

A Teaching Technique to Improve School Connectedness among LGBTQ+ Students



Meagan Shipley, PhD, CHES, Caitlin Holden, MS, CHES,
Elisa “Beth” McNeill, PhD, CHES, Cori Strahan, BS,
& Caitlin Kahney

Learning Outcomes



By the end of the session, participants will:

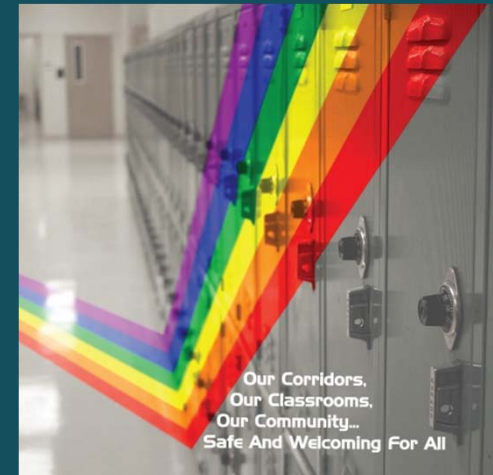
- Describe the importance, regarding health and academic performance, of school connectedness for LGBTQ+ students
- Participate in an activity to identify levels of school connectedness among various school staff
- Discuss strategies for promoting school connectedness for LGBTQ+ students



School Connectedness: Positive Effects

School connectedness promotes:

- Positive student/staff relationships
- Classroom engagement & student learning
- School attendance
- Physical and emotional safety
- Healthy decision making skills
- Improved grades & academic achievement
- Overall school graduation/completion rates



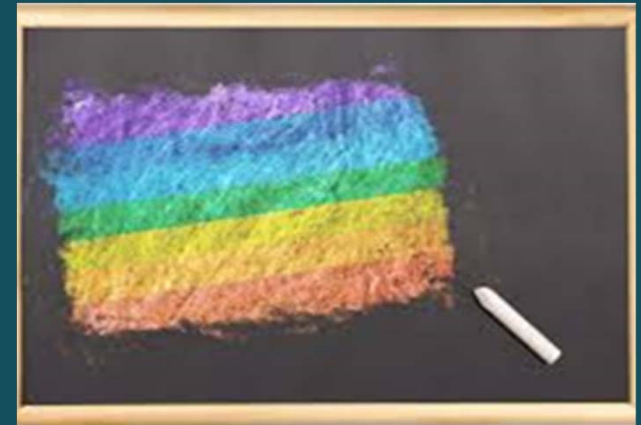
Lack of School Connectedness: Negative Effects

Increased incidence of:

- Violence and bullying behaviors
- Disruptive behaviors
- Absenteeism
- Tobacco and substance use
- Risky sexual behaviors

Lower prevalence of:

- Classroom engagement
- School graduation/completion rates



LGBTQ+ Students & School Connectedness

LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately exposed to bullying and harassment, resulting in several negative health and academic implications including:

Higher rates of:

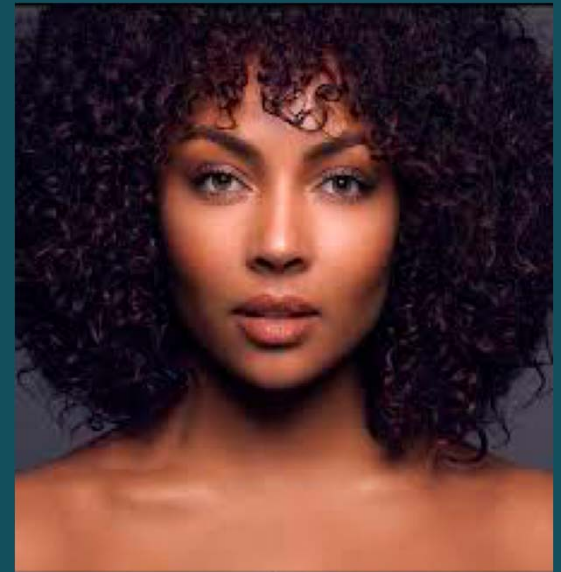
- Feeling unsafe at school
- Absenteeism
- Depression and anxiety
- Suicide attempts

Lower rates of:

- Self esteem
- Academic performance
- Sports & extracurricular involvement



Activity









Activity - Part I

1. At your table, use the key to identify your assigned role based on the color of sticker
2. As a team, place a sticker next to the individual's picture if:
 - i. You know their **name** AND
 - ii. Can describe **personal** information about them

(Examples: interests, siblings, work, hobbies)

 1. Once completed, return to your seat

Sticker & Role Key	
	Administrators
	Teachers
	Cafeteria Staff
	Custodial Staff
	Nurses
	Counselors



Activity Debrief - Part II



4. Analyze which pictures have no stickers and which pictures have every color represented. These are important questions to consider:
 - a. Students with no stickers by their picture: Why is a student not receiving any engagement, interaction, or support from a single adult in the school?
 - a. Students with a lot of stickers by their picture: Why is a student receiving so many interactions, support with adults in the school?



Closing Remarks

Although today we used pictures of celebrities, this activity provides a visual representation of students who may feel **low, average, or high levels** of school connectedness. As a table discuss the following:



- i. Is this applicable to my school/work setting? How or why?
- i. What strategies could you use to promote school connectedness for LGBTQ+ students?



Strategies & Best Practices

- Acknowledge your own beliefs & biases
- Use correct terminology & inclusive language
- Don't make assumptions
- Stop negative behavior → as an ally, be willing to call out students (or staff) who bully or harass other students
- Publicly support transgender and gender diverse students
- Advocate for GSAs (and other similar clubs) in schools
- Assure and respect confidentiality **#oneperson**



Questions?

