

ALL ABOUT BULLYING

LGBT youth-related bullying

Bullying of youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) can range from mild verbal teasing to extreme physical violence and hate crimes. LGBT youth, and those seen by others as LGBT, are at more risk than usual of being bullied at school, online, in their communities and sometimes even at home.

WHAT CAREGIVERS NEED TO KNOW

- **Schools aren't always a safe environment.**
 - Research shows that LGBT students are verbally harassed (including the use of homophobic teasing and slurs), physically harassed and physically assaulted at school because of their sexual orientation and gender identity/gender expression.
- **Bullies are in the minority.**
 - LGBT youth report that 75% of their peers do not have a problem with their identity as LGBT.
- **Bullying of LGBT youth has significant effects.**
 - These youth are more likely to skip school, smoke, use alcohol and drugs, or engage in other risky behaviors.
- **LGBT youth of color may face additional difficulty.**
 - Students might be bullied because of both sexual orientation and race/ethnicity. These students are more likely to miss school than those who were severely harassed based on sexual orientation only or race/ethnicity only.
- **Family support is crucial.**
 - Family acceptance promotes well-being and helps protect LGBT youth from risk.
 - Family rejection has a serious impact on a young LGBT person's risk for health and mental health.
 - Lack of family support can cause problems such as depression, suicide and homelessness.

STRATEGIES FOR CAREGIVERS TO HANDLE BULLYING OF LGBT YOUTH

- **Let your child know you accept and support them.**
 - Model your acceptance of your LGBT child for other family members, and encourage all family members to accept and include your LGBT child and treat the child with the same respect as they give other family members.
- **Work with your child's school.**
 - A culture in schools that tolerates bullying is unsafe for everyone. LGBT youth and their heterosexual peers need to feel confident that school is a safe place to learn and grow, where prejudiced behaviors are not tolerated.
 - Advocate on your child's behalf for any harassment and bullying to be addressed and for a safer, more accepting school climate.
- **Seek additional support.**
 - It's OK to ask for help. If you are struggling to accept your child's LGBT identity, seek help from a professional and/or a peer support group with other parents of LGBT children. This will help you learn how to talk with your child and support them in their experiences, despite your discomfort.

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“LGBT youth-related bullying” continued >

STRATEGIES TO SHARE WITH LGBT YOUTH ABOUT HANDLING BULLYING

- **Know that you are not alone** and give yourself 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 LGBT identity. Consider contacting your town's Special Victims Unit.
- **Seek out peer support groups** where your identity is accepted, such as a local LGBT 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 help protect you from being harassed and victimized and can help improve the school environment for everyone.

NEED HELP?

The Gender & Sexuality Development Clinic at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia offers medical and psychosocial support for gender-variant, gender-nonconforming, and transgender children and youth up to 21 years of age and their families.

LEARN MORE

chop.edu/gender
215-590-3537

 **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia**
Center for Violence Prevention

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RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Family Acceptance Project
familyproject.sfsu.edu

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
home.pflag.org

Gender Spectrum
genderspectrum.org

Gay-Straight Alliance Network
gsanetwork.org

Human Rights Campaign
hrc.org/explore/topic/transgender-children-youth

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network
nctsn.org

RESOURCES TO SHARE WITH YOUTH

It Gets Better Project
itgetsbetter.org

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
stopbullying.gov

The Trevor Project
thetrevorproject.org

The “All About Bullying” fact sheets are brought to you by Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia’s Center for Violence Prevention, a hospital-wide, evidence-based effort to protect youth from violence.

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