

#Out4MentalHealth

This Fact Sheet serves to provide an overview of LGBTQ mental health in Shasta County in order to inform policy makers, providers, and community members about health disparities in their community and ways to address them.

ARE SHASTA COUNTY SCHOOLS SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF LGBTQ+ STUDENTS?

Educators and administrators work hard to create learning environments where all students can have the opportunity to reach their goals, make important contributions to the community and live fulfilling lives.

LGBTQ+ youth have dreams and aspirations just like their peers, but often face different challenges on campus, at home and in the community. The effects bullying, harassment or the stress of 'coming out' can have a negative impact on a young person's mental health. Studies have found LGBTQ+ youth have a higher risk of suicide and mental health issues because of the rejection they face from peers, family and society.

A 2017 study by the Human Rights Campaign of 1,700 California youth found that:

84%

of LGBTQ youth in California rated their average stress level as a 5 or higher on a 10 point scale.

78%

More than 78% of LGBTQ students in California felt depressed or down in the past week.

47%

indicated trouble concentrating or inability to focus on schoolwork in the past week.

45%

indicated feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, letting people down and/or not being a good person within the last week.

LGBTQ+ youth in rural areas, like Shasta County, are more at risk of bullying and harassment than LGBTQ+ students in urban or metropolitan areas. According to a **2012 nation wide survey by GLSEN of 2000 rural LGBTQ youth:**

87%

nearly 9 out of 10 rural LGBT students had been verbally harassed because of sexual orientation, and 68% due to gender expression.

81%

of rural LGBT students had felt unsafe at school during the past year because of a personal characteristic, like sexual orientation and gender expression.

45%

of rural LGBT students said they had been physically harassed (pushed or shoved), and 31% due to gender expression.

70%

of rural LGBT students had regularly had rumors or lies spread about them.

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF A HOSTILE SCHOOL CLIMATE FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH?

LGBTQ+ youth who feel unsafe at school may skip class or miss entire days because of the fear of harassment or assault, and the exhaustion of having to constantly hold their ground. According to a 2012 nation wide survey by GLSEN of 2000 rural LGBTQ youth.

36%

missed days of school because they felt unsafe.

53%

of LGBTQ+ students who had experienced high levels of victimization missed school in the past month compared to 29% of less severely victimized students.

45%

were uncomfortable raising LGBTQ+ issues in class.

70%

of rural LGBT students had regularly had rumors or lies spread about them.

The survey also found the LGBTQ+ students that experienced high levels of harassment and/or assault had significantly lower GPAs and college aspirations (3.2 GPA vs. 2.9 GPA).

WHAT ARE SHASTA COUNTY LGBTQ+ YOUTH EXPERIENCING?

Youth who attend NorCal OUTreach Project's weekly LGBTQ+ Youth Drop In report:

- Missing school or skipping class because of harassment related to their gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Switching schools or ultimately opting for home school because their school environment is hostile.
- Being told to not participate in high school traditions, such as dances or proms because a youth may have a date that is the same gender.
- Being forced off of sports teams or out of locker rooms because of their gender identity.
- Transgender students, their parents and supportive peers are having to struggle with teachers, staff or administration over correct pronoun and name use.

* While this information is informally obtained, it has been consistently reported throughout the 2-years the group has been meeting.

WHAT CAN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT DO?

We are confident that our local school districts want to give their students the best education possible. We want to support teachers, staff and administrators in creating safe climates where LGBTQ+ youth are thriving at the same level as their non-LGBTQ+ peers.

We believe that in order to support the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ youth, Shasta County School Districts should:

1. Mandate that all K-12 Educators and District Staff, who interface with students, complete training in culturally inclusive practices and how to support LGBTQ+ students. Training should be funded by each school district's Local Control and Accountability Plan, as mandated by the State Local Control Funding Formula.

2. Ensure that anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies explicitly list protections for gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.
3. Identify educators and staff that are willing to be a visible network of support for LGBTQ+ students and allow them to display a sticker or placard that clearly indicates they are a safe, supportive person to talk to.
4. Actively recruit teachers that are willing to serve as advisors and create formal GSA, Genders and Sexualities Alliances, clubs on campus, and empower youth to become leaders.
5. Make collecting Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) demographic data mandatory and arrange for students to participate in local, county or statewide LGBTQ+ surveys.

LGBTQ+ youth who report having at least one accepting adult in their life were 40% less likely to report a suicide attempt in the past year.

- The Trevor Project Research Brief 7/2019

CALIFORNIA LAWS PROTECTING LGBTQ+ YOUTH

AB 1266 - School Success and Opportunity Act

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/di/eo/faqs.asp>

AB 537 - California Student Safety and Violence Protection Act

Learn more about legal protections for LGBTQ students and staff.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/ss/se/documents/ab537report.pdf>

AB 9 - "Seth's Law" Anti-bullying policy requirements for California public schools.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/ss/se/sampleactionplan.asp>

AB 2246 - Youth Suicide Prevention

For information on mandated suicide prevention policies outlined in AB2246.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/cg/mh/suicideprevres.asp>

RESOURCES

HRC California LGBTQ Youth Report

<https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/YouthReport-California-Final.pdf>

GLSEN: LGBT students in Rural and Small Town Schools, Resources for educators.

<https://www.glsen.org/ruralreport>

GSA (Genders and Sexuality Alliance) Network

www.GSANetwork.org

Trevor Project: Accepting Adults Reduce Suicide Attempts Among LGBTQ+ Youth

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/2019/06/27/research-brief-accepting-adults-reducesuicide-attempts-among-lgbtq-youth/>

Creating Visibility: Why and how you should collect data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

<https://californialgbtqhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/How-Why-You-Should-Collect-SOGI-Data-FINAL.pdf>

NorCal OUTreach Project, Redding's LGBTQ+ Center

www.norcaloutreach.org

