

# LGBTQIA+ SAFETY AWARENESS TIPS



## DID YOU KNOW?

LGBTQIA+ people are nearly four times more likely to experience violent forms of victimization including rape, sexual assault, and aggravated assault compared to non-LGBTQIA+ individuals. It is critical to know how to best protect yourself, your students, and the community; and to know where to report victimization.

## PROTECT YOURSELF



- **Make a safety plan!** LGBTQIA+ individuals are at an increased risk of physical attacks and victimization. Take a buddy when going out, traveling, or waiting for transportation. If you are going on a date or to meet up with a new friend, tell someone trusted where you are going, who you are with, and when they should expect you back.
- **If you are ever victimized,** move to a safe space and take note of any identifying information about your perpetrator. What do they look like? What were they wearing? Do they have any identifying markings or tattoos? These things will be helpful if you choose to report to the police.
- **Dating apps** are widely utilized by the LGBTQIA+ community. Be aware of significant safety concerns:
  - 35% of LGBTQIA+ Match.com users reported experiencing harassment or online abuse while using the dating app. The FBI reported that online dating scams have increased by fourfold for LGBTQIA+ users so be aware of fake profiles and dating scams.
  - Be aware of the lack of privacy on dating apps! If you are not out to your family, friends, or employer, be aware that everything posted to a dating app can potentially be shared.
  - When traveling abroad, know the laws in the country you are traveling to. In 2019 Tinder introduced a new feature that will notify LGBTQIA+ users when they enter a country that could criminalize them for being out. 11 countries report that consensual same-sex acts could be punishable by the death penalty.
- 25% of LGBTQIA+ community members report being victims of human trafficking. **Know the signs of grooming:**



TARGET



BEFRIEND



GAIN TRUST



FULFILL NEED



ISOLATE



CAPITALIZE

## PROTECT YOUR STUDENT



**“Affirming transgender and non-binary youth by respecting their pronouns and allowing them to change their name and/or gender marker legally, is associated with lower rates of attempting suicide” - The Trevor Project**

### When your child is coming out:

- Support from family members can be a key protective factor against things like depression, suicide, substance abuse, and risky sexual behaviors.
- If a LGBTQIA+ youth has at least one affirming adult in their life it reduces their risk of suicide by 40% (The Trevor project).

### When your child is living openly:

- LGBTQIA+ youth are at an increased risk of physical attacks. Because of this, students should beware of people using false identities and should always travel in groups.
- Empower students by teaching them what to document if they are ever victimized. It is helpful to know any recognizable characteristics of the perpetrator and as much detail about the event as possible.

## RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS



If you are a LGBTQIA+ youth seeking resources you can text **“START”** to **678-678** and live help will be provided to you.

# LGBTQIA+

## SAFETY AWARENESS TIPS



### CULTURAL COMPETENCIES



- **Lesbian, gay** and **bisexual** are terms that describes sexual orientation. Lesbian and gay refer to women and men who are attracted to individuals of the same sex.
- **Bisexual** refers to those who are attracted to both men and women.
- **Transgender** is a term that describes people whose gender identity differs from what is stereotypically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. Gender identity is one's own internal sense of self and their gender, whether that is man, woman, neither or both.
- **Cisgender** is a term used to refer to people whose gender identity and/or gender expression do align with the sex assigned to them at birth.
- **Living Openly** is a state in which LGBTQIA+ persons are comfortably living out their sexual orientation or gender identity when and where it feels appropriate to them.
- **Coming Out** is the ongoing process where a person acknowledges, accepts, and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to assess when and where they feel safe to share with others if they choose.
- **Ally:** To work alongside another as a collaborator, listener, active accomplice, and advocate. A person or group that provides visible and consistent support to an ongoing effort, activity, or struggle.
- **Queer:** Often used as a catch-all phrase to include people who do not identify as straight and/or people who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. Due to the historic use of the term Queer to shame and demean members of the LGBTQIA+ community, some are not comfortable with this term.

### REPORTING



If you or someone you know is victimized, please report! Crime Stoppers of Houston's Tip Line is a truly anonymous reporting system that allows community members to report without any fear of retaliation. We cannot legally ask any identifying information or track your call in any way.

- If you are in immediate danger, please **call 911!**
- If you feel as if you are in crisis, please call the **LGBT Switchboard Houston** at **713-529-3211**
- To report hate crimes anonymously call Crime Stoppers at **713-222-TIPS (8477)**
- According to the FBI, a **hate crime** is defined as: "a criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity". In 2019, the number of anti-trans violence grew by 18% from 2018 to 2019 (FBI 2019 Hate Crime Stats Report).
- Though Federal laws do not ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, all but 5 states (Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, and Wyoming) have laws addressing hate crimes. In Texas, hate crimes are addressed based on sexual orientation but not gender identity. In 20 States and D.C., hate crimes are addressed based on sexual orientation AND gender identity.

### RESOURCES



- **LGBT Switchboard of Houston** is a 24 hour helpline dedicated to providing information, nonjudgmental support, crisis information intervention and referral services for Houston's LGBTQIA+ community. **713-529-3211**
- **The Montrose Center** empowers the community —primarily lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQIA+) individuals and their families—to live healthier, more fulfilling lives by providing behavioral health and support services, adult primary care and psychiatry, and free wellness programs that empower individuals to proactively participate in their own care. [montrosecenter.org](http://montrosecenter.org)
- **Houston Gay and Lesbian Parents** is a diverse social group for LGBTQIA+ parents, their partners, and their kids. They offer family friendly activities, support groups and resources for parents planning to come out. [hglp.org](http://hglp.org)
- **PRIDE Houston Inc.** will support, educate and promote the LGBTQIA+ community in order to commemorate our history and advocate our rights for current and future generations by producing Pride events that represent our diverse community. [pridehouston.org](http://pridehouston.org)
- **LGBTQ+ Cycle** is an organization with a mission to support the LGBTQIA+ Community by promoting self-liberation, instilling confidence and the willingness to be. They provide mental and emotional health assistance, opportunities for relationship building, and career and personal achievement promotion for the LGBTQIA+ community. [facebook.com/lgbtqcycle](https://facebook.com/lgbtqcycle)