

Mental Health: What You Should Know and How the GSA Can Help

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386

LGBTQ individuals are almost 3 times more likely than other to experience a mental health condition according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Often termed “minority stress,” differences in the LGBTQ community often stem from a variety of factors including stigma, discrimination, prejudice, denial of civil and human rights, abuse, harassment, victimization, social exclusion and family rejection (NAMI).

Inclusive and affirming counseling and support can be the key to helping LGBTQ youth on the road to recovery from a mental health condition. There are tons of great resources out there for LGBTQ youth, including the National Suicide Prevention Hotline and the Trevor Project.

Getting Help and Support

You may feel hesitant to access care because you fear being discriminated. While these concerns are completely understandable, it is important to seek help. Finding a mental health care provider that takes into account your personal experiences and how they affect your mental health will help you in your recovery.

Find a mental health provider you can trust. You should feel comfortable with your provider so that you can be open and feel safe.

Come with questions you want to ask so that you can be better prepared to share your concerns. After your initial visit think about your interactions. Did this person seem at ease with you? Did they talk openly about your sexuality or gender identity? Did you feel comfortable?



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Questions about this information?
Email: GSAs@iowasafeschools.org



Tips For Talking To Your Provider

- If you feel comfortable, come out when you meet with your provider.
- Ask questions about the provider's experience working with LGBTQ people.
- Be confident about disclosing relevant information about your sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- Be open about your thoughts and feelings of depression, suicide, anxiety, fear and self-harm.
- Ask for more information about any health-care-related referrals, including to other therapists and psychiatrists.

How can the GSA help?

As a GSA, your group is often a lifeline for LGBTQ youth at your school who may otherwise feel unaccepted, lonely, or sad. Creating a safe and welcoming environment for all students is a great way to help combat mental health issues in the LGBTQ youth community. Here are some other ways you can help:

- Invite students who you see by themselves to the GSA meetings. An individual may be nervous about attending a meeting where they don't know anyone, so make a friend and invite them!
- Educate your school community on the importance of mental health, and signs and symptoms to look out for when interacting with friends.
- Speak with local mental health providers about the importance of being culturally competent with LGBTQ issues. Create a list of open and affirming providers in your community, and make sure that list is always available at GSA meetings
- Organize an event that brings new people together. Oftentimes feelings of depression, sadness, and anxiety can stem from feeling lonely and isolated.
- Participate in the Day of Silence and No Name Calling Week. Events like these are held throughout the year to bring awareness to bullying and harassment. Show your support of all students by participating in these awareness events!



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