

The Importance of LGBTQ Inclusion in Sports

Across the country, LGBTQ youth face harassment, bullying, and discrimination-- in school, at home, and on the playing field. This harmful treatment can often lead to negative physical and mental health outcomes. For example, research has shown that LGBTQ students who experience high levels of anti-LGBTQ victimization and discrimination have lower GPAs, lower self-esteem, and higher levels of depression.

In recognizing the power of sports to potentially mitigate the negative impacts of LGBTQ discrimination, especially among youth, advocates and allies are expanding their efforts to increase LGBTQ access to sports. Expanding our LGBTQ awareness and increasing our competency in athletics is an essential step in effectively creating safer spaces in sports for LGBTQ communities.

- **LGBTQ youth face harassment, discrimination, and isolation.**
 - **Seven out of ten** LGBTQ students experience verbal harassment at school based on sexual orientation. (GLSEN, School Climate Survey, 2018)
 - **Sixty-seven percent** of LGBTQ youth report that they've heard family members make negative comments about LGBTQ people. (Human Right Campaign, 2018)
 - **Only twenty-four percent** of LGBTQ youth **participate in sports** (compared to the national average participation rate of **sixty-eight percent**). (Play to Win, 2018)
 - **Four out of Five** LGBQ Youth **are not out to their coaches** about their sexual orientation. (Play to Win, 2018)
- **This negative treatment impacts the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ youth.**
 - **Twenty-eight percent** of LGBQ youth and **forty percent** of transgender youth) feel depressed most or all of the time compared to twelve percent of non-LGBTQ youth. (Human Rights Campaign, 2017)
 - LGBQ young people are more than **twice** as likely to feel suicidal and over **four times** as likely to attempt suicide. (Human Rights Campaign, 2017)
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- **One in three** transgender youth have seriously considering suicide and **one in five** has made a suicide attempt. (Human Rights Campaign, 2017)
 - LGBTQ youth have higher rates of obesity and diabetes than non-LGBTQ youth. (Northwestern Medicine, 2018)
 - LGBTQ youth are less likely to engage in physical activity than non-LGBTQ students. (Northwestern Medicine, 2018)
- **Supportive sports environments can have a positive impact for LGBTQ youth.**
 - Coaches can provide LGBTQ with life-saving support. A recent report showed that LGBTQ youth who had **at least one accepting adult** in their life were **forty percent** less likely to report a suicide attempt in the last year. (Trevor Project, 2019)
 - Sports instill life-changing self confidence. LGBTQ youth who play sports report **higher rates of self confidence and well-being** than LGBTQ youth who do not play sports. (Human Rights Campaign, 2018)