



ADOLESCENT AND SCHOOL HEALTH

STORIES OF SUCCESS

APA's Respect Workshop: Improving School Support for LGBTQ Students

For LGBTQ students to thrive in their schools and communities, they need to feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe and supported. APA's Respect Workshop is effective at improving school staff support for LGBTQ students.



The American Psychological Association's (APA) **Respect Workshop**, developed with CDC support, provides school staff with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to make schools safe and supportive for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students. The workshop teaches school counselors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers about direct services they can provide to LGBTQ students. It promotes implementing school-wide protective practices to address school climate, peer and family support, access to school and community health resources, and inclusive sexual health education.

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students experience increased health and safety risks

The latest Youth Risk Behavior Survey data show that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students are at greater risk in many aspects of their lives.*

More than **60%** have been so sad or hopeless they stopped doing some usual activities.



Nearly **50%** report seriously considering suicide.

More than **20%** report attempting suicide in the last year.

10% have missed school because of safety concerns.

Providing support at multiple levels helps all students thrive

There is no simple solution to the dangerous intersections of risks, but research has identified factors that can help protect students at multiple levels.

Individual-level protective factors include helping young people develop problem-solving and coping skills and encouraging bystander interventions.



Family-level protective factors include family support and connectedness, connection to other caring adults, and connection and commitment to schools and peers.

Community-level protective factors include community support and connectedness and access to mental health and substance use services.

*Kann L, McManus T, Harris WA, Shanklin SL, Flint KH, Queen B, et al. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2017. MMWR Surveill Summ. 2018;67(8):1-114.



APA puts the Respect Workshop to the test to promote protective factors

A total of **150 pre-surveys** and **114 post-surveys** were collected from **Illinois, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Vermont** representing **28 districts** covering over **90,000 students**.



From 2015 to 2017, APA partnered with education agencies to implement an in-person Respect Workshop. The participating state education agencies included Delaware, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Illinois, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Vermont. State education agencies in Illinois, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Vermont participated in data collection before and after the workshops.

100% of survey respondents reported promoting school policies, programs, and practices for a safe and supportive school environment after completing the Respect Workshop



After attending the Respect Workshop, school staff are better equipped to address students' needs

All survey respondents—**100%**—reported that they had promoted school **policies, programs, and practices** to maintain a safe and nurturing climate for all students since completing the Respect Workshop.

Respondents reported significant increases in both knowledge and skills, and confidence in their abilities, to **(1) promote safe school environments, (2) motivate students to prevent HIV, STDs, and pregnancy, and (3) assist LGBTQ students in coping with specific challenges**. For example, the workshop teaches that students are always looking for safe, supportive people. Survey respondents indicated that after the workshop, they made their support for LGBTQ students more visible by displaying stickers, posters, and resources in their office.

Follow-up data were collected from 16 respondents 3 to 4 months after they completed the Respect Workshop. Respondents reported that they were still taking action.

- Multiple respondents reported on efforts to start or support more engagement with gender sexuality alliances (GSAs).
- Several respondents described taking steps to review and reconsider gender-based graduation gowns.
- Respondents reported reaching out to LGBTQ rights organizations in their state, either as a referral resource or to share information at a school forum.
- Respondents reported continuing to display Respect Workshop resources, stickers, and posters in their offices.

Said one respondent:
"I really took to heart the idea that students are constantly scanning for safe, supportive people, and am doing my best to appear as just that."



Find out more about offering the **Respect Workshop** at your school:
www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/training/respect-workshop

