

stopping anti-gay abuse  
of students in  
public schools

a legal perspective

Special Thanks to April Burns and Steve Munro for their assistance in the production of this publication.

Author: David Buckel

Editors: Peg Byron, Deirdre M. Reznik

©1996, 1998 by Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.

Any part of this publication may be reproduced with appropriate attribution and without prior written consent. No part of this publication should be taken as a substitute for legal advice or consultation with an attorney. For help in finding an attorney, you may call one of our offices and, if Lambda is not able to answer your questions or undertake representation, we can provide the names of local attorneys who have listed themselves in directories as lawyers interested in working on lesbian and gay issues.

**Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund** is a national non-profit organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, and people with HIV/AIDS through impact litigation, education, and public policy work. Founded in 1973, Lambda is the nation's oldest and largest lesbian and gay legal organization.

**National Headquarters**

120 Wall Street, Suite 1500  
New York, NY 10005-3904  
212-809-8585  
212-809-0055 fax

**Western Regional Office**

6030 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 200  
Los Angeles, CA 90036-3617  
213-937-2728  
213-937-0601 fax

**Midwest Regional Office**

11 East Adams, Suite 1008  
Chicago, IL 60603-6303  
312-663-4413  
312-663-4307 fax

**Southern Regional Office**

1447 Peachtree Street, NE, Suite 1004  
Atlanta, GA 30309-3027  
404-897-1880  
404-897-1884 fax

[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

stopping anti-gay abuse  
of students in  
public schools

a legal perspective

A Publication by  
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund



# contents

- introduction ..... 1
- what can you do? ..... 4
  - the most important legal step: report the abuse..... 4
  - but: get safe first ..... 5
  - who counts as a legally liable school official? ..... 6
  - how to document ..... 6
  - move up the ladder ..... 7
  - complaint procedures ..... 8
  - documenting beyond the complaint letters ..... 8
  - be ready with solutions ..... 9
- checklist ..... 11
- conclusion ..... 12
- appendix a: resources to “get safe” ..... 13
- appendix b: educational resources & materials ..... 15



# introduction

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund wrote this booklet to help the many students who are enduring the pain of anti-gay hatred and violence in public schools. It suggests steps by which students, parents, family members, educators, and concerned citizens can join in the fight against this extraordinarily harmful form of bigotry. This manual is an important extension of our near-million-dollar victory in the Nabozny case, the first lawsuit to challenge anti-gay abuse in schools.

Anti-gay hatred and violence in schools often lead to what one researcher calls “a suicidal script” for targeted students. Young people’s self-esteem and their ability to make sound decisions are badly damaged by homophobic messages and actions. Their suffering leads to increased risks of dropping grades, dropping out of school, abusing drugs, participating in unsafe sex, and, as with our plaintiff Jamie Nabozny, attempting suicide.

The studies range in their findings on how the suicidal script plays out as anti-gay bigotry undermines the self-esteem of youth.

For example, a 1995 Massachusetts study funded by the Center for Disease Control found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual students and students who merely identify as having had same-sex

sex, are five times more likely to miss school because of feeling unsafe and four times more likely to have attempted suicide.

**For more information on the Massachusetts study, contact the Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Youth, listed in the next box.**

**For more information on the Vermont study, contact Kelly Hale, 802-651-1557, [kelly@adap.adp.state.vt.us](mailto:kelly@adap.adp.state.vt.us), or Shawn Donahue, 802-748-8640, [sdonahue@doe.state.vt.us](mailto:sdonahue@doe.state.vt.us).**

check it out

In 1997, the Vermont Department of Health released a study finding that gay-identified students were nearly seven times more likely to have been threatened or injured with a weapon at school and four times more likely to attempt suicide.

**Massachusetts is a model state for the ongoing efforts to address anti-gay bigotry in public schools. To obtain more information on those efforts, request a copy of the report entitled “Making Schools Safe For Gay and Lesbian Youth” from the Governor’s Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth, State House, Room 111, Boston, MA, 02133, 617-828-3039, or contact the Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students, Department of Education, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA, 02148, 617-388-3300.**

check it out

In the state of Washington, concerned citizens have launched a project documenting anti-gay abuse of youth, and have discovered that gay-identified youth are truly under siege, in schools and outside schools.

check it out

**The Safe Schools Coalition of Washington publishes the results of its documentation of anti-gay abuse of youth in Safe Schools Anti-Violence Documentation Project Third Annual Report 1 (1997). To order copies of the Report, call or write the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment, PO Box 16776, Seattle, WA, 98116, 206-233-9136, or download from [http://members.tripod.com/~claytoly/ssp\\_home](http://members.tripod.com/~claytoly/ssp_home)**

Anti-gay fear and hatred in public schools hurts everyone in our society. It can cause direct emotional and physical harm to anyone who is a lesbian or gay student or perceived to be gay ("gay-identified"). The hatred and violence also targets individuals associated with gay-identified people, so the group affected by anti-gay abuse includes the sons and daughters of lesbians and gay men, friends of lesbian and gay students, bisexual students and their friends, transgendered students and their friends, and students living with HIV/AIDS.

Anti-gay fear and hatred also "hurts [youth] who are not lesbian or gay because they are taught to hate and discriminate." [Joyce Hunter & Robert Schaecher, "Gay and Lesbian Adolescents," in Encyclopedia of Social Work 1055, 1059 (Richard L. Edwards et al. eds., 19th ed. 1995).] Often, learning to hate means that non-gay youth, as they grow older and act out their hate with violence, are lost to the criminal justice system, just as the targets of their

hatred are often lost to homelessness, substance abuse, and suicide. In either case, with non-gay youth or gay youth, these young people suffer the devastating loss of their hopes for the future.

**While bisexual and transgendered people may be "gay-identified" and therefore suffer from homophobia, they also suffer from fear and ignorance having to do with who they are. In addition, it is very important to acknowledge that many other groups suffer from hate and violence in the public schools, including but not limited to young women and young people of color. While this booklet focuses on anti-gay abuse, Lambda hopes it will benefit others who suffer similarly, and we welcome the opportunity to work with other groups against hate and violence in our public schools, where all students deserve to be safe.**

B/t/w

In the first federal appellate case on anti-gay violence in schools, Lambda successfully represented Jamie Nabozny, who suffered severe anti-gay abuse in his Wisconsin school. He now says that he hopes his lawsuit might mean that other students will not have to live through the same horrors he experienced. In testimony he submitted to Congress about his school's reaction to abuse that was so severe that it required hospitalization, he said:

*"My parents kept calling and meeting with the school officials, but the response was that if I was gay that I should expect this kind of treatment. The school took no meaningful actions against the boys who were harassing me, which sent the message that it was okay to keep harassing me. The school was teaching the value that disrespect for others is okay, and that violence is okay."*



*“Instead of disciplining the kids beating me up, the school started to treat me like I was the problem. They moved me into separate classes, even though I wasn’t the problem. Eventually they separated me even more and moved me into a special education class, even though I wasn’t the problem. When kids on the bus wouldn’t stop throwing things at me and spitting on me, the school changed my assigned seat to the front of the bus where I had to sit with the elementary school children, even though I was sixteen years old, and even though I wasn’t the problem... Instead of teaching the value of respect for others, the school taught that if you are different you are the problem, and you are the one that has to be separated out and hidden.”*

We dedicate this publication to Jamie Nabozny, who lost an important part of his childhood because of the anti-gay abuse he suffered in school, and who agreed to stand up and fight with Lambda in an effort to make sure that other young people do not have to suffer the way he did. (For more information on Jamie Nabozny’s case see page 12.)

# what can you do?

The goal is to stop the anti-gay abuse, whether it is name-calling at one end of the spectrum or physical violence at the other end. Whatever the abuse, schools should show zero tolerance for it because every child deserves a safe environment, emotionally as well as physically, in which to get an education. To achieve that goal, you must work with those who have the power and responsibility to stop the abuse. If they do not cooperate, you will need to take the necessary steps to increase pressure on them to act. At the same time, you will need to document the abuse. If added pressure does not help, the documentation may provide a basis for a lawsuit.

For our purposes here, we will assume that you are dealing with a public school that has failed to address anti-gay abuse. There are, of course, many schools that have shown great integrity on issues of fairness and safety, in addition to the schools that resist protecting and teaching respect for all.

Also, we emphasize here that all other avenues for addressing anti-gay hatred, such as discussions and lobbying for change, are preferable to litigation because they involve informing, debating, and persuading, which can achieve faster results. Litigation takes time and involves force, which is less likely to truly

persuade people because they must respond to power rather than to reason. Nonetheless, if assertive and respectful reasoning does not prevail, litigation is an important tool for ensuring students safe environments in which to get an education.

Lastly, while we focus in this booklet on making schools do something about anti-gay abuse, there are other approaches you might want to consider. Assaults are criminal in nature and, if reported to the police, may be prosecuted. In addition, the abusive students and their parents may be civilly liable for assaults, through what are called “tort” lawsuits. Pursuing these other avenues, however, should not substitute for imposing upon a school its responsibility to take action. In the end, holding the school to its responsibilities may prove to be the most productive approach (criminal prosecution or civil lawsuits against private parties may or may not be desirable, depending on the circumstances).

## the most important legal step: report the abuse

Common to almost all of the legal steps you take with a public school is this factor: no school can take action in an individual case if

**Teachers/Counselors/Principals May Jeopardize Their Licenses.** For those teachers and counselors that are unhelpful, or even hurtful, it may be effective to bring to their attention that they are licensed by the state and that they may be violating the law in failing to address anti-gay abuse. Violations of law may place their licenses in jeopardy. In fact, some states expressly prohibit teachers from “discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation,” including Alaska, Connecticut, Florida, and Pennsylvania. For copies of the laws, call one of our offices for information on obtaining “Taking the Offensive in the Struggle Against Anti-Gay Abuse in Public Schools: Improving School Policies and State Laws.”

it does not know about an abuse problem. In addition, the less it knows about the problem, the less likely that it will be liable for its actions/inactions. Accordingly, the single most important step in preparing for a legal fight against anti-gay abuse in public schools is this: REPORT THE ABUSE TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL (and not just to counselors or teachers who may not have the same level of authority or obligation to respond). ALSO, REPORT ALL FORMS OF ABUSE (and not just serious physical abuse, because the more reports there are, the sooner liability arises).

**Teachers/Counselors/Principals May Violate State Child Abuse Statutes.** When it comes to anti-gay abuse of minors, all school personnel (teachers/counselors/administrators/nurses) must be mindful of their legal obligations to report abuse to the state authorities. Failure to do so can have serious consequences.

but: get safe first

Regrettably, the most important step, reporting the abuse, is often the most difficult

to take. The fear of retribution is not to be taken lightly. Retribution can come from school officials and from classmates, and the results can be devastating. [See Appendix A for toll-free helplines for young people who already face those problems.] Accordingly, we emphatically caution readers to ensure that you or the people you are helping have an adequate emotional support system in place (family, friends, counselors, teachers, support groups, or clergy) before triggering the potential for retribution. [For struggling youth, one of several helpful books is “Free Your Mind,” by Ellen Bass and Kate Kaufman, Harper Perennial, <http://www.free-mind.com>.]

As part of the effort to establish an emotional support system, it is very helpful to identify organized groups with nearby chapters that will be familiar with many of the issues facing lesbian, gay, and bisexual students, such as Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) or Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). [See Appendix A for information about supportive groups.] If those groups do not exist in your area, consider forming a chapter with the assistance of the national or nearby regional groups. In addition, students can form supportive groups, commonly called “Gay/Straight Alliances” at their school. Students have formed gay/straight alliances in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Lincoln, Salt Lake City, and in many other cit-

**If a school receives federal funding and has non-curricular school clubs, as most schools do, a “Gay/Straight Alliance” student group is entitled to recognition just like any other student group under the federal law called the “Equal Access Act,” [20 U.S.C. § 4071].**

ies and towns. GLSEN has materials about how to start a gay/straight student alliance or other gay-related clubs, and Lambda has a legal resource packet (which can be especially effective if put in the hands of the school's attorney).

## who counts as a legally liable school official?

It is important that you report abuse to school officials. Counselors and teachers do not count as school officials. They can be very helpful and key components to the support system for young people, but there are fewer legal grounds on which they are obliged to take action. The school principal is the key.

Often, attempts to report abuse will be diverted from the principal, to a counselor or another authority. If this happens, make sure that there is written documentation of the complaint, and include the principal as a recipient, so that even if the principal is not involved in the verbal discussions, the principal nonetheless has received notice of the abuse. In the next section, we talk more about the nuts and bolts of how to document.

As to why you should document your complaints in writing, there are several reasons. For example, it improves communication, meaning that there is a higher likelihood of stopping the abuse. It also displays a level of seriousness that invites a more serious response, which increases the chance for success.

Lastly, if nothing works, and the matter goes to litigation way down the road, old verbal reports of abuse are subject to poor memories and dispute. Without documentation, such verbal reports may result in a trial with one witness saying "I told him a hundred times," while another witness insists "I never knew about it." Such a situation weakens a case.

## how to document

A verbal report of abuse to the principal is meaningful because it is interactive and can promote more understanding. In addition, however, written documentation is necessary and copies must be provided to the principal. It should include your written complaint with key details of the abuse, such as who, what, when, where, and witnesses. Include the details of any verbal exchange with the principal (for example, "You said that you would investigate and take appropriate action by Friday").

It is conceivable that an official could later claim you never provided the written documentation. Consider various methods of "proof of receipt," such as having the official's assistant sign and date your copy of the letter/memo, or sending it by certified mail, return receipt requested, or, if matters get very serious, having an adult "serve" the notice for you and then immediately write a notarized statement about it:

"My name is . . . , and on this date . . . , I personally delivered to . . . , the original of the attached copy of . . . ."

Keep copies of everything you submit.

Witnesses are very important. School officials are less likely to take meaningful action where all you have is the word of the abused student against the contrary word of the assailant. In addition, if a case moves into a lawsuit, the presence of witnesses strengthens the case.

At minimum, present a list of all witnesses to the incident to the principal. Better yet, have witnesses prepare written, detailed, and signed statements (preferably notarized) about the incident. Never let such statements out of your hands until you have copies in a safe place.

Another issue under the topic of “how to document” is the issue of the “tone” of your documenting. It is fair to give principals, who are educators, the benefit of the doubt as to their good intentions when it comes to responding to complaints of abuse. Of course they may lose that benefit of the doubt if they are not responsive to the complaints, especially when the abuse is of a very severe nature.

However, it is a good idea to have the tone of initial contacts reflect an assumption of good faith on the part of the principal, unless there is a good reason for thinking otherwise. A positive tone can increase the chance of responsiveness.

## move up the ladder

There are principals who are homophobic or for other reasons do not respond effectively to complaints of anti-gay abuse. For example, one insufficient response to most incidents of

anti-gay abuse is merely giving the abusive student a “talking to.” Parent conferences, combined with detention, suspension, or sometimes expulsion, are probably more appropriate.

Expulsion is likely the last step in a progressing series of disciplinary measures.

It is inappropriate for the school to change the class schedule or seating assignment of the abused student, as if she or he, instead of the misbehaving student, is the problem. Such responses can make matters worse because they make it clear to abusive students that the abuse is to be expected, and that the gay-identified student is not worthy of meaningful actions by the school officials.

When principals respond insufficiently, it is wise to move up the ladder (very severe abuse may require climbing the ladder early on). Often principals are non-responsive because the issues never leave the four walls of their offices. They may express seemingly heartfelt concern, and promise investigations and actions each time, but nothing meaningful happens.

We have seen this situation over and over again, so we need to emphasize that **ONE OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES IS THE FAILURE TO CLIMB THE LADDER ABOVE THE PRINCIPAL.**

Climbing the ladder takes the matter beyond the principal, brings attention to the principal’s activities, and fosters additional motivations for the school to respond.

Usually the next step on the ladder is the superintendent of the school district or the school board, although the titles of officials and the lines of authority may vary from place to place. Beyond the superintendent is often the head of the state's education department. Some investigation may be necessary to confirm the appropriate steps on the ladder.

In addition to climbing the supervisory ladder, provided the abused student can remain safe, you may wish to also consider contacting other groups about the problem to increase the attention to the school's failure to fulfill its obligations. Such groups would include a parents' association, or a teachers' association, elected officials, or groups like GLSEN or PFLAG, which are listed along with other groups in the Appendices.

## complaint procedures

It may be that the school has formal complaint procedures available to challenge abuse. The procedures may be very general and apply to any complaint of student misconduct, or they may

be very specific and apply to just one type of complaint, like sexual harassment. In addition, the procedures may be particular to the individual school, or they may be applicable regionally or state wide.

Sometimes the procedures are easy to find — as when they are posted on the cafeteria wall — but sometimes you will need to make several requests to several people, including the state's education department, to determine what complaint procedures are available to you.

Once you know what procedures are available, there are more strategic considerations. For example, you may find that the procedure has too many steps to address severe abuse in a timely manner. In such a case, you may want to go down two roads at the same time, using the slow procedure, which involves making a formal complaint, to protect any rights there, while at the same time climbing the ladder immediately to the superintendent or school board just in case that approach is more effective.

## documenting beyond the complaint letters

There are all sorts of possibilities for lawsuits, if all else fails. The word "possibilities" is important, because there is no way of knowing what legal remedies might be available unless a lawyer looks at the particular facts of a case and consults the law of the relevant jurisdictions for that case. Therefore, we cannot give you an easy formula for all the things you can do to prepare for a potential lawsuit.

check it out

**Concerning state-level protections, some states have prohibited discrimination based upon sexual orientation in their education law, including the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Vermont. [See Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-15c (1997); Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. Ch. 71 § 5 (West 1982 & Supp. 1996); 22 Pa. Code § 5.4 (1996); Wisc. Stat. Ann. § 118.13 (West 1992 & Supp. 1996); Vt. Stat. Ann. Tit. 16 § 565 as defined in Vt. Stat. Ann. Tit. 16 § 11(a) (26)(West 1989 & Supp. 1995).] The departments of education in those states should be able to supply the procedures for complaints.**

*A Word About a Deadline.* **For one type of lawsuit against a school, called a “tort” lawsuit based on state law, there may be a very short deadline to meet. This deadline typically is called the “Notice of Claim” requirement, and it can be a deadline of sixty days from the “injury” complained of (perhaps less time, sometimes more, depending on the state). A Notice of Claim does not start a lawsuit, but if you do not file the Notice you may lose your chance to bring this one type of lawsuit. With cases of anti-gay abuse, though, it may be hard to decide when the harm has built up to the point where you could call it an “injury.” If the abuse is severe, it may be obvious. But for the hard cases, keep in mind that you should consult an attorney if you are concerned that the harm has risen to the level of an “injury” and the clock may be ticking. Also keep in mind that a new instance of abuse can start the clock over again, because you may be able to string the incidents together. These Notice of Claim deadlines do not apply in other lawsuits against the school, and do not apply in lawsuits against the assaultive students or their parents, where instead the “statute of limitations” applies as a deadline – typically giving the injured person longer (a year or more) to take action.**

However, keeping a written record or list about abusive or unfair treatment at the school may turn out to be helpful in your case, even though much of what is unfair in schools cannot be solved by a lawsuit.

As one example of unfair treatment, you may find that other types of abuse in the school are addressed effectively. If a boy hits his girlfriend, the boy may be suspended, whereas if a boy hits a lesbian because she is a lesbian, he may not be suspended. Any caring human being would think that is unfair, and in fact the law may agree based on “equal protection” principles. As a result, if the abuse does not get effectively addressed, and the matter goes to litigation, it may be very

important to have written documentation of unfair treatment.

For that reason, it would be extremely helpful to keep a record or list that keeps track of unfair incidents, including names and dates, so that it will be easier later on for a lawyer to sort through and find the proof necessary to make a case. (This record or list would be kept separate from a private journal that you may not want to wind up in court.)

In another example, you may read the local news and find the principal quoted as saying that a student should expect problems if the student is open and proud about being gay. That quotation could be very important later because it is possible that the lawyer might have to prove that the principal was “deliberately indifferent” to anti-gay abuse, and the quotation may be relevant evidence.

For that reason, it would be helpful to also keep copies of items that you think further document the unfairness of the situation.

## be ready with solutions

Our hope is that a principal or other educators will want to be responsive to complaints, and yet they may be at a loss for what to do other than to engage the disciplinary process. Be prepared for that. Anti-gay abuse comes from homophobia and a lack of mutual respect, so educators need to address the problem at the source and use instructional materials geared toward teaching respect for others and underscoring that prejudice is harmful for all.

There are helpful videotapes about homophobia and other forms of bigotry that educators should show in classes or at assemblies, and there are curricular materials that they can incorporate more directly into their work. [See Appendix B for sources of information on instructional materials.] In addition, educators should call upon groups that have more useful information and may provide speakers or trainers for the school. [See Appendices A and B for such groups.]

check it out

**These are some of the organizations that have passed resolutions calling for an end to discrimination against lesbian and gay youth: American School Health Association, National School Board Association, American Psychological Association, National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers. [For information on how to get copies of the resolutions, contact Tracy Phariss, whose "Bibliography" is listed under "Workshops/Training Materials" in Appendix B on pages 15 & 16.]**

Keep in mind that sometimes educators need to educate themselves before they can educate students. The process for an educator can be difficult, but there is no choice if educators take seriously the ethical code underlying their license to teach, and there is no choice if educators take seriously one of the most important goals of education: teaching respect for others and teaching how to peacefully and productively live together.

Lastly, you may want to propose changes in the policies and procedures for harassment. Call one of our offices for information on how to obtain a copy of our guide entitled "Taking the Offensive in the Struggle Against Anti-Gay Abuse in Public Schools: Improving School Policies and State Laws."



# checklist

- get safe first  
[See Appendix A for information about supportive groups.]
- report the abuse to the school principal  
and not just to counselors or teachers who may not have the same authority or obligation to do anything
- document the abuse  
In writing  
Who, what, when, where, and witnesses  
Get statements from witnesses if you can  
Get proof that you submitted the documentation to the principal  
Keep copies of everything you submit
- move up the ladder  
one of the most common mistakes is the failure to climb the ladder above the principal when necessary
- look into complaint procedures
- beyond complaint letters  
keeping a list of the unfair things at the school may turn out to be helpful
- be ready with solutions  
use appendices for videotapes, curricular materials, speakers

# conclusion

Many courageous people across this country have been standing up and speaking out against anti-gay bigotry in public schools.

Lambda is proud to have advanced these efforts in the first legal challenge to anti-gay violence in schools, with a resounding victory in the Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. Nabozny v. Podlesny, 92 F.3d 446 (7th Cir. 1996). In its landmark ruling, the court said, "...The Equal Protection Clause does, however, require the state to treat each person with equal regard, as having equal worth, regardless of his or her status.... We are unable to garner any rational basis for permitting one student to assault another based on the victim's sexual orientation."

The court remanded the case for trial, and, in November 1996, a jury found three school administrators liable for discriminating against Jamie Nabozny. The school quickly settled the case for just under a million dollars. The case sent the message nationwide that schools must take anti-gay harassment seriously.

With this booklet, we hope to empower many more concerned people to help stop those who degrade and destroy some of the most vulnerable members of our communities: our youth.

# appendix a: resources to “get safe”

## crisis numbers & support/talk lines

### toll-free

**You can call these numbers from anywhere; they are completely anonymous and won't show up on your phone bill**

#### **Boston Alliance of Gay & Lesbian Youth (BAGLY)**

1-800-42-BAGLY (1-800-422-2459)

24-hour, youth-run hotline providing social support for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth ages 22 and under.

#### **Covenant House (The “Nine Line”)**

1-800-999-9999

1-800-999-9915 TTY (DAILY 4:00-8:00PM EST)

24-hour, national hotline provides crisis intervention and referrals to young people under 21 and their families. Young people call about all kinds of problems including: family problems, relationship problems, child abuse, family violence, homelessness, running away, substance abuse, and gang involvement.

#### **Fenway Community Health Center — Boston**

Peer Listening Line

1-800-399-PEER (1-800-399-7337)

MON: 7:00-10:00PM, TUE&WED: 4:00-10:00PM,

FRI: 7:00-10:00PM EST

Hotline staffed by lesbian, gay, or bisexual youth who can provide support, referrals, and information.

#### **National Child Abuse Hotline**

1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)

24-hour child abuse hotline provides crisis intervention, information, and referrals.

#### **National AIDS Hotline**

1-800-342-AIDS (1-800-342-2437)

1-800-344-SIDA (1-800-344-7432) Spanish

1-800-243-7889 TTY

24-hour hotline operated by the Centers for Disease Control to answer your questions about HIV/AIDS, give referrals, and send educational materials and information free of charge.

#### **National Runaway Switchboard**

1-800-621-4000

1-800-621-0394 TTY

24-hour line that provides crisis intervention, family mediation, suicide counseling, and referrals for housing, medical services, and counseling. Will deliver messages between families and runaways. They also have a “Home Free” program to provide runaways with free bus tickets home.

#### **Out Youth Austin**

Austin, TX

1-800-96-YOUTH (1-800-969-6884)

DAILY 5:30-9:30PM CST

This hotline offers counseling, support, and referrals.

#### **Teens Teaching AIDS Prevention (Teens TAP)**

Kansas City, MO

1-800-234-TEEN (1-800-234-8336)

MON-FRI: 4:00-8:00PM CST

Teenagers trained in AIDS prevention answer questions about HIV/AIDS.

## limited toll-free

**These numbers are toll-free in certain areas only**

### **Gay & Lesbian Community Action Council**

Minneapolis, MN  
1-800-800-0907  
(TOLL FREE IN IA, MN, ND, SD, & WI)  
OTHER STATES CALL 612-822-8661  
MON-FRI: NOON-MIDNIGHT,  
SAT: 4:00PM-MIDNIGHT CST

Call if you are afraid or have been a victim of anti-gay violence. Council provides referrals, counseling, advocacy, and education as well as documents/collects data on anti-gay crime.

### **LYRIC Gay Youth Talkline**

Lavender Youth Recreation & Info Center  
San Francisco, CA  
1-800-246-PRIDE (1-800-246-7743)  
(TOLL FREE ONLY IN BAY AREA)  
MON-SAT: 6:30-9:00PM, TUE: 4:00-9:00PM PST  
Helpline provides support, information, and referrals to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning youth 23 years old and under.

## online resources

### **Oasis Monthly Magazine**

<http://www.oasismag.com>

### **!OutProud!**

<http://www.outproud.org>

### **The PERSON Project**

Public Education Regarding Sexual Orientation  
Nationally  
<http://www.youth.org/loco/PERSONProject/>

## national organizations

### **The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**

121 West 27th Street, Suite 804  
New York, NY 10001  
212-727-0135  
212-727-0254 fax  
E-Mail: [GLSEN@glsen.org](mailto:GLSEN@glsen.org)

Teachers and community members work together to help make schools places where all people are valued, regardless of sexual orientation. GLSEN has over 25 chapters and administers the National Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual History Month project.

### **National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC)**

1711 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 206  
Washington, DC 20009  
202-319-7596  
202-319-7365 fax  
E-Mail: [NyouthAC@aol.com](mailto:NyouthAC@aol.com)

NYAC advocates for and with young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered. NYAC's Bridges Project provides information, resources, assistance, and referrals.

### **Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)**

1101 14th Street, NW, Suite 1030  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-638-4200  
MON-FRI: 9:00AM - 5:30PM EST

PFLAG is devoted to promoting the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons and their families and friends through support, education, and advocacy.

# appendix b: additional educational resources & materials

**Note: This appendix supplements those resources and materials already mentioned in the text, and those available from the national organizations listed in Appendix A.**

## photos/posters

### **“Love Makes A Family: Living In Lesbian and Gay Families”**

A photo-text exhibit that brings gay-positive images and voices to elementary, middle, and high schools, libraries, churches, colleges, museums, and community centers across the country. Exhibit consists of photos of twenty diverse families with lesbian and gay members (grandparents, parents, and youth), along with interview text. It can be a school or community-wide focus for discussions, panels, events, and curriculum about family diversity, prejudice, and homophobia. For information on how to bring the exhibit to your college or local community, contact: Peggie Gillespie, 413-256-0502. To bring it directly into your school (K-12), contact: Pam Brown, 413-256-0049.

## workshop/training materials

### **“A Safe Place For Questions”**

A program of the San Francisco Unified School District which offers a video and comprehensive resource guide for educators who are interested in creating a safe school environment for “sexual minority” youth. For more information, contact: Support Services for GLB Youth, School Health Programs Dept. – SFUSD, 1512 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94115, 415-749-3400.

### **IYG Video Resource Library**

IYG is a non-profit organization concerned with issues related to youth and sexual orientation, and provides training and technical assistance, a variety of workshop materials, and an **extensive video- and book-lending library**. For more information, contact: PO Box 20716, Indianapolis, IN 46220, 317-541-8726.

### **“Overcoming Homophobia in the Elementary Classroom”**

In-service workshop materials for educators and administrators addressing homophobia/heterosexism and the presence of lesbian and gay families in the elementary school setting. Workshop training materials include the video titled “Both of My Moms’ Names are Judy.” For more information, call: 415-387-9886.

**The P.E.R.S.O.N. Organizing Handbook:  
Public Education Regarding Sexual  
Orientation Nationally**

Written by David Marshall, Robert Kaplan, and Jessea Greenman, this is an organizing manual which provides action alerts and information on curriculum and local challenges nationwide via e-mail. For more information, as well as an enormous amount of other materials, see: <http://www.youth.org/loco/PERSONProject/>

**"A Bibliography: Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education"**

Comprehensive listing of lesbian and gay educational resources and curriculum compiled by Tracy Phariss. Available from GLSEN/Colorado. For more information, contact: PO Box 280346, Lakewood, CO 80228-0346, 303-936-6562.  
E-Mail: [glstnco@aol.com](mailto:glstnco@aol.com)

**Gay and Lesbian High School Curriculum and Staff Development Project**

Catalogue of materials developed by and available from: Arthur Lipkin, Research Associate, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 210 Longfellow Hall, Cambridge, MA 02138, 617-547-2197.

**"Becoming Visible"**

Written by Kevin Jennings, this is a curriculum/reader for college and high school social studies. Trade paperback available from: Alyson Publications, Inc., 40 Plymton Street, Boston, MA 02118.  
ISBN 1-55583-2547 (\$9.95)

**"Project 21"**

Project 21 is a campaign for educational equity sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation of the San Francisco Bay area. For more information, contact: Project 21, 1360 Mission Street, Suite 200, San Francisco CA 94103, 415-861-2244.

## school programs

**"The Harvey Milk School"**

A program of the Hetrick-Martin Institute, the Harvey Milk School is the first alternative high school for youth who are unable to complete their education because of anti-gay harassment. Hetrick-Martin also offers an after-school drop in center, individual and family counseling, street outreach, as well as training and resources to educators, counselors, and community groups. For more information, contact: Hetrick-Martin Institute, 2 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003-6998, 212-674-2400.

**"Project 10"**

Offers on-site support in the Los Angeles unified school district to lesbian and gay youth through rap groups and education. Provides assistance to schools and school districts seeking to establish similar projects. For more information, contact: Project 10, 7850 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90046, 818-577-4553.

**"Project 10 East"**

K-12th grade support services and resource information on creating safe schools for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered youth. For more information, contact: Cambridge Public Schools, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138, 617-349-6486, 617-349-6897 (fax).  
E-Mail: [Project10E@aol.com](mailto:Project10E@aol.com)

## videos

**Descriptions provided by promotional literature or phone contacts**

### **“Both of My Moms’ Names are Judy: Children of Lesbians and Gays Speak Out”**

A diverse group of children ages 7-11 describe what it is like for them to have lesbian and gay parents. Available from the Lesbian and Gay Parents Association. For more information, call: 415-387-9886.

### **“Gay Lives & Culture Wars”**

This 27-minute video focuses on lesbian and gay youth and their families, presenting young people telling their personal stories about coming to terms with their sexual identity. For more information, contact: Democracy Media, 503-452-6500.

### **“Growing Up Gay and Lesbian” (#1013)**

Award-winning host Brian McNaught presents a compelling look at the challenges of growing up lesbian or gay in a heterosexual world. Available from Wolfe Video. For more information, call: 1-800-438-9653.

### **“Hate, Homophobia, and Schools”**

“Designed around a forum of gay and non-gay, some anti-homosexual, youth and adults discussing what it is like to grow up gay in this society... The intention of ‘Hate, Homophobia, and Schools’ is to lessen the impact of homophobia in our society by helping teens understand what it is like to live with hate and fear...” Available from NEWIST/CESA 7. For more information, call: 414-465-2599 or 1-800-633-7445.

### **“It’s Elementary” and “Respect for All: Preventing Homophobia Among School-Age Children”**

A ground-breaking, educational media project to prevent homophobia among elementary and middle school children. The project consists of a documentary for adult audiences — primarily teachers and parents — and three short videos for children to be used in the classroom setting. For more information, call: Women’s Educational Media, 415-641-4616.

### **“Setting the Record Straight”**

Features lesbian, gay, and straight teachers and youth addressing how homophobia damages schools in a dramatic 11 minute video. Available from Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. For more information, call: 212-727-0135. E-Mail: GLSEN@aol.com

### **“Sexual Orientation: Reading Between the Labels”**

Focuses on “issues facing gay and lesbian youth and is designed to help build respect between individuals of divergent sexual orientation.” Received honorable mentions in several competitions and received a gold medal from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Available from NEWIST/CESA 7. For more information, call: 414-465-2599 or 1-800-633-7445.

### **“Straight From the Heart” (#1010)**

Academy Award nominee, this video examines the issues parents face in coming to terms with having a lesbian or gay child, particularly for families with strong religious upbringings. Available from Wolfe Video. For more information, call: 1-800-438-9653.

### **IYG Video Resource Library**

IYG is a non-profit organization concerned with issues related to youth and sexual orientation, and provides training and technical assistance, a variety of workshop materials, and an **extensive video- and book-lending library**. For more information, contact: PO Box 20716, Indianapolis, IN 46220, 317-541-8726.

notes: