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Inclusive Sex Education in Schools

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QUARK & QUILL

OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR TACOMA HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS

What is LGBTQ?

L | Lesbian | A woman who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women.

G | Gay | A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender

B | Bisexual | A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender, or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to same degree.

T | Transgender | An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Q | Queer | A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations.

(Source: [HRC](#))

LGBTQ Youth Resources

TrevorLifeline: 866-488-7386

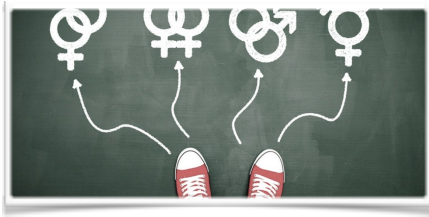
[gsanetwork](#)

[It Gets Better Project](#)



What is Inclusive Sex Education?

Sex education can be one of the few ways for teens to obtain correct and reliable information on sexuality and sexual health. True inclusive sex education is scarce for teens in public schools but necessary for their health. Each day more teens are identifying as LGBTQ and the traditional heteronormative sexual education is no longer reaching all students about safe sex. We must recognize that more teens are identifying with LGBTQ community and they deserve as much of an education about safe sex as their heterosexual peers. Omitting the LGBTQ language from the curriculum robs LGBTQ youth of the chance to learn about their sexual and/or gender identity, and also does not provide all students with the correct vocabulary to use when talking about people who are LGBTQ. Without adequate education on the topic, other students are bound to be misinformed which can lead to bullying. According to the CDC, having a school that creates a safe and supportive learning environment for all students as well as having caring and accepting parents.



Important Concepts for Being **Inclusive**

Heteronormative

The idea that being heterosexual (straight) is normal and not being heterosexual is abnormal. The social norm (also referred to as heteronormativity) puts extreme pressure on people and culture to be straight, and if people defer from that expectation, they are ignored, questioned, or worse, punished.

Cisgender

A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

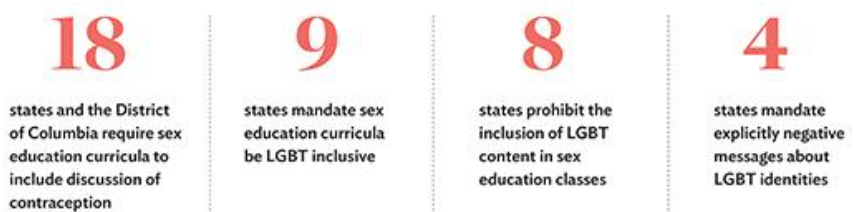
Cisnormative

Assuming that people are either men or women based on their reproductive organs. The social norm (also referred to as cisnormativity) is the idea that being cisgender is superior to being transgender, non-binary, or gender non-conforming. Like Heteronormativity, cisnormativity puts extreme pressure on people to be cisgender.

(Source: [Healthy Teen Network](#))

Changing the Message

In order to create a safe and inclusive environment, the message being sent to teens needs to change. Research shows that abstinence-only curricula may portray messages that promote fear of same-sex attraction, reinforce gender stereotypes and heterosexual relationships, mandate heterosexual marriage and disparage non-traditional families. According to a study conducted by the Human Rights Campaign, “In the eight states that prohibit the positive discussion of homosexuality in schools, students were more likely to hear homophobic remarks from school staff, less likely to report feeling supported by school staff, less likely to receive an effective response to harassment from school staff, and less likely to have LGBTQ resources in schools such as comprehensive anti-harrassment/assault policies and Gay-Straight Alliances.” (HRC). Inclusive sex education allows students to open the communication between friends and parents about the topic and helps start a difficult conversation. It helps to develop a tolerance for the topic at an early age and reduces the risk of sexually transmitted diseases. Studies have found that LGBTQ students that receive an inclusive sexual education reported fewer sexual partners, less recent sex and less substance abuse before having sex than LGBTQ youth in other schools. By including these topics in sex education, we are helping keep teens safe and healthy.



Studies conducted using LGBTQ students show that majority of sex education is exclusive to heteronormative concepts. In broadening the topic it is proven to reduce risky sexual behaviors, promote safe sex, and prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). No matter what sexual/gender orientation students identify, sex education for everyone important to protect the safety of teens and young adults.