

## Ten Things Educators Can Do

### 1. Do Not Assume Heterosexuality

The constant assumption of heterosexuality renders LGBTQ people invisible. Such invisibility is devastating to the individual's sense of self. Both the school as an institution and its professionals must be inclusive in their language and attitudes. **Strategy:** *Remind yourselves that LGBTQ people are found on every staff, in every classroom, and on every team, and educators can “unlearn” heterosexism.*

### 2. Guarantee Equality

LGBTQ members of the school community need to know that their schools value equality and that they are protected against discrimination. **Strategy:** *Add sexual orientation and gender identity to your non-discrimination and harassment policies. In addition, sexual orientation and gender identity/expression should be included in multicultural and diversity statements as a way to communicate a commitment to equal treatment for all.*

### 3. Create a Safe Environment

It is the school's obligation to take proactive measures to ensure that all members of its community have a right to participate without fear of harassment. **Strategy:** *Make it clear that neither physical violence nor harassing language like “faggot” will be tolerated. Create a “Safe Zone” program—displaying posters, stickers, and other literature that encourage acceptance. It is a great way to communicate that your school is a safe environment for all.*

### 4. Diversify Library and Media Holdings

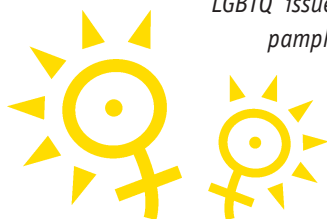
The library is frequently the first place to which students turn for accurate information about sexuality and gender. Too often, few or no works on LGBT issues are found there. Librarians and media specialists need to be sure their holdings are up to date and reflect the diversity of our world. Materials that reflect LGBT themes and authors should be prominently displayed and easily accessible to students seeking them. The library and media center should reflect LGBT holidays and events (find a list at [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)) in their programming, and should strive to make sure that individual classroom libraries are similarly inclusive. The GLSEN Bookstore is a great online “one-stop shopping” resource for LGBT materials. **Strategy:** *Develop and promote a library of resources such as the list offered at end of the Kit.*

### 5. Provide Training for Faculty and Staff

School staff need to be equipped to serve all the students with whom they work, including LGBTQ students and children from LGBT families. Understanding the needs of LGBTQ youth/families and developing the skills to meet those needs should be expected of all educators regardless of personal, political, or religious beliefs. **Strategy:** *Invite community speakers and experts in gender, media literacy, hate crimes, bullying and harassment prevention into the school to address these issues openly and through guided conversations and presentations with youth and staff. Key to reducing bullying and harassment is comprehensive bullying and harassment prevention programs and policy supports.*

### 6. Provide Appropriate Health Care and Education

While being LGBTQ is not only a “health issue,” health education on sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases should sensitively address the issues of LGBTQ people. **Strategy:** *Educate counselors and health staff to ensure their sensitivity to LGBTQ issues. By educating themselves about related support services and agencies, and making pamphlets and other literature available, health professionals can provide for the needs of the LGBTQ students and families with whom they work.*



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## 7. Be a Role Model

Actions speak louder than words. The most effective way to reduce anti-LGBTQ bias is to consistently behave in ways that appreciate all human beings and condemn discrimination of any kind. **Strategy:** *Publicly acknowledge role models.*

## 8. Provide Support for Students

Peer support and acceptance is the key to any student's sense of belonging in the school. "Gay-Straight Alliances" (GSAs) offer students this sense of belonging as well as the chance to effect positive change in their schools. GSAs welcome membership from any student interested in combating anti-LGBTQ bias and raising awareness of heterosexism and diverse gender/sexual identities. There are currently over 3,000 GSAs registered with GLSEN and countless more across the nation. Consider being a GSA advisor and helping students in your community to form a club that provides support, understanding and an avenue for promoting equality and school change. **Strategy:** *Demonstrate respectful language, intervening during instances of anti-LGBTQ harassment, and bringing diverse images into the classroom in safe and affirming ways, all staff members can be role models for the students with whom they work. Both straight and LGBTQ students benefit from having openly LGBT educators, coaches, and administrators. Staff members need not be "out" or LGBT themselves in order to be good role models.*

## 9. Reassess the Curriculum

Educators need to integrate LGBTQ issues throughout the curriculum—not just in classes such as health education, but also in disciplines such as English, history, art and science. **Strategy:** *Broaden curricula to include LGBT images where appropriate (such as in studies of the Holocaust and Civil Rights Movement). Current events, popular music and film, and other media that include LGBT people and issues should be regularly discussed in class. Classroom libraries, story times, and assigned reading should be thoughtfully structured to include the full range of human diversity. Take advantage of "teachable moments," treating questions, comments and instances of name-calling as opportunities to educate students about LGBT people and issues. Children spend the majority of their time in class. As long as LGBT issues are seen as "special" and outside the classroom, students will continue to see LGBT people as marginal.*

## 10. Broaden Entertainment and Extracurricular Programs

Extracurricular activities often set the tone for the community. Programs such as assemblies, film nights, and school fairs should regularly include content that reflects the diversity of our world. Special LGBTQ events and holidays such as LGBT History Month (October) and Pride Month (June) should be incorporated into school-wide celebrations. **Strategy:** *Guest speakers and lectures that can inform the school community about the unique needs and accomplishments of LGBT people should be a regular part of school programming.*

Adapted from GLSEN: [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

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