



# LGBTQ+ Part 1

## Take a Stand: Creating Safe Schools for LGBTQ+ Students

### Competency

Educators will learn about LGBTQ+ people and how to create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students.

### Key Method

Educators will learn and expand their awareness about school safety issues for LGBTQ+ students, analyze the factors that affect their safety, and develop an action plan to create safe spaces for this student population in learning communities.

### Method Components

Factors Contributing to a Safe/Unsafe Environment

#### **LGBTQ+ Terminology**

The language used to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people has evolved over the years. Gender identity and sexual orientation are the first terms to understand.

- **Sexual orientation** is an inherent or immutable, enduring, emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people. Sexual orientations:
  - Lesbian
  - Gay
  - Bisexual/Bi+
  - Asexual
- **Gender identity** is one's concept of themselves as male, female, a blend of both, or neither. This is how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. Gender identities:
  - Non-binary
  - Binary
  - Male
  - Female
  - Cisgender
  - Transgender/Trans

## Gender-nonconforming

### The impact of School Safety on LGBTQ+ Students

Safety is foundational to the success of every student. Abraham Maslow sought to explain human motivation through what is known as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. It starts with meeting the basic needs of food, water, and safety. Then moving to higher levels such as supportive friendships, feelings of accomplishment, and achieving potential.

Three types of safety are critically important to success in school and many other areas of life: emotional, mental, and physical safety.

- **Emotional Safety** is when someone feels safe to express emotions, is secure, and has the confidence to take risks, be challenged and to try something new.
- **Mental/Psychological Safety** is the belief that one will not be humiliated or teased for ideas offered, for asking questions or admitting mistakes.
- **Physical Safety** is the protection from violence, theft, and exposure to weapons and threats to establish a secure learning environment.

### Creating a Safe School Environment

Steps to create a safe school for LGBTQ+ students requires a comprehensive approach with multiple stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, students, and families. These are steps to consider in preparing a safe school for LGBTQ+ students:

- Welcome all children, families, and staff
- Promote gender equity and support transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive students
- Work to prevent bullying of all students
- Foster understanding and respect
- Implement inclusive policies & practices
- Use Inclusive curricular resources
- Create a safe space where LGBTQ+ can seek refuge if needed
- Provide gender-neutral bathrooms
- Train educators and staff
- Support LGBTQ+ student organizations
- Provide access to mental health services for all students

### Address Bullying and Harassment

Students who feel safe, supported, and included at school have better educational outcomes. LGBTQ+ students who have access to resources to support them at school, have better school experiences and academic success.

Inclusive policies and practices like these can work to create more inclusive and safer schools for LGBTQ+ students:

- GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCES/GENDER AND SEXUALITY ALLIANCES (GSAs) is one such resource. These extra-curricular clubs create safe, welcoming, and supportive environments for all students regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Among GSAs reported benefits:
  - LGBTQ+ students were less likely to hear homophobic remarks or other negative remarks about gender expression or transgender people
  - There was increased awareness, support, and acceptance among school staff and student peers for LGBTQ+ people
  - LGBTQ+ students were less likely to miss school because they felt unsafe
  - LGBTQ+ students felt a greater sense of belonging to their school community

Additionally, GSAs and their members are also involved in a range of activities where they can lead and educate school officials and their peers about education, safety, interpersonal support, leadership development, and other issues that matter to them. As of 2014, just 37% of high schools had

GSAAs, 17% of middle schools, and 5% of elementary schools.

Wraparound supports are necessary to support and keep LGBTQ+ students safe while at school. Educators should make themselves aware of various school and community services. They also need to know how to connect with them when needed to support a student in crisis. Those services may include:

- In GSAAs, LGBTQ+ students and their peer allies work together to promote social inclusion and a positive school climate for all students.
- Access to social service, legal counsel, and physical and mental health services providers experienced in serving LGBTQ+ youth
- Suicide hotline numbers
- Access to [The Trevor Project](#) which provides crisis intervention and help with suicide prevention, mental health issues, homelessness/housing insecurity, HIV/AIDS diagnosis, and more.

### Laws and Policies

Laws and policies can play a crucial role in making schools safe environments for LGBTQ+ students. Here are some ways in which laws and policies can help students:

- Anti-Discrimination Policies:
  - Laws and policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression help ensure LGBTQ+ students are protected in schools.
- Trans-Inclusive Policies:
  - Policies that recognize and affirm the gender identity of transgender and non-binary students can create a more inclusive environment for these students. These policies can include allowing students to use restrooms and locker rooms that match their gender identity, allowing students to use their preferred names and pronouns, and allowing students to participate in sports teams and other activities that align with their gender identity.
- Safe Schools Legislation:
  - Safe schools legislation can provide funding and support for programs and initiatives that promote inclusivity, diversity, and acceptance in schools. These programs can include training for staff to learn about issues impacting LGBTQ+ students and how to support and create safe spaces for them.

- Title IX Protections:
  - Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. In 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Title IX protections extend to transgender students, which means that schools cannot discriminate against transgender students based on their gender identity.

## Supporting Rationale and Research

American Psychology Association (2023). *Sexual orientation and gender identity*. American Psychological Association. Retrieved February 22, 2023, from <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/sexual-orientation>

American Psychology Association (2023). *Understanding Transgender People, Gender Identity and Gender Expression*. Retrieved March 25, 2023. <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/transgender-people-gender-identity-gender-expression>

GLSEN (n.d.). *Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network*. Retrieved February 25, 2023. <https://www.glsen.org/>

Marx, Robert A. (2016). "Gay-Straight Alliances Are Associated with Lower Levels of School-Based Victimization of LGBTQ+ Youth: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis" – *The Journal of Youth Adolescence*.  
[News.vanderbilt.edu/](https://news.vanderbilt.edu/), Vanderbilt Edu.  
<https://news.vanderbilt.edu/files/2016-Gay-Straight-Alliances...Victimization.pdf>.

Sawchuk, S. (2021). 'It's So Hard': As Trans Bans Spread, Experts Weight How to Balance Fairness and Inclusion in High School Sports. *The 74 Million*.  
<https://www.the74million.org/article/its-so-hard-as-trans-bans-spread-experts-weigh-how-to-balance-fairness-and-inclusion-in-high-school-sports/>

Wichita State University. (n.d.). *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*. Hierarchy of needs. Retrieved February 22, 2023.  
<https://www.wichita.edu/services/mrc/OIR/Pedagogy/Theories/maslow.php#:~:text=Maslow's%20Hierarchy%20of%20Needs&text=From%20the%20bottom%20up%2C%20the.esteem%2C%20and%20self%2Dactualization>

## Resources

### Creating Safe Spaces

[BEST PRACTICES FOR SERVING LGBTQ STUDENTS](#)

[GLSEN Safe Space Kit: Solidarity with LGBTQ+ Youth](#)

[Human Rights Campaign](#)

[Inclusive Curriculum Standards | GLSEN](#)

[LGBTQ Students Thanking their Educators](#)

[LGBTQ+ - Welcoming Schools](#)

[Model Laws and Policies | GLSEN](#)

[Policy Resources | GLSEN](#)

[Resources for Grassroots and State-Level Advocacy on LGBTQ+ Issues](#)

[Responding to Questions - Welcoming Schools](#)

[Safe Schools Laws](#)

[The Trevor Project](#)

[Transgender Exclusion in Sports](#)

[Universal Design All-Gender Restrooms](#)

[What Educators Should Know About LGBTQ+ Rights | NEA](#)

### Surveys

[The 2017 National School Climate Survey](#)

[State Research Snapshots | GLSEN: Navigator](#)

[Local School Climate Survey](#) (requires a free account)

Terminology and Statistics

[Glossary of Terms - Human Rights Campaign](#)

[NEA LGBTQ+ Terms \(BL\)](#)

[The 2017 National School Climate Survey](#)

## Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

*To earn this micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and be proficient in all components in Part 2.*

### Part 1. Overview Questions

#### **(200-400 word count)**

Please answer the following contextual questions to help our assessor understand your current situation.

*Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

1. What challenges have you faced as a teacher in creating a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ students in your school?
2. Have you received any training or support from your school administration on how to support LGBTQ+ students, and if so, what did that training entail?
3. In your experience, how have you developed a learning culture in your classroom?

**Passing:** Response provides specific examples from the educator's experience to justify the reason for choosing this micro-credential which addresses the needs of both the teacher and the student. The educator

includes a learning goal that describes what they hope to gain from earning this micro-credential.

## Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following 3 artifacts as evidence of your learning. See the Rubric for the passing score.

*Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

### **Artifact 1: Research and Summary**

Research policies and/or laws that protect LGBTQ+ students in your schools, district, or state. Consider including anti-discrimination, bullying prevention, and transgender-inclusive policies.

Share these policies or laws in summary form, such as a table. The suggested format is to list the source, include links, brief overviews of the laws/policies, and notes on each.

- The research is accurate, up-to-date, and from reputable sources.
- The summary includes the source, overview of the law or policy as well as notes on why the policy or law resonates with your learning in this micro-credential.
- The summary should include at least three policies or laws and no more than ten.

### **Artifact 2: Analyze Research** (250-300 words)

Write a 2-3 paragraph analysis about the impact of the policies and/or laws on LGBTQ+ students in the school, district, or state.

The analysis may include:

- An examination of the effectiveness of policies in reducing discrimination.
- Recommendations for improving academic outcomes.
- ways to promote inclusivity.
- Steps to identifying gaps in policies/laws in your area
- The external and internal factors that make spaces at school unsafe because of gaps in these policies/laws?

### **Artifact 3: Action Plan**

Based on your learning, create a list, chart, or diagram to share your thoughts on the following:

- The key stakeholders that need to be involved to create safer schools for all learners
- What you will do to make the learning environment safe The information and resources you will share with others

## Part 2. Rubric

	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>Artifact 1: Research and Summary</b>	<p>The summary includes at least three, but not more than ten, reputable sources.</p> <p>The format is easy to read with information that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of the laws/policies</li> <li>• notes on why these laws/policies resonate with your learning</li> <li>• a link to the laws/policies</li> </ul>	<p>The summary includes at least two, but not more than eleven, reputable sources.</p> <p>The format is easy to read with information that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an overview of the laws/policies,</li> <li>• notes on why these laws/policies resonate with your learning</li> <li>• a link to the laws/policies</li> </ul>	<p>The summary does not include three to ten resources or the format does not include this information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an overview of laws/policies,</li> <li>• notes on why these laws/policies resonate with your learning,</li> <li>• a link to the laws/policies</li> </ul>
<b>Artifact 2: Analyze Research</b>	<p>The analysis includes two to three paragraphs that describe in detail, how the</p>	<p>The analysis includes two to three paragraphs that describe in detail, how the</p>	<p>The analysis includes two to three paragraphs that describe in detail, how the policies/laws</p>

	<p>policies/laws affect the safety of the LGBTQ+ learners in your school.</p> <p>Completely describes the impact on your learners and their safety</p>	<p>policies/laws affect the safety of the LGBTQ+ learners in your school.</p> <p>Completely describes the impact on your learners and their safety</p>	<p>affect the safety of the LGBTQ+ learners in your school.</p> <p>Or does not completely describe the impact on your learners and their safety</p>
<p><b>Artifact 3: Action Plan</b></p>	<p>Action plan answers all three questions:</p> <p>Who are the key stakeholders that need to be involved in creating safe schools for all learners?</p> <p>What will you do to make the learning environment safe for all students?</p> <p>What information and resources will you share with others?</p>	<p>Action plan only answers two of these questions:</p> <p>Who are the key stakeholders that need to be involved in creating safe schools for all learners?</p> <p>What will you do to make the learning environment safe for all students?</p> <p>What information and resources will you share with others?</p>	<p>Action plan answers less than two of these questions:</p> <p>Who are the key stakeholders that need to be involved in creating safe schools for all learners?</p> <p>What will you do to make the learning environment safe for all students?</p> <p>What information and resources will you share with others?</p>

### Part 3 Reflection

**(200-400 words)**

Use the word count above as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection, review this resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

*Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

1. What new information have you learned that surprised you? What would you like to learn more about?
2. What advice would you offer others who are learning this material?
3. What learning was missing from this course ?

**Passing:** Reflection provides evidence that this activity has impacted the educator in positive ways, related to their learning and interactions with colleagues regarding this topic. Examples are from new information gained from research and interactions with colleagues. Notable action steps stem from research and discussions with colleagues and will be integrated into the educational setting in the future.