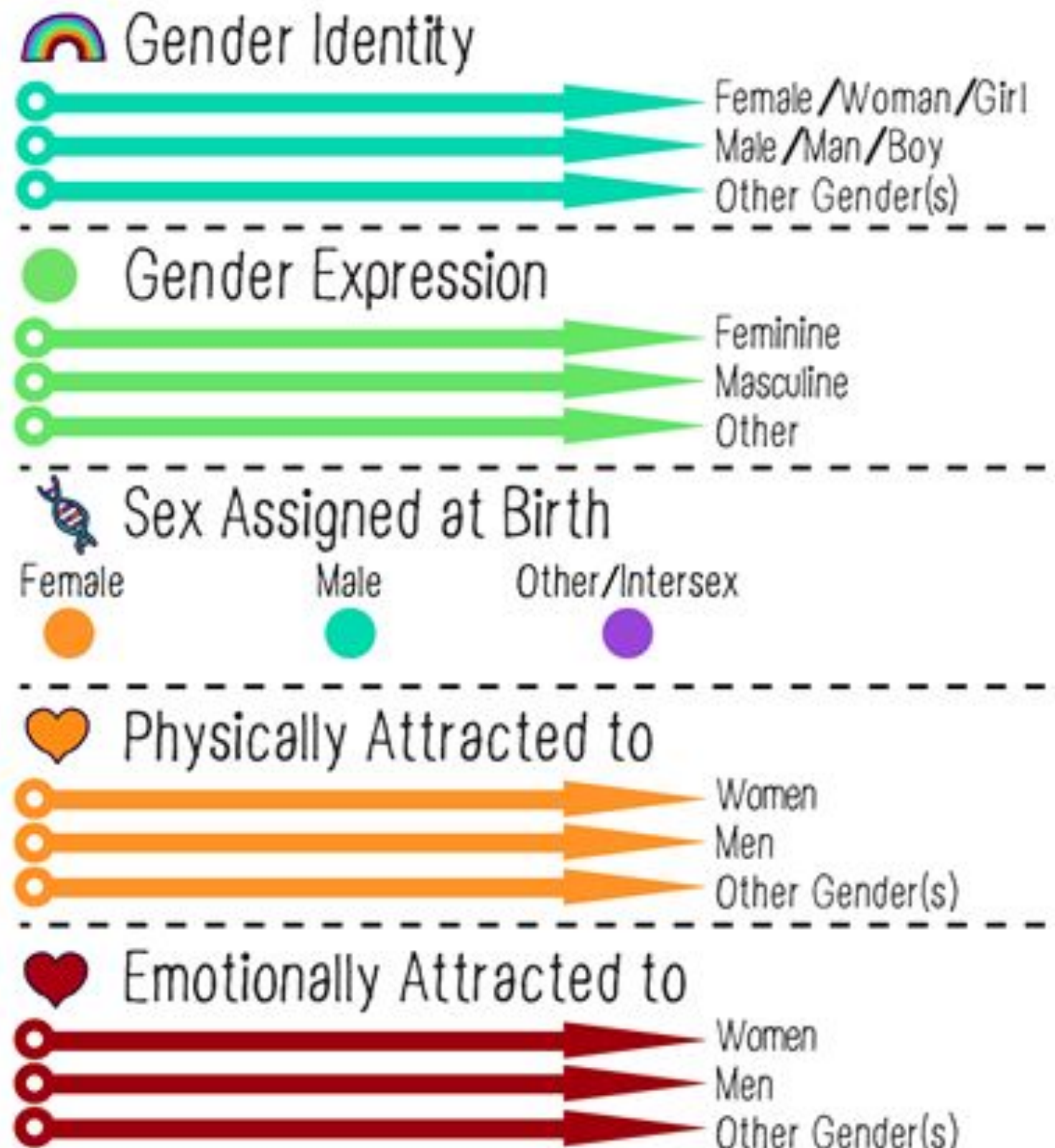
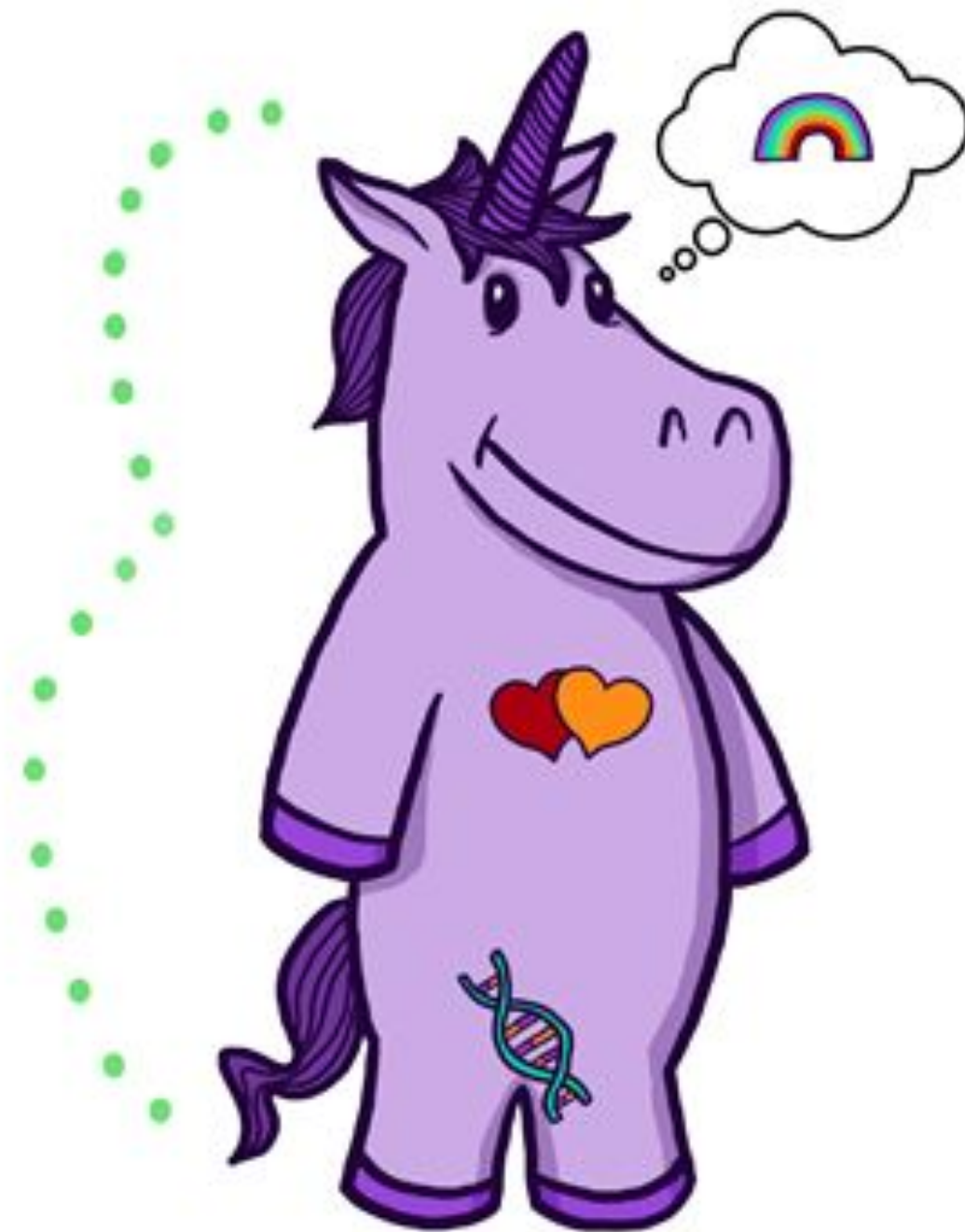


# The Gender Unicorn



## The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

<https://transstudent.org/gender/>

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# The Need

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**1 in 4** high school students identify as LGBTQ+ – that’s a lot!

**3%** of high school students identify as transgender (another 2% questioning gender)

Most requests I receive are from elementary schools!

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2013–2023. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2024. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/su/su7304a6.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/su/su7304a6.htm)



# The Need, Among LGBTQ+ HS Students

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**65%** experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness during the past year

**29%** were bullied at school

**19%** did not go to school because of safety concerns

**41%** seriously considered attempting suicide

**20%** attempted suicide

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2013–2023. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2024.](#)

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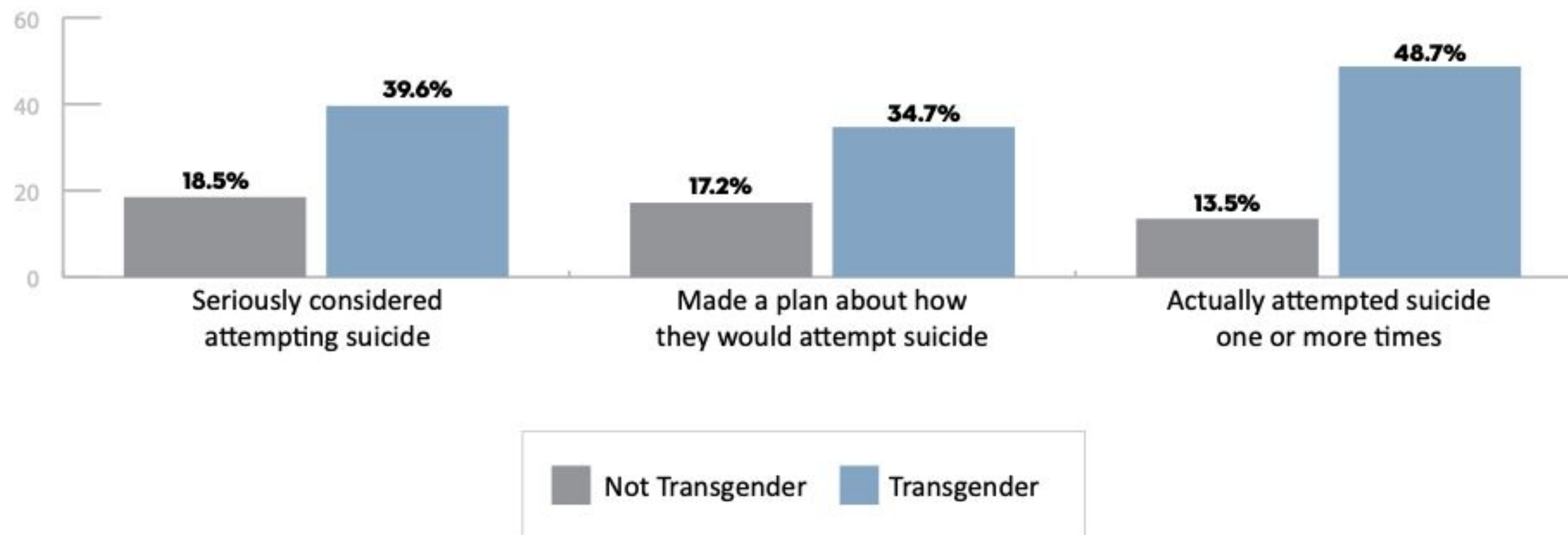




# The Need



## High school suicidality, by gender identity

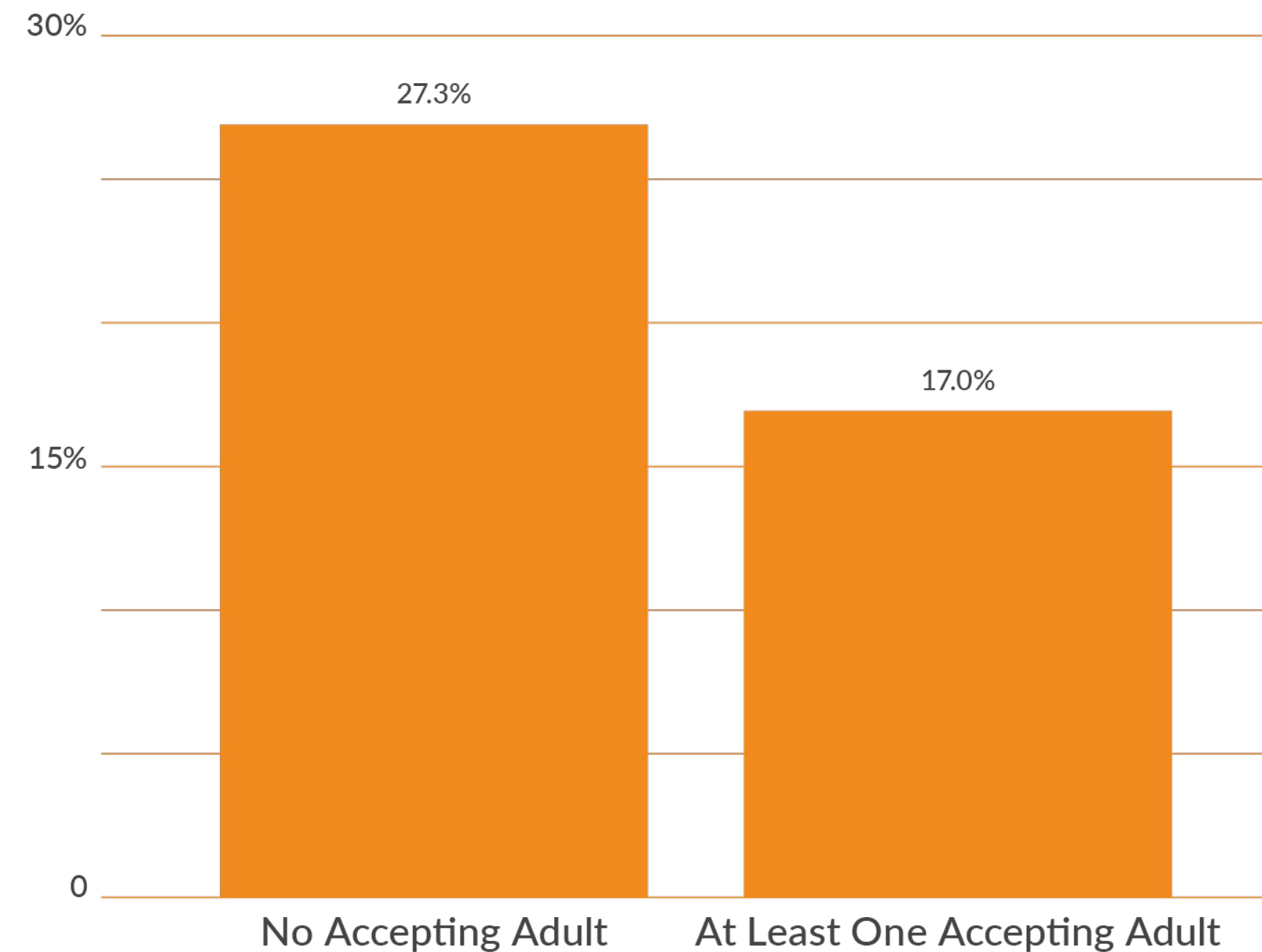




# Making a Difference

- Accepting adults can significantly reduce the risk of suicide for LGBTQ+ youth.
- These adults can be parents, teachers, coaches, administrators, counselors, etc.

Suicide Attempt Rate Among Those with Accepting Adults



<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/accepting-adults-reduce-suicide-attempts-among-lgbtq-youth/>

6/15/2023



# Affirming our Children Improves Their Health



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Transgender teens able to use their chosen names at school, home, work and with friends:

**71** percent fewer symptoms of severe depression

**34** percent decrease in reported thoughts of suicide

**65** percent decrease in suicidal attempts.

Steven Russell, PhD University of Texas



# Think About

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What was something new you learned about sexual orientation, gender identity or expression?

What stood out to you in the data?





In what ways could your SBHC  
be an affirming environment  
for an LGBTQ student?



At what age is it appropriate to even talk about gender, and how do I do it?



# At What Age Does Gender Identity Typically Develop in Children?

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- 2 conscious of the physical differences between different sexes
- 3 can label themselves by gender
- 4 stable sense of their gender identity

**Children who assert a gender-diverse identity know their gender as clearly and consistently as their developmentally matched peers and benefit from the same level of support, love, and social acceptance.**

[www.downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/BF\\_HealthySexualityGenderIdentity\\_Tipsheet.pdf](http://www.downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/BF_HealthySexualityGenderIdentity_Tipsheet.pdf)



# At What Age Does Sexual Orientation Typically Develop in Children?

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**9-10** young people can know their sexual orientation

**12** average age for knowing

**12** might not identify feelings as “sexual,” but they can have strong feelings/preferences

OSSE slide, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2013/06/13/chapter-3-the-coming-out-experience/>



# What If Someone Says Something?

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Stop It.

Don't Ignore It.

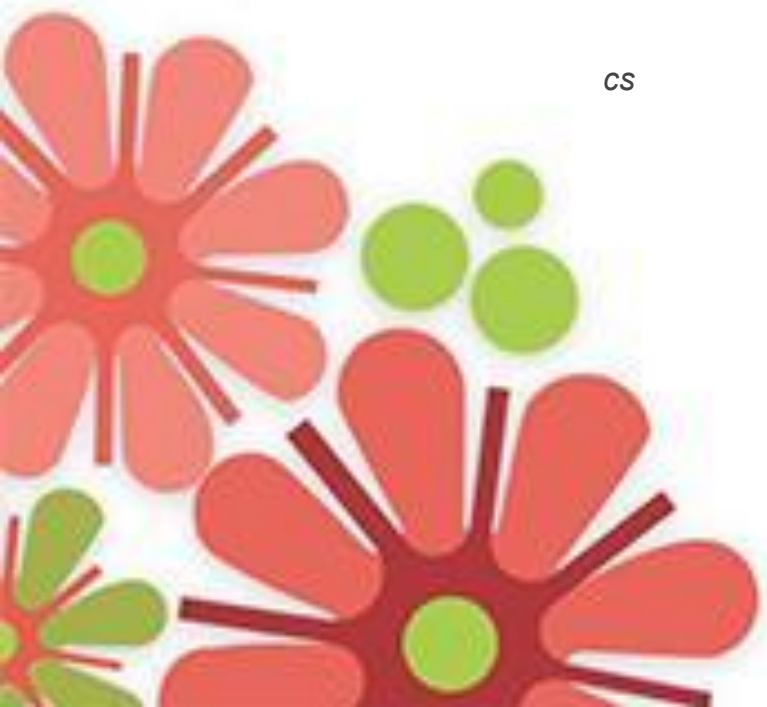
Educate.

Be Proactive.

CS

[https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/welcoming-schools/documents/NEA\\_HRCF\\_Stop\\_Anti\\_Gay\\_and\\_LGBTQ\\_Comments.pdf?mtime=20200713131629&focal=none](https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/welcoming-schools/documents/NEA_HRCF_Stop_Anti_Gay_and_LGBTQ_Comments.pdf?mtime=20200713131629&focal=none)

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# Key Messages

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Everyone's gender is unique to them.

How you see yourself and how you want to express your gender is personal - there is not just one way to be.

Things, like toys and clothes, don't have genders -- people have genders.

You can't tell a person's gender just by looking at them.

Your body doesn't determine your gender.





# Five Piece Suit

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Children need:

**Affirmation**

**Information**

**Limit Setting**

**Values Clarification**

**Anticipatory Guidance**

Deborah Roffman, author of “Talk To Me First”  
and “Sex and Sensibility”

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# Life Hack

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Slow down.

Clarify the question.

“Tell me more about that.”



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# Think About

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What question do you have about talking to your patients about sexual orientation and gender identity?

What's comes up for you when you think about answer student questions about sexual orientation and gender identity?



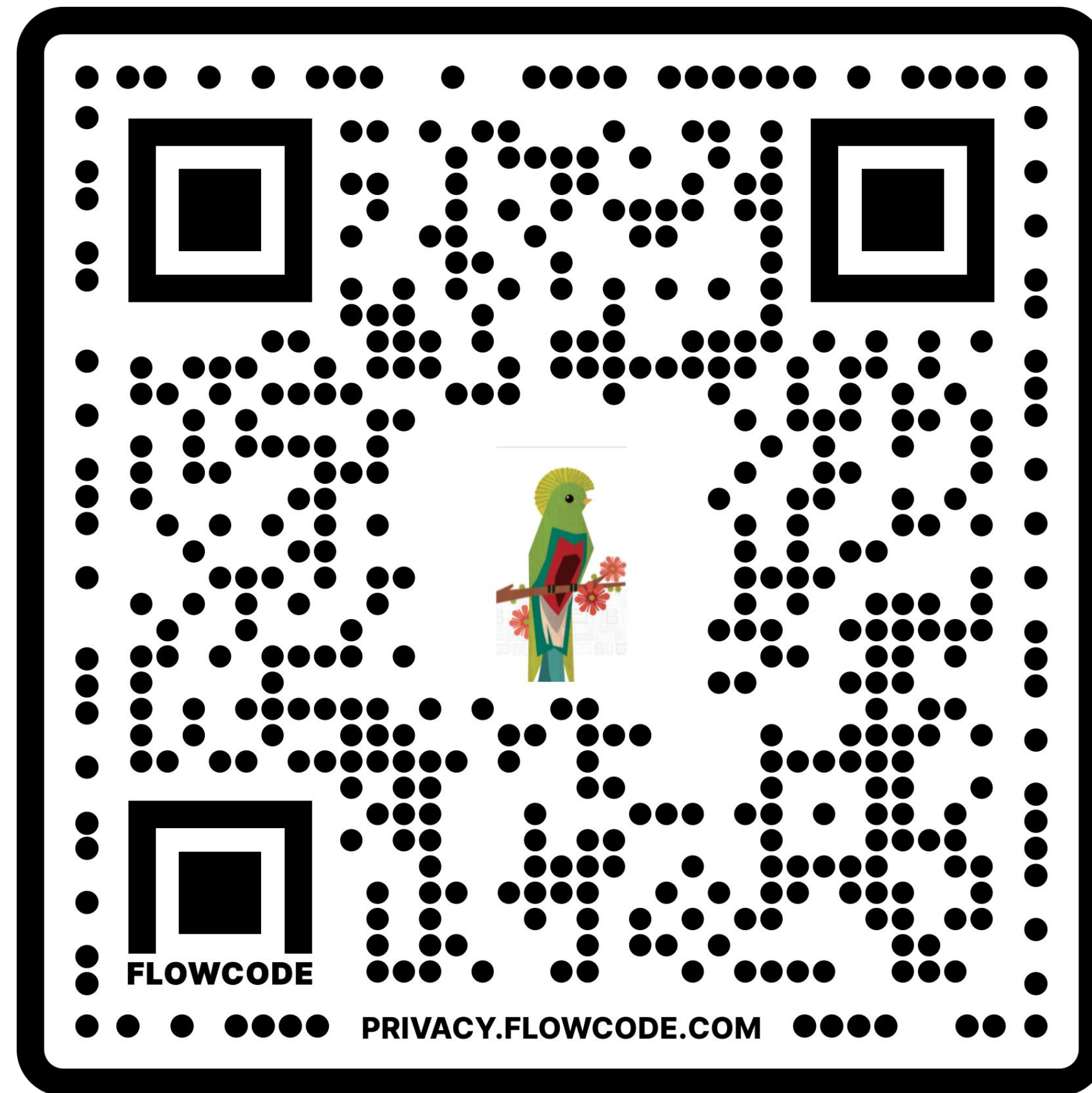


What's a message about sexual orientation or gender identity could you could share with your students?



# Resources

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If I stick my neck out for LGBTQ+ students, who's got my back?



# The Health Care Community



**POLICY STATEMENT** Organizational Principles to Guide and Define the Child Health Care System and/or Improve the Health of all Children



## Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents

Jason Rafferty, MD, MPH, EdM, FAAP, COMMITTEE ON PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH, COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE, SECTION ON LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER HEALTH AND WELLNESS

PRESS RELEASE

### AAMC Statement on Gender-affirming Health Care for Transgender Youth

April 9, 2021

AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) President and CEO David J. Skorton, MD, issued the following statement about the importance of allowing doctors to provide gender-affirming care to transgender youth:

"The AAMC is committed to ensuring access to high-quality care that treats all people, including transgender individuals, equally and with respect, and providing training to physicians and other health care professionals that is consistent with those values.

Stuart Heiser, Sr. Media Relations Specialist  
sheiser@aamc.org  
202-828-0059



POPULATION CARE

### Advocating for the LGBTQ community

4 MIN READ

The American Medical Association supports everyone's access to quality evidence-based health care regardless of gender or sexual orientation. To ensure that LGBTQ patients are not discriminated against in seeking the care they need, nor forced into medically un-sound programs, the AMA works diligently at the state and federal levels to expand access to medical services, reduce stigma in treating patients with unique needs and break down discriminatory barriers to necessary care.

American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

### Patient Care

# LGBTQ+ Health and Wellness

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## LGBTQ Students

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LGBTQ Students

Position Statement

printable version

NASN POSITION

It is the position of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) that, to provide culturally competent care, school staff and communities should institute affirming policies that support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth. These include bullying, health risk behaviors, and rejection from family and friends. Such challenges can cause adverse mental and physical health effects such as depression and suicidal ideation. Registered professional nurses (hereinafter referred to as school nurses) are uniquely positioned to help LGBTQ youth by creating LGBTQ-affirming spaces, guiding youth towards resources, advocating for school-wide protections, and assuring youth that their identities and feelings are normal and appropriate.



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# Additional Health Care Support

AAP News



## AAP reaffirms gender-affirming care policy, authorizes systematic review of evidence to guide update

August 4, 2023

Alyson Sulaski Wyckoff, Associate Editor

Article type: [News](#)

Topics: [Advocacy](#), [Diversity, equity and inclusion](#)

The AAP Board of Directors voted to reaffirm the 2018 AAP policy statement on gender-affirming care and authorized development of an expanded set of guidance for pediatricians based on a systematic review of the evidence.

An updated policy statement, plus companion clinical and technical reports, will reflect data and research on gender-affirming care since the original policy was released and offer updated guidance. The board recognized the value of additional detail with five more years of experience since the 2018 policy statement was issued.



## Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health

FROM THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS | TECHNICAL REPORT | JULY 01 2013

## Office-Based Care for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth **FREE**

David A. Levine, MD; the COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE; Paula K. Braverman, MD; William P. Adelman, MD; Cora C. Breuner, MD; David A. Levine, MD; Arik V. Marcell, MD; Pamela J. Murray, MD; Rebecca F. O'Brien, MD

*Pediatrics* (2013) 132 (1): e297–e313.

<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2013-1283>

### This Technical Report was reaffirmed April 2021.

The American Academy of Pediatrics issued its last statement on homosexuality and adolescents in 2004. This technical report reflects the rapidly expanding medical and psychosocial literature about sexual minority youth. Pediatricians should be aware that some youth in their care may have concerns or questions about their sexual orientation or that of siblings, friends, parents, relatives, or others and should provide factual, current, nonjudgmental information in a confidential manner. Although most lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth are quite resilient and emerge from adolescence as healthy adults, the effects of homophobia and heterosexism can contribute to increased mental health issues for sexual minority youth. LGBTQ and MSM/WSW (men having sex with men and women having sex with women) adolescents, in comparison with heterosexual adolescents, have higher rates of depression and suicidal ideation, higher rates of substance abuse, and more risky sexual behaviors. Obtaining a comprehensive, confidential, developmentally appropriate adolescent psychosocial history allows for the discovery of strengths and assets as well as risks. Pediatricians should have offices that are teen-friendly and welcoming to sexual minority youth. This includes having supportive, engaging office staff members who ensure that there are no barriers to care. For transgender youth, pediatricians should provide the opportunity to acknowledge and affirm their feelings of gender dysphoria and desires to transition to the opposite gender. Referral of transgender youth to a qualified mental health professional is critical to assist with the dysphoria, to educate them, and to assess their readiness for transition. With appropriate assistance and care, sexual minority youth should live healthy, productive lives while transitioning through adolescence and young adulthood.

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# The Education Community



neaToday

ARTICLES SCHOOL ME MORE NEA WEBSITES

News and Features from the National Education Association

STUDENTS AND SOCIAL ISSUES BULLYING

OCTOBER 8, 2015 • 11:00AM



## Schools in Transition: A Guide to Support Transgender Students in K-12

BY BRENDA ÁLVAREZ



U.S. Department of Education

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PRESS RELEASE

### U.S. Department of Education Confirms Title IX Protects Students from Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

JUNE 16, 2021

Related Content

### AFT Resolution

## SUPPORT FOR TRANSGENDER, NONBINARY AND GENDER-NONCONFORMING WORKERS

WHEREAS, the American Federation of Teachers has a continuing commitment to supporting transgender workers; and

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# The Legal Community



**TRANSGENDER RIGHTS TOOLKIT**  
A LEGAL GUIDE FOR TRANS PEOPLE  
AND THEIR ADVOCATES



**NAACP**

RESOLUTIONS LIBRARY

RESOLUTION

## Ending Murders of Violence Against Black Transgender Women and Supporting Transgender Communities

**SP LEARNING  
LC FOR JUSTICE**

Classroom  
Resources

Professional  
Development

Magazine &  
Publications

BUILD A

## TOOLKIT FOR "BEING THERE FOR NONBINARY YOUTH"

This toolkit synthesizes the key tips and takeaways from "Being There for Nonbinary Youth" and offers online resources for supporting transgender students.

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**ABA**  
AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Commission on  
Sexual Orientation and  
Gender Identity

**ACLU**

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## Trans and Gender- Nonconforming Youth



The ACLU works in courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and the laws of the United States guarantee everyone in this country.

**ADL**

About Research Centers What We Do Resources Take Action

PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS

## LGBTQ+ Rights



# Student (and Staff) Rights

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FERPA

Title IX

Bostock v Clayton County

MD's Nondiscrimination in Education Law

Bullying prevention law/policy

School's nondiscrimination policy

SBHC's nondiscrimination policy





# Student (and Staff) Rights

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In MD schools, individuals have a right to their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression ...

**free from discrimination or harassment.**





# What Are Some Student-Centered Solutions?

Names and Pronouns

Dress Code

Privacy/Confidentiality

Staff Training



Bathrooms & Locker Rooms

Gender-Based Activities

Bullying and Harassment

*content from DCPS Transgender Training Slides*

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# What Are Some Patient-Centered Solutions?



Waiting room signage/lanyards

Names/Pronouns

Forms/EHR

Inclusive Provider

All-gender  
restroom



SSHADESS/Exam

Staff Training

Confidentiality



*Image from AAMC website*

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# Think About

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What would you need to **plan** for to welcome an LGBTQ+ student?

What other considerations are there?





Name something that you can do to welcome and include LGBTQ+ students, staff and families.



# What Else?

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What didn't we cover?

What else do we want to learn?





What's the most valuable thing you  
learned today?



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## Questions?





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**Thank you!**

**Let's Stay Connected!**

**[www.dianabruce.com](http://www.dianabruce.com)**

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