

# ALL ABOUT BULLYING

## Bullying of LGBTQ+ Youth

Youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer/questioning (LGBTQ+), and those seen by others as LGBTQ+, have an elevated risk of being bullied at school, online and in their communities. This bullying can range from verbal teasing to extreme physical violence and hate crimes. While these risks can be very concerning for parents and caregivers, there are a number of things families can do to support, protect and advocate for their LGBTQ+ children.

### WHAT PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS NEED TO KNOW

- **Bullying or harassment** that is based on someone's sexual orientation or gender identity is a violation of civil rights. It should be reported to the school for investigation and disciplinary action. It **can also be reported as a crime** to local law enforcement, or as a **civil rights violation** to your state Attorney General's Office of Civil Rights.
- According to a Trevor Project survey, **half of all LGBTQ+ youth are bullied each year**, and those who are bullied have more suicidal thoughts and behaviors. It's important to check in with vulnerable youth and connect them with mental health supports when needed.
- **Family support is crucial.** Family acceptance promotes well-being and helps protect LGBTQ+ youth from depression and other risks. Making home a safe haven can build your child's resilience for handling stresses like bullying both during the school day and online.
- **Schools can be affirming.** According to a Trevor Project survey, about 54% of transgender and non-binary students report that their school is a gender-affirming place. Attending a gender-affirming school reduced the number of suicide attempts among non-binary and trans students.

### HOW PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS CAN HELP THEIR LGBTQ+ YOUTH

**Let your child know you accept and support them.**

- Voice your support and acceptance of your LGBTQ+ child. Feeling supported at home will build your child's self-worth AND open up communication so that they feel comfortable sharing any incidents of bullying with you.

**Work with your child's school.**

- LGBTQ+ youth need to feel confident that school is a safe place to learn and grow, where bullying and harassment are not tolerated. You can support a more positive school culture by volunteering at school and by staying in close communication with teachers and school leaders. Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Gender and Sexuality Development Clinic provides professional development trainings tailored to the school's needs in supporting LGBTQ+ students.
- As kids get older, parents and caregivers can help them advocate for themselves — for example, by helping them identify a supportive teacher who would be willing to sponsor an LGBTQ+ student group or gay-straight alliance.
- Advocate on your child's behalf for any harassment or bullying to be addressed. Inform the teacher, guidance counselor or principal when you learn of incidents of mean teasing or potential bullying. Consider whether to report the bullying to law enforcement, based on the specifics of the situation.

- Include your child in the safety planning process, to empower them after the disempowering experience of being bullied. Your child can share what kind of response would be most helpful or supportive from the adults at school — some kids would prefer a quiet, private word of support, while others would appreciate it if the teacher would speak to the whole class about the harm caused by bullying.

#### Seek additional support and resources.

- Help your child find a peer group or club, inside or outside school, where their identity is understood, accepted and supported. This experience can buffer against lasting harm from bullying.
- Educate yourself about LGBTQ+ youth issues by reading advocacy websites (for example, [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)) or by attending a webinar or other training on how to support your LGBTQ+ child.
- Talk to your child's pediatrician to get additional support and guidance.

Use the QR code under "Find Support" to access more LGBTQ+ resources.

## STRATEGIES TO SHARE WITH LGBTQ+ YOUTH FOR HANDLING BULLYING

- **Know that you are not alone**, and you can find the support you need to deal with the situation.
- **Seek help from a trusted adult right away** if you are being harassed and/or victimized due to your LGBTQ+ identity.
- **Seek out peer support groups** where your identity is accepted, such as a local center and/or an online community. Have a trusted adult help you select a safe online community.
- **Be a leader in your school and community.** Start a gay-straight alliance (GSA) that can offer peer support and guidance and can help improve the school environment for everyone.

Visit [www.chop.edu/schoolbullying](http://www.chop.edu/schoolbullying) to access the "Getting Support at School" fact sheet for tips on how your parent can work effectively with your school.

Visit [www.chop.edu/bullying](http://www.chop.edu/bullying) to access the "Tips for Youth" fact sheet for more tips on handling bullying.



### GET INVOLVED

Children, caregivers and school staff all play an important part in bullying prevention. To learn more about the different types of bullying and ways you can help, visit [violence.chop.edu/bullying-schools](http://violence.chop.edu/bullying-schools)



### FIND SUPPORT

Many organizations offer free resources to victims of bullying. For more information, visit [violence.chop.edu/bullying-prevention-resources](http://violence.chop.edu/bullying-prevention-resources)



### LEARN MORE

This handout is part of the "All About Bullying" fact sheet series developed by CHOP experts. To access the full suite of educational handouts, visit [violence.chop.edu/violence-prevention-tools#fact-sheets](http://violence.chop.edu/violence-prevention-tools#fact-sheets)