School-based Interventions to Improve the Wellbeing of Students, with a focus on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Youth

Presentation to the New York State Board of Regents November 5, 2018
Panel Introductions

- Eliza Byard, Executive Director, GLSEN
- Peter A. Wyman, PhD., Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Rochester School of Medicine
- Sally King, Sophie Vieni, and Raven Lacey, Peer Leaders, Guilderland Central School District’s Sources of Strength Program
Agenda

- Introduction of Panel Members
- Championing LGBTQ Issues in K-12 education
- Sources of Strength Evidence-Based Health Promotion & Youth Suicide Prevention Project
- Student Peer Leaders as Change Agents
- New York State Involvement & Resources
- Questions
GLSEN connects with decision-makers in education at all levels. Our experience motivates and supports changemakers improving school climate in K-12 schools nationwide.

GLSEN is a trusted partner in the education world, providing programs, research, resources, and PD for LGBTQ-inclusive schools.
Local Impact via Student, Educator, Chapter Networks

GLSEN reaches all 50 states through our educator & student networks, and via 40 local chapters.
LGBTQ Youth Experience
Presence Nationally

- Federal YRBS 2017: 15% of U.S. students identified as LGB or “not sure”
- Transgender students: est. 130,000-200,000

8,300,000+ students across the U.S.

SOURCE: CDC-DASH Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2017
82.1% of students have an LGBTQ person in their lives

- 72.6% know an LGBTQ student *at their school*
- 22.5% have an LGBTQ *family member*
- 2.2% have an LGBTQ *parent*

SOURCE: From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited (GLSEN 2016)
LGBTQ Student Experience: Risk Profile

LGB students’ risk factors significantly higher than non-LGB peers:

- Mental health/suicidality: 5 of 5 indicators
- Violence-related: 12 of 13
- Tobacco use-related: 13 of 18
- Alcohol/other drug use-related: 19 of 20
- Sexual behavior-related: 7 of 8

SOURCE: CDC-DASH Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2017
Compared to other students, gender nonconforming students in elementary school were more likely to:

- Be called names, made fun of or bullied
- Have mean rumors or lies spread about them
- Feel very safe at school
- Miss school for safety reasons

SOURCE: GLSEN's Playgrounds & Prejudice: Elementary School Climate in the U.S.
Data From:

GLSEN’s 2017 National School Climate Survey

Full report and executive summary at glsen.org/nscs
New York State: LGBTQ Youth Victimization

**Figure 1. Hearing Anti-LGBT Remarks from Students in New York Schools**
(percentage of LGBTQ students hearing remarks sometimes, often, or frequently)

- "Gay" Used in a Negative Way (e.g., “that’s so gay”): 87%
- Homophobic Remarks (e.g., “fag” “dyke”): 77%
- Negative Remarks about Gender Expression: 85%
- Negative Remarks about Transgender People: 63%

**Figure 2. Identity-based Harassment & Assault in New York Schools**
(percentage of LGBTQ students harassed or assaulted)

- Sexual Orientation: 21% (65% Verbal Harassment, 9% Physical Harassment, 6% Physical Assault)
- Gender Expression: 16% (50% Verbal Harassment, 8% Physical Harassment)
- Gender: 16% (42% Verbal Harassment, 6% Physical Harassment)
- Race or Ethnicity: 19% (19% Verbal Harassment, 3% Physical Harassment, 6% Physical Assault)
- Disability: 21% (21% Verbal Harassment, 6% Physical Harassment, 4% Physical Assault)

*SOURCE: GLSEN’s 2015 New York State Snapshot*
New York State: Anti-LGBTQ Discrimination

Figure 3. Discrimination Against LGBTQ Students in New York Schools
(percentage that were prevented from...)

- Expressing PDA in School: 21%
- Using the Bathroom or Locker Room that Aligns with Gender: 21%
- Wearing Clothes Considered Inappropriate for Their Gender: 17%
- Using Their Preferred Name or Gender Pronoun: 17%
- Bringing a Same-gender Date to a School Dance: 11%
- Forming or Promoting a GSA: 8%
Differential Impact of Bias on LGBTQ Youth

**Race/Ethnicity:** LGBTQ students of color had higher rates of victimization based on race/ethnicity than White students. Asian/South Asian/Pacific Islander students experienced the lowest victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression.

**Gender Identity:** Transgender, genderqueer, and other non-cisgender students faced more hostile school climates.

**Gender Expression:** Gender nonconforming cisgender students experienced more hostile school climates.

**Sexual Orientation:** Bisexual students experienced less peer victimization, poorer mental health outcomes, and were less likely to be “out.”
Victimization & Wellbeing
The Impact of Hostile School Climate

- Victimization and Discrimination
  - ↓ Academic achievement
  - ↓ Educational aspirations
  - ↓ School belonging
  - ↑ Missing school

- Victimization and Discrimination

- ↑ Depression
- ↓ Self-Esteem

Academic achievement and Educational aspirations decrease, while School belonging decreases and Missing school increases. The result is an increase in Depression and a decrease in Self-Esteem.
School Belonging, Self-Esteem & Depression

**Figure 1.29 School Belonging by Experiences of Victimization and Discrimination**
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Demonstrating Positive School Belonging)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience of Discrimination</th>
<th>Lower Victimization</th>
<th>Higher Victimization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Expression</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.30 Self-Esteem by Experiences of Victimization and Discrimination**
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Demonstrating Higher Levels of Self-Esteem)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience of Discrimination</th>
<th>Lower Victimization</th>
<th>Higher Victimization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Expression</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.31 Depression by Experiences of Victimization and Discrimination**
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Demonstrating Higher Levels of Depression)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience of Discrimination</th>
<th>Lower Victimization</th>
<th>Higher Victimization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Expression</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey
School-Based Interventions
In-School Interventions: Four Supports

- Supportive Educators
- Comprehensive Policies
- Inclusive Curriculum
- Student Clubs
New York State: School-Based Supports

Figure 4. Availability of LGBT-Related Resources & Supports in New York Schools

- Comprehensive Policy: 22%
- At Least One Supportive Educator: 98%
- 6 or More Supportive Educators: 77%
- Gay-Straight Alliance: 68%
- Inclusive Curriculum: 31%
- Library Resources: 49%
- Internet Access: 60%

SOURCE: GLSEN’s 2015 New York State Snapshot
GSAs: Reduced Victimization, Absenteeism

Figure 2.10 Presence of GSAs and Victimization
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Experiencing Higher Levels of Victimization)

- Victimization Because of Sexual Orientation
  - School Does Not Have a GSA: 21.5%
  - School Has a GSA: 38.1%
- Victimization Because of Gender Expression
  - School Does Not Have a GSA: 25.1%
  - School Has a GSA: 37.8%

Figure 2.9 Presence of GSAs and LGBTQ Students’ Feelings of Safety and Missing School

- Felt Unsafe Because of Sexual Orientation
  - School Does Not Have a GSA: 48.2%
  - School Has a GSA: 51.7%
- Felt Unsafe Because of Gender Expression
  - School Does Not Have a GSA: 41.3%
  - School Has a GSA: 41.8%
- Missed at Least One Day of School in the Past Month
  - School Does Not Have a GSA: 28.7%
  - School Has a GSA: 25.1%

SOURCE: GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey
GSAs: Increased Faculty Support & Intervention

Figure 2.11 Presence of GSAs and Number of School Staff Supportive of LGBTQ Students

- School Does Not Have a GSA:
  - 6.9% No Supportive Staff
  - 44.4% Some (1-10) Supportive Staff
  - 73.4% Many (11 or more) Supportive Staff
- School Has a GSA:
  - 0.4% No Supportive Staff
  - 55.3% Some (1-10) Supportive Staff
  - 19.7% Many (11 or more) Supportive Staff

Figure 2.12 Presence of GSAs and Intervention in Anti-LGBTQ Remarks

- Intervention in Homophobic Remarks:
  - School Does Not Have a GSA: 11.3%
  - School Has a GSA: 18.2%
- Intervention in Negative Remarks About Gender Expression:
  - School Does Not Have a GSA: 7.0%
  - School Has a GSA: 11.1%

SOURCE: GLSEN’s 2017 National School Climate Survey
School Policies: Reduced Anti-LGBTQ Remarks

Figure 2.26 School Harassment/Assault Policies and Frequency of Hearing Anti-LGBTQ Remarks
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Hearing Remarks Often or Frequently)

- "Gay" Used in a Negative Way: 74.5% (No Policy), 72.5% (Generic Policy), 64.3% (Partially Enumerated Policy), 55.6% (Comprehensive Policy)
- "No Homo": 41.3% (No Policy), 41.6% (Generic Policy), 35.4% (Partially Enumerated Policy), 30.0% (Comprehensive Policy)
- Other Homophobic Remarks: 64.7% (No Policy), 62.5% (Generic Policy), 54.9% (Partially Enumerated Policy), 46.6% (Comprehensive Policy)
- Negative Remarks Regarding Gender Expression: 66.3% (No Policy), 63.7% (Generic Policy), 60.0% (Partially Enumerated Policy), 51.0% (Comprehensive Policy)
- Negative Remarks about Transgender People: 49.8% (No Policy), 47.3% (Generic Policy), 40.4% (Partially Enumerated Policy), 34.7% (Comprehensive Policy)

SOURCE: GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey
School Policies: Victimization & Staff Support

Figure 2.27 School Harassment/Assault Policies and Experiences of Victimization
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Experiencing Higher Levels of Victimization)

Figure 2.28 School Harassment/Assault Policies and Staff Intervention in Anti-LGBTQ Remarks
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Reporting that Staff Intervened Most of the Time or Always)

SOURCE: GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey
Supportive Staff: Greater Safety & Aspirations

Figure 2.18 Supportive School Staff and Feelings of Safety and Missing School

- Felt Unsafe Because of Sexual Orientation:
  - No Supportive Staff: 79.2%
  - Some (1-10) Supportive Staff: 68.3%
  - Many (11 or More) Supportive Staff: 48.8%
  - Missed at Least One Day of School in the Past Month:
    - No Supportive Staff: 51.0%
    - Some (1-10) Supportive Staff: 50.8%
    - Many (11 or More) Supportive Staff: 43.8%
  - Felt Unsafe Because of Gender Expression:
    - No Supportive Staff: 43.4%
    - Some (1-10) Supportive Staff: 34.8%
    - Many (11 or More) Supportive Staff: 20.1%

Figure 2.19 Supportive School Staff and Educational Aspirations

- LGBTQ Students Not Planning to Pursue Post-Secondary Education:
  - No Supportive Staff: 14.2%
  - Some (1-10) Supportive Staff: 7.6%
  - Many (11 or More) Supportive Staff: 3.7%

- LGBTQ Students Not Planning to Complete High School or Not Sure:
  - No Supportive Staff: 4.9%
  - Some (1-10) Supportive Staff: 1.4%
  - Many (11 or More) Supportive Staff: 0.5%

SOURCE: GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey
Changes in School Resources and Supports Over Time

Availability of LGBTQ-Related School Resources Over Time
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Reporting Resource in School, Accounting for Covariates)

SOURCE: GLSEN’s 2017 National School Climate Survey
Anti-LGBTQ Remarks Over Time

Between 2015 and 2017:

- There was **no difference** in general homophobic remarks.
- Remarks like “that’s so gay” have increased.
- Negative remarks about transgender people have **increased**.

SOURCE: GLSEN’s 2017 National School Climate Survey
Victimization Over Time

Frequency of School Victimization Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression Over Time
(Percentage of LGBTQ Students Reporting Event Often or Frequently, Based on Estimated Marginal Means)

Sexual Orientation
- Verbal Harassment
- Physical Harassment
- Physical Assault

Gender Expression
- Verbal Harassment
- Physical Harassment
- Physical Assault

Download the National School Climate Survey summary, full report, and infographics at glsen.org/nsces

SOURCE: GLSEN’s 2017 National School Climate Survey
Reporting Victimization Over Time

- LGBTQ students were somewhat more likely to report victimization to school staff in 2017.

- But overall, they felt that reporting was less effective.

SOURCE: GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey
Discrimination Over Time

- Most forms of discrimination were not different between 2015 and 2017, but lower than 2013.

SOURCE: GLSEN’s 2017 National School Climate Survey
Discrimination Over Time

- Most forms of discrimination were not different between 2015 and 2017, but lower than 2013.
- Gender-specific discrimination increased in 2017.

SOURCE: GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey
Conclusions: Causes for Concern

- School remains a hostile place for many LGBTQ students and more work needs to be done to ensure safe and affirming schools for all.
- Overall, improvements that we have been seeing may be somewhat stalled.
- Gender-related topics have increased visibility, prove challenging for schools.
New York State Senate
Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

University of Rochester School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry
School and Community Prevention Program
Sources of Strength Modules for Training Peer Leaders

- Anger
- Anxiety/Worry
- Depression/Withdrawal

Signals to get help, examine Sources of Strength…

What is strong now?

Which 1 - 2 would you like to strengthen?
How It Works
Prevention Modalities ...
****Guilderland Central School District - 175 Peer Leaders – 44 Adult Mentors ****
Sources of Strength Objectives

- Spread Healthy Coping
- Strengthen Youth-Adult Connections
- Increase Help-Seeking & Receiving
Evidenced-Impact of Sources of Strength

- Randomized Controlled Trial (NIMH, SAMHSA funding)

- Peer Leaders
  - Increased healthy coping attitudes/norms
  - More connections to adults
  - 4X more likely to refer peer to adults
  - Largest gains for least connected, healthy peer leaders

- School Population
  - Increased help-seeking acceptability
  - Increased perception that adults help suicidal peers
  - Largest gains for suicidal students
Troubling Statistics

1 out of 5 children has a diagnosable mental health disorder

HALF OF ALL MENTAL ILLNESSES BEGIN BEFORE AGE 14.

ONLY 1 IN 5 KIDS RECEIVE THE HELP THEY NEED.
The Scope and Impact of Emotional Distress in Youth

- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for 15-to-24 year-olds.
- Emotional disturbance is associated with the highest rate of school failure: approximately 50 percent of students with a mental illness age 14 and older drop out of high school.
- A majority of youth in juvenile justice settings and other “cross system” needs have a Serious Emotional Disturbance.
NYS Education Department Involvement in the Promotion of Wellness and Prevention of Bullying

PARTNERSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS:

- NYS Governor’s Task Force on Suicide Prevention – NYSED Representative
- NYS Office of Mental Health Suicide Prevention Advisory Council – NYSED Representative
- Mental Health Education Advisory Council – NYSED Chair
- NYS Dignity Act Task Force – NYSED Chair
- Community Schools Technical Assistance Centers - NYSED Lead
- School-based Mental Health Centers - NYS Office of Mental Health
- School-based Health Centers - NYS Department of Health
- NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services – Prevention Agenda, including Recovery High Schools
New York State Education Resources

NYS 1st in the Nation to Require Mental Health Education in Schools

- Mental Health Education Literacy: Linking to a Continuum of Well-being - Comprehensive Guide released in June 2018
- Additional resources available:
  http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/health-education/
  https://www.schoolhealthny.com/

Safe and Supportive Schools Technical Assistance Center

- Provide on-site technical assistance to schools receiving Supportive Schools Grants on Social Emotional Learning; Trauma-Informed Practices; Mental Health Education & Supports; Restorative Practices; Parent, Family and Community Engagement; Student Leadership; among others;
- Distribute up to $100,000 grants to middle schools and high schools identified in need of technical assistance and resources to build healthy, supportive and safe learning environments.
World Day of Bullying Prevention at NYSED
October 1, 2018
GRACIAS
THANK YOU
MECÍA