

C.A.R.E

Connect.Accept.Respond.Empower

How to Respond to LGBTQ Youth in a School Setting



Meg Ten Eyck
Education Manager
The Trevor Project

Webinar Logistics

- Presentation will be 1 hour
- To listen to the presentation please call:
(888) 632-9077 then enter code: 17069322 (#)
- For technical difficulties please press *0 and you'll be connected to the operator.
- Please type your questions into the chat box at anytime during the presentation. We will answer questions at the end of the presentation as time permits.



What is Screening for Mental Health, Inc.

- SMH is a national non-profit whose mission is to promote the improvement of mental health by providing the public with education, screening, and treatment resources.
- SMH pioneered the concept of large scale mental health screening and education programs in 1991, with its flagship program, National Depression Screening Day[®] (NDSD)



Screening for Mental Health

- National Depression Screening Day®
- National Eating Disorders Screening Program®
- National Alcohol Screening Day®
- *CollegeResponse*®
- *Military Pathways*® (*for Military installations and VAs*)
- *WorkplaceResponse*® and *HealthcareResponse*™
- *Signs of Suicide*® (*Middle School and High School*)
- *Signs of Self-Injury* (*High School*)



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Outline

- Overview of The Trevor Project
- Why The Trevor Project?
- Risk Factors
- Warning Signs
- How to Help
- Promoting Resiliency
- LGBTQ Youth Health Concerns and Best Practices for Providers
- Experience in School and Making School Safer
- Helping Parents and Homelife
- Questions & Answers



What is The Trevor Project?

- The leading national organization focused on suicide and crisis prevention efforts among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth



Why an organization like Trevor?

- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among 15 to 24 year olds¹
- LGBTQ youth are up to 4x more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers because of the ways they are treated in their homes, schools, and various communities ²
- Sources: CDC 2007; Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2009



Why an organization like Trevor?

- LGB youth who come from highly rejecting families are more than 8 times as likely to have attempted suicide than LGB peers who reported no or low levels of family rejection¹
- More than 75% LGBTQ youth report verbal abuse while 15% report physical abuse at school. More than 1/3 will lose friends through coming out. Increased victimization and losing friends both predict negative mental health outcomes—including substance use and suicide²
- Sources: Ryan C 2009; D'Augelli R 2002



Story from The Lifeline



General Risk Factors for Suicide

- Prior History of Suicide Attempt(s)
- Psychological State
- Emotional State
- Affective Disorders
- Accessibility to Firearms
- Homelessness
- Family Crisis
- Academic
- Loss of a Loved One
- Risky Sexual Behavior
- Victimization
- History of Suicide in the Family



LGBTQ Youth-specific Risk Factors for Suicide

- Gender Non-conformity
- Coming Out Issues
- Rejection when Coming Out
- Coming Out at a Young Age
- Gay Related Victimization
- Unique Developmental Stressors



Warning Signs of Suicide

- Having a Plan for Suicide and the Means to Carry it Out
- Able to Describe Formulated Plan
- Expressing Suicidal Feelings
- Making Final Arrangements
- Signs of Depression
- Change in Regular Behavior
- Alcohol or Drug Use Increases
- Increased Isolation



How To Help a Suicidal Person: Y-CARE

- You
- Connect the person to resources and a trusted adult
- Accept and listen to the person's feelings and take them seriously
- Respond if a person has a plan to attempt suicide, and tell someone you trust
- Empower the person to get help and reach out to a lifeline



ACT[®]

Acknowledge

Acknowledge that you are seeing the signs of depression or suicide in a friend and that it is serious

Care

Let your friend know you care about them and that you are concerned that he or she needs help you cannot provide

Tell

Tell a trusted adult that you are worried about your friend



Promoting Resiliency in All Youth

- Effective Clinical Care
- Easy Access to Care
- Restricted Access to Highly Lethal Means of suicide
- Strong Connections
- Artistic, Athletic or Academic Talent
- Medical and Mental Health Care
- Skills in Problem Solving
- Cultural and Religious Beliefs



Promoting Resiliency in LGBTQ Youth

- Family, Community and School Support
- Positive Media Representations
- Gay or Gay-Friendly Social and Support Networks
- Development of Coping Mechanisms



Top Health Risks for LGBTQ Young People

- HIV/AIDS
- Substance Abuse
- Depression and Suicide
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Abuse and Victimization
- Stigma and Heterosexism
- Racism
- Eating Disorders
- Homelessness
- Access to Care
- Source: Fenway Guide to LGBT Health



Screening for Safety with LGBTQ Youth - HEADS

- Home
- Education
- Activities
- Drugs/Depression/Diets
- Safety/Sexuality



Source: Fenway Guide to LGBT Health

www.MentalHealthScreening.org

Other Tips for Providers

- It is NOT our place to tell a young person when, whether, where, or how to come out
- Remember the heightened need for confidentiality
- Sensitive topics need to be addressed carefully and unapologetically in easy-to-understand language
- Use more inclusive questions



Small Steps to Make Schools Safer for LGBTQ Youth

- Be alert to signs of distress among those who may be bullied or harassed.
- Youth and educators should document the 6 W's for every instance of harassment:
 - **WHO** was involved
 - **WHAT** happened
 - **WHERE** it happened
 - **WHEN** it happened
 - **WHO** it was reported to
 - If there were any **WITNESSES**



Small Steps to Make Schools Safer for LGBTQ Youth

- Speak up and challenge students who make homophobic or anti-gay remarks in your presence (or if you overhear comments)
- Work with student councils and governments to have programs on respect, school safety, and anti-bullying; be an advocate for school policies that challenge bias and promote respect and safety
- Use inclusive language that does not assume everyone is heterosexual
- Become a visibly open and allied resource for young people.
- Educate yourself and your fellow educators



Family Behaviors that Inc. Risk for Mental Health Issues, Incl. Suicide

- Physically hurting a child because they are LGBTQ
- Verbal/emotional harassment because they are LGBTQ
- Excluding LGBT youth from family events
- Blocking access to LGBT friends, events, and resources
- Blaming a child when they are discriminated against because of LGBT identity
- Pressuring a child to be more (or less) masculine or feminine
- Telling a child that God will punish them because they're LGBT
- Telling a child that you're ashamed of them or that the way they act will shame the family
- Making a child keep their LGBT identity a secret in the family and not letting them talk about it



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Family Behaviors that Reduce Risk for Suicide

- Talk with the child about their LGBT identity or questioning that identity
- Express affection when you learn that the child is LGBT
- Support the child's LGBT identity even though you may be uncomfortable
- Advocate for the child when he or she is mistreated because they identify as LGBT
- Require that other family members respect the LGBT child
- Bring the child to LGBT organizations or events
- Connect the child with an LGBT role model to show them options for the future
- Welcome the child's LGBT partners and friends into your home
- Support the child's gender expression
- Believe the child can have a happy future as an LGBT adult



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Questions and Answers



The Trevor Helpline
866.4.U.TREVOR
FOR LGBT AND QUESTIONING YOUTH
FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL, 24/7

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SOS
SIGNS OF SUICIDE®
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