



WESTERN NEW YORK INC.
growing lgbtq+ youth support

716.855.0221 | www.glyswny.org

GROWING LGBTQ+ YOUTH SUPPORT

GLYS Mission

GLYS WNY builds affirming cultures and supportive communities for youth of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.



Gay & Lesbian Youth of Buffalo (GLYB) was founded in **1983** by members of the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier (MSNF) as a part-time volunteer based organization that offered a Drop-In Center (DIC) and peer support for LGBTQ+ youth



In **2000**, GLYS became a full time youth development agency



During **2020** GLYS did some rebranding and changed our name to GLYS Western New York, Inc. *Growing LGBTQ+ Youth Support*

In **1994** GLYB changed our name to Gay & Lesbian Youth Services (GLYS) of Western New York



42 years later in **2025** GLYS is still going strong and engages hundreds of youth across Western New York each year. We provide a wide variety of support services to youth, their families and community members in order to promote the safest and most inclusive spaces possible and provide young people the opportunity to be leaders in their community.

ACRONYMS

GLYS - **G**rowing **L**GBTQ+ **Y**outh **S**upport

LGBTQ+ - **l**esbian, **g**ay, **b**isexual, **t**ransgender, and **q**ueer or **q**uestioning and includes anyone who affirmatively identifies in this community.

TGNC - **T**rans and **G**ender **N**on-**C**onforming (other acronyms you may have seen: TGNB, TGE, TGD...)

SOGIE - **S**exual **O**rientation, **G**ender **I**ntity & **E**xpression

SUPPORT

having at least one supportive adult can reduce
the risk of a suicide attempt among LGBTQ
young people by 40%

– The Trevor Project, 2019



Among all LGBTQ+ young people, 84% wanted mental health care - of those young people, 50% of them were not able to access mental health care in the past year

**Over 60% of LGBTQ+ youth in NYS
ages 13-17 said they had
experienced bullying based on their
SOGIE identities in the last year**

What is a Safe Space?



Safe Space: a supportive and affirming environment for LGBTQ+ young people.

- While we can never ensure that any space is going to be “safe” 100% of the time, a safe space is a place, group or community that is *intentionally* working to affirm LGBTQ+ young people

At GLYS, we provide a safe(r) environment for LGBTQ+ young people through...

Programs

- Drop-In Center
- Trans support group
- Youth Advisory Board
- Youth Leadership Conferences
- Pride Prom
- PrideALIVE
- Caregiver support group
- Programming for families with young children

Support

- Support for WNY GSAs
- PATHWAYS program
- TRUTH Roundtable
- One-on-one caregiver support
- Peer Caregiver Helpline
- Safe Space trainings and other community trainings
- Building relationships among community organizations

**A majority of LGBTQ+ young people say
the best way to support them is**
“trust that I know who I am”
&
“stand up for me”

NEW YORK STATE LAWS & REGULATIONS

Many LGBTQ+ youth are not
aware of the specific rights they
have
as minors in school



90% of LGBTQ+ youth said the anti-LGBTQ+ climate
had a negative impact on their mental health

45% of TGNC youth reported that their family was
considering moving to another state to avoid anti-
LGBTQ+ legislation

78% of LGBTQ+ young people in
New York State said the community
they live in *is accepting* of LGBTQ+
people,
including **75%** of TGNC young people

New York State Protections

Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) and Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act (SONDA):

Discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived gender identity or expression or sexual orientation is prohibited in all areas covered by the Human Rights Law, including employment, housing, places of public accommodation, and non-religious schools.

DASA Dignity for All Students Act:

Protects students from harassment or discrimination by employees or students on school property, a school bus or at a school function based on race, weight, national origin, ethnicity, religion, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex.



Legal Resources for Western NY

New York State Division of Human Rights

<https://dhr.ny.gov/lgbtq>

- Deals with discrimination based on sexual orientation & gender identity or expression.

Empire Justice Center

<https://empirejustice.org/lgbtq-rights/>

- Free legal services to low-income LGBTQI+ clients in New York State (outside of NYC).
- Focus on employment, education, housing, credit, public accommodations, as well as name and gender marker changes.

PrideLaw Legal Services (through Center for Elder Law and Justice)

<https://www.elderjusticenyc.org/pride-law>

- Offers free services to LGBTQIA+ people in WNY (no income requirement)
- Advance planning, civil rights disputes, discrimination claims, gender marker changes, legal name changes...



QUESTIONS?

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