

Suggested Reading

Hatred in the Hallways: Violence and Discrimination Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students in U.S. Schools. Human Rights Watch, 2001.

Our house: a very real documentary about kids of gay and lesbian parents.
Cinema Guild, 1999. (video)

Marcus, Eric. *What if someone I know is gay? : answers to questions about gay and lesbian people.* Price Stearn Sloan, 2000.

Perrotti, Jeff. *When the drama club is not enough : lessons from the Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students.*
Beacon Press, 2001.

Woog, Dan. *School's out : the impact of gay and lesbian issues on America's schools.* Alyson Publications, 1995.

Be your self : questions and answers for gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth.
PFLAG, 1999.

These materials are available for loan from the Family Resource Connection, at the NH State Library. Books and videos will be mailed upon request to any NH resident, along with a pre-paid envelope to return them. This is a FREE service to all NH residents. Call 800-298-4321 or email FRC@library.state.nh.us. Browse GLBT and other child-related materials online at: <http://webster.state.nh.us/nhsl/frc/lend.html>.

Resources

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians & Gays, New Hampshire (PFLAG-NH)
Phone - 211
Website - <http://pflagnh.org/>

Education, Advocacy & Support for GLBT people and their families. Services include:

- 4 Area Chapters
- Parent to Parent Network
- Speaker Bureau
- National Scholarship

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
Website - <http://glsen.org/>

GLSEN is the leading national organization fighting to end anti-gay bias in K-12 schools.

From Our House to the School House: a recipe for safe schools - From PFLAG National
<http://pflag.org/index.php?id=121>

Southern Poverty Law Center
Tolerance Web Project
<http://www.tolerance.org>

Human Rights Campaign
<http://www.hrc.org/>

Supporting Gay, Lesbian, And Bisexual Students

“We have learned that society cannot afford to squander the resources [of] any segment of the population ... We must ... provide the same support and understanding of our gay and lesbian children, and their families, that we are attempting to provide to all of our fellow human beings.”

Sandy Bayne, mother of a gay son

School can be a difficult place to learn and mature for those students who are gay, lesbian or bisexual. If they are openly gay (or merely perceived to be gay) they may be verbally or physically harassed. If they do not feel safe to be open and honest about their sexual orientation, the pressure to hide who they really are is intense and may make it difficult for them to learn the skills which they need for a productive future.

Discrimination may take many forms. It may be open hostility; name-calling, homophobic graffiti, or even violence. It may be silence: homosexuality may never be mentioned at all in discussions of health, families, history, literature, or any other context within the school.

Whatever its form, discrimination is hurtful and harmful to those who are its targets, and has negative impact on all students, gay and straight. It

creates an environment which can restrict the full potential of some students to pursue their true talents and interests for fear of being labeled. It also keeps students from learning to move through life alongside those who may be different from themselves, and from fully benefiting from the talents and experiences of others.

In some cases, discrimination can strain family relations, particularly for young people who risk rejection by family members if they are open about their sexual orientation. It can restrict honest communication and the richness of supportive family relationships.

All students deserve support and an environment in which they are free to learn and grow, free of harassment or the fear of harassment. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students are frequently invisible in our schools, and a supportive environment is necessary whether or not a school may be aware of openly gay students.

- *More than 90% of GLB youth interviewed reported hearing homophobic remarks in their schools*
- *69% of GLB youth interviewed reported experiencing some form of harassment or violence*
- *More than 33% of GLB youth interviewed reported that no one intervened*

Hatred in the Hallways” - Human Rights Watch, 2001

As parents we can...

- √ Encourage our schools to be openly supportive of all students by inviting a speaker from the PFLAG NH Speaker Bureau to give a presentation to a school committee, PTO, or other community meetings.
- √ Attend parent/teacher conferences and ask our children's teachers what steps they are taking to ensure that schools are safe and inclusive.
- √ Let our children know that we support them whether they are straight, gay or bisexual.
- √ Stand up for the rights of gay, lesbian and bisexual students, whether or not our own children are gay.
- √ Write letters to our newspapers and our state and local legislators letting them know that we believe ALL students, including gay, lesbian and bisexual students, deserve equal rights.

As Students we can...

- √ Support the creation or ongoing activities of a Gay/Straight Alliance.
- √ Ask questions about homosexuality and bisexuality in class or in conversation with others.
- √ Speak up against discrimination toward gay, lesbian and bisexual students.

As teachers we can...

- √ Make it clear that harassment of and discrimination against gay, lesbian and bisexual students will not be tolerated in our classrooms.
- √ Make our curriculum inclusive of gay, lesbian and bisexual components by including homosexuality in a sex education or health class, the gay rights movement in the study of civil rights movements, or gay and lesbian influences in the arts and history.
- √ Inform ourselves about the needs of and resources for gay, lesbian and bisexual students.
- √ Not assume that all students or their parents are heterosexual.
- √ Organize a school-wide diversity day, including GLB information and displays highlighting gay, lesbian, and bisexual art, history, and literature.
- √ Invite someone from PFLAG NH or GLSEN to do faculty training, or invite a PFLAG youth speaker to talk to a student assembly about their experiences as a gay, lesbian, or bisexual student.

We all can...

- √ Insist that our schools extend respect and dignity to all students and families.
- √ Refrain from assuming that all students will grow up to be in heterosexual partnerships or that their current families are “traditional” heterosexual families.
- √ Speak out against discrimination toward gay, lesbian or bisexual students, teachers, or families.
- √ Insist that our schools offer a curriculum that is inclusive of the diversity which includes gays, lesbians and bisexuals interwoven throughout the disciplines, and that our libraries include information and literature on lesbian, bisexual and gay issues.
- √ Invite someone from the PFLAG NH Speaker Bureau to do a presentation to your civic group, place of worship, or other gathering of concerned citizens.

Visit: <http://pflagnh.org/>