

Ten Things Educators Can Do

1. **Do not assume heterosexuality.** The constant assumption of heterosexuality renders lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people invisible. The school as an institution, as well as its professionals, must be inclusive in their language and attitudes.
2. **Guarantee equality.** LGBT members of the school community need to know that their schools value equality and that they are protected against discrimination. Schools should add sexual orientation and gender identity to their non-discrimination and harassment policies.
3. **Create a safe environment.** It is the school's obligation to take proactive measures to ensure that all members of its community have a right to participate without fear of harassment. Schools must make it clear that neither physical violence nor harassing language like "faggot" and "dyke" will be tolerated.
4. **Diversify library and media holdings.** The library is frequently the first place to which students turn for accurate sexuality and gender information. Too often, few or no works on LGBT issues are found there. Librarians and media specialists need to be sure their holdings are up to date and reflect the diversity of our world. Materials that reflect LGBT themes and authors should be prominently displayed and easily accessible to students seeking them.
5. **Provide training for faculty and staff.** School staff need to be equipped to serve all the students with whom they work, including LGBT students and children from LGBT families.
6. **Provide appropriate health care and education.** Health education on sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases should sensitively address the issues of LGBT people. Counselors and health staff should be particularly careful to make their sensitivity to LGBT issues clear. By educating themselves about related support services and agencies, and making pamphlets and other literature available, health professionals can provide for the needs of the LGBT students and families with whom they work.
7. **Be a role model.** Actions speak louder than words. The most effective way to reduce anti-LGBT bias is to consistently behave in ways that appreciate all human beings and condemn discrimination of any kind. By demonstrating respectful language, intervening during instances of anti-LGBT harassment, and bringing diverse images into the classroom in safe and affirming ways, all staff members can be model human beings for the students with whom they work.
8. **Provide support for students.** Peer support and acceptance is the key to any student's feeling of belonging in the school. "Gay-Straight Alliances" (GSAs) offer students this sense of belonging as well as the chance to effect positive change in their schools.
9. **Reassess the curriculum.** Educators need to integrate LGBT issues throughout the curriculum—not just in classes such as health education, but in disciplines such as English, History, Art and Science. Preexisting curricula should be broadened to include LGBT images where appropriate (such as in studies of the Holocaust and the Civil Rights Movement). Current events, popular music and film, and other media that include LGBT people and issues should be regularly discussed in class.
10. **Broaden entertainment and extracurricular programs.** Extracurricular activities often set the tone for the community. Programs such as assemblies, film nights, and school fairs should regularly include content that reflects the diversity of our world. Special LGBT events and holidays such as LGBT History Month (October) and Pride Month (June) should be incorporated into school-wide celebrations.

Source: The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), "Ten Things Educators Can Do . . ." (New York: 2002), <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/253.html> (accessed January 21, 2004). Excerpted with permission.

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