

PTOWNWEST

No Place Like Home



P TOWNWEST

*The mission of Ptownwest is to reconnect,
promote and create gay community*

October 2022
Volume 27

Inclusive Sexual Education

by [River L Starliper](#) | published Oct. 22nd, 2022

War. Genocide. Drugs. Violence. All things that students are exposed to across multiple subjects, but sex is where many draw the line.

In the United States, a very small percentage of middle schools and high schools – 18 and 43 percent respectively – teach material that covers key topics in sexual education as defined by the [CDC](#).

Additionally, [only 18](#) of the 50 U.S. states require that the information taught in sexual education be medically accurate. Other states teach abstinence-only education, in which students are exclusively taught to avoid sex altogether.

Students are not being taught about sex, and this educational deficit goes beyond the mechanics of intercourse. Contraception, reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and domestic abuse are all neglected topics by schools lacking sexual education.

The Demand for Diversity

Chelsea Proulx, a public health researcher at the University of Pittsburgh, studies the impact of inclusive sexual education on students' mental health and well-being.

In 2019, Proulx conducted [a study](#) examining schools with LGBT-inclusive sexual education programs and whether or not their students had better mental health outcomes.

Proulx's model found that schools that had LGBT-inclusive sexual education programs experienced lower rates of depression and suicidality in both LGBTQ+ and cisgender heterosexual students, along with lower rates of bullying and harassment.

This research included statistics outlining the prevalence of same-sex couples in an area as a control value to soften the effects of experiencing more diverse or inclusive environments outside of school.

In the study overall, over twice as many LGBTQ+ students reported "prolonged feelings of hopelessness or sadness" than their heterosexual peers, and LGBTQ+ youth were five times more likely to attempt suicide.

(Continued on following page)

Additionally, LGBTQ+ students were more likely to report bullying, harassment, and feeling unsafe in their school environments.

Even though schools may have gay-straight alliances or gender-sexuality alliances (GSAs), only a limited number of students actually attend those meetings. Students who may engage in homophobic or transphobic behavior are usually not a part of these organizations.

By including LGBTQ+ topics in general curricula, all students are exposed to these issues and may gain a greater awareness and understanding of the different types of relationships and gender expression in the world.

"[Inclusive sexual education] uses language that is very open and accepting, and definitions that are more inclusive."

If there is so much data backing up these claims and positive outcomes, why haven't more schools adopted an inclusive curriculum?

Thinking of the Children

Many are familiar with legislation such as [Florida's HB 1557](#), nicknamed the "Don't Say Gay" bill. The legislation bars all discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity in kindergarten through third grade, or "in a manner that is not age appropriate or developmentally appropriate."

Supporters of these bills argue that they are protecting students from grooming and predatory behavior by instructors, and question why children that young need to discuss sex in the first place.

Discussions of LGBT topics go far beyond just sex and general sexual education covers much more than sex itself. So what might an LGBT inclusive sexual education actually look like?

"It uses language that is very open and accepting, and definitions that are more inclusive," Proulx said.

This could mean using anatomical terms instead of gendered ones, or having gender-neutral conversations about pregnancy. Many elementary schools already conduct early sexual education by teaching students about periods and their changing bodies, and most sexual education curricula is built around developmentally-appropriate topics for an age group.

"Kids that age are also old enough to understand what relationships look like," Proulx said.

At this stage, inclusive sexual education may be as simple as teaching boys about periods as well as girls, teaching all students about different types of bodies and including same-gender couples in discussions about relationships.

As kids advance through their schooling, what material is considered "developmentally appropriate" advances as well.

Sexual education in a high school could include teaching about how pregnancy and birth work, methods of contraception and STI prevention. It can also cover life saving information on how students can self-check for breast cancer and testicular cancer.

"When we get to high school, I think talking about what safe sex looks like for queer youth ... [benefits] heterosexual youth as well," Proulx explained.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis, or [PrEP](#), is a medication that can be taken by those at risk of HIV to prevent contracting the disease, either by sexual means or otherwise. Similarly, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) can be taken as an emergency measure after an individual has potentially engaged in intimate contact with a person with HIV.

However, PrEP and PEP are not typically mentioned during a sexual education program that focuses on heterosexual youth, as they are more commonly used by members of the LGBTQ+ community.

This is just one example of how inclusion of medically accurate and appropriate LGBTQ+ topics in sexual education can provide beneficial resources to cisgender heterosexual youth as well.

However, the barrier of policy remains, and with some states actively working against placing such programs in schools, the task of securing an equal education for everyone becomes more complicated.

An Educated Future

There is a gap in America's education and inclusive, expansive, and medically-accurate sex-ed provides students with resources to make informed decisions about their sexual health and activity.

Most school curriculum is set at the state level, placing the decisions on youth sexual education in

the hands of state legislators and education officials instead of doctors or sexual health experts.

“Talking about what safe sex looks like for queer youth ... [benefits] heterosexual youth as well.”

Inclusion doesn't stop at sex-ed either. LGBTQ+ history and culture are a part of the United States that is often neglected by the material taught in schools.

“Sexual education can be a hard subject to advocate for ... if we can integrate [LGBTQ+ topics] into any curriculum, we're making progress,” Proulx said.

And what can we do when high school sexual education leaves lingering questions?

“Sexual education doesn't stop at high school ... Colleges should also think about making their communities inclusive with sexual education resources,” Proulx said.

All students at RIT have access to [services](#) offered by the student health center, including safe-sex kits, birth control, STI screenings and gender transition resources.

So get informed, get tested and bridge that gap as we work towards a country of inclusive sexual education, for everyone.

<https://reporter.rit.edu/wellness/inclusive-sexual-education-0>

October is LGBT History Month

October is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) History Month. Each day throughout the month a video highlighting a different historical figure will be available for viewing in a special section of the LGBT Center Website: [LGBT History Month Featured Videos](#)

Each of these 31 leaders were nominated by leaders of state, national and international LGBT organizations and from the public, and have achieved success in a variety of different endeavors, were national heroes, or advanced LGBT civil rights.

The LGBT Community is one of the only communities worldwide that does not always learn its history at home, in the public schools, or in religious or other institutions. LGBT History Month teaches our heritage, provides role models, builds community, and educates about our unique national and international contributions.

<https://www.ithaca.edu/intercom/2022-10-01-october-lgbt-history-month>

What's Spirit Day? | Here's why millions of people are wearing purple on Oct. 20

A 2021 report from The Trevor Project shows the majority of LGBT middle or high schoolers reported being bullied either in person or online in the past year.

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2021/>

Nearly half of American LGBT adults are religious—here's how this breaks down demographically

More than 11 million people in the United States identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, according to the Williams Institute. Among those who identify with these labels, about 3.1 million consider themselves moderately religious, while another 2.2 million are highly religious. Combined, these two groups comprise about half of the LGBT population.

Most religious LGBT adults in the U.S. (over 4 million) identify with the Christian faith, whether Protestant, Catholic, or other Christian denominations. Meanwhile, more than 130,000 LGBT American adults are Jewish, over 100,000 are Muslim, and another 100,000 are Mormon. An additional 420,000 are affiliated with another unspecified non-Christian religion.

<https://warwickonline.com/stories/nearly-half-of-american-lgbt-adults-are-religiousheres-how-this-breaks-down-demographically,180959?>

HRC. FAITH POSITIONS:

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/faith-positions>

In conservative Florida, LGBT community fights to make its voice heard

Coming just weeks before decisive midterm elections, the Pride parade cannot help but take on a political tone

A Beyonce hit thumped in the background as Pride parade participants marched on Saturday through the streets of Orlando, transforming the Florida city into a rainbow island in a US state more and more associated with the conservative politics of its governor.

In March, Florida's Republican Governor Ron DeSantis, one of the most prominent conservative politicians in the United States, signed a law prohibiting the discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity in elementary school classrooms.

Originally published as [In conservative Florida, LGBT community fights to make its voice heard](https://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/in-conservative-florida-lgbt-community-fights-to-make-its-voice-heard/news-story/2b319d6fced4ba4b699950bb650728d1)

<https://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/in-conservative-florida-lgbt-community-fights-to-make-its-voice-heard/news-story/2b319d6fced4ba4b699950bb650728d1>

14 People, Organizations, Allies To Be Inducted Into Chicago LGBT Hall Of Fame: 'It's Important We're Not Erased From History'

This ceremony will be held Oct. 11 at the Chicago History Museum. It's the organization's first in-person induction ceremony since 2017.

CHICAGO – More than a dozen LGBTQ people, organizations and allies will be inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame next week.

The 14 inductees will be honored during a ceremony 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Chicago History Museum, 1301 N. Clark St. The event is free and open to the public, but registration is required and can be done on the event's [website](https://www.chicagohistory.org/2022/10/05/14-people-organizations-allies-to-be-inducted-into-chicago-lgbt-hall-of-fame-its-important-were-not-erased-from-history/).

The inductees join hundreds of names that have been recognized by the [Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame](https://www.chicagohistory.org/2022/10/05/14-people-organizations-allies-to-be-inducted-into-chicago-lgbt-hall-of-fame-its-important-were-not-erased-from-history/) for their contributions to the city's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities. They're organized by individual inductees, or people who identify as LGBT; organizations; and

friends of the community, for all individuals and organizations.

"There's a mix of people who are currently active and historical figures or organizations that are now defunct but have contributed something enormous," said Rick Karlin, co-chair of the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame.

<https://blockclubchicago.org/2022/10/05/14-people-organizations-allies-to-be-inducted-into-chicago-lgbt-hall-of-fame-its-important-were-not-erased-from-history/>

Mexico's Largest State Approves Marriage Equality

The congress of the State of Mexico, which includes parts of Mexico City's metropolitan area and the surrounding region, voted to approve same-sex marriage on Tuesday, making the state the 29th in the country to do so.

<http://gomag.com/article/mexicos-largest-state-approves-marriage-equality/>

The United Nations has called on Iran to suspend the death penalties imposed on two convicted LGBTQ+ activists.

<http://gomag.com/article/un-calls-on-iran-to-annul-death-sentences-of-two-lgbtq-activists/>

QATAR arrest and Abuse LGBT ahead of World Cup

Beirut) - [Qatar](https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/24/qatar-security-forces-arrest-abuse-lgbt-people) Preventive Security Department forces have arbitrarily arrested lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people and subjected them to ill-treatment in detention, Human Rights Watch said today. LGBT people interviewed said that their mistreatment took place as recently as September 2022, as Qatar prepared to host the [2022 FIFA Men's World Cup](https://www.fifa.com/tournaments/men/cup/qatar2022/) in November and even as the government came under intense scrutiny for its treatment of LGBT people.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/24/qatar-security-forces-arrest-abuse-lgbt-people>

Russia Considers Complete Ban On LGBT 'Propaganda'; Deportation, Huge Fines Proposed

- Laws completely banning "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" have been submitted to the Russian parliament
- These will introduce fines for such relations and the sharing of gender reassignment information to minors, among others
- Nearly 400 deputies of the Russian lower house have signed the legislative package

<https://www.ibtimes.com/russia-considers-complete-ban-lgbt-propaganda-deportation-huge-fines-proposed-3627263>

10 iconic places, people, events that shaped Arizona LGBTQ+ community: Gaymers to RuPaul

<https://www.azcentral.com/story/entertainment/life/2022/10/14/arizona-lgbtq-history-people-events/8238288001/>



[KiMi Robinson](#)

Arizona Republic

Hawaii LGBT

The Hawaii LGBT Legacy Foundation invites the local LGBTQ community to attend year-round events. In addition to the Honolulu Pride Parade and Festival, the Hawaii LGBT Legacy Foundation produces many events throughout the year as resources for Hawaii's LGBTQ+ community.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kngK3CvSeok>

NASCAR Supports LGBT in Arizona

[NASCAR](#) is sponsoring an LGBT-inclusion conversation, along with the [NOH8 campaign](#) — called [Activ8 Against H8](#) — on Nov. 3 in Scottsdale, Ariz., ahead of the NASCAR race that weekend at Phoenix Raceway.

The event will feature various speakers talking about the push for inclusion in sports and in society at large, a cocktail reception and a free NOH8 campaign photo shoot.

In support of the event, Phoenix Raceway is also giving each [attendee of the Activ8 Against H8](#) event one complimentary ticket to the NASCAR Xfinity Series Championship Race at Phoenix Raceway on Nov. 5 at 3pm.

Everyone attending will also be part of a free NOH8 photo shoot directly after the panel discussion.

<https://www.outsports.com/2022/10/13/23402972/nascar-sponsors-lgbt-series-noh8>

Queer as Fact

<https://queerasfact.podbean.com/>

