



# LGBTQIA2S+ SUICIDE PREVENTION PUBLIC COMMENT GUIDE



## WHY PUBLIC COMMENT?

Public comment is a tool we can use to have our voices heard by decision makers and hold them accountable for their words, actions, policies and practices surrounding LGBTQIA2S+ youth. Benefits can include:

- Opportunity to point out issues, offer alternatives, improve language, and help decision makers identify new solutions to issues at hand.
- Sharing expertise, data, and facts
- Elevate the reality of lived experiences of those impacted by issues, policies, and regulations



## CRAFTING PUBLIC COMMENT

Consider these key components when drafting your commentary:

- Greeting to board
- Who you are and the lens from which your statement is coming from (e.g., “parent and suicide prevention advocate,” “concerned community member,” “suicide loss survivor,” etc.)
- Position statement- share experience if applicable
- Ask or call to action – related to practice or policy
- Evidence to support your statement – appeal to logic
- Respectful sign-off



## HELPFUL TIPS FOR PROVIDING PUBLIC COMMENT

- Power in numbers! Encourage others to attend and add their comments on the issues.
- Speak to shared values- safety of our children, freedom, rights, etc.
- Frame messaging around suicide prevention, health, and human rights.
- Identify affiliations with respected suicide prevention experts, organizations, and initiatives
- Borrow language from respected sources, and use your words to strengthen your argument
- Help audience understand accepting and rejecting behaviors, and their relationship to suicide risk for LGBTQIA2S+ youth
- Emphasize the importance of allies- offer ideas on how to be a good ally
- Less focus on individuals- focus on society-at-large (and schools as a proxy) to create supportive and non-rejecting environments
- Practice good self-care!



## SUICIDE PREVENTION LANGUAGE BEST- PRACTICES

**DO:** Emphasize prevention, list or acknowledge warning signs, highlight the effectiveness of treatment for underlying mental health issues, and talk about suicide as a symptom of larger issues (social climate, access to resources, discrimination, familial rejection, etc.), with multiple intersecting risks

**DON'T:** Normalize suicide by presenting it as a common or expected death for LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, focus on the personal or specific details of a death by suicide, or glorify death by suicide



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## FACTS ABOUT LGBTQIA2S+ YOUTH - NATIONAL DATA

- **LGBTQ youth who have supportive families and are in supportive environments have higher resilience.** Both LGBTQ youth who reported living in an affirming home or attending an affirming school also reported higher resilience than LGBTQ youth in non-affirming homes or schools.
- **LGBTQ youth with high resilience had 59% lower odds of reporting a suicide attempt in the past year compared to LGBTQ youth with low resilience.**
- The majority of LGBTQ youth (52%) who were enrolled in middle or high school reported being bullied either in person or electronically in the past year.
- **LGBTQ students who reported being bullied in the past year had three times greater odds of attempting suicide in the past year.**
- LGBTQ students who reported their school to be LGBTQ-affirming had 30% lower odds of being bullied in the past year.
- **45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year. Nearly 1 in 5 transgender and nonbinary youth attempted suicide and LGBTQ youth of color reported higher rates than their white peers.**
- LGBTQ youth who found their school to be LGBTQ-affirming reported lower rates of attempting suicide.
- **LGBTQ youth who live in a community that is accepting of LGBTQ people reported significantly lower rates of attempting suicide than those who do not.**

Sources: [Trevor Project - Resilience & Mental Health Among LGBTQ Youth \(2022\)](#)

[Trevor Project: Bullying & Suicide Risk Among LGBTQ Youth \(2021\)](#)

[Trevor Project: 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health \(2022\)](#)



## FACTS ABOUT LGBTQIA2S+ YOUTH IN OREGON

- About 8% of Oregon 6th, 8th, and 11th graders are trans or gender-expansive.
- About 1/3 of Oregon youth identify with an LGB+, other, or unsure sexual orientation.
- **About 1 in 4 Oregon youth experience conflict at schools based on race, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.**
- **The vast majority of LGBTQ students (more than 88%) in Oregon regularly heard anti-LGBTQ remarks.**
- **61% of LGBTQ+ Students report being bullied.**
- **43% of transgender students report seriously considering suicide.**
- LGBTQ+ students are 3x more likely to miss school due to fear.

Sources: [OHA 2020 Student Health Survey](#)  
[2019 GLSEN Oregon Snapshot](#)

[Oregon Safe Schools & Communities Coalition 2020 State of Safe Schools Report](#)