**Understanding the Needs of LGBTQ Students:
Creating Safe, Inclusive, and Respectful Schools for All**
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Ohio Association of Pupil Services Administrators
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Today's Outline:

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Assessing Your Personal Beliefs

People aren't born prejudiced, so where does it come from? From the moment we are born, we are inundated with messages, spoken and unspoken, about different types of people. Often we learn stereotypes and prejudices without even realizing it. Some of these messages may have been about ourselves and what we are "supposed to" or not "supposed to" be.

All of us, LGBT and non-LGBT, have learned messages about LGBT people. What were the earliest messages you received about LGBT people and where did they come from? Were they positive, negative or neutral? Understanding the messages we receive can help us identify our own beliefs and biases that we can then challenge, helping to make us stronger allies. Use the "Check Yourself" Exercise below to explore your own biases.

Check Yourself: Understanding Your Own Beliefs

Anti-LGBT bias is all around us. Yet we tend to overlook the subtle biases — the anti-LGBT jokes, the exclusion of LGBT related-themes in curricula, even anti-LGBT name-calling. Subtle or not, bias has the power to hurt and isolate people. Your work as an ally includes recognizing and challenging your own anti-LGBT bias. Answer each question honestly, and consider how these will affect your work as an ally to LGBT students.

1. If someone were to come out to you as LGBT, what would your first thought be?

2. How would you feel if your child came out to you as LGBT? How would you feel if your mother, father or sibling came out to you as LGBT?

3. Would you go to a physician whom you thought was LGBT if they were of a different gender than you?
   What if they were the same gender as you?

4. Have you ever been to an LGBT social event, march or worship service? Why or why not?

5. Can you think of three historical figures who were lesbian, gay or bisexual?

6. Can you think of three historical figures who were transgender?

7. Have you ever laughed at or made a joke at the expense of LGBT people?

8. Have you ever stood up for an LGBT person being harassed? Why or why not?

9. If you do not identify as LGBT, how would you feel if people thought you were LGBT?

Recognizing your own biases is an important first step in becoming an ally. Based on your responses to these questions, do you think you have internalized some of the anti-LGBT messages pervasive in our world? How might your beliefs influence your actions as an educator of LGBT students? The more aware we are of our own biases and their impact on our behavior, the easier it is to ensure that our personal beliefs don't undermine our efforts to support LGBT students.
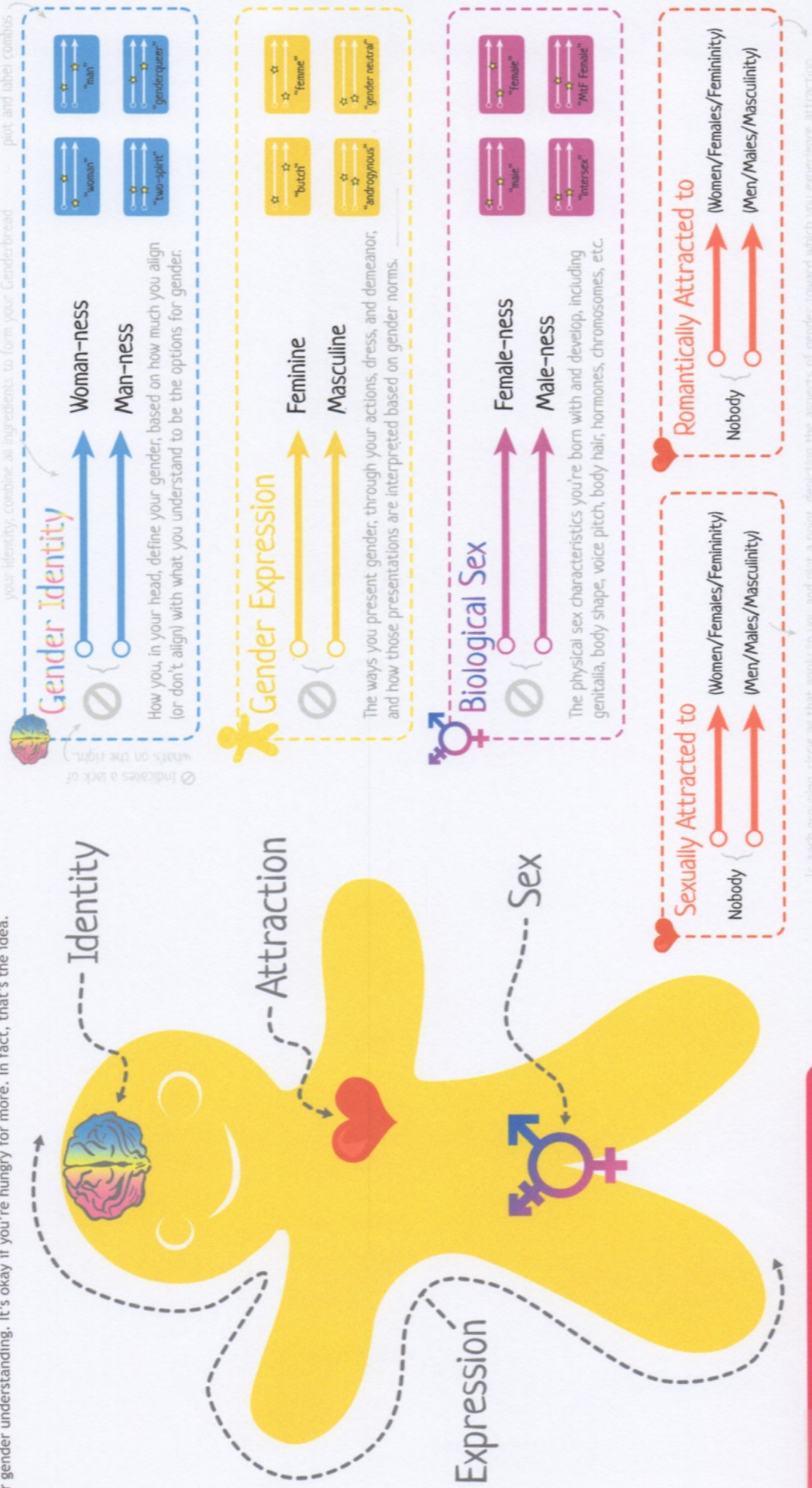
Match the definitions from Column 2 with the term from Column 1

		Column 1		Column 2
___	1.	Sexual Orientation	A.	The irrational fear or aversion to transgender people of those who are perceived to break or blur societal norms regarding gender identity or gender expression.
___	2.	Lesbian	B.	The inner feelings of who we are attracted or oriented to sexually and emotionally.
___	3.	Gender Identity	C.	Refers to an irrational fear of or aversion to homosexuality or lesbian, gay or bisexual people.
___	4.	Gender Expression	D.	An identity of a person whose gender identity is not aligned with their sex assigned at birth and/or whose gender expression is non-conforming.
___	5.	Transgender	E.	An individual's physical characteristics, behaviors and presentation that are linked, traditionally, to either masculinity or femininity, such as: appearance, dress, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions.
___	6.	Gay	F.	A sexual orientation and/or identity of a person who is female-identified and who is sexually and emotionally attracted to some other females.
___	7.	Gender Non-Conforming	G.	A sexual orientation and/or identity of a person who is sexually and emotionally attract to some males and some females.
___	8.	Androgynous	H.	Applies to attitudes, bias, and discrimination in favor of heterosexual sexuality and relationships. It includes the presumption that everyone is heterosexual or that male/female attractions and relationships are the norm and therefore superior. It is the belief that everyone is or should be straight.
___	9.	Bisexual	I.	A sexual orientation and/or identity of a person who is sexually and emotionally attracted to some members of the same sex.
___	10.	Transphobia	J.	How we identify ourselves in terms of our gender.
___	11.	Homophobia	K.	An identity of a person who has gender characteristics and/or behaviors that do not conform to traditional or societal gender expectations.
___	12.	Heterosexism	L.	An umbrella term used to describe a sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression that does not conform to heteronormative society.
___	13.	Queer	M.	Having the characteristics or nature of both maleness and femaleness; neither specifically feminine nor masculine.
___	14.	Cisgender	N.	An identity of a person whose gender identity is aligned with their sex assigned at birth and whose gender expression is conforming.

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The Genderbread Person v3.3

by *it's pronounced* METRO sexual.com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more. In fact, that's the idea.

— Identity

— Attraction

— Sex

Expression

Gender Identity

Plot a point on both continua in each category to represent your identity; combine all ingredients to form your Genderbread

How you, in your head, define your gender, based on how much you align (or don't align) with what you understand to be the options for gender:

Woman-ness

Man-ness

⊘ Indicates a lack of what's on the right.

"man"   "genderqueer"

"woman"   "two-spirit"

Gender Expression

The ways you present gender, through your actions, dress, and demeanor, and how those presentations are interpreted based on gender norms.

Feminine

Masculine

"femme"   "gender neutral"

"butch"   "androgynous"

Biological Sex

The physical sex characteristics you're born with and develop, including genitalia, body shape, voice pitch, body hair, hormones, chromosomes, etc.

Female-ness

Male-ness

"female"   "MtF Female"

"male"   "intersex"

4 (of infinite) possible plot and label combos

Sexually Attracted to

(Women/Females/Femininity)

(Men/Males/Masculinity)

Nobody

Romantically Attracted to

(Women/Females/Femininity)

(Men/Males/Masculinity)

Nobody

In each grouping, circle all that apply to you, and plot a point, depicting the aspects of gender toward which you experience attraction.

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SCHOOL CLIMATE IN OHIO

Findings from the GLSEN *2013 National School Climate Survey* demonstrate that Ohio schools were not safe for most lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) secondary school students. In addition, many LGBT students in Ohio did not have access to important school resources, such as having Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) or similar student clubs, and were not protected by comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment school policies.

FACT: The vast majority of LGBT students in Ohio regularly heard anti-LGBT remarks.

- More than 9 in 10 heard "gay" used in a negative way (e.g., "that's so gay") and nearly 9 in 10 heard other homophobic remarks (e.g., "fag" or "dyke") at school regularly (i.e., sometimes, often, or frequently; see Figure 1).

- More than 8 in 10 regularly heard other students in their school make negative remarks about how someone expressed their gender, such as comments about someone not acting "feminine" or "masculine" enough (see Figure 1).

- 6 in 10 regularly heard negative remarks about transgender people (see Figure 1).

- Students also heard anti-LGBT language from school staff. 26% regularly heard school staff make negative remarks about someone's gender expression and 18% regularly heard staff make homophobic remarks.
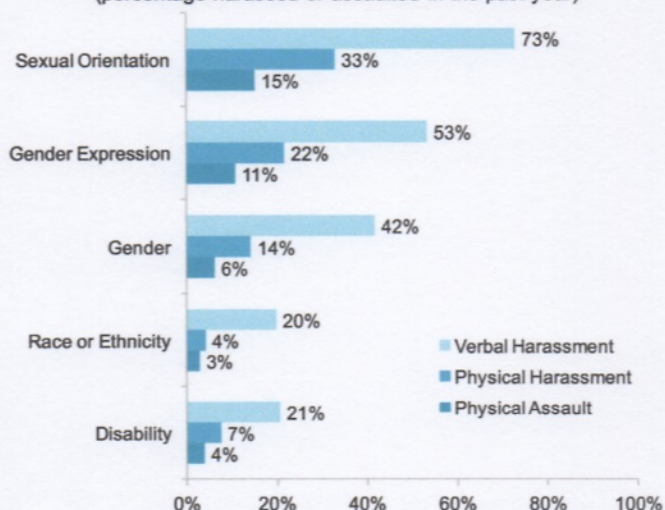
Figure 1. Hearing Anti-LGBT Remarks from Students in Ohio Schools
(percentage hearing remarks sometimes, often, or frequently)
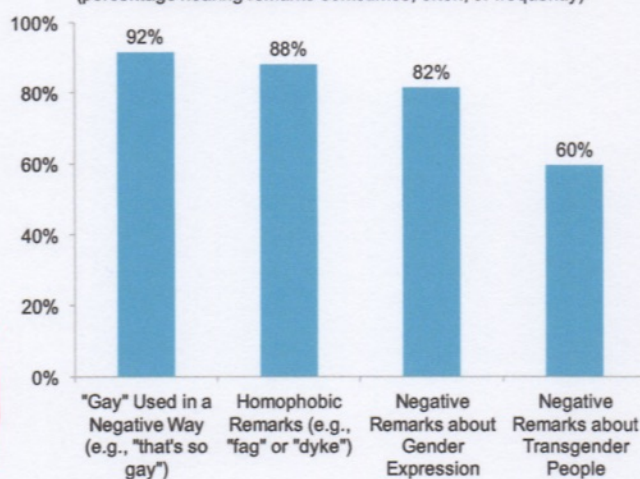
FACT: Most LGBT students in Ohio had been victimized at school. The majority of these incidents were not reported to adult authorities.

- The majority experienced verbal harassment (e.g., called names or threatened): more than 7 in 10 based on their sexual orientation and more than 5 in 10 based on the way they expressed their gender (see Figure 2).

- Many also experienced physical harassment and physical assault: for example, more than 3 in 10 were physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved) based on their sexual orientation and 1 in 10 were physically assaulted (e.g., punched, kicked or injured with a weapon) based on the way they expressed their gender (see Figure 2).

- Students also reported high levels of other forms of harassment at school: 87% felt deliberately excluded or "left out" by peers; 79% had mean rumors or lies told about them; 54% were sexually harassed; 48% experienced electronic harassment or "cyberbullying"; and 40% had property (e.g., car, clothing, or books) deliberately damaged and/or stolen.
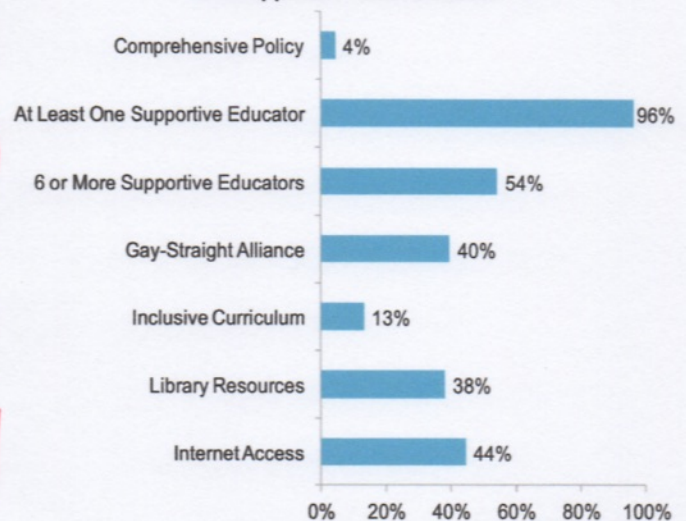
- 61% of students who were harassed or assaulted in school *never* reported it to school staff, and 51% *never* told a family member about the incident. Among students who did report incidents to school authorities, only 35% said that reporting resulted in effective intervention by staff.

Figure 2. Harassment and Assault in Ohio Schools
(percentage harassed or assaulted in the past year)

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FACT: Many LGBT students in Ohio did not have access to in-school resources and supports.

- Only 4% attended a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy that included specific protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (see Figure 3).

- Nearly all could identify at least one school staff member supportive of LGBT students, but only 54% could identify 6 or more supportive school staff (see Figure 3).

- Only 4 in 10 had a Gay-Straight Alliance or similar student club at their school (see Figure 3).

- Less than 2 in 10 were taught positive representations of LGBT people, history, and events (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Availability of LGBT-Related Resources and Supports in Ohio Schools

Resource	Percentage
Comprehensive Policy	4%
At Least One Supportive Educator	96%
6 or More Supportive Educators	54%
Gay-Straight Alliance	40%
Inclusive Curriculum	13%
Library Resources	38%
Internet Access	44%

RECOMMENDATIONS

School-based supports such as comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policies, school personnel who are supportive of LGBT students, Gay-Straight Alliances, and LGBT-inclusive curricular resources can positively affect school climate for LGBT students. Findings from the *2013 National School Climate Survey* demonstrate that students attending schools with these resources and supports report more positive school experiences, including lower victimization and absenteeism and higher academic achievement.

Given the high percentages of LGBT students in Ohio who experience harassment at school and the limited access to key resources and supports that can have a positive effect on their school experiences, it is critical that Ohio school leaders, education policymakers, and other individuals who are obligated to provide safe learning environments for all students take the following steps:

- Implement comprehensive school anti-bullying/harassment policies;
- Support Gay-Straight Alliances;
- Provide professional development for school staff on LGBT student issues; and
- Increase student access to LGBT-inclusive curricular resources.

These actions can move us toward a future in which all students in Ohio will have the opportunity to learn and succeed in school, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

To **learn more** about GLSEN, visit www.glsen.org or contact glsen@glsen.org.

To **get involved** in a GLSEN chapter in Ohio, visit www.glsen.org/chapters or contact chapterinfo@glsen.org.

GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network) is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students.

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What Schools Can Do

1. Provide professional development for school staff to improve rates of intervention and increase the number of supportive teachers and other staff available to students

2. Adopt and implement comprehensive bullying/harassment policies that specifically enumerate sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in individual schools and districts, with clear and effective systems for reporting and addressing incidents that students experience

3. Ensures that school policies and practices, such as those related to dress codes and school dances, do not discriminate against LGBTQ students

4. Support student clubs, such as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), that provide support for LGBTQ students and address LGBTQ issues in education. These clubs *must* be permitted to organize in public schools according to the Federal Equal Access Act (EAA) of 1984

5. Increase student access to appropriate and accurate information regarding LGBTQ people, history, and events through inclusive curricula and library and Internet resources (Be aware of internet search blocks on school computers)

6. Respect a student's confidentiality by never disclosing a student's gender nonconformity or being transgender (or sexual orientation) to a student's parents/guardians, school staff, friends, or other individuals unless the student consents

7. Identify "safe spaces," such as counselor's offices, designated classrooms, or student organizations, where LGBTQ youth can receive support from administrators, teachers, or other school staff
   a. Allies
   b. Supporters

8. Encourage respect for all students and prohibit bullying, harassment, and violence against students

9. Use chosen names and correct pronouns based on the person's self-identification: he/him/his/himself; she/her/hers/herself; they/them/their/theirs/themselves

10. Provide access to gender-neutral restrooms

11. Provide restrooms with single-stalls

12. Provide access to gender appropriate restrooms (that is, students are permitted to use restrooms based on their self-identification)

13. Provide appropriate locker room spaces:
    a. use of a private area within a public area
    b. a separate change schedule
    c. use of a nearby private area

14. Satisfy PE requirements by independent study, summer gym, out of school programs, or options such as band, cheerleading, sports, flag team, etc.

15. Allow students to dress according to their gender identity (ensure that dress code policies are gender nonconforming and not only "male" and only "female")

These recommendations were taken from www.transgenderlaw.org, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health-- http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm, and the GLSEN 2013 National Climate Survey Executive Summary

Respond to Anti-LGBT Language and Behavior

Anti-LGBT behavior comes in all shapes and sizes: biased language, name-calling, harassment and even physical assault. GLSEN's National School Climate Survey consistently finds that many LGBT students regularly hear homophobic slurs, such as "faggot" or "dyke," at school, and most students have been verbally or physically harassed in school. Youth who regularly experience harassment can suffer from low self-esteem, high rates of absenteeism and low academic achievement. Educators can make a difference by intervening in anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment every time they witness it. Taking action when you see it occur can help create a safe space for all students. Intervening on the spot will also serve as a teachable moment to let other students know that anti-LGBT behavior will not be tolerated. One of the most effective things you can do as an ally is respond to anti-LGBT behavior.

HOW TO INTERVENE IN NAME-CALLING, BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Follow these steps when you witness anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying or harassment.

1. Address Name-Calling, Bullying or Harassment Immediately.

Concentrate on stopping the behavior in that moment. Sometimes it's a simple response to hearing a derogatory term like "That language is unacceptable in this classroom." Make sure that everyone can hear you. Never miss the opportunity to interrupt the behavior. Remember: no action is an action — if an incident is overlooked or not addressed it can imply acceptance and approval.

2. Name the Behavior.

Describe what you saw and label the behavior. "I heard you use the word faggot and that is derogatory and is considered name-calling. That language is unacceptable."

3. Use the Teachable Moment (or Create One).

Make sure to educate after stopping the behavior. Decide if you are going to educate in the moment or later, and if it will be publicly or privately. If you decide to educate later you will need to create the teachable moment. You can then take this opportunity to teach one class, the entire grade or the whole school about language and behaviors that are acceptable and those that are not.

4. Support the Targeted Student.

Support the student who has been the target of the name-calling, bullying or harassment. Do not make assumptions about what the student is experiencing. Ask the student what they need or want. You will have to decide whether to do this in the moment or later, and if it will be publicly or privately. Suggest that the student visit with a counselor only if the student requests extra support.

5. Hold Students Accountable.

Check school policy and impose appropriate consequences. Make sure disciplinary actions are evenly applied across all types of name-calling, bullying and harassment.

WHAT DO I SAY WHEN THEY SAY "THAT'S SO GAY?" RESPONDING TO UNINTENTIONAL ANTI-LGBT LANGUAGE

Almost all LGBT students regularly hear the word "gay" used in a negative way at school. Though many downplay the impact of expressions like "that's so gay" because they have become such a common part of the vernacular and are often not intended to inflict harm, most LGBT students say that hearing "gay" or "queer" used in a negative manner causes them to feel

bothered or distressed. Especially because these expressions are so pervasive in our schools, it is critical that an ally treat this like all other types of anti-LGBT language and address it.

Not all students may understand why this language is offensive, so you may need to educate the students on why this is anti-LGBT language. For example, ask them why they would use "gay" to mean that something is bad or boring. Let them know that it is offensive and hurtful to LGBT people when they use "gay" to describe something as undesirable. When challenged on using this type of language, a common response from students and adults is that they did not mean "gay" to mean homosexual. They may say that it's just an expression and they don't mean any harm by it. The chart below suggests some strategies for dealing with these types of comments, including the benefits and challenges for each strategies.

For free public service announcements, lesson plans, discussion guides and other resources that address anti-LGBT language, visit **www.ThinkB4YouSpeak.com/educators**.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO "THAT'S SO GAY"

(excerpted from GLSEN's *ThinkB4YouSpeak Educator's Guide*)

RESPONSES	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
"What do you mean by that?"	Doesn't dismiss it.	Students might not be forthcoming.
"How do you think a gay person might feel?"	Puts responsibility on the student to come up with the solution.	Student may not say anything.
"Do you say that as a compliment?"	Asking this rhetorical question in a non-accusatory tone may lighten things up enough for your students to shake their heads and admit, "No."	Students may just laugh off your question, or reiterate that they're "Just joking."
"So the connotations are negative?" or "So maybe it's not a good thing?"	Not accusatory. Could open up the floor for discussion.	There's always the chance that students will still be reluctant to speak up.