AFFIRMING SCHOOL COMMUNITY
Strengthening LGBTQI2S Support Systems that Meet the Moment!
LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We begin with the unsettling recognition that the land we work, live and benefit from is the stolen, sacred traditional territory of many Indigenous nations.

The concepts of race, gender, sexuality, and oppression are largely based in white, Western, colonial systems of thought and do not represent the multitude of understandings of identity that exist outside of this viewpoint.

The violence of colonialism is ongoing, as are movements toward resisting this violence. As settlers, we all have a responsibility to commit meaningfully to this work.
Egale is Canada’s national LGBTQI2S organization.
For more than 30 years, Egale has been working to improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and Two Spirit (LGBTQI2S) individuals across Canada and to enhance the global response to LGBTQI2S issues.
PANDEMIC IMPACTS ON LGBTQI2S YOUTH

More exposure to non-affirming environments and relationships
Shrinking access to safer, affirming ones
Consider Impacts of political climate
Added stressors may be especially unbearable to those already struggling
LGBTQI2S support initiatives may have become deprioritized by gatekeepers
VITAL ROLE OF AFFIRMING ADULTS

LGBTQI2S youth with supportive adults both inside and outside their family are 4 TIMES more likely to report good or excellent mental health

(Being Safe, Being Me, results of the Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey, 2015)
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AFFIRMING?

Foster optimal conditions for self-development
Reinforce rights and denormalize violence and harm
Keep communication channels open, listen actively
Receive feedback with humility and accountability
Commit to continuous learning
AFFIRMING PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

• Find creative, emerging possibilities and connections for learning
• Listen for, ask about and respond to emerging needs
• Ensure culturally competent and well equipped support and guidance staff
• Build active and adaptive GSAs
• Continue influencing your school community culture digitally
• Form affirming adult networks and make yourself known
LEARNING RESOURCE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Draw the Line Against Transphobic Violence
A Guide for Educators Working with Youth to Support Bystander Intervention in Transphobic and Sexual Violence

https://egale.ca/awareness/draw-the-line-atv/
LEARNING RESOURCE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

50 Years Later: Sex, Sin & 69 Documentary Trailer and Learning Resources

https://egale.ca/awareness/sx-sin-69-learn/
GENERATING BUY IN AND HANDLING PUSH BACK

• Underscore urgency of supports for LGBTQI2S students
• Find common ground & link to existing priorities and policies
• Emphasize benefit to all
• Come prepared with learning resources and opportunities
• Need for more inclusive curriculum
Community care as a vital resource for LGBTQI2S youth
Assess and respond to privacy, safety and access needs & wants
Deepen club’s intersectional lens
Let digital format spark creative possibilities
Help youth bridge the gap online, no matter where your GSA is at
LEARNING RESOURCE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

GSA Tools for Tough Times:
Strategies to help your Gender Sexuality Alliance Meet the Moment

Webinar Recording and Learning Resource

https://egale.ca/awareness/a-guide-to-virtual-gsas/
SAFER AND AFFIRMING DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

Know which youth may be disproportionately impacted
Recognize features of queerphobic online bullying that intensify harm
Ensure prevention and intervention takes an anti-oppression approach
Be proactive as well as responsive
Emphasize empowering potential of digital communication tools
LEARNING RESOURCE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Anti-LGBTQI2S Cyberbullying
A resource for educators

https://egale.ca/awareness/tackling-anti-lgbtqi2s-cyberbullying-in-schools/
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Ask for or offer help on a question/challenge related to promoting LGBTQI2S affirming environments or supports in your school community
THANK YOU!

For follow-up questions, please contact:

training@egale.ca
Links to share:

GUIDE TO VIRTUAL GSAs:  
https://egale.ca/awareness/a-guide-to-virtual-gsas/

BACK TO SCHOOL RESOURCES:  
https://egale.ca/egale-in-action/back-to-school-resources/