

## What are the particular factors or markers that could precipitate LGBTQ+ suicidal ideation?

Suicidal ideation is more widespread than either attempts or suicides, and its recognition can provide an opportunity to intervene before more serious suicidal behavior develops.

- Stress from disclosure of LGBTQ+ identity (especially at an early age) leading to increased stigma, discrimination, harassment and bullying
- Lack of family, religious or community support
- Feelings of social isolation, alienation or victimization
- Homelessness (or youth is runaway, living in foster care or in juvenile detention center)
- History or signs of depression or other mental health issues, alcohol or drug use

## Are there any signs specific to LGBTQ+ youth that would need to be watch for?

LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risk for exposure to and experience with stressors that contribute to suicide ideation.

- History of family abuse, neglect or LGBTQ+ stigma
- Feeling unsafe at school or home and dropping out of school
- Risky health behaviors (e.g. substance abuse, unsafe sex practices, etc.)
- Lack of access to mental health or culturally competent health services
- Exposure to suicide through the media, family, friends or co-workers
- Dropping out of school

## What are the ways to help ensure LGBTQ+ youth feel safe and valued?

- Safe and affirming schools and learning environment (creating Safe Spaces and training teachers/admins on how to create safe and inclusive environments)
- A feeling of safety, support and connectivity at school through peer groups like Gay-Straight Alliances
- Support from medical and mental health care professionals
- Family acceptance of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- Positive role models and self-esteem reflected in society, media, curriculum

Suicide Risk Factors - The Trevor Project <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/preventing-suicide/suicide-risk-factors/#sm.000013n842necfdtnu4vjh1myn4jq>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2008). Suicide risk and prevention for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

Haas, A. P., Eliason, M., Mays, V. M., Mathy, R. M., Cochran, S. D., D'Augelli, A. R. . . . Clayton, P. J. (2011). Suicide and suicide risk in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations: Review and recommendations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 58(1), 10-51.

## National Association of Secondary School Principals-Recommendations for School Leaders

Advocate for school district policies that include protections for **transgender** students if those policies are not currently in place. Model and set expectations for students, staff, and parents about how to build a positive school culture where all students feel included and respected, regardless of their **gender identity** or **gender expression**. -nassp

## National Policy Board for Educational Administration-Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

Confront and alter institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, **gender** and **sexual orientation**, and disability or special status. -ccsso

## When your school has a GSA...

- There are lower levels of victimization related to sexual orientation and gender expression within the school
  - School personnel are more likely to intervene when hearing homophobic remarks
  - School culture and climate improves
  - Suicidal ideation and attempts decreases amongst LGB youth and their heterosexual peers.
- GLSEN, [UBC](#)

## LGBTQ+ Competency Support

De Palazzo  
Safe and Healthy Schools Director  
[de@equalityflorida.org](mailto:de@equalityflorida.org)

Ian Siljestrom  
Safe and Healthy Schools Coordinator  
[ian@equalityflorida.org](mailto:ian@equalityflorida.org)

# LGBTQ+ Suicide Prevention Best Practices

## District Messaging

Senior leadership sends communication to all schools related to the implementation of the district and school LGBTQ+ best practices to ensure the consistency of enactment.

## LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency

Professional development training focused on providing data driven LGBTQ+ cultural competency training to all school administrators, support personnel, staff, and teachers.

## LGBTQ+ Support Guide Implementation

Develop and implement a comprehensive support guide that will ensure all schools have the tools and knowledge to be able to handle any LGBTQ+ related situation with equity across the district.

## LGBTQ+ Liaisons

### District LGBTQ+ Liaison:

Handles the programmatic success of all district level LGBTQ+ initiatives; primarily the implementation, development, and continuation of the district best practices.

### School LGBTQ+ Liaison:

Coordinates all school LGBTQ+ best practices, with the goal to develop a school culture that is inclusive for all students.

## Transgender and Gender Diverse Student Support

Affirming students' gender identity and expression by attending to affirmed pronouns, dress, restrooms, facilities, and school functions.

Socially transitioned transgender children who are supported in their gender identity have developmentally normative levels of depression and only minimal elevations in anxiety, suggesting that psychopathology is not inevitable within this group.

## Inclusive Materials and Clubs

LGBTQ+ related stickers and posters are accessible to staff who are interested, to demonstrate their room is a "safe space" and that they are an ally to LGBTQ youth.

All middle and high schools have a Gay-Straight Alliance that is active, supported, and resourced.

### [pflag.org](http://pflag.org)

Uniting people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) with families, friends, and allies, PFLAG is committed to advancing equality through support and education.

### [genderspectrum.org](http://genderspectrum.org)

Offers resources to empower your relationships with youth and children. From how-to guides, research, to sample training materials, they provide tools to create gender inclusive environments.

### [familyproject.sfsu.edu/publications](http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/publications)

A research, intervention, education and policy initiative that works to prevent health and mental health risks for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) children and youth.

### [glsen.org](http://glsen.org)

National organization that provides tools and resources to help educators and schools to ensure safe and affirming environments for LGBTQ+ students.

### The Trevor Project: [thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org)

**Trevor Lifeline**—The only national 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention lifeline for LGBTQ+ young people under 25, available at 1-866-488-7386.

**TrevorChat**—A free, confidential, secure instant messaging service for LGBTQ+ youth that provides live help from trained volunteer counselors, open daily.

**TrevorText**—A free, confidential, secure service in which LGBTQ+ young people can text a trained Trevor counselor for support and crisis intervention, available daily by texting START to 678678.