

Creating Safe and Inclusive Spaces for LGBTQ+ Youth Webinar Handout

This handout was developed to accompany the PREP webinar titled, **Creating Safe and Inclusive Spaces for LGBTQ+ Youth**, on 2/10/22. Its purpose is to serve as an ongoing resource for PREP grantees as they seek to improve their understanding of sex and gender, LGBTQ+ inclusivity, and strategies for improving environments for LGBTQ+ learners.

1. Understand LGBTQ+ vocabulary.

- **Sex and Gender**
 - **Sex** refers to a series of biological attributes that primarily include physical features like genes, hormones, and anatomy.
 - <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity>
 - **Gender** refers to socially constructed roles and includes behavior, expression, and personal identification.
 - Gender Spectrum: [The Language of Gender](#)
- **What does LGBTQ+ mean?**
 - HRC [Glossary of Terms](#)
 - [The Gender Unicorn](#)

2. Define inclusivity and understand why it is important. Know that it exists on a spectrum.

- **LGBTQ+ inclusivity** refers to the degree to which programs are sensitive toward, responsive to, and encompassing of, the diverse experiences and needs of LGBTQ youth and families. Inclusivity is best envisioned on a spectrum. The handout includes several important definitions:
 - **“Inclusive:** Efforts have been made to include LGBTQ+ youth”
 - **“Affirming:** A program that validates, supports, respects, and values identities of all youth”
- **Why is it important?**
 - **Relevance:** LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to learn and apply skills that are relevant to their lives.
 - **Respect:** Inclusive environments promote positive environments for all students.
 - **Resilience:** LGBTQ+ youth experience stigma and discrimination that increases their risk for poor health outcomes. Addressing stigma and discrimination through programming can improve these outcomes.
 - [Seven Ways You Can Foster a More Inclusive LGBTQIA+ Learning Environment](#)
 - [Call to Action for LGBTQ+ Inclusive Sex Education](#)
 - [LGBT-Inclusive Sex Education Means Healthier Youth and Safer Schools](#)
 - **Relevant Literature**
 - Goldfarb, E. S., & Lieberman, L. D. (2021). Three decades of research: The case for comprehensive sex education. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 68*(1), 13–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.07.036>
 - O’Farrell, M., Corcoran, P., & Davoren, M. P. (2021). Examining LGBTI+ inclusive sexual health education from the perspective of both youth

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and facilitators: A systematic review. *BMJ Open*, 11(9), e047856.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34475162/>

- Proulx, C. N., Coulter, R. W. S., Egan, J. E., Matthews, D. D., & Mair, C. (2019). Associations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning–inclusive sex education with mental health outcomes and school-based victimization in U.S. high school students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 64(5), 608–614.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2018.11.012>

3. Practice strategies for making your program more inclusive.

- **Create a welcoming physical space.**
 - Include of posters with symbols and depictions of people that represent the LGBTQ+ community and affirm their presence, (e.g. rainbows and pink triangles, images of LGBTQ+ individuals, welcoming statements)
 - Be sure that these materials also include diversity within the LGBTQ+ community, for example, by race and ability
 - Include explicit statements of belongingness and acceptance
- **Get to know students and respect their identifiers.**
 - Ask students to share how they want to be addressed as you would in any classroom. Include name and pronouns for all students and respect students' choices about whether to engage with these questions. Allow opportunities to not answer.
 - Ask about where and when you can use that name and pronoun; remember, not all students are out to their parents or other teachers.
 - Provide information about how this will be kept confidential and when this information may be shared.
 - Make sure to abide by those boundaries
- **Address discrimination immediately and according to policy.**
 - Create inclusive nondiscrimination policies that are clearly stated and collaboratively developed with students. Post these policies in highly visible areas. Include intersections of identity.
- **Continually work on staff knowledge about LGBTQ+ topics.**
 - Practice literacy with LGBTQ+ vocabulary
 - Understand terminology as well as words to use with caution or avoid
 - Familiarize yourself with language used by your students; know when it is appropriate to incorporate these terms and what they mean.
 - Use gender neutral language
 - Especially important when discussing reproductive health and bodies
 - Extends to assumptions about partnerships; practices within vignettes and roleplay; greetings to the classroom (e.g., ladies and gentlemen)
 - Elicit feedback

4. Use tools and guides to assess the inclusivity of your programming.

- CDC inclusivity self-assessment
 - https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/disparities/mai/pdf/LGBTQ_Inclusivity-508.pdf
- **Guides for inclusivity**

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- [National LGBT Health Education Center: Creating an Inclusive Environment for LGBT Patients](#)
- Fenway Institute [Best Practices to Create a Safe and Inclusive Environment for LGBT Patients](#)
- GLSEN: [Developing LGBTQ-Inclusive Classroom Resources](#) and [LGBT-Inclusive Sex Education](#)
- FYSB: [Going Beyond the Acronym: Meaningful Inclusion of LGBTQ Youth](#)
- FYSB: [Practical Strategies for Creating Welcoming and Supportive Environments for All Youth](#)