

Bullying and LGBT Youth

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Agenda



- Introductions/Goals
- Take a Stand Activity
- Terminology
- The Reality for LGBTQ Youth
- School Climate
- Next Steps

Goals

- Highlight the realities of LGBTQ youth
- Explore approaches and strategies currently being used to combat anti LGBTQ bullying
- Discuss next steps to ensure safe schools for ALL students



Addressing LGBTQ issues in the schools

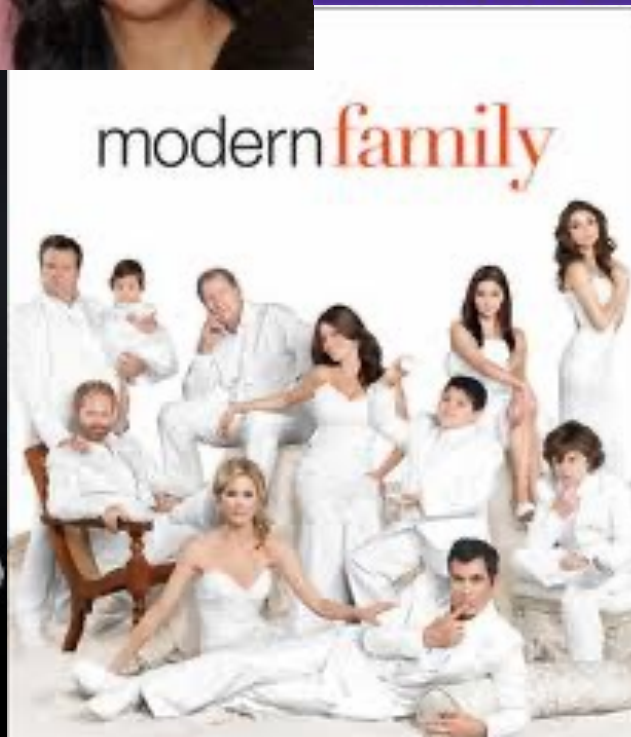
- Controversial

- Regardless of our values and beliefs, we can all agree that EVERY student deserves a safe and affirming school environment

“The times they are a changing”

- Same sex marriage debate
- DADT/DOMA
- Growing acceptance on social and even political level
- Increasing visibility of LGBTQ people and families

Visibility matters



Take a stand

- Talking about LGBTQ issues in the schools is risky because of how some parents/school board members/administrators might react
- Prejudice around LGBTQ issues exists in my school

What's in a name?

- LGBTQ
- Homophobia vs. Heterosexism
- Addressing the needs of children/youth with same sex parents
- Dealing with forms, directories, holidays, and invisibility

LGBTQ youth: The reality

- Young people are coming out at younger ages (changed in past 30 years from 19 to 16 years old)
- Living with bullying is a DAILY reality for LGBTQ students
- Children and teens are targeted not because they are out as LGBTQ but because they are different

The reality

- Issues vary at elementary, middle, and high schools
- Nationwide schools are hostile environments for many LGBTQ students
- Many LGBTQ youth hear homophobic remarks and face verbal/physical harassment and assault because of their sexual orientation or gender expression
- For last 10 years, GLSEN has collected data on experiences of LGBTQ youth

Elementary school reality

- GLSEN report: Playgrounds and Prejudice
- Sample of elementary students and teachers
- Biased remarks at school (45%-49% students/teachers hear gay in negative way; 39-48% hear gender judging or sexist remarks; 26% hear homophobic slurs)
- 36% of students report being called names or bullied and report lower grades and QOL and higher stress
- 49% of teachers view bullying and name calling as a serious problem

Elementary school reality

- Almost 10% of students report they do NOT conform to traditional gender norms
- Less than half of teachers (41%) believe that non traditional gendered students would feel comfortable at their school
- 83% teachers believe they have an obligation to ensure a safe environment for students who do not conform to traditional gender norms
- Most believe that school personnel would be supportive but fewer believe that district administration, board, parents or PTA would be supportive

Middle school reality

- GLSEN report: From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America
- Sample of middle school students
- Homophobic and negative gender comments are pervasive in middle school; more common than HS
- Biased remarks at school (91% students hear gay in negative way; 63% hear gender judging or sexist remarks; 82% hear homophobic slurs)

Middle school reality

- Harassment in middle school
 - 72-91% of LGBT students were verbally harassed (gender vs. LGBT); 41-59% were physically harassed (gender vs. LGBT); 24-39% were physically assaulted (gender vs. LGBT)
- Middle school students were much more likely to report victimization than HS students
- 57% of those never told school staff and 50% never told a family member; only 29% said reporting led to effective interventions

High school reality

- GLSEN report: From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America
- Sample of secondary school students and teachers
- LGBT students (22%) are three times as likely as non LGBT students (7%) to feel not safe at school
- 92% LGBT teens have been verbally or physically harassed or assaulted in the past year

High school reality

- Most students (65%) experience some harassment in school because of perceived or actual appearance, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, race/ethnicity, disability or religion
- 33% frequently harassed because of real or perceived sexual orientation
- 57% or 51% hear homophobic/sexist remarks
- 39% hear “that’s so gay” or “you’re so gay”
- 36% believe that bullying or harassment is a serious problem at their schools

From teasing to torment

- Nature & type of bullying and harassment varies by type of school
 - More in junior high
 - More in public schools (34%) than private/parochial (18%)
- Public school students are less likely to feel very safe at their school (44% vs. 81%)
- Students at private schools are less likely to know a LGBT student

- This high incidence of harassment and assault is exacerbated by school staff rarely, if ever intervening
- 62% of those students believe little or no action will be taken or the situation will be made worse
- 34% of those students who did report an incident said that school staff did nothing

Academic consequences of not feeling or being safe

- 29% of students skipped a class at least once in past month; almost 50% missed at least one entire day of school in past month
- The more frequently they are harassed the more likely they are to miss school; 3X more likely to miss school if victimized
- Those who were harassed regularly had significantly lower GPAs
- GPAs almost half a grade lower and more likely to have lower educational aspirations

Personal consequences of not feeling/being safe

- Victimization leads to higher levels of depression, anxiety, and lower levels of self-esteem
- 2-6X more likely to attempt suicide and may account for as many as 30% of youth suicides

Overall effects

- LGBTQ youth suffer emotionally, socially, and academically
- Unlike other youth targeted by bullies, they cannot often ask for help at home for fear of rejection
- These effects can be life altering

School climate

- Norms, values and expectations that support students feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe
- More than a safety issue; it is about a student's right to an education

School climate

- Ultimately school climate affects how LGBTQ students feel about being at school
- A “null” environment is never enough
- An affirming and safe school is one where LGBTQ students are proactively told that they matter and where visible allies exist

What research says makes a difference

- ④ Having a comprehensive, effective, and enforced bullying/harassment policy that explicitly addresses bias-based bullying
- ④ Creating an inclusive curriculum
- ④ Training teachers and school personnel to intervene thus creating a presence of supportive educators
- ④ Supporting Gay-Straight Alliances and other visible programmatic efforts
- ④ **LGBT students with these resources/interventions are less likely to hear homophobic and anti gender remarks**

What schools can do

- Support national programming (e.g., No Name Calling Week, Day of Silence, National Coming Out Day)
- Form a Gay Straight Alliance
- Curricular interventions
- Expose students to positive messages about LGBT individuals
- Develop effective professional development training on LGBTQ issues
- Be proactive!!

Importance of school resources

- Gay-Straight Alliances: mostly at HS level; very few MS students (4%) have GSAs or other student clubs
- Supportive School Staff: 64% MS students report having at least one supportive teacher/staff member compared to 86% HS
- LGBT-Inclusive Curriculum: Most ES/MS students report fewer curricular resources (e.g., library materials, access to internet resources, readings)
- Comprehensive School Anti-Harassment Policies: Less common to address LGBT/gender harassment at MS and ES level

Using a competency approach

- Necessary competencies will vary for students, teachers, and administrators
- Many students want to intervene but don't know how
- Create opportunities for students to learn skills (e.g., role plays, Use Another Word)
- Show videos/movies that offer alternative perspective and provide examples of how to respond

Necessary competencies

- Brainstorm Common Incidents
- Responding to Negative Incidents
 - Be Aware
 - Intervene (Stop the behavior)
 - Show Empathy
 - Educate
 - Report
- Responding to LGBTQ Students
 - Be Aware
 - Demonstrate openness
 - Initiate and anticipate
 - Be LGBTQ affirmative

Barriers to success

- Brainstorm barriers and how to deal with them

Next steps

- What to consider as you enhance your programs and policies oriented towards creating/ensuring safe schools

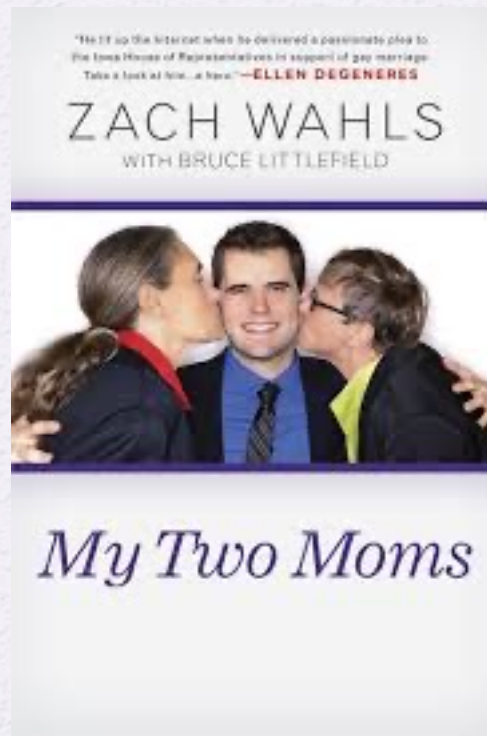
Letting children lead us

- <http://groundspark.org/trailers/itselementary.html>



Zach Wahls speaks about family

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMLZO-sObzQ>



Questions/Answers