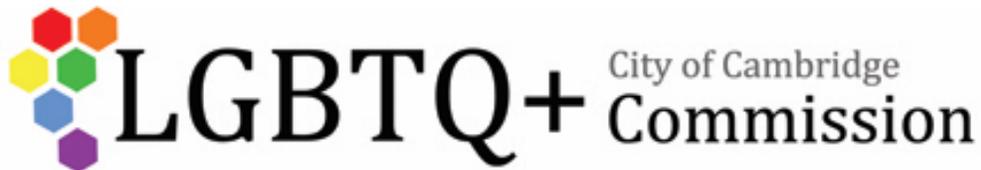


# **LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Cambridge Out-of-School Time Programs**

## **An Assessment & Best Practices Guide for Youth-Serving Organizations/Programs Outside of School**

**A Report by the City of Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission**

**Written by Elysia Chandler & Amelia Joselow**



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Cambridge Public Library  
Cambridge Youth Lacrosse Team  
Cambridge Youth Soccer  
City of Cambridge Women's Commission  
City Peace  
City Sprouts  
Cambridge Recreation Department  
Community Art Center  
East End House  
Enroot  
Farrington Nature Linc.  
Girls Only Leadership Development Program  
Girls Strength Camp  
The Hip Hop Transformation  
Just-A-Start  
Maud Morgan Arts  
Olympian Fencing Center

Outback Summer Program  
Phillips Brooks House Association  
Science Club for Girls  
Sports Leadership Academy  
Team GreenSense  
Tutoring Plus  
Underground Railway Theatre  
Youth Build  
Cambridge YMCA Afterschool Childcare  
  
Cambridge Department of Human Services Programs:

- Center for Families
- Inclusion Initiative for Children
- Fletcher Maynard After-School
- King 2-5
- King Open Extended Day
- Morse (K-2; 2-5)
- Peabody (K-2; 2-5)
- All Pre-teen/Teen Youth Centers
- Community Schools
- Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program
- Youth Works
- Find It Cambridge
- Boys' Empowerment Program / Girls' Empowerment Program

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***“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.”***

***-Audre Lorde***

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The Cambridge LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus) Commission is an official Commission of the City of Cambridge. Started in 2004, it consists of up to twenty volunteers who live and/or work in Cambridge. The mission of the Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission is to advocate for a culture of respect and to monitor progress toward equality of all persons with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. The Commission recognizes that LGBTQ+ youth and seniors may face unique challenges while accessing essential services. Recent work by the Commission has included evaluations of the policies and practices in healthcare and housing organizations in Cambridge, to understand the extent to which they are supportive of LGBTQ+ seniors.<sup>1</sup>

This project focuses on LGBTQ+ inclusion within out-of-school time (OST) organizations and programs in Cambridge that serve youth from Kindergarten through grade 12. The LGBTQ+ Commission is aware that LGBTQ+ youth may face challenges in their homes, schools, social groups, youth-serving organizations, and general public accommodations because of their perceived or actual sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression. These challenges can have a huge impact on the lives and well-being of LGBTQ+ youth, and therefore it is essential that youth workers and youth service providers are able to ensure that their organizations and programs are positive and supportive. There have been and continue to be significant efforts in the City of Cambridge and throughout the Cambridge Public School District (CPSD), to ensure that all youth are welcome. Currently there are student programs such as upper school and high school Gay Straight Alliances and staff members such as an LGBT Family Liaison and Diversity Coordinators, as well as staff training efforts and initiatives, some of which are mandatory.

The LGBTQ+ Commission seeks to understand what efforts currently take place and what areas of interest and knowledge youth workers have to create LGBTQ+ inclusive OST organizations and programs. (Hereafter the terms “organization” and “program” will be used interchangeably.) Extracurricular organizations are key environments where youth develop socially, emotionally, and academically. While LGBTQ+ youth face unique challenges, OST organizations can help these youth have positive experiences with their peers and trusted adults, leading to higher levels of well-being. This is especially true when policies and practices which protect LGBTQ+ youth are explicit and enforced and when organizations promote an inclusive climate.

Staff of participating organizations completed a short voluntary survey about topics related to working with and supporting LGBTQ+ youth. The following report highlights the findings from survey responses and defines and shares important best practices and resources for how to create affirming, welcoming OST spaces for LGBTQ+ youth.

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<sup>1</sup> Chandler, E. *The Need for LGBTQ Inclusive Healthcare for Seniors in the City of Cambridge*. The City of Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission. June, 2015; Chandler, E. *LGBT Inclusive Housing for Older Adults in Cambridge*. The City of Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission. Nov, 2016.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Research Associate sought input from staff members about LGBTQ+ inclusion within their out-of-school time (OST) organizations and programs. 155 staff members in 35 organizations and programs in Cambridge completed a voluntary 10-question online survey which included multiple choice and open-ended questions. (Refer to *Appendix A* for full survey tool). The survey asked about staff perceptions of the following areas:

- Recognition and awareness of LGBTQ+ youth in programming
- Confidence and comfort levels in creating an LGBTQ+ welcoming space
- Knowledge about LGBTQ+ terms, concepts, and training
- Interest in training or support in order to make organizations more welcoming and supportive

### Key Findings

- 1. 41%** of the respondents reported there are Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual youth who attend their organization/program.
  - The majority, **53%**, was unsure.
  - **6%** reported that there are no LGB youth in their program.
- 2. 33%** of respondents reported there are transgender and/or gender non-conforming youth who attend their organization/program.
  - The majority, **53.5%**, was unsure.
  - **13.5%** responded that there are no transgender and/or gender non-conforming youth in their program.
- 3.** The overwhelming majority, **90%**, can describe at least one strategy for creating a welcoming and respectful environment for LGBTQ+ youth and families:
  - **4%** said “No”, and **6%** said they were “Unsure.”
- 4.** The majority of respondents feel confident about addressing a discrimination complaint voiced by a youth concerning sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, while some report feeling unsure or not confident.
  - **79%** (sexual orientation) and **78%** (gender identity/expression) feel confident addressing these types of discrimination.
  - **15%** (sexual orientation) and **15.5%** (gender identity/expression) feel unsure about their confidence level in addressing this discrimination.
  - **6%** (sexual orientation) and **6.5%** (gender identity/expression) do not feel confident addressing these types of discrimination.
- 5.** Staff respondents across OST organizations reported feeling *less* comfortable responding to slurs or offensive language about LGBTQ+ people made by an adult (including

- parent/guardian) in their program, than they would responding to a youth.
- **91%** feel comfortable responding to youth, compared to **78%** feeling comfortable in responding to adults (including parent/guardian).
  - **19%** said they were unsure if they would feel comfortable responding to an adult, while half as many (**8%**) said they were unsure about their comfort levels responding to a youth.
- 6.** The overwhelming majority (**95%**) of staff report feeling comfortable discussing with a supervisor a concern related to supporting LGBTQ+ youth and families.
  - 7.** **79%** of respondents feel they can define each of the following terms: sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
    - **21%** are either unsure or cannot define these terms.
  - 8.** Over half of respondents (**53%**) reported that they have *not* received training in the last two years about education, health and/or wellness disparities for people who are LGBTQ+.
    - Over one-third (**39.5%**) of respondents reported they have received training.
  - 9.** Nearly one third (**32%**) of respondents said that there were not aware of current policies or practices in their organization/program that create a welcoming, affirmative LGBTQ+ environment for youth, their families, and/or staff.
    - Only **19%** said they had explicit policies or practices for this.
  - 10.** **75%** of respondents are interested in expanding their organizational/program curriculum to include topics about LGBTQ+ youth and families. **79%** would like to receive informational resources about how to create an LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum, and organizational practices and policies.
  - 11.** When asked about concerns regarding including LGBTQ+ topics into their organization's/program's curriculum, **24%** of respondents said they were concerned about parent criticism.
    - **14%** said they were unsure if the topics were age-appropriate.
    - Only **5%** mentioned “culture or religious beliefs” as a concern
  - 12.** While the majority (**61%**) of staff responded that they do not have concerns about using LGBTQ+ inclusive literature, movies, and/or activities in their programs, some do, or are uncertain about including them.
    - **17%** said that they have concerns, and another **17%** said they are unsure if they have concerns.

13. 51% of respondents stated that they would like to receive training and 22% said they would like more resources when asked what would be a helpful way to learn more about the topic of LGBTQ+ inclusion,

### Recommendations and Best Practices

There are many ways to make OST programs and organizations LGBTQ+ inclusive. These recommendations are intentionally broad and can be used or adapted for any age group. Some steps include the following. See *Conclusions and Recommendations* section for more details.

- **Assume that there are youth that identify as LGBTQ+ in all programs and organizations.** There are LGBTQ+ youth in Cambridge OST programs and organizations. That figure may be as high as one in five, according to GLAAD.<sup>2</sup> It should not be necessary for youth to self-disclose their gender identify or sexual orientation (commonly known as “coming out”) to staff in order for the staff to make them feel welcome. Indeed, if they do choose to come out it may be because the staff fostered an environment of inclusivity in which they felt safe to do so. Inclusion should be proactive, not reactive.
- **Keep confidential any knowledge of the sexual orientation or gender identity of youth in your program.**  
If any youth comes out to staff positive responses can include:
  - ✓ Say “thank you” / “thank you for sharing this with me”
  - ✓ Ensure this information will stay confidential. (e.g. “I just want you to know that this information is safe with me and I will keep it to myself.”)
  - ✓ Let them know they can come to you for future support. (e.g. “Let me know if you ever want to talk about this more or if you need anything.”)
  - ✓ If you think there is a safety concern such as harassment or self-harm, say something like “If I ever have to talk with your parents because of these concerns I will *not* share any of your private sexual orientation or gender identity information with them without your permission.”
- **Include opportunities for youth to self-identify in a confidential, and possibly anonymous, way.** One example is through questions/language used on enrollment forms. See *Best Practices* section for examples.
- **Be a visible ally.** Post an LGBTQ+ welcoming sticker or posters in classrooms or workspaces. This could include a rainbow flag, a GLSEN’s Safe Space Sticker, or a similar LGBTQ+ welcoming symbol that a school, organization, or city has created. Post celebratory

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.glaad.org/blog/glaads-2018-accelerating-acceptance-report-shows-alarming-decline-lgbtq-acceptance>

information such as LGBTQ+ History Month in October or LGBTQ+ Pride in June, or display inspirational quotes from iconic LGBTQ+ people. Make sure that program staff have the knowledge and comfort level to back up any symbols of support. See *Resources* section for staff education resources.

- **Use an LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum.** The inclusion of LGBTQ+ people and topics in OST programs can increase feelings of safety and inclusion for all youth, especially when it is explicitly positive education.<sup>3</sup> LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula can also encourage respectful behavior, critical thinking, and social justice among youth. Refer to *Conclusions and Recommendations* for more details and to *Resources* section for a list of free resources to help you include this in your program/organization.
- **Discussing Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.** Program/organization staff should have the knowledge and tools to discuss sexual orientation and gender identity/expression in OST activities. The Human Rights Campaign Welcoming Schools offers a guide called “Talking with Kids about LGBTQ Issues” which includes a list of LGBTQ+ definitions that are kid-friendly and understandable for even very young children. Refer to the *Conclusions and Recommendations* and *Resources* sections for more details and resources.
- **Support Staff:** While there are many local and national resources that exist, it is important to create a time and a place for shared knowledge and discussion about SOGI concepts to take place among staff and organizational leadership. One concrete way to do this is to have staff introduce themselves and their pronouns at staff meetings- for example “My name is Amelia and my pronouns are she/her/hers.”
- **GSAs: Gay-Straight Alliances or Genders & Sexualities Alliances.** One major way OST organizations can become knowledgeable about and welcoming for LGBTQ+ youth is through clubs or groups. One example is the presence of youth led Gay-Straight Alliances or Genders & Sexualities Alliances (GSAs). GSAs are traditionally found in schools and function like any student club, and are run by LGBTQ+ youth and their allies, with teacher supervision. While information about starting GSAs is generally targeted toward schools, OST programs may have space for these clubs as well. See *Conclusions and Recommendations* for more details.
- **Updating Program Language.** Adapting language to form an inclusive mission statement can help provide inclusion and protections for LGBTQ+ youth, families, and staff. Instead of using phrases like “boys and girls,” programs should use terms like “students” or “youth.” If the program is segregated by gender, such as a “Girls’ Group” or “Boys’ Group,” language could be included to specifically clarify that youth can opt into those groups based on self-identified gender. Examine the mission statement and other language about the program or organization and ask “If a student is LGBTQ+, how would this make them feel?” then adapt

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<sup>3</sup> Burdge, H., Sinclair, K., Laub, C., Russell, S. T. (2012). Lessons That Matter: LGBTQ Inclusivity and School Safety. (Gay-Straight Alliance Network and California Safe Schools Coalition Research Brief No. 14). San Francisco, CA: Gay-Straight Alliance Network.

it accordingly. Simply changing a few words can make a big difference in the stated intentions and climate of a program and have a positive impact on youth's lives.

- **Promote Inclusive Programming & Engage with the Community.** There are many LGBTQ+ inclusive efforts happening within Cambridge and the Greater Boston Area, with which Cambridge OST organizations are involved. Hosting inclusive programming can be a wonderful opportunity to provide education for youth, parents, staff and others in your organization. It is also a great way to connect with local advocacy work in your community and create partnerships.
- **Pursue Training Opportunities.** OST programs typically train their staff in a number of areas so that they may provide quality care for the youth they serve. Including LGBTQ+ cultural competency can equip staff with the knowledge and tools they need to make programs more LGBTQ+ inclusive. According to the Human Rights Campaign, there are several steps that can be followed to ensure the effectiveness of the training, including...
  - ✓ **Assess your training needs**  
Staff may already be aware of LGBTQ+ inclusion strategies or have varying attitudes about LGBTQ+ inclusion. Engaging staff in planning the training will allow for buy-in from them and success with the training.
  - ✓ **Consider the needs of different staff members**  
All staff should be trained on basic LGBTQ+ issues and definitions, but a director may need different information than a direct service youth worker. Trainings with supplemental materials, including those that accompany this report, may be appropriate.
  - ✓ **Identify quality training programs and providers**  
Human Rights Campaign offers a comprehensive list of national training providers as well as ways to find local providers. Visit <https://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-tips-for-successful-lgbtq-staff-training-efforts> for specifics (link also in *Resources*).
  - ✓ **LGBTQ+ trainings should be done on an ongoing basis**  
When a program or organization hires new staff, they should undergo an LGBTQ+ training. Additionally, even for staff that have previously been trained, yearly refreshers and opportunities such as discussions during team meetings are encouraged. There may be online offerings as well as local workshops or conferences or trainings at other OST organizations that could be attended.
  - ✓ **Consider a “train the trainer” model so future trainings can be done internally**  
It may be expensive and not feasible for a program or organization to always hire an outside trainer. There may be a way for some staff to get trained in such a way

that they can offer the training in the future.<sup>4</sup>

- ✓ **For full list of resources and suggestions, please see "Tips for Successful LGBTQ Staff Training Efforts."** PDF available here:  
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-tips-for-successful-lgbtq-staff-training-efforts> (link also in *Resources*).



*“Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much.”  
-Blaise Pascal*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-tips-for-successful-lgbtq-staff-training-efforts>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Development

Everyone has a gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. People develop, understand, and experience these aspects of their identities at different times and in different ways throughout their lives. There are common timeframes during childhood and adolescence in which people form awareness and develop these aspects of identity.

Children’s understanding of gender identity generally happens at an early age, beginning around two-years old, as they become conscious of the physical characteristics related to the sex they were assigned at birth.<sup>5</sup> Please note that “sex” is a biological aspect of a body, however “gender” is socially constructed and self-identified; they are not the same. Moving forward this report will be discussing gender, not sex. Children are often able to identify their gender identity by age three or four, declaring what they think, feel, or know about their gender. For many, the gender with which they identify aligns with the gender that was assigned by a physician and/or their parents, when they were born; for some, the gender they identify as does not match the one that was assigned to them at birth. Those who identify as a different gender than the one they were assigned at birth are usually referred to as Transgender. Some people do not identify with any gender and others identify with more than one gender; they might call themselves Gender Non-Binary or Gender Nonconforming. People who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth are called Cisgender. Transitioning or affirming one’s gender can happen at any stage in one’s life, from childhood to older adulthood. Not all transgender people physically transition (go through hormone therapy and/or gender affirmation surgery), but some do.

Related to gender identity, gender expression can also begin at a very young age. Before the age of three children are able to ascertain which activities, hairstyles, clothing, behaviors, and other forms of expression are typically associated with different genders.<sup>6</sup> Children often see examples of gender expressions from people around them such as family, friends, and teachers as well as social institutions such as media, advertisements, stores, schools, etc. Sometimes children’s gender expression aligns with gender stereotypes; sometimes it does not.

Separate from gender identity and expression, the definition of sexual orientation is forming emotional, romantic and/or sexual feelings towards others.<sup>7</sup> A person’s development of their sexual orientation is commonly thought to develop during puberty. Many children are aware of their attraction to others before the onset of puberty, but may be able to better articulate or understand their sexual orientation at a later age.

It is important that out-of-school time (OST) staff understand the challenges youth may face about their gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. This understanding gives them an opportunity to gain the knowledge and tools to create an inclusive environment for all youth. Creating a space where youth can receive positive messages about their identities is essential to their development of high self-esteem, social belonging, and academic success. Youth workers have the power to help young people shape these aspects of their identity in a positive way by creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all to feel safe, accepted, and valued.

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<sup>5</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. (2015). *Gender Identity Development in Children*. <<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/Gender-Identity-and-Gender-Confusion-In-Children.aspx>>

<sup>6</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. (2015). *Gender Identity Development in Children*.

<sup>7</sup> PFLAG National Glossary of Terms < <https://www.pflag.org/glossary>>



### **LGBTQ+ Youth: An Overview of Inclusion, Barriers and Challenges**

While everyone has a sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, people often experience different levels of acceptance, respect, and even safety based upon these aspects of their identity. Some may think that because LGBTQ+ youth are living at the height of social, political, and economic advancements in mainstream society, that they experience little-to-no adversity based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression. Indeed, there have been incredible advances in equity for LGBTQ+ people over the last two decades in key areas of human rights.

The first same-sex marriage in Massachusetts took place in Cambridge on May 17, 2004. In June 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states could not ban same-sex marriage.<sup>8</sup> Earlier in the same month, the Military Equal Opportunity policy included protections for all troops based on sexual orientation. Massachusetts laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression in public and private employment, housing, credit, education, and public accommodations.<sup>9</sup> Anti-bullying policies provide protections for students in schools with regard to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in all public schools in Massachusetts.<sup>10</sup> These protections are fundamental in providing legal support and educational guidelines to help institutions be welcoming to all.<sup>11</sup>

Even with these and other advances, there are more barriers to overcome. A question on the Massachusetts 2018 ballot attempts to repeal protections for gender identity in public accommodations.<sup>12</sup> At the time of this publication, there is still no legal ban in Massachusetts on dangerous conversion therapy practices that can be used by mental health practitioners in attempts to change or alter LGBTQ+ individuals' sexual orientation and/or gender identity to fit

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2004/05/17/mass-marks-first-day-legalized-same-sex-marriage/1G0Z10A2SG54q9Hww4lPDK/story.html>

<sup>9</sup> GLAD. Massachusetts Overview of Legal Issues for Gay Men, Lesbians, Bisexuals, and Transgender People. (October 2016).

<sup>10</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Guidance for Massachusetts Public Schools Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment. 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Healey, Maura. Gender Identity Guidance for Public Accommodations. (Sept., 2016).

<sup>12</sup> [https://ballotpedia.org/Massachusetts\\_Gender\\_Identity\\_Anti-Discrimination\\_Veto\\_Referendum\\_\(2018\)#Full\\_text](https://ballotpedia.org/Massachusetts_Gender_Identity_Anti-Discrimination_Veto_Referendum_(2018)#Full_text)

heterosexual and cis-gender identities.<sup>13</sup> The American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, National Association of Social Workers, and many more have submitted policy and position statements stating that conversion therapy is harmful, ineffective, and can be psychologically damaging. These organizations agree that it should not be practiced on minors and yet it remains legal in 40 states, including Massachusetts.<sup>14</sup>

Many LGBTQ+ youth thrive and live happily in their schools, homes and communities. However, national research shows several areas in which LGBTQ+ youth face additional challenges and hardships that can lead to detrimental outcomes for physical and psychological health. The first nationally representative study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual high-school students was the 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) led by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It found devastating results when comparing Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) students to their non-LGB, heterosexual peers. Results showed:

- **23%** of LGB vs. **9%** of heterosexual students experienced sexual dating violence
- **34%** of LGB vs. **19%** of heterosexual students experienced bullying at school
- LGB students were up to **five times** more likely to report substance abuse
- **40%** of LGB students reported seriously considering suicide
- **29%** said they had attempted suicide in the past year<sup>15</sup>

While this data was gathered specifically from students during school time, that same information carries over for the youth in OST programs.

Since less data exists about transgender youth, we can make inferences by using the existing information about transgender adults. Research from the Fenway Institute in Boston and the Williams Institute American Foundation for Suicide Prevention at the University of California, Los Angeles, shows:

- **45%** of transgender individuals from ages 18-44 had attempted suicide in their lifetime.
- People of Color have worse outcomes than their White peers, with **56%** of American Indians/Native Alaskans, **54%** of multiracial individuals, and **45%** of Black or African American people reporting having attempted suicide in their lifetime, compared with **38%** of their White counterparts.
- ***Across all races surveyed, 50% to 78% of transgender adults who experienced harassment or bullying, physical assault, or sexual assault while in school (elementary through college) had attempted suicide***<sup>16</sup>

While transgender youth and adults face extreme physical and psychological health disparities, bisexual individuals, known as the “invisible majority” also faces great disparities.<sup>17</sup> Bisexual people are those who are physically, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to more than one gender, and they may experience being bisexual in differing ways and degrees

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/conversion\\_therapy](http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/conversion_therapy)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.hrc.org/resources/policy-and-position-statements-on-conversion-therapy>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/results.htm>

<sup>16</sup> Williams Institute American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Suicide Attempts among Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Adults: Findings of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. Jan, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Movement Advancement Project, 2016. “Invisible Majority: The Disparities Facing Bisexual People and How to Remedy Them.” Retrieved from: <http://www.lgbtmap.org/policy-and-issue-analysis/invisible-majority>

throughout their lifetime. This group is also sometimes referred to as bi+, which includes pansexual, polysexual, heteroflexible and a number of other terms meaning, with some variation, attracted to more than one gender. According to a Movement Advancement Project report, 52% of LGBTQ+ individuals identify as bisexual.<sup>18</sup>

- Only **5%** of youth age 13-17 who identified as bi+ reported being “very happy” compared with **21%** of their heterosexual peers and **8%** of their lesbian/gay peers. This may be because bi+ people face lack of acceptance both outside and within the LGBTQ+ community.
- Only **44%** of bisexual youth reported having a caring adult they could talk to, compared to **54%** of their lesbian/gay peers.<sup>19</sup>
- **47%** of bisexual youth age 18-22 report one or more instances of sexual assault in their lifetime, compared to **33%** of lesbian/gay youth and **17%** of heterosexual youth.
- **40%** of bisexual youth seriously considered attempting suicide and **28%** had attempted suicide in their lifetime.<sup>20</sup>

It is important to consider data for transgender and bi+ individuals (and many transgender individuals identify as bi+ as well) separately because they often face more challenges than their lesbian and gay peers. The LGBTQ+ community is not homogeneous and while all LGBTQ+ youth should feel and be included in OST programs, some may have additional needs.

As we look at this data to learn about what youth may be experiencing, we can also infer that positive intervention at younger ages, including making OST spaces more welcoming and inclusive, may serve as a protective factor and improve outcomes for these youth as they age.

Experts believe that high levels of suicide ideation and attempts among LGBTQ+ youth are directly related to their common experiences of bullying, harassment, violence, and unjust treatment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. One national study examined suicide ideation and attempts among 12-15 year old youth, and found among youth who self-reported lower levels of social connectedness and higher levels of bullying victimization, that there was a significant increase in their likelihood to seriously consider or attempt suicide.<sup>21</sup> Specifically, for LGBTQ+ youth, higher rates of experiences with victimization about sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as being rejected by or disconnected from peers, family, and other social supports, is associated with increased suicide ideation.<sup>22</sup>

Bullying (see *Glossary* for a comprehensive definition) is a concern in U.S. schools and OST programs. When youth are bullied, it often has negative effects on their psychological well-being, social involvement and skills, school achievement, and health. Furthermore, some of these negative health outcomes include a high risk of suicide, high risk sexual behaviors, depression,

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<sup>18</sup> Movement Advancement Project, 2016. “Invisible Majority: The Disparities Facing Bisexual People and How to Remedy Them.” Retrieved from: <http://www.lgbtmap.org/policy-and-issue-analysis/invisible-majority>

<sup>19</sup> Human Rights Campaign Supporting and Caring for Our Bisexual Youth.” Retrieved from: <https://www.hrc.org/blog/supporting-and-caring-for-our-bisexual-youth>

<sup>20</sup> Movement Advancement Project, 2016. “Invisible Majority: The Disparities Facing Bisexual People and How to Remedy Them.” Retrieved from: <http://www.lgbtmap.org/policy-and-issue-analysis/invisible-majority>

<sup>21</sup> Arango A, Opperman KJ, Gipson PY, King CA. Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among youth who report bully victimization, bully perpetration and/or low social connectedness. *Journal of adolescence*. Aug 2016;51:19-29.

<sup>22</sup> Liu R, Mustanski B. Suicidal Ideation and Self-Harm in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth. *J Preventive Medicine*. Mar 2012; 42(3): 221-228

and substance abuse.<sup>23</sup> Bullying is a major issue facing all youth, families, and schools, however LGBTQ+ youth experience disproportionately higher rates of bullying than their heterosexual and cis-gender counterparts.<sup>24</sup> Specifically, the nature of this bullying is bias-based, as it targets a youth's sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression. A 2015 report by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) "From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited," surveyed both U.S. secondary students (ages 13-18) and teachers to examine bias-based bullying. They found that:

- **67%** of LGBTQ+ youth (in comparison to **13.5%** of non-LGBTQ+ counterparts) were bullied or harassed based on actual or perceived sexual orientation.
- **59.7%** of LGBTQ+ youth (in comparison to **17.6%** of non-LGBTQ+ youth) reported that they were bullied or harassed based on actual or perceived gender expression.<sup>25</sup>
- LGBTQ+ youth were more than **twice as likely** as non-LGBTQ+ youth (**36.6% vs. 14.7%**) to miss school in the last month "because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable."

While the academic attendance and performance of LGBTQ+ youth inside of their school classrooms is of great concern, so too are their experiences and comfort levels in enrichment and extracurricular activities that take place outside of school hours.

According to two major GLSEN reports cited below, LGBTQ+ youth were *half as likely* to play school sports than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. The study found that:

- **15.9%** of LGBTQ+ youth versus **35.8%** of non-LGBTQ+ youth participated in intramural sports.
- The main activities in which LGBTQ+ youth were *more* likely to participate than their heterosexual and cis-gender peers were: GSAs (Gay-Straight Alliances or Genders and Sexualities Alliances), social justice oriented clubs, music activities, and theater activities.<sup>26</sup>

These findings are important because another GLSEN study, *The Experiences of LGBT students in School Athletics*, found that LGBT students who were athletes on school-based sports teams reported that they had better academic achievement, such as higher GPAs, and greater levels of self-esteem and school belonging, than LGBT non-athletes.<sup>27</sup> LGBT athletes who were team leaders for these sports reported the highest levels of academic and mental health results. While this study is not the first to highlight the positive impact of sports on general well-being for youth, it also revealed that...

- **29.4%** of these LGBT athletes reported they had been harassed or assaulted because of their sexual orientation or gender expression
- **79.4%** of LGBT students said they were not comfortable talking to their coaches or P.E. teachers about LGBT issues that had arisen or might arise on their teams

The discomfort and hesitance of LGBTQ+ young people to bring up concerns to an adult

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<sup>23</sup> Robers S, Zhang J, Truman J. Indicators of school crime and safety, 2010. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011002.pdf>. Accessed January 12, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> American Public Health Association. (2014). Reduction of bullying to address health disparities among LGBT youth.

<sup>25</sup> Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. (2016). From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teachers. New York: GLSEN

<sup>26</sup> GLSEN (2016)

<sup>27</sup> GLSEN (2013). The Experiences of LGBT Students in School Athletics (Research Brief). New York: GLSEN.

about discrimination regarding sexual orientation and gender identity/expression is not unique to athletics. The 2015 National School Climate Survey administered by GLSEN found that the majority of LGBTQ+ youth experience identity-based verbal harassment:

- **70.8%** reported this occurring about their sexual orientation
- **54.5%** reported about their gender expression
- **57.6%** of these bullied students did not report these occurrences to administration or staff at their schools because they did not think staff would mediate or resolve the issues effectively, and they were worried that reporting would escalate harassment.
- When youth did report an experience with discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, **63.5%** reported that staff told them to ignore what was happening or responded with inaction.<sup>28</sup>

GLSEN's 2015 School Climate Survey showed that in Massachusetts specifically:

- **74%** reported they regularly hear the term "Gay" used in a negative way from **students**
- **70%** reported they regularly hear general homophobic remarks from **students**, and **10%** reported that they hear this from **school staff**
- **66%** reported that they hear negative remarks about transgender people from **students**
- **87%** reported that they hear negative remarks about gender expression from **students**
- **29%** reported that they hear this from **school staff**<sup>29</sup>

*Fortunately, research suggests that psychological distress many LGBTQ+ youth experience due to early age victimization and bullying can be alleviated and improved over time if they encounter less victimization.*<sup>30</sup> This suggests that people and institutions that serve youth can help them by making sure these youth are not experiencing discrimination, bullying and victimization presently nor that they experience them in the future. If OST programs and staff create a positive, inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ youth, they may improve the future well-being of these youth and help reduce several risks discussed earlier, including:

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Sexual dating violence
- Physical health issues caused by stress
- Bullying and victimization
- Depression, psychological distress, trauma
- Suicide ideation and/or attempt

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.glsen.org/article/2015-national-school-climate-survey>

<sup>29</sup> GLSEN. (2017). School Climate in Massachusetts (State Snapshot). New York: GLSEN.

<sup>30</sup> Birkett M, Newcomb ME, Mustanski B. Does It Get Better? A Longitudinal Analysis of Psychological Distress and Victimization in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth. J Adolescent Health. Mar 2015;56(3):280-285.

## METHODOLOGY

### Survey Collection

Findings for this project come from an online survey. The survey collection period took place from November 2016 through August 2017. The LGBTQ+ Commission Research Associate contacted the majority of youth serving organizations that operate outside of normal school-day hours, and provide services for youth between Kindergarten and 12th grade, through phone calls and emails.

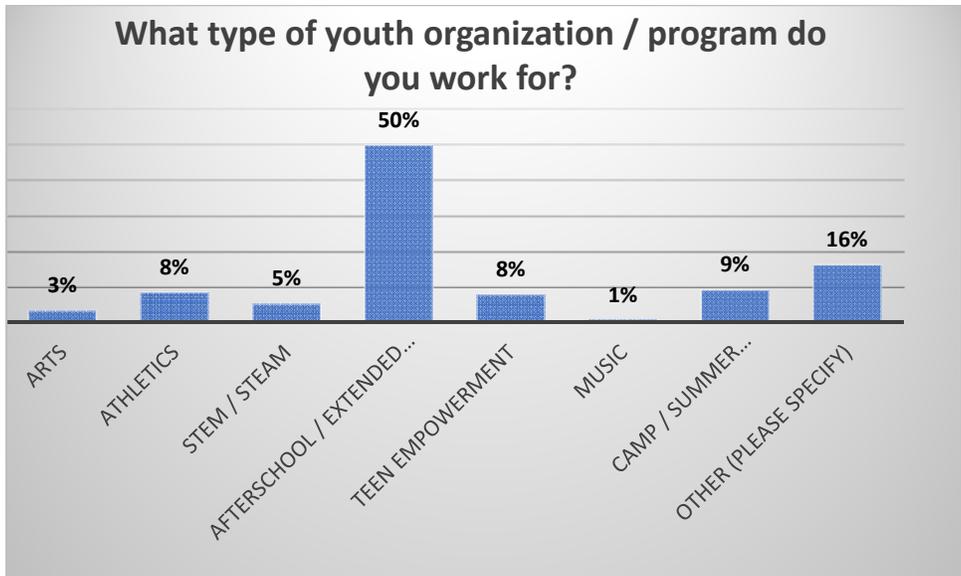
### Survey Formation

The survey was 26 items, which included a combination of three-point scale (yes, no, unsure) and four-point scale (yes, no, unsure, n/a) response options, as well as a four-question open-response portion. The design included question randomization in the three-point and four-point question scales, to help mitigate any question order effect.

The questions were first formulated by the Research Associate based on previous nationwide surveys such as the GLSEN 2015 National School Climate Survey. These had aspects of assessing LGBTQ+ inclusion that applies to out-of-school time (OST) organizations. Survey questions were then reviewed and edited by a small group consisting of the Assistant to the City Manager of Cambridge, and the Director of the Human Rights Commission, as well as the Co-Chairs of the Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission and one of their members. Their feedback was then applied to create the final set of 26 items.

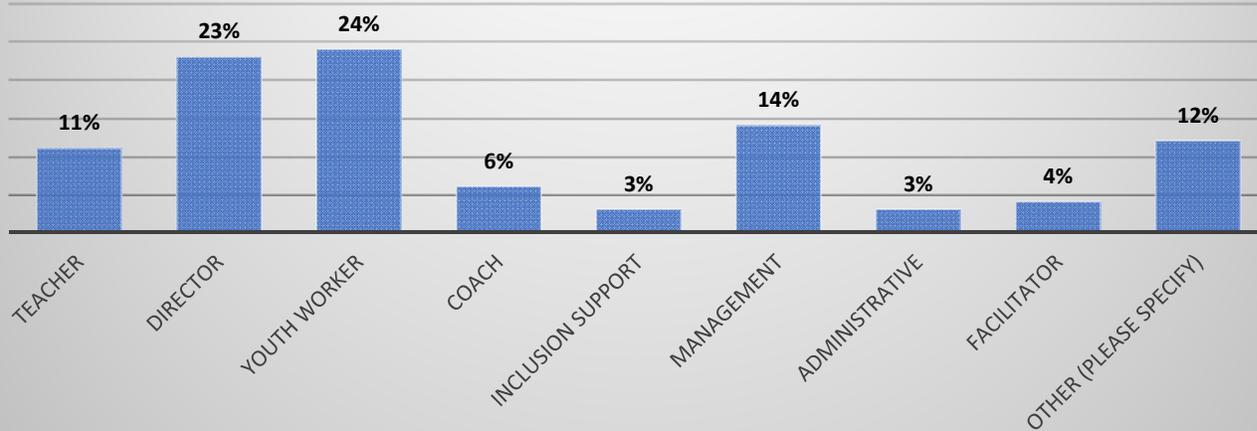
### Participants

35 organizations/programs participated in total. 155 staff members from the participating organizations took the voluntary survey. Some organizations that participated have multiple programs for which respondents work. Staff respondents may work for one or more programs within an organization, or they may work for multiple organizations (i.e. during the academic calendar for one organization, and during the summer months for another). The following graphs and tables provides details of our respondents (N=155):



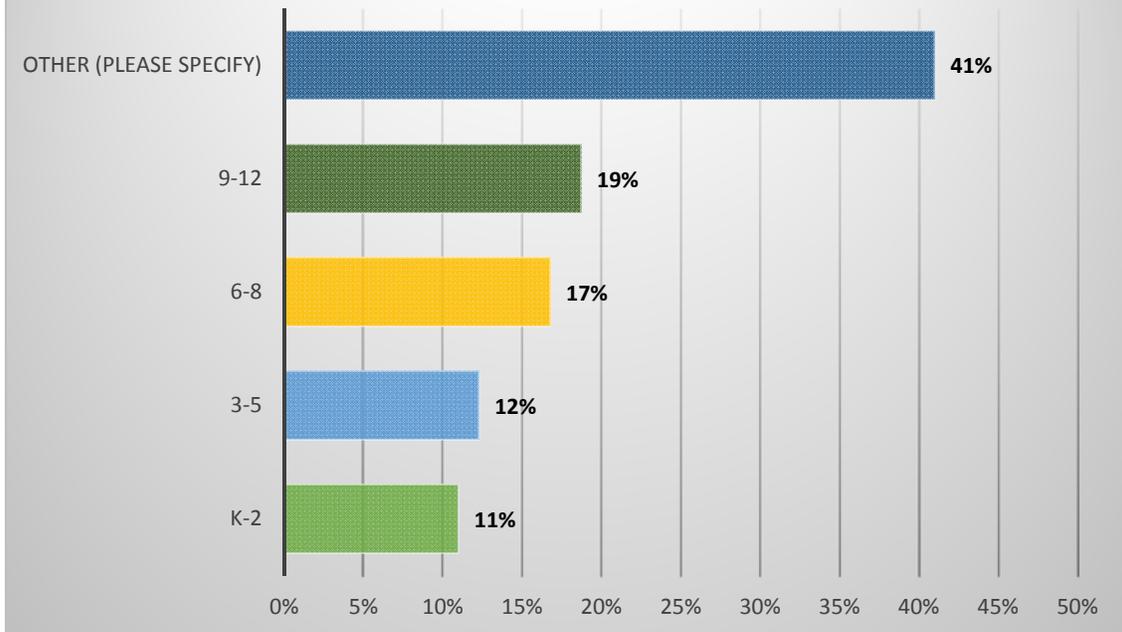
<b>OTHER (Please Specify):</b>	<b>#</b>
Field Trip Site for Summer Camps / Afterschool Content Provider	1
Girls Strength Camp	1
Urban Agriculture Based Education	1
Gardening and Cooking Internship	1
Summer Enrichment/Afterschool	2
Nonprofit / Multi-service organization	1
City of Cambridge	1
Youth Employment	1
Library	7
Inclusion	2
College & Career Readiness	3
Cambridge Youth Programs	2
City Sprouts	1
Academic & Enrichment	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 / 16%</b>

## Title of Role / Position in Organization



<b>OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)</b>	<b>#</b>
Executive Director	1
Owner and Head Coach	1
Camp Counselor	1
Counselor	1
College Fellow	1
Group Leader	1
Program Coordinator	2
Librarian	2
Youth Services Librarian	2
Library Staff	2
Library Associate	1
Head Teacher	1
Coordinator	1
Job Coach	1
Rotating Teacher	1
Total "Other"	19 (12%)

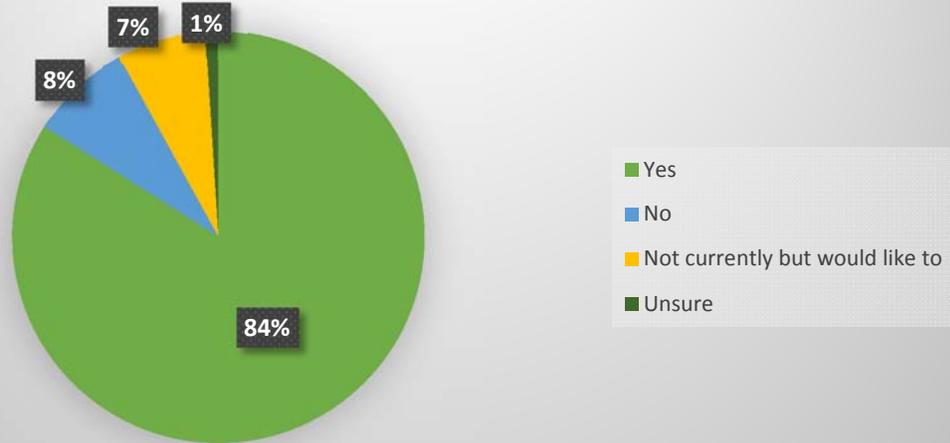
## What Grade Range Do You Work With?



Answer Choices	Responses	
	%	#
<b>K-2</b>	11%	17
<b>3-5</b>	12%	19
<b>6-8</b>	17%	26
<b>9-12</b>	19%	29
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	41%	64

"Other" Specified	Total	
	%	#
0 (birth) - 12th grade	14%	22
Pre-K - Senior Citizens	1%	2
K - 8th grade	10%	16
4th - 8th grade	6%	9
4th - 12th grade	8%	13
12th grade and up +	1%	1
Oversee Program	1%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>64</b>

## Are you involved in designing, creating, or improving curriculum for your organization/program?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	84%	130
No	8%	13
I am not able to in my current position, but I would like to be involved in this process.	7%	11
Unsure	1%	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>155</b>

## FINDINGS

Survey questions were designed to focus on three general areas of LGBTQ+ youth support for out-of-school time (OST) professionals: Awareness of LGBTQ+ Youth, Addressing Discrimination, and Terminology. Open response questions followed in order to determine interests or concerns in updating organizations/programs to be more inclusive and how that could be accomplished. This section examines key findings in each of the following areas:

- Recognition and awareness of LGBTQ+ youth in programming
- Confidence and comfort levels in creating an LGBTQ+ welcoming space
- Knowledge about LGBTQ+ terms, concepts, and training
- Areas of interest for future support to improve LGBTQ+ inclusivity

### 1. Recognizing LGBTQ+ Youth

There are LGBTQ+ youth in Cambridge OST programs and organizations. That figure may be as high as one in five, according to GLAAD.<sup>31</sup> While statistical data does not exist to tell us the size of the LGBTQ+ youth population in Cambridge specifically, it is important to create spaces that recognize and include youth across all sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions to avoid adverse outcomes as cited in previous sections.

From our survey responses:

- The majority of respondents (**54%**) said they were “unsure” if there are youth who attend their organization/program that identify as Lesbian, Gay and/or Bisexual, Transgender and/or Gender non-conforming.
- **41%** said LGB youth attend their programs, and **33%** said Transgender and/or Gender Non-conforming youth attend.
- The small minority of respondents (**6%**) do not think LGB youth presently attend their organization/program, and **14%** of respondents do not think Transgender and/or Gender non-conforming youth attend.



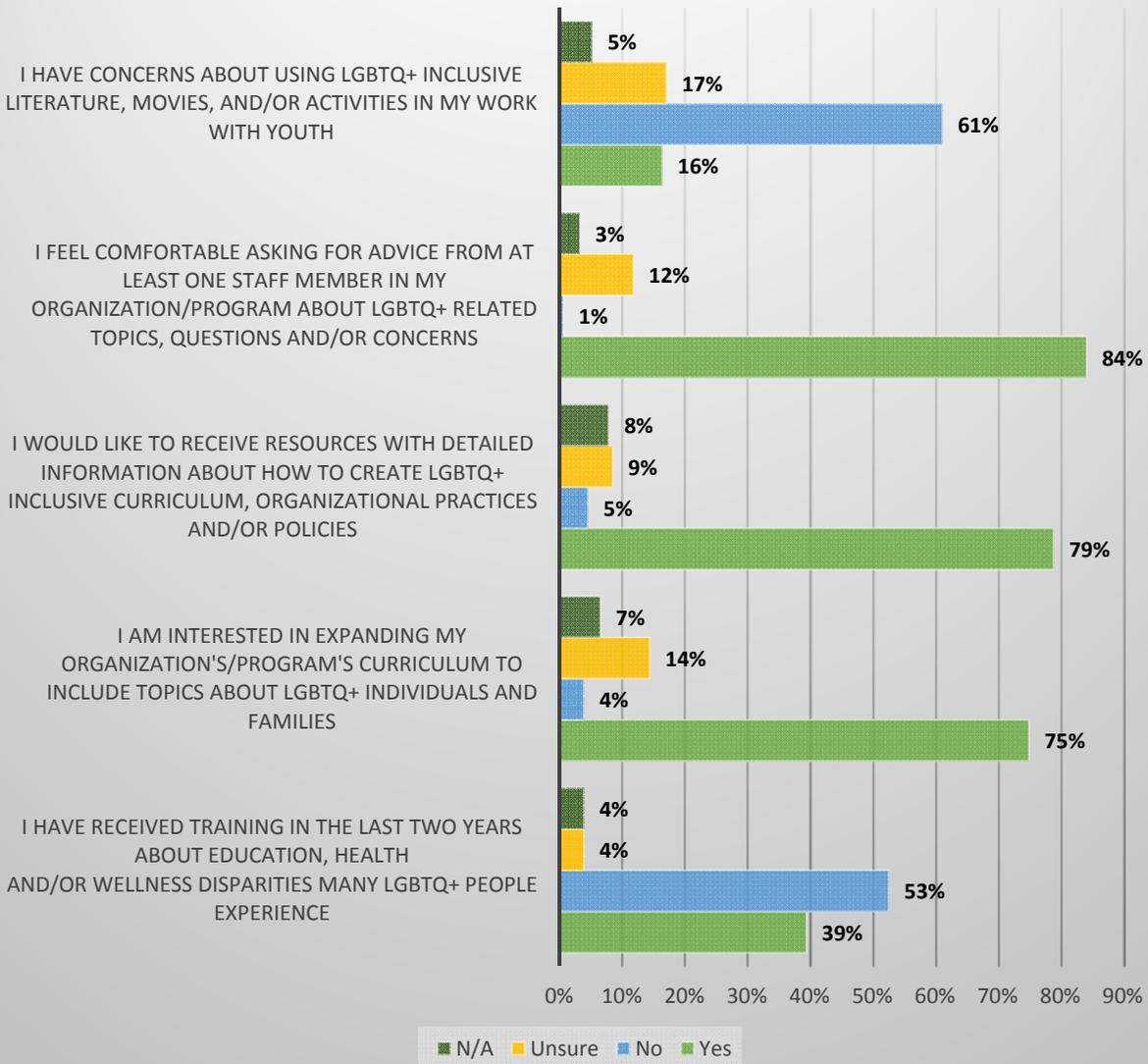
<sup>31</sup> <https://www.glaad.org/blog/glaads-2018-accelerating-acceptance-report-shows-alarming-decline-lgbtq-acceptance>

## 2. Creating an LGBTQ+ Welcoming Environment

If staff take action in their organizations to recognize and affirm important aspects of identity among the youth with whom they work, they can create settings in which youth feel they belong and are safe to be themselves. In order for youth workers to be able to create environments that foster LGBTQ+ youth acceptance, it is important they have the necessary resources, education, and tools.

- I. The overwhelming majority, **90%** said they could describe at least one strategy for creating a welcoming and respectful environment for LGBTQ+ youth and families
  - A small minority of respondents, **4%**, said “No” and **6%** were “Unsure”.
- II. **75%** of respondents said they were interested in expanding their organization’s or program’s curriculum to include topics about LGBTQ+ individuals.
  - **14%** said they were unsure if they were interested in this, and **7%** said this was not applicable (N/A) to their work.
  - A small minority of respondents (**4%**) said they were not interested in this.
- III. **79%** of respondents said they would like to receive resources with detailed information about how to create LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum, organizational practices, and/or policies.
  - **8%** said they were unsure if they would like to receive these resources, and **8%** said that this was not applicable to their work.
  - A small minority of respondents (**5%**) said they would not like to receive these resources.
- IV. While the majority of respondents (**61%**) do not have concerns about using LGBTQ+ inclusive literature, movies, and/or activities in their work with youth, some are either unsure or have concerns.
  - **17%** said they do have concerns, and another **17%** said they are unsure.
  - A small minority of respondents (**5%**) said that this was not applicable to their work.

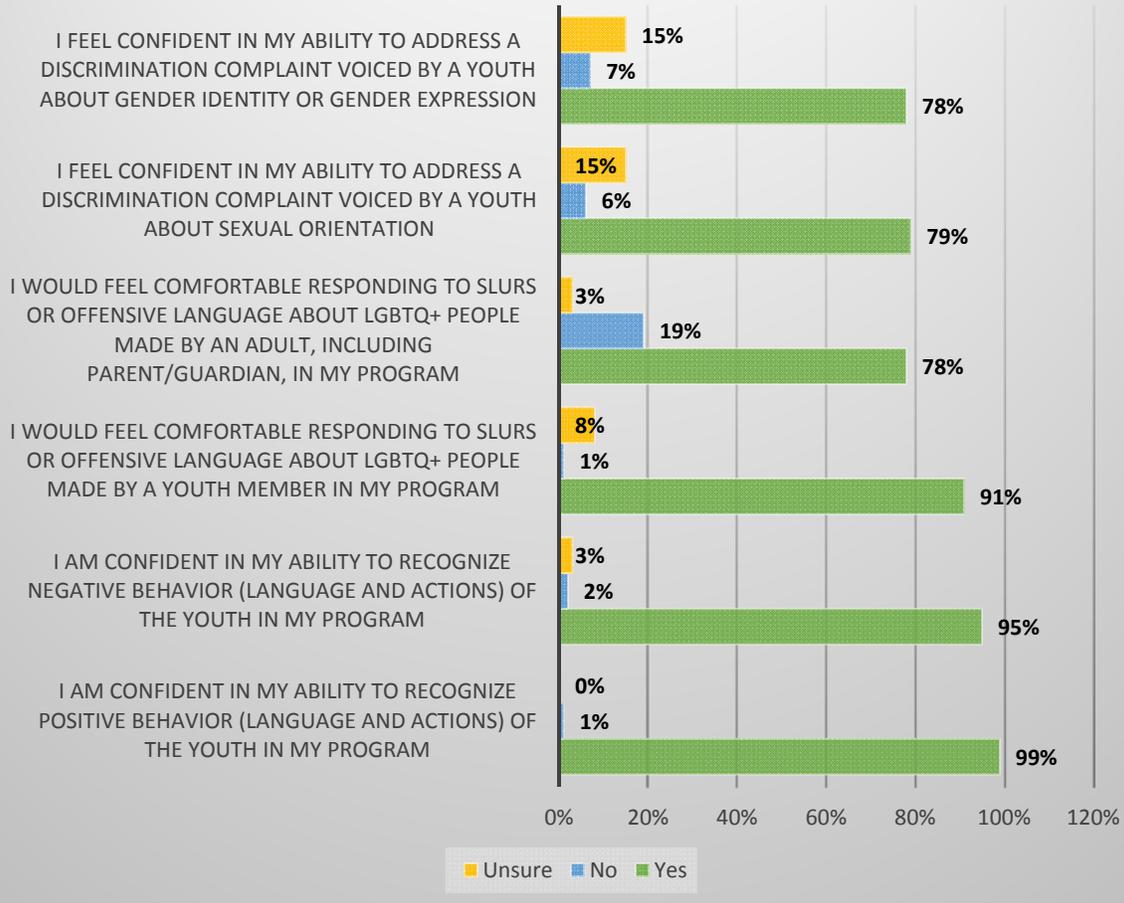
**Please choose your level of agreement with the following statements  
(N=155)**



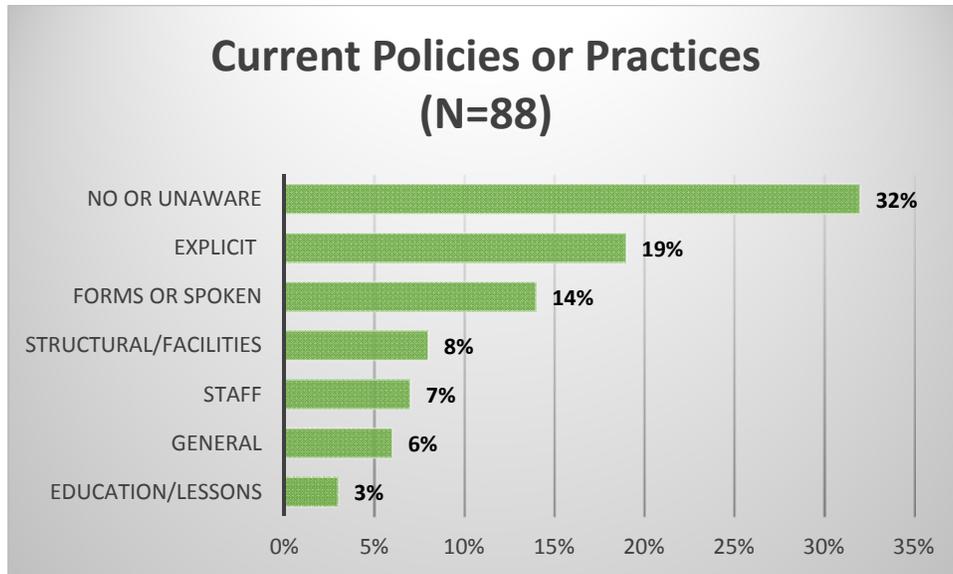
- V. The overwhelming majority of respondents reported they were confident in their ability to recognize and distinguish positive and negative language and behavior of young people.
- **99%** said they are confident in recognizing positive language and behavior of youth, and **1%** of respondents said they were not confident in this.
  - **95%** said they are confident in recognizing negative language and behavior of youth.
  - **3%** said they were unsure if they were confident in this, and **2%** people said they were not confident.

- VI.** When it comes to feeling comfortable responding to youth if they use language that is offensive or contains slurs about people who are LGBTQ+:
- **91%** of respondents reported they would feel comfortable responding to youth who used this language.
  - **8%** said they were unsure if they felt comfortable responding, and **1%** said they would not feel comfortable.
- VII.** *Fewer* people reported they were comfortable responding to an adult, including a parent/guardian, using language that is offensive or contains slurs about people who are LGBTQ+, than if they were responding to youth.
- **78%** reported they would feel comfortable responding to an adult, in comparison to **91%** who would feel comfortable responding to a youth.
  - More than twice as many reported they were unsure if they were comfortable responding to an adult in this scenario than responding to a youth (**19%** vs. **8%**).
  - **3%** reported they were not comfortable responding to an adult in this situation.
- VIII.** In addressing complaints of discrimination voiced by a youth about their sexual orientation:
- **79%** reported they were confident in their ability to address this discrimination.
  - **15%** reported they were unsure if they were confident in doing this, and **6%** reported they were not comfortable.
- IX.** Similarly, in addressing complaints of discrimination voiced by a youth about their gender identity and expression:
- **78%** responded they were confident in their ability to address discrimination about gender identity and gender expression.
  - **15%** responded they were unsure if they were confident in doing this, and **7%** responded they were not comfortable in their ability.
- X.** The overwhelming majority (**95%**) of respondents feel comfortable discussing concerns related to supporting LGBTQ+ youth and families with their supervisor.
- **4%** responded they were unsure, and **1%** responded said they were not comfortable.

**Please choose your level of agreement with  
the following statements  
(N=155)**



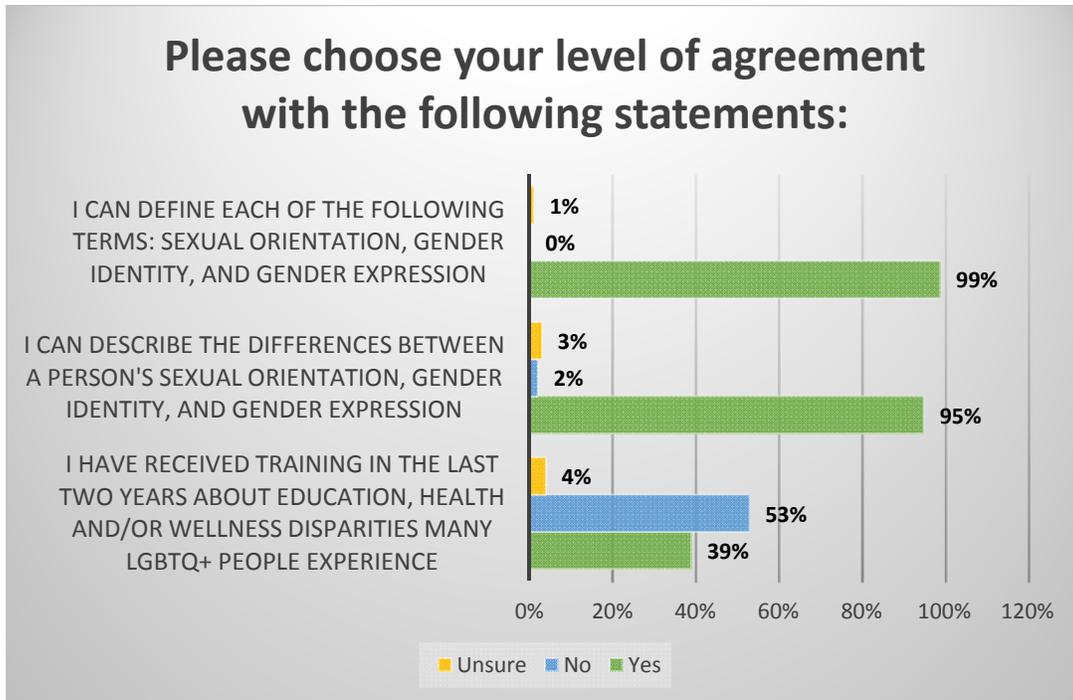
- XI.** 32% of respondents said that they were unaware of policies practices currently exist in their organization/program that create a welcoming, affirmative LGBTQ+ environment for youth, their families or that there were no such practices or practices
- 19% responded that their organization/program did have policies or practices that explicitly addressed LGBTQ+ inclusivity.
  - 14% said their program’s forms were inclusive, 8% said there was structural inclusivity such as all gender bathrooms, 7% said their staff was inclusive.
  - Only 3% said they had materials or lessons for youth that were LGBTQ+ inclusive.



### 3. Education and Awareness

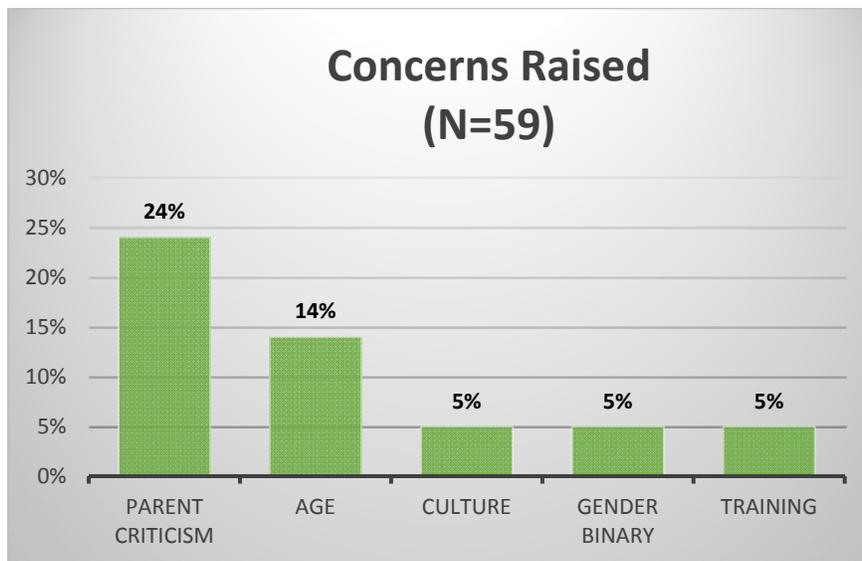
Knowing the definitions of and differences between various sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions is an important aspect of being able to understand and respect these identities.

- I. While the majority of respondents (**79%**) reported they can describe the differences between a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, **17%** are unsure they are able to describe these differences, and **4%** said they are not able to do this.
- II. Similarly, while the majority of respondents (**79%**) report they can define each of the following terms: sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, **14%** are unsure they can do this, and **7%** cannot.
- III. The majority of respondents (**62%**) have **not** received training in the last two years about education, health and/or wellness disparities LGBTQ+ youth may experience.
  - **16%** reported they have been trained in the last two years about these topics/issues.
  - **17%** were unsure, and **4%** said this training was not applicable to their work.



#### 4. Interest and Concerns

While a majority of respondents expressed a desire to make their programs/organizations more inclusive, several concerns were raised in open-ended questions.



I. **24%** of responses mentioned parent criticism as a main concern. Some sample responses were:

- *“One concern of intentionally including LGBTQ+ topics into curriculum would be parent concern. Some parents who are not open/educated may not want their child to be involved in the curriculum and may push back when*

*their child comes home with new ideas. I am not "concerned", I feel I could even combat this but I can think of a few parents off the top of my head it wouldn't sit well with. I would still incorporate it! Let's educate everyone!"*

- *"Like I mentioned in one of the previous questions, the only way a conversation will be started or continued by me, is if I get consent from their guardians. Other than that all I can do is make sure everyone feels welcomed and safe in my class."*

**II.** The next biggest concern raised was age appropriateness, with **14%** of respondents citing that as a concern. Some sample responses were:

- *"I would hope material is developmentally appropriate for children."*
- *"Making sure that curriculum is appropriate for all ages. Knowing when it may be the right time to introduce this discussion to youth."*
- *"I am concerned about the reactions of the youth upon hearing about LGBTQ+ topics as they are quite young and may respond in an insensitive manner offending youth who belong to the community."*

**III.** Cultural differences, single gender ("gender binary") programming, and a need for training were also brought up as concerns, at **5%** each.

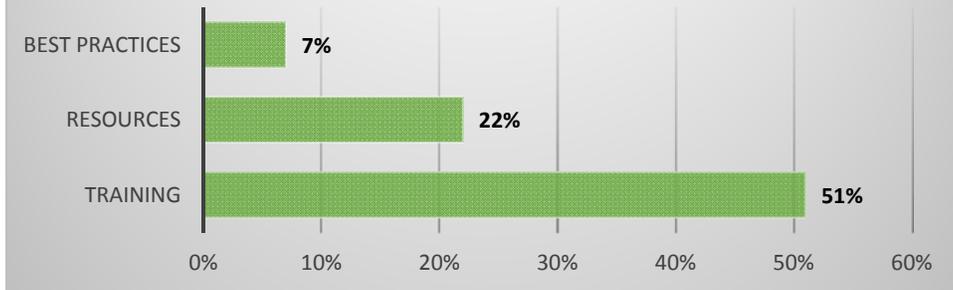
Example responses included:

- *"We have a lot of binary-focused curricula = boys and girls club, etc. Other than "Don't Discriminate," no real training on these issues."*
- *"How can we effectively incorporate gender identity into our girls and boys workshops to become more inclusive"*

**IV.** When asked "What would be a helpful way to learn more about the topic of LGBTQ+ inclusion as it applies to your work?"

- **51%** of respondents to this question stated they would like to receive training.
- **22%** asked for resources.
- **7%** said they would like to know about best practices.
- One respondent stated: *"We need to be intentional about this. This type of training and inclusion should be plentiful."*

**What would be a helpful way to learn more about the topic of LGBTQ+ inclusion as it applies to your work?  
(N=68)**



While concerns exist, the overwhelming result was that staff want to make their programs and organizations more inclusive and supportive of LGBTQ+ youth and would like to learn how to do so through trainings and other methods.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Best Practices for Recognizing LGBTQ+ Youth

It is clear from the survey results that most respondents are aware that LGBTQ+ youth attend their programs and wish to create inclusive spaces for them. The following best practice guidelines can help organizations and programs to serve and support these young people. These recommendations are intentionally broad and can be used or adapted for any age group.

- **Assume that there are youth that identify as LGBTQ+ in all programs and organizations.**

There are LGBTQ+ youth in Cambridge out-of-school time (OST) programs and organizations. That figure may be as high as one in five, according to GLAAD.<sup>32</sup> If programs/organizations start from this assumption, their work may be more inclusive. It is not necessary for youth to come out to staff in order for the staff to make them feel welcome. Indeed, if they do choose to come out it may be because the staff fostered an environment of inclusivity in which they felt safe to do so. Inclusivity should be proactive, not reactive.

- **Keep confidential any knowledge of the sexual orientation or gender identity of youth in your program.**

- ✓ Sexual orientation and gender identity are private pieces of information. It is important that this information remains private and that the only person sharing this information is the one it belongs to.
- ✓ Some youth are completely open about their sexual orientation and/or gender. Even when this is true it is always the sole right of that person to choose when, how, and with whom it is discussed. As has been cited in previous sections, it may not be safe for youth to be out in their schools, homes, and communities.

- If any youth comes out to staff positive responses can include:

- ✓ Say “thank you” / “thank you for sharing this with me”
- ✓ Ensure this information will stay confidential. (e.g. “I just want you to know that this information is safe with me and I will keep it to myself.”)
- ✓ Let them know that they can come to you for future support (e.g. “Let me know if you ever want to talk about this more or need anything.”).
- ✓ If you think there is a safety concern such as harassment or self-harm, say something like “If I ever have to talk with your parents because of these concerns I will *not* share any of you sexual orientation or gender identity information with them without your permission.”

- **Program forms can be updated to include opportunities for youth to self-identify their gender in a confidential way.**

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.glaad.org/blog/glaads-2018-accelerating-acceptance-report-shows-alarming-decline-lgbtq-acceptance>

- ❖ **Example:** The simplest way to do this is by leaving “gender” as an open-ended question on applications when youth are registering for a program, rather than traditional “male/female” options:

What is your gender identity? \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ **Example:** Another way to make sure you are using inclusive language is to add a section for names/pronouns:

Legal Name \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname or Preferred Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Pronouns You Use \_\_\_\_\_

This allows transgender applicants to disclose their desired name and pronouns but works for all youth as well.

## 2. Creating LGBTQ+ Inclusive OST Spaces

Creating a welcoming and respectful environment for LGBTQ+ youth can happen in many ways. Most people reported being able to describe at least one strategy to do so, while a small percentage of people were unable to do this, or were not sure if they could.

*Some people may already be using these strategies, but the following are suggested:*

- **Be a visible ally:**
  - Post LGBTQ+ welcoming sticker or posters in your classroom or workspace. This could include a rainbow flag, a GLSEN’s Safe Space Sticker, or a similar LGBTQ+ welcoming symbol that a school, organization, or city has created (Link in *Resources*). Make sure that program staff have the knowledge and comfort level to back up any symbols of support.
  - Post materials that are informational and supportive, such as materials from local LGBTQ+ organizations (see *Resources* section).
  - Post celebratory information such as LGBTQ+ History Month in October or LGBTQ+ Pride in June, or display inspirational quotes from iconic LGBTQ+ people (see *Resources* section).
- **Use an LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum:**
  - Read developmentally age-appropriate books in class about gender and sexual orientation. Refer to *Resources* section for book recommendations from the Cambridge Public Library. GLSEN has sample curricula and materials for elementary-, middle-, and high- school aged youth. Welcoming Schools and History Un erased also offer a variety of lessons and educational materials to represent the LGBTQ+ community and support all youth. OST programs may also consider including anti-bullying lessons into their curricula in order to create

a safer space. Links to these sites and more can be found in *Resources* section.

- **Include opportunities for youth to be represented and protected:**

- It is important to have an inclusive definition of gender to share with current and prospective youth, families, and staff. This may be especially important in single-sex programs and activities.

- ❖ **For example:** Have an inclusive mission statement, with sexual orientation and gender identity/expression integrated into its message.

- The YWCA Cambridge Girls Only Leadership Development program (GOLD) publicly defines women in an inclusive way. This definition is listed on its website and promotional sites such as [finditcambridge.org](http://finditcambridge.org):

“GOLD is on a mission to support and empower Cambridge’s young women\* to become resilient and transformative leaders of their lives, communities, and beyond.

\*All people--cisgender, transgender, gender-nonconforming, genderqueer, and two-spirit people--who identify with girlhood, womanhood, or femininity are welcomed and encouraged to be part of the GOLD community.”<sup>33</sup>

- Instead of using phrases like “boys and girls,” programs should use terms like “students” or “youth.”
- Examine the mission statement and other language about the program or organization and ask “If a student is LGBTQ+, how would this make them feel?” then adapt it accordingly. Simply changing a few words can make a big difference in the stated intentions and climate of a program and have a positive impact on youth’s lives.

- **Be Ready to Discuss Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)**

- Youth may raise questions or make statements about LGBTQ+ individuals that require a youth worker to respond in a caring yet educational way. The Human Rights Campaign Welcoming School Project offers several guides to help teachers or youth workers talk to young people about the LGBTQ+ community and issues. The guides can be found here: [www.hrc.org/resources/talking-with-kids-about-lgbt-issues](http://www.hrc.org/resources/talking-with-kids-about-lgbt-issues) (Link also in *Resources* section). The more youth workers have the tools and knowledge to discuss SOGI topics, the more likely they will feel comfortable taking steps to intentionally create an LGBTQ+ positive space, or address LGBTQ+ topics with their youth.

- **Support Staff:**

- While there are many local and national resources that exist, it is important to create a time and a place for shared knowledge and discussion about SOGI

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<sup>33</sup> YWCA Cambridge. <<http://ywcacam.org/gold>>

concepts to take place among staff and organizational leadership. One concrete way to do this is to have staff introduce themselves and their pronouns at staff meetings- for example “My name is Amelia and my pronouns are she/her/hers.” The more practice discussing sexual orientation and gender identity/expression issues as they pertain to all youth, the more comfort and awareness staff will have to bring to their interactions with youth and parents. When staff know that their organization’s leadership supports them and their work to be LGBTQ+ inclusive, the more likely staff will feel like they can have these conversations.

- **Form a GSA: Gay-Straight Alliance or Genders & Sexualities Alliance**
  - As discussed earlier, it has been shown that GSAs can serve to make schools more welcoming and safer spaces for LGBTQ+ youth.<sup>34</sup> This may also be true for OST programs. A step-by-step video guide from the ACLU on starting a GSA can be found in the *Resources* section. Please note, GSAs are most commonly known as Gay-Straight Alliances, but can be made more inclusive by changing the language to Genders & Sexualities Alliances or Queer Students Alliances. More information about making GSA clubs more inclusive and what language to use can be found through the GSA Network: [www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org). GSAs don’t have to be just for school. If OST programs offer youth a choice of activities during the week, one of those choices could be a GSA.
  
- **Include LGBTQ+ Topics in the Curriculum**
  - If the program has a set curriculum that all youth follow, one or more sessions could be devoted to LGBTQ+ education and inclusion. See point 2 above for educational resources/suggestions. These sessions should be held at the beginning of the school year/program in order to create an inclusive environment from the start.
  
- **“Safe Schools” Principles that can be Adapted for OST Programs and Organizations**
  - In 2015, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education created and adopted the “Safe Schools Program” Principles for Ensuring Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for LGBTQ+ Students. The following is a list of nine principles that can be adapted for OST programs:
    1. Schools must have policies, and update them as needed, protecting LGBTQ students from harassment, violence, and discrimination based on LGBTQ status, to ensure compliance with the law.
  
    2. Schools must include content about violence and suicide prevention related to LGBTQ students in their required training for school personnel.
  
    3. Schools are encouraged to offer school-based groups such as GSAs for LGBTQ and

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<sup>34</sup> Marx RA, Kettrey HH. Gay-Straight Alliances are associated with lower levels of school-based victimization of LGBTQ plus youth: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*. Jul 2016;45(7):1269-1282.

heterosexual students.

4. Schools are encouraged to provide support for family members of LGBTQ students.
5. School districts are encouraged to designate a staff member who is proficient in issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity.
6. Schools, through their curricula, shall encourage respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals, including LGBTQ individuals.
7. Schools are encouraged to provide age-appropriate information about LGBTQ issues in school libraries and in student and faculty resource centers.
8. Schools are encouraged to have a diverse workforce.
9. Schools are encouraged to review academic and non-academic policies and procedures, and available data, to identify issues or patterns that may create barriers to a safe and successful learning experience for LGBTQ students.<sup>35</sup>

- **Pursue Training Opportunities**

- OST programs typically train their staff in a number of areas so that they may provide quality care for the youth they serve. Including LGBTQ+ cultural competency could equip staff with the knowledge and tools they need to make programs more LGBTQ+ inclusive. There are several steps that can be followed to ensure the effectiveness of the training, including...
  - ✓ **Assess your training needs**  
Staff may already be aware of LGBTQ+ inclusion strategies or have varying attitudes about LGBTQ+ inclusion. Engaging staff in planning the training will allow for buy-in from them and success with the training.
  - ✓ **Consider the needs of different staff members**  
All staff should be trained on basic LGBTQ+ issues and definitions, but a director may need different information than a direct service youth worker. Trainings with supplemental materials, including those that accompany this report, may be appropriate.
  - ✓ **Identify quality training programs and providers**  
Human Rights Campaign offers a comprehensive list of national training providers as well as ways to find local providers. Visit <https://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-tips-for-successful-lgbtq-staff-training-efforts> for specifics (link also in *Resources*).

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<sup>35</sup> Safe Schools Program Principals, from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq/Principles-SafeEnvironment.html>

- ✓ **LGBTQ+ trainings should be done on an ongoing basis**  
When a program or organization hires new staff, they should undergo an LGBTQ+ training. Additionally, even for staff that have previously been trained, yearly refreshers and opportunities such as discussions during team meetings are encouraged. There may be online offerings as well as local workshops or conferences or trainings at other OST organizations that could be attended.
- ✓ **Consider a “train the trainer” model so future trainings can be done internally**  
It may be expensive and not feasible for a program or organization to always hire an outside trainer. There may be a way for some staff to get trained in such a way that they can offer the training in the future.<sup>36</sup>
- ✓ **For full list of resources and suggestions, please see "Tips for Successful LGBTQ Staff Training Efforts."** PDF available here:  
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-tips-for-successful-lgbtq-staff-training-efforts> (link also in *Resources*).

- **Promote Inclusive Programming & Engage with the Community:**

- There are many LGBTQ+ inclusive efforts happening within Cambridge and the Greater Boston Area, with which Cambridge OST organizations are involved. One recent example was “Be the Change Community Action: Transgender Rights,” organized by Cambridge Camping and Porter Square Books, which featured the personal family experience of a transgender rights advocate, and created a community space to discuss advocacy for transgender children and youth in Massachusetts.



*A photo taken of the “Be the Change Community Action: Transgender Rights” event at Porter Square Books.*

Hosting inclusive programming can be a wonderful opportunity to provide education for youth, parents, staff and others in your organization. It is also a great way to connect with local advocacy work in your community and create partnerships.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-tips-for-successful-lgbtq-staff-training-efforts>



***“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”***

***-Nelson Mandela***

### **ACKNOWLEDGING CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES**

There may be some barriers to LGBTQ+ inclusivity in out-of-school time (OST) programs. Program staff are often not trained in LGBTQ+ issues and may not know how to discuss or respond to them. Others may be concerned about resistance from other staff or parents/guardians of youth in the program. Some staff may not understand the importance of creating welcoming spaces and preventing bullying. Still more may be unaware of the positive impact that having LGBTQ+ role models, including learning about LGBTQ+ historical figures, may have on youth. OST programs often seek to enrich young people’s academic experience as well as support their social and emotional well-being. LGBTQ+ inclusive environments help youth to focus on learning by providing all youth with a safe and welcoming space to do so.

In spite of common values about caring for youth, some people may still raise objections. There are several ways to remind them about what LGBTQ+ inclusion in OST programs means. According to the Human Rights Campaign Welcoming Schools Program, LGBTQ+ inclusive programs:

- Give youth the opportunity to understand LGBTQ+ people instead of learning about them through negative myths and stereotypes.
- Allow youth to respect all types of families and people.
- Help all young people to better understand the world around them.

- Minimize shame or unhappiness in youth who do and will identify as LGBTQ+.<sup>37</sup>

It may help some to refer to the core principles or mission statement of their program in order to understand how LGBTQ+ inclusivity, or caring for all youth, already fits into what they do.

Some programs/organizations may increase LGBTQ+ inclusivity by having staff trainings, amending program language, and creating explicit policies and practices around the issue. Some may choose to include LGBTQ+ issues into program curricula. Some states require parental permission in order for school curricula to address sexuality, however making OST programs more inclusive does not. Still, it is good practice to keep parents/guardians informed about what their child is learning, and transparency is valuable. Human Rights Campaign Welcoming Schools encourages programs to hold regular Family Nights where families can meet each other and program staff. Family Nights can cover specific topics such as bullying or gender identity or can be a general meet-and-greet gathering.

Some staff are uncomfortable with or unsure of how to make their programs and organizations more LGBTQ+ inclusive because they do not know how to talk about it. Unfortunately, many adults are hesitant about discussing sexual orientation or gender identity with youth because they may confuse these with sex itself. When serving youth in an LGBTQ+ inclusive way, these issues should be framed in terms of self-expression and acceptance and families and love rather than sexual activity. Tools about what language to use can be found through Human Rights Campaign Welcoming Schools: Talking with Kids about LGBTQ Issues (link in *Resources*).

Although only 5% of respondents to the open ended survey item asking about concerns mentioned “culture” or “religious beliefs” as a concern, it is seen as a barrier to some. This report has been designed to frame LGBTQ+ inclusivity as a benefit to all youth and offers many suggestions and recommendations for approaching LGBTQ+ issues in a way that highlights safety, respect, inclusion, and education. This entire report, the *References* section, and *Resources* section offer a comprehensive view that those who are unfamiliar with LGBTQ+ inclusion can use to gain a greater understanding and awareness of LGBTQ+ issues and the importance of inclusion.

LGBTQ+ inclusion may be new to some and may be met with some resistance. It is vital to remember that having an LGBTQ+ inclusive program serves to support the social and emotional well-being of all youth by creating a welcoming, supportive, and safe space for all.

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<sup>37</sup> Human Rights Campaign Welcoming Schools, [www.welcomingschools.org](http://www.welcomingschools.org)

## LIMITATIONS

Results of this survey do not specifically represent the level of LGBTQ+ inclusivity of each participating organization or program. Therefore, results should not be interpreted as overall conclusions that are organization specific, but are intended to be more representative of the overall status of inclusivity in OST programming across the city.

The results of this study are based upon survey responses from a wide range of staff within OST programs and organizations. Therefore, multiple survey respondents who are from the same organization may answer a single question differently. Additionally, answers are self-reported, and cannot necessarily be verified.

The self-selecting nature of the survey should also be noted. As it was a voluntary survey, those who chose to respond may have already had an interest in LGBTQ+ inclusion in their programs. As it was administered voluntarily, results do not capture the sentiments of those who did not take the survey and they may have the least knowledge and/or interest in inclusion and could therefore benefit the most from the information in this report.

Overall, this study provides a snapshot overview of the status of LGBTQ+ youth inclusion in OST programs in the city of Cambridge. Conclusions and recommendations are drawn from and directed to the participating organizations and those that did not take part in the survey as a general way to improve the climate for LGBTQ+ youth and all youth across the city.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

This study gathered information from staff at OST programs. Valuable data could also be collected from the youth themselves, as their actual experience may vary from the staff perception. Information from youth may lead to different ideas about inclusivity and best practices and may challenge beliefs held by the staff.



*“We should indeed keep calm in the face of difference, and live our lives in a state of inclusion and wonder at the diversity of humanity”  
-George Takei*

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Bisexual:** A person who is physically, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to more than one gender. People may experience being bisexual in differing ways and degrees throughout their lifetime.

**Bullying:** Massachusetts Law defines bullying as "the repeated use by one or more students of a written or electronic expression or physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property;
- places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- infringes on the rights of the victim at school;
- or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- Bullying also includes cyber-bullying."<sup>38</sup>

**Gay:** A term used to describe someone who has primary physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to someone of the same gender. This word is predominantly used to describe men, and is commonly preferred over "homosexual."

**Gender Expression:** How someone expresses their gender identity on the outside. This can refer to how someone dresses, talks, walks, etc. Usually transgender people match their gender expression with their gender identity, instead of their sex assigned at birth.

**Gender Identity:** The gender you feel you are. This can be man, woman, both, or neither. For transgender people, their gender assigned at birth and their personal sense of gender identity are not the same. Additionally, gender identity and sexual orientation are not there same. Example: A transgender woman, who was assigned a male gender at birth and is attracted to other females.

**Heterosexual:** A term used to describe someone who has primary physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to someone of the opposite gender.

**Lesbian:** A woman whose primary physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women. (The term gay can also be preferred).

**LGBTQ:** Acronym for: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning

**Out-of-School Time (OST) Program:** Any program for school-aged youth that takes place outside of school hours. This typically includes afterschool programs and summer camps and can take place in school buildings or at outside sites, either through Department of Human Services, non-profits, private agencies, or others.

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<sup>38</sup> Welcoming Schools Cambridge. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.cpsd.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=3042869&pageId=3496522>

**Queer:** An inclusive term for people in sexual orientation or gender minorities. This term has been taken back, or reclaimed, by many LGBT people following a long history of its use as a derogatory term.

**Questioning:** A person who is undetermined about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Sexual Orientation:** A person's primary physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or different genders.

**STEM / STEAM:** Acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math or Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math.

**Transgender:** An umbrella term used for people whose gender does not align with the one assigned at birth, and includes people whose gender identity and/or expression defies societal expectations of how they should look or act based on the sex they were assigned at birth, and conventional expectations of masculinity or femininity.

## RESOURCES

### Local LGBTQ+ Resources

#### **BAGLY** (Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Youth)

[www.bagly.org](http://www.bagly.org)

PO Box 814

Boston, MA 02103

617.227.4313

Youth group meets weekly and sponsors events. Gay group which is especially welcoming to transgender kids.

#### **Bisexual Resource Center**

[www.biresource.org](http://www.biresource.org)

PO Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

617.424.9595

Resource center for bisexuals, including youth and adults. Also sponsors events and discussion groups.

#### **Boston GLASS** (Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services)

[www.jri.org/services/health-and-housing/health/boston-glass](http://www.jri.org/services/health-and-housing/health/boston-glass)

93 Mass. Ave., Floor 3

Boston, MA 02116

617.266.3349

Drop-in center for LGBTQ+ youth (ages 13-25) offering support and culturally sensitive resources.

#### **Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission**

[www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/LGBTQPlusCommission](http://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/LGBTQPlusCommission)

The LGBTQ+ Commission meets on the fourth Thursday of every month (except August and December), from 5:30 - 7:30PM at Windsor Street Community Health Center, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 119 Windsor St., Cambridge. Meetings are open to the public.

#### **Fenway Community Health Center, Lesbian/Gay Family and Parenting Services**

[www.fenwayhealth.org](http://www.fenwayhealth.org)

7 Haviland St.

Boston, MA 02115

617.927.6243

Comprehensive health care in a welcoming environment.

**Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)**

[www.glad.org](http://www.glad.org)

294 Washington Street; Suite 740

Boston, MA 02108

617.426.1350

New England legal rights organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status and gender identity and expression.

**Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**

[www.glsen.org/boston](http://www.glsen.org/boston)

132 Boylston Street, 4th Floor

Boston, MA 02116

617.451.1119

National organization making schools safer for ALL students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

**Greater Boston PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)**

[www.gbpfllag.org](http://www.gbpfllag.org)

P.O. Box 541619

Waltham, MA 02454-1659

Waltham Office: 781.891.5966

Provides training, resources and opportunities for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

**kyriQ**

[www.kyriQ.com](http://www.kyriQ.com)

Provides training and technical assistance to youth-serving organizations to improve LGBTQ+ competency and best practices.

**Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC)**

[www.masstpc.org/tp](http://www.masstpc.org/tp)

Dedicated to ending discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression.

**Additional Resources**

**Gender Jabber**

[www.genderjabber.org](http://www.genderjabber.org)

One of the few sites that focus on very young children, birth-5. “This page is meant to be a resource for people who interact with young children and who want to think inclusively about gender. It is for people who want to support kids of all genders. The focus is on language we use.”

**Gender Spectrum**

[www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org)

Helping to create gender sensitive and inclusive environments

### **GLSEN “Changing the Game”**

[www.glsen.org/participate/programs/changing-the-game](http://www.glsen.org/participate/programs/changing-the-game)

For sports. This project gives ideas for students and parents to take steps within their own schools to make school sports a more inclusive, safe space for LGBTQ students, including resources on Title IX as it relates to the protection of transgender athletes.

### **GLSEN Educator Resources: LGBT-Inclusive Curriculum**

<https://www.glsen.org/educate/resources/curriculum>

How to Incorporate LGBT history, themes and people into your curriculum. Curricula available for elementary, middle, and high school.

### **GLSEN Ready, Set, Respect! Elementary Toolkit**

[www.glsen.org/readysetrepect](http://www.glsen.org/readysetrepect)

The kit provides a set of tools that will help you prepare to teach about respect and includes lesson plans that can help you seize teachable moments. The lessons focus on name-calling, bullying and bias, LGBT-inclusive family diversity and gender roles and diversity and are designed to be used as either standalone lessons or as part of a school-wide anti-bias or bullying prevention program.

### **GLSEN “Safe Space Kits”**

[www.glsen.org/safespace](http://www.glsen.org/safespace)

Designed to help you create a safe space for LGBTQ youth in schools, the Safe Space Kit is GLSEN’s Guide to Being an Ally to LGBTQ Students. The guide provides concrete strategies that will help you support LGBTQ students, educate about anti-LGBTQ bias and advocate for changes in your school.

### **GSA Network**

[www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org)

GSA Network is a next-generation LGBTQ racial and gender justice organization that empowers and trains queer, trans and allied youth leaders to advocate, organize, and mobilize an intersectional movement for safer schools and healthier communities.

### **History Unerased**

[www.unerased.org](http://www.unerased.org)

Professional Development and LGBTQ academic content to provide an LGBTQ+ inclusive educational experience for all youth.

### **How to Start a Gay-Straight Alliance**

[www.aclu.org/video/how-start-gay-straight-alliance?redirect=lgbt-rights/how-start-gay-straight-alliance](http://www.aclu.org/video/how-start-gay-straight-alliance?redirect=lgbt-rights/how-start-gay-straight-alliance)

A short online video outlining the steps students can take to start a GSA at any public school (can be used in out-of-school time programs). These steps can also be followed in OST settings, and can be called Queer Students Alliances or Genders & Sexualities Alliances.

### **Human Rights Campaign Welcoming Schools: Talking with Kids about LGBTQ Issues**

[www.hrc.org/resources/talking-with-kids-about-lgbt-issues](http://www.hrc.org/resources/talking-with-kids-about-lgbt-issues)

Resource for language to use when talking with youth about LGBTQ+ issues.

### **I AM: Trans People Speak**

[www.transpeoplespeak.org](http://www.transpeoplespeak.org)

Trans people, family members and allies tell their stories to raise awareness about the diversity that exists within transgender communities.

### **Teaching Tolerance**

[www.tolerance.org/magazine/tips-for-teachers-ally-yourself-with-lgbt-students](http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/tips-for-teachers-ally-yourself-with-lgbt-students)

Tips for teachers to ally yourself with LGBTQ+ students

### **Tips for Successful LGBTQ Staff Training Efforts**

[www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-tips-for-successful-lgbtq-staff-training-efforts](http://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-tips-for-successful-lgbtq-staff-training-efforts)

A comprehensive guide to getting an LGBTQ+ training in a program/organization, including links to many training providers. Offered by the Human Rights Campaign.

### **Trans Youth Family Allies**

[www.imatyfa.org](http://www.imatyfa.org)

Empowers children and families by partnering with educators, service providers and communities, to develop supportive environments in which gender may be expressed and respected.

### **The Trevor Project**

[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) young people ages 13-24.

### **Welcoming Schools**

[www.welcomingschools.org](http://www.welcomingschools.org)

Human Rights Campaign Welcoming Schools lesson plans are here to help you make classrooms more welcoming, inclusive and safe. All HRC Welcoming Schools lessons are aligned with the Common Core Standards and are easily integrated into Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and anti-bullying programs.

### **Youth in Motion**

[www.frameline.org/distribution/youth-in-motion](http://www.frameline.org/distribution/youth-in-motion)

Provides free LGBTQ themed movies, with professionally created curricula and action guides, to student clubs and educators in middle and high schools.

## **Bullying Prevention Resources**

### **Education.com**

[www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

Bullying at school and online video clips, activities, information and discussion about a variety

of aspects of bullying. Includes Spanish translations of many resources.

**The Kinder and Braver World Project**

[www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing](http://www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing)

Current research related to youth meanness and cruelty.

**Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC)**

[cyber.law.harvard.edu/node/7491](http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/node/7491)

Includes links to research and free resources for educators and parents. Evidence based and evaluated annually.

**Stop Bullying Now**

[www.stopbullying.gov/index](http://www.stopbullying.gov/index)

Presents practical research-based strategies for reducing bullying in schools.

# STAND UP!



## STORYTIME FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE



### Recommended Reading List – Gender Identity



**Who Are You? The Kid's Guide to Gender Identity**  
by Brook Pessin-Whedbee  
illustrated by Naomi Bardoff



**Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress**  
by Christine Baldacchino  
illustrated by Isabelle Malenfant



**I Love My Purse**  
by Belle DeMont  
illustrated by Sonja Wimmer



**Red: A Crayon's Story**  
by Michael Hall



**Sparkle Boy**  
by Lesléa Newman  
illustrations by Maria Mola



**Clive and His Babies**  
by Jessica Spanyol



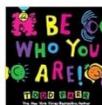
**The Boy & the Bindi**  
by Vivek Shraya  
illustrated by Rajni Perera



**Big Bob, Little Bob**  
by James Howe  
illustrated by Laura Ellen Anderson



**I'm a Girl!**  
by Yasmeen Ismail



**Be Who You Are**  
by Todd Parr

**Ask your librarians for even more books about gender identity.**

**LGBTQ+ Literature for Grades 9-12 Available at the Cambridge Public Library**

**The Upside of Unrequited**

By Becky Albertalli

**Georgia Peaches and Other Forbidden Fruit**

By Jaye Robin Brown

**Look Both Ways**

By Alison Cherry

**Jess, Chunk, and the Road Trip to Infinity**

By Kristin Elizabeth Clark

**Little & Lion**

By Brandy Colbert

**Labyrinth Lost**

By Zoraida Cordova

**Of Fire and Stars**

By Audrey Coulthurst

**Dreadnought**

By April Daniels

**Look Past**

By Eric Devine

**The Love Interest**

By Cale Dietrich

**The Cursed Queen**

By Sarah Fine

**Girl Mans Up**

By M.E. Girard

**Whatever**

By S.J. Goslee

**We Are the Ants**

By Shaun David Hutchinson

**Read Me Like a Book**

By Liz Kessler

**Honestly Ben**

By Bill Konigsberg

**Radical**

By E.M. Kokie

**We Are Okay**

By Nina LaCour

**Goldie Vance**

By Hope Larson, Brittney Williams, et al.

**Not Your Sidekick**

By C.B. Lee

**The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue**

By Mackenzi Lee

**True Letters from a Fictional Life**

By Kenneth Logan

**10 Things I Can See From Here**

By Carrie Mac

**When the Moon Was Ours**

By Anna Marie McLemore

**It Looks Like This**

By Rafi Mittlefehldt

\*More suggestions available at the Cambridge Public Library Main Branch Teen Room

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## APPENDIX A

### Survey Tool

1. What type of youth organization / program do you work for?
  - a. Arts
  - b. Athletics
  - c. STEM / STEAM
  - d. Afterschool / Extended Day
  - e. Teen Empowerment
  - f. Music
  - g. Camp / Summer Enrichment
  - h. Other (please specify)
  
2. What title best describes your role in the organization / program where you work?
  - a. Teacher
  - b. Director
  - c. Youth Worker
  - d. Coach
  - e. Inclusion Support
  - f. Management
  - g. Administrative
  - h. Facilitator
  - i. Other (please specify)
  
3. What grade do you work with? (please choose the grade range with who you work).  
Example: If you work with 5th grade, please choose the answer category "3-5".
  - a. 3-5
  - b. 6-8
  - c. 9-12
  - d. Other (please specify)
  
4. Are you involved in designing, creating, or improving curriculum for your organization/program?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I am not able to in my current position, but I would like to be involved in this process.
  - d. Unsure
  
5. Please choose your level of agreement with the following statements (Yes; No; Unsure):
  - a. There are youth who attend my organization/program that identify as Lesbian, Gay and/or Bisexual

- b. There are youth who attend my organization/program that identify as Transgender and/or Gender non-conforming
  - c. I can describe at least one strategy for creating a welcoming and respectful environment for LGBTQ+ youth and families
  - d. If I ever have a concern related to supporting LGBTQ+ youth and families, I would feel comfortable discussing it with a supervisor
  - e. I am confident in my ability to recognize negative behavior (language and actions) of the youth in my program
  - f. I am confident in my ability to recognize negative behavior (language and actions) of the youth in my program
  - g. I would feel comfortable responding to slurs or offensive language about LGBTQ+ people made by a youth member in my program
  - h. I feel confident in my ability to address a discrimination complaint voiced by a youth about sexual orientation
  - i. I feel confident in my ability to address a discrimination complaint voiced by a youth about gender identity or gender expression
  - j. I can describe the differences between a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression
  - k. I can define each of the following terms: sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression
6. Please choose your level of agreement with the following statements (Yes; No; Unsure; Not Applicable)
- a. I have received training in the last two years about education, health and/or wellness disparities many LGBTQ+ people experience
  - b. I am interested in expanding my organization's/program's curriculum to include topics about LGBTQ+ individuals and families
  - c. I would like to receive resources with detailed information about how to create LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum, organizational practices and/or policies
  - d. I feel comfortable asking for advice from at least one staff member in my organization/program about LGBTQ+ related topics, questions and/or concerns
  - e. I have concerns about using LGBTQ+ inclusive literature, movies, and/or activities in my work with youth
  - f. Other (please specify)
7. Please list any concerns you may have about including LGBTQ+ topics into your organization's/program's curriculum: (Open Response)
8. What policies or practices currently exist in your organization/program that create a welcoming, affirmative LGBTQ+ environment for youth, their families, and/or staff: (Open Response)

9. Please share any other thoughts you may have about this survey or general topic in the comment section below: (Open Response)
  
10. What would be a helpful way to learn more about the topic of LGBTQ+ inclusion as it applies to your work? (Open Response)