



Education Department Resource

What One Teacher Can Do

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Introduction

The following checklist describes different levels at which educators can become involved in learning about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in schooling and how to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

1. Inform yourself about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people and about anti-LGBT bias.

Low Risk

- Learn about LGBT history, culture, and current concerns by reading books, journals and periodicals.

Some Risk

- Attend LGBT film series or lectures.
- Attend a meeting of an LGBT organization.
- Attend an “allies” meeting (for example, P-FLAG).
- Have conversations with openly LGBT people.

Greater Risk

- Engage heterosexual people, including your family and friends, in discussing issues concerning LGBT people.

2. Create a safe and equitable classroom.

Low Risk

- Change your assumption that everyone is heterosexual unless they tell you otherwise.
- Use inclusive language that implicitly allows for LGBT possibilities (for example, “parent” rather than “mother” or “father”; “spouse” rather than “wife” or “husband”; “date” rather than “boyfriend” or “girlfriend”).

Some Risk

- Challenge anti-LGBT language and name-calling.
- Put up LGBT friendly posters, pictures, or signs.
- If you are heterosexual, don’t be quick to inform others of your heterosexuality. Ask what they might think if you told them you were LGBT.

Greater Risk

- Be clear about your willingness to support LGBT students.
- Use language that explicitly allows for LGBT possibilities (for example, “Emily Dickinson and partner”).
- Invite LGBT speakers to your classroom.
- Use LGBT curriculum.
- If you are LGBT, come out to your students.

3. Create a safe and equitable school.

Low Risk

- Be a role model of acceptance.

Some Risk

- Challenge name-calling and harassment.
- Work to establish policies protecting LGBT students from harassment, violence, and discrimination.
- Call for the inclusion of LGBT people in diversity presentations.
- Work to form Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) and/or support group for LGBT students.
- Call for faculty and staff training in LGBT youth issues (including crisis intervention and violence prevention).
- Call for counseling services for LGBT youth and their parents.

Greater Risk

- Invite LGBT speakers to your school.
- Join a GSA.
- Call for and develop an LGBT awareness day.
- Work with the PTA and other community based support groups regarding the education and health needs of LGBT students.
- Solicit the cooperation of LGBT alumni/ae in motivating the school to meet the needs of students who succeed them.
- Call for faculty training in LGBT studies.
- Encourage colleagues to develop and use LGBT curriculum.
- If you are LGBT, come out to the school community.

