

# HOW CAN ADULTS SUPPORT THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF LGBTQ+ YOUTH?



**UCLA**  
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**1**

## **BUILD SAFER SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS**

Research has documented many educational policies, practices, and strategies that create positive school climates for LGBTQ youth, such as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and curricula that includes the contributions of LGBT Americans.

These types of support have been shown to improve mental health, reduce harassment, and increase feelings of safety among LGBT students.

**Russell & Fish (2019), *Sexual Minority Youth, Social Change, and Health: A Developmental Collision, Research in Human Development***

**2**

## **INCREASE FAMILY ACCEPTANCE**

There is a strong link between the well-being of LGBT youth and family acceptance.

When families affirm and accept LGBT youth, young people have a lower risk of depression and suicidal thoughts along with greater self-esteem, social support, and general health.

**Ryan, Russell, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez (2010), *Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults. Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing***

**3**

## **ENCOURAGE PEER CONNECTIONS**

Friendships and romantic relationships with other LGBT youth can provide sexuality-related social support that can improve mental health for sexual minority young people.

Adults can encourage involvement in organizations designed to promote connections with other LGBT youth as well as positive online social networks, both of which can buffer the effects of discrimination and promote wellbeing.

**Russell & Fish (2016), *Mental Health in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Youth, Annual Review of Clinical Psychology***