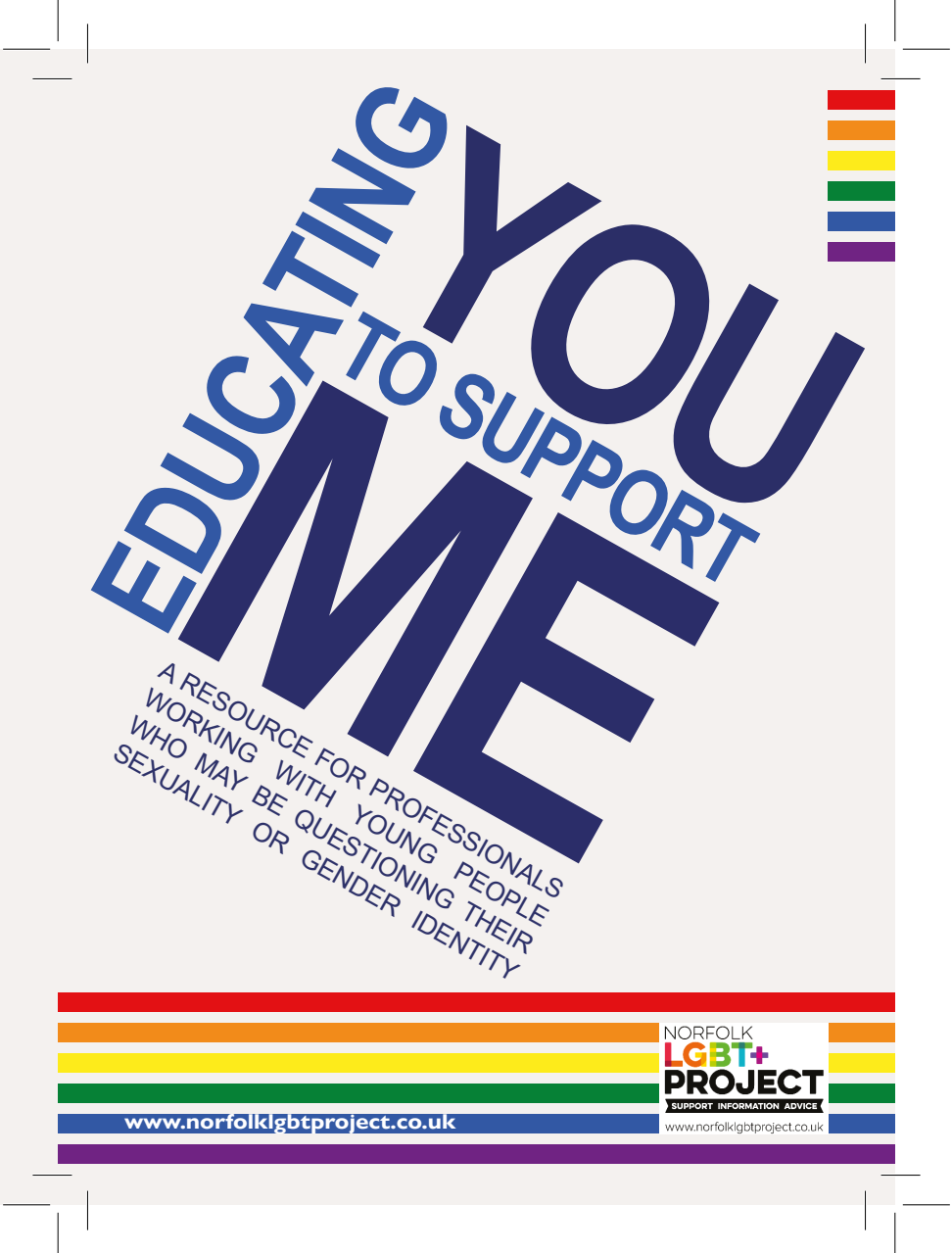




EDUCATING YOU TO SUPPORT ME

A RESOURCE FOR PROFESSIONALS
WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE
WHO MAY BE QUESTIONING THEIR
SEXUALITY OR GENDER IDENTITY



www.norfolkrgbtproject.co.uk

NORFOLK
LGBT+
PROJECT

SUPPORT INFORMATION ADVICE

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INTRO

INTRO

The lack of provision during teacher training results in most staff members in education having little expertise or confidence in supporting young people who disclose their sexuality or gender identity.

School for pupils who identify as LGBT+ can be a difficult time, especially if they decide to come out but they have the right as any other pupil to attend an environment that is free from prejudice and discrimination.

Despite a person's beliefs, values and personal opinions when working in a professional capacity they have a duty of care to those for whom they are responsible. This means being supportive and acting to safe guard both the health and wellbeing of any LGBT+ pupils.

The aim of this booklet is to provide teachers, social workers and other professionals with guidelines to help build a framework through which the appropriate support can be provided.

MY STORY

MY STORY

I wish there had been some sort of support available when I was in school, even though I left education 7 years ago, my mental health has never recovered from the bullying that I suffered from the pupils, and ignorance from the teachers.

LGBT+ issues were never spoken about, just because it was not included in the curriculum doesn't mean it had to be ignored. Some of the teachers had issues with tackling homophobic bullying and coming out. There are such tragic cases of young LGBT+ people committing suicide because of bullying and rejection from their families.

Regardless of their own personal beliefs and values, teachers have the moral responsibility to provide support for their pupils whilst they are in their care.

Anonymous

MY EXPERIENCE

At school the teachers did nothing, even though they knew that I was being bullied because of my sexuality... I came out to them before I was ready in the hope that they would do something, as it was discrimination but nothing happened. I questioned one teacher and asked her if she would treat someone of colour or disability in the same way but her response was "it's completely different, it was your choice to be gay so you just have to put up with what is thrown at you" From then on I kept my head down and couldn't wait to leave.

STORIES

THE DIFFERENCE SUPPORT WOULD HAVE MADE

It would have showed that they cared about people like me... they could have, at least tried, like an assembly on LGBT+ acceptance. Or a tutorial about it... Maybe the gained knowledge could have stopped the bullies from seeing my sexuality as a disgusting thing, to be teased and beaten up over... Also some school counselling during a time of great inner battles when I believed that there was something wrong with me, could have changed my younger self completely for the better!

Billie, 17

MY EXPERIENCE

I was 20 before I felt able to come out and that was largely to do with my teachers' passiveness towards homophobic language and behaviour. Due to the nature of the school I went to, the teachers had a tendency to banter with the pupils which often meant that they overlooked any and all homophobic behaviour. I later learnt from other pupils that they didn't come out whilst out school as they had no confidence with what support they would have received from the teachers.

STORIES

THE DIFFERENCE SUPPORT WOULD HAVE MADE

Having a greater awareness of homophobia and a zero tolerance towards it would have been a massive help as it would have taught the other students that it's not something to laugh about and should not be condoned. If teachers were better educated on the situation, I believe that it could positively influence the students' behaviour, introducing a more tolerant environment for LGBT+ students.

Xander, 24



“Why do you have to flaunt your sexuality?”

“Being transgender is not the answer”

“Are you sure it’s not a phase”

DON’T

“It’s wrong to be gay”

“Your lifestyle choice is not natural”

“Maybe you should focus on your homework more than your sexuality”

**“What do you expect me to do
about it?”**

“I am a teacher, not a counsellor”

“I don’t want to know”

JUST SAY

“Get over it”

**“Attention seeking won’t do you
any good”**

**“Maybe if you asked your mum to
take you to your Doctor?”**

TOP TIPS

Ally yourself with LGBT+ pupils.

Failure to teach LGBT+ issues in schools can contribute to a negative impact on young LGBT+ pupils' health and wellbeing. Most staff in schools have no confidence when tackling these matters and don't receive any equality and diversity training. This has to change!

Whether or not you know their identity or sexuality, you can be assured that you are teaching LGBT+ pupils. Noticeable support and minor acts of compassion go a long way in assisting these young pupils feel safer and find congruence whilst at school.

Not only does accomplishing the position of ally let them know they are not alone, it sends out the message to other pupils that LGBT+ classmates are their peers, who are worthy of respect and acceptance just like anyone else.



TOP TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Here are 5 LGBT+ welcoming activities teachers and staff members can undertake to ensure their classroom and school is a safe zone. You can simply add to the list by asking young LGBT+ people for their input.

1. Do not assume that a pupil is LGBT+ or not. If a pupil confides in you, acknowledge them for their confidence in you, perhaps sharing this information is sufficient at this point. Allow the pupil to take the lead.
2. Challenge all homophobic and transphobic remarks, many pupils use the term “that’s so gay” without thinking. Ask them if they really understand what the term means and the impact it may have on any young LGBT+ pupils in your school, let them know, in no uncertain terms, if such language is acceptable.

TOP TIPS

TOP TIPS

3. Enforce your Anti-bullying policy.

Display Anti-bullying resources around your school, these help to inform about the consequences bullying has both, on the victim and the bully. During Anti-bullying month in November provide workshops for both pupils and staff members.

4. Educate yourself and your colleagues – network with local LGBT+ organisations to see what services they provide. Ask their advice on how you can create a safer environment for your LGBT+ pupils.

5. Provide teachers and other staff members with equality and diversity training. Ensure that this is kept up to date.

A MOTHER'S

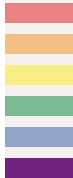
A MOTHERS STORY

The day my son came out to me as gay is a day that I will never forget, I was so happy that he had told me but as the days went by I started to worry how society would treat him when he was older, there I was thinking about his future but didn't give a second thought to how he would be treated by some of his peers at school.

His school didn't teach anything about LGBT issues or provide diversity or equality training to its staff but yet they are there to support the emotional wellbeing of their pupils. My son felt let down by certain staff members when he confided in them about his sexuality, it was brushed under the carpet, it was as if some of the teachers felt uncomfortable talking about it.

Despite the local LGBT+ organisation being on hand to provide support for both my son and I, schools must provide adequate training for all their staff members, failing to do this has a serious impact on young LGBT pupil's mental health.

Anonymous



PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

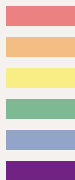
Schools fall under the Public Sector Equality Duty: they must eliminate discrimination; provide equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between minority groups and others. Religion or belief may not be used to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender variant/trans/non-binary people.

On 5 April 2011, the public sector equality duty (the equality duty) came into force. The equality duty was created under the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Duty

The equality duty was developed in order to harmonise the equality duties and to extend it across the protected characteristics. It consists of a general equality duty, supported by specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation.

C SECTOR CITY DUTY



In summary, those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The Act states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

The equality duty covers the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status. This means that the first aim of the duty applies to this characteristic but that the other aims (advancing equality and fostering good relations) do not apply.



BLAH LGBT+ Youth provides support for young LGBT+ people and those questioning their sexuality and gender identity aged 25 yrs and under living in Norfolk & Waveney.

Support is provided by:

Email & phone support
1:1 appointments
School/college outreach work
BLAH LGBT+ Youth groups

Please contact us at blah@norfolklgbtproject.co.uk for more information.



Educating with Pride is part of Norfolk LGBT+ Project's services. Our aim is to raise the awareness of LGBT+ issues in schools and colleges, this is achieved via the provision of a variety of resources such as workshop, both for educators and pupils, individual sessions and the supply of informative materials such as booklets and posters.

For more information about our services please email us at info@norfolklgbtproject.co.uk



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