



# Supporting LGBTQIA+ Communities in Schools

## Supports for LGBTQIA+ Youth

Supports for LGBTQIA+ Youth is part of the *Supporting LGBTQIA+ Communities at School* series. This series identifies strategies, action items, and resources to build relationships and advocacy with LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and communities. See also [Guidance for Administrators](#) and [Resources for Teachers](#).

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Being an LGBTQIA+ person comes with its unique joys and challenges. Out, unsure, or vibrantly queer, you are always deserving of love and opportunity for authentic community. Below are supports to help you confidently advocate for yourself and others.

## Considerations for coming out

Coming out is a personal decision that has benefits and risks: it can help you live a more authentic life, but not everyone is understanding and accepting. The following suggestions center around the feelings of others, but we want to be clear: It is up to you to determine when, where, if, and how you want to come out. There is no “right way” – and it’s always okay if you prefer to be out in some spaces and not others.

- Practice what you want to say. Do not feel pressured to label yourself right away.
  - Seek support from adults who are out, school guidance counselors, mental health professionals, and other people in your life who you can trust to give you guidance. There are always people who can help.
  - Pay attention to how people respond to LGBTQIA+ issues to gauge their potential support.
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- Choose a relaxed, private space and schedule plenty of time to have the conversation.
- Time your conversation so that the other person can respond constructively. The person you come out to may experience discomfort, uncertainty, and even anger. Allow them to process their emotions, and recognize the person you are really coming out for is you.
- Be open and honest. Do your best not to assume prejudice.
- Provide resources that may help them understand and support you.
- Remember that you deserve love, support, safety, and joy.

## Selected resources

- [The Gay Straight Alliance Network](#) offers resources on starting your own GSA. They have resources for youth and adult leaders to build sustainable communities where LGBTQIA+ students can live authentically.
- [GLSEN \(Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network\)](#) is a national network of educators, students, and local chapters working toward LGBTQIA+ K-12 education across the country. They are known for their educational resources, programs for students, and leadership in the national Day of Silence.
- [Trevor Project Crisis Counselor](#): If you are thinking about harming yourself, get immediate support. Connect to a crisis counselor 24/7, 365 days a year, from anywhere in the U.S. It is 100% confidential, and 100% free. Chat, call, text options.
- [TrevorSpace](#): TrevorSpace is an affirming, online community for LGBTQIA+ young people between the ages of 13 and 24 years old. With over 400,000 members across the globe, you can explore your identity, get advice, find support, and make friends in a moderated community intentionally designed for you.



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MAEC is an education nonprofit dedicated to increasing access to high-quality education for culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students. The Center for Education Equity (CEE), a project of MAEC, is the Region I Equity Assistance Center funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Our publications promote equitable education for the benefit of all students by identifying best practices as they have been developed over the years and in varying contexts. It is up to each school district, teacher, and student to figure out how best to align these best practices with their own experience to achieve their goals.

The contents of this guide were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education under the Equity Assistance Centers Program. However, the contents of this guide do not necessarily represent the policy or views of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Department of Education or federal government, generally.

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Suggested citation: Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc. (2023). Supporting LGBTQIA+ Communities in Schools: Guidance for Administrators. Bethesda, MD. Edition: April 2023