



# Introductions

## Subject-Matter Experts

- **Kevin Hodgson**, Manager of Programs, Hockey Education Reaching Out Society (HEROS Hockey). His 15-year career in the Human Services sector has exclusively focused on marginalized children and youth. He is also a Consulting Trainer for the Centre for Suicide Prevention.
- **Linda Scurr, MEd**, counselling program supervisor with Adult Addiction Services Calgary, Addiction and Mental Health (formerly AADAC), Alberta Health Services. As the supervisor of the Calgary AADAC Enhanced Services for Women program Linda was awarded the Premier's Award of Excellence 2005. She is a Consulting Trainer with Centre for Suicide Prevention and has taught suicide intervention training since 1975.
- **Dave MacLeod, MSc RPsych**, founding clinical psychologist with Western Psychology Services in Calgary, now the overseer of the WPS co-operative. Dave began work in suicide prevention in the late 1970s as a volunteer with the Distress Centre/Drug Centre and has, since then, worked in a variety of adolescent treatment centres around the world. Dave is a Consulting Trainer with the Centre for Suicide Prevention.

## Secondary Research

- **Robert Olson, BA, MLIS**, Librarian, Centre for Suicide Prevention, provides secondary research and presents this webinar.



# Co-sponsoring Organizations

## Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research (ACICR)

A provincial organization committed to advancing the impact or prevention, emergency response, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries in Alberta. ACICR is part of the School of Public Health, University of Alberta. For more information, visit us at [www.acicr.ca](http://www.acicr.ca)

## Centre for Suicide Prevention (CSP)

An education centre committed to reducing suicide through education: information services, workshops, presentations and now webinars. CSP is a branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). For more information, visit us at [www.suicideinfo.ca](http://www.suicideinfo.ca)



# The 5 Things We Wish ALL Teachers Knew About LGBT and Suicide



FACT 1:

# The language of sexuality can be a problem.

Lesbian Homophobic Pansexual Gay Coming Out  
Transgender Gender Non-Conformist Queer Third Sex In The Closet  
Heterosexual Privileged Gender Atypical Two-Spirit Questioning Bigendered  
Asexual Cisgendered Homosexual Gender Neutral FTM **LGBTTTQQIAA**  
Masculine Hir Bisexual Gender Assigned MTF Hetero Normative Transsexual  
Mixed Gender Feminine Gender Reassigned Androgyne Cissexual  
Gender Dysphoria Third Gender Ambiphilia Transvestite Hijra Non-  
**Binary Discriminating** Gynephilia Postgenderist Transfeminist Transphobic  
Gender Identity Disordered Heterosexual

FACT 1:

# The language of sexuality can be a problem.

## Denotations and Connotations

- Terms are increasingly narrow & specialized
- “the string” **LGBTTTQQIAA**
  - **L**esbian, **G**ay, **B**isexual, **T**ransgender, **T**ranssexual, **T**wo-spirited, **Q**ueer, **Q**uestioning, **I**ntersex, **A**sexual, **A**lly

FACT 1:

**The language of sexuality can be a problem.**

## **Denotations and Connotations**

- “homosexual”
- “queer”
- “homophobic”
- “assignment”

FACT 2:

# Attitudes about sexuality can be a problem.

## Dichotomies

- Male / Female
- Sex / Gender
- Normal / Abnormal
- Healthy / Sick (Disordered)
- Right / Wrong
- Sexual Orientation / Sexual Identity
  
- “Us / Them”



**FACT 3:**

# **LGBT individuals have higher rates of suicide.**

**LGBT youth are at higher risk for suicide than LGBT men and women who are older.**

Adults:

- are more accepting of who they are
- develop a greater amount of protective factors
- have broader support networks

**FACT 3:**

# **LGBT individuals have higher rates of suicide.**

**LGBT youth have higher instances of suicidality than the general youth population**

Risk of attempting suicide:

- LGB youth **28%**
- Transgender youth **77%**
- Heterosexual youth **4%**

**FACT 3:**

# **LGBT individuals have higher rates of suicide.**

**Suicidal ideation:** LGBT youth 1.5 to 3 times more

**Suicide attempts:** LGBT youth 5 to 15 times more

**Deaths by suicide:**

Attempts by LGBT youth account for nearly 30% of all completed suicides.

FACT 4:

**Sexuality does not cause suicide.**

**The EXPERIENCE of sexuality causes suicide.**

Homophobic / transphobic comments

Verbal harassment

Physical harassment

Sexual harassment

Unsafe spaces

FACT 4:

**Sexuality does not cause suicide.**

**The EXPERIENCE of sexuality causes suicide.**

**Homophobic / transphobic comments:**

70% of students say they hear comments like  
“That’s so gay” daily at school

48% hear terms like “faggot”, “lezbo”, “dyke”

FACT 4:

**Sexuality does not cause suicide.**

**The **EXPERIENCE** of sexuality causes suicide.**

**Homophobic / transphobic comments:**

10% of students say they hear homophobic comments  
FROM TEACHERS

23% hear transphobic comments FROM TEACHERS

FACT 4:

**Sexuality does not cause suicide.**

**The EXPERIENCE of sexuality causes suicide.**

### **Verbal harassment**

74% of transexual students report having been harassed about their gender expression

26% of LGBT students report having been harassed daily about their sexual orientation

37% of youth with LGBT parents report being harassed about their parents' sexuality

FACT 4:

**Sexuality does not cause suicide.**

**The EXPERIENCE of sexuality causes suicide.**

### Physical harassment

21% of LGBT youth report being physically assaulted for their sexual orientation

29% of LGBT youth report being physically harassed or assaulted for their gender expression



FACT 4:

**Sexuality does not cause suicide.**

**The EXPERIENCE of sexuality causes suicide.**

### **Sexual harassment**

49% of transexual students

45% of students with LGBT parents

42% of bisexual students

40% of gay male students

33% of lesbian students

FACT 4:

**Sexuality does not cause suicide.**

**The EXPERIENCE of sexuality causes suicide.**

### Unsafe spaces

64% of LBGT students feel unsafe at school

61% of students with LGBT parents feel unsafe at school

FACT 4:

**Sexuality does not cause suicide.**

**The EXPERIENCE of sexuality causes suicide.**

**Most unsafe places in the school:**

Phys. Ed. change rooms

Washrooms

(both are gender-segregated)

**FACT 5:**

# **Steps can be taken to support LGBT students.**

**Policies**

**Communication**

**Attitudes**

**FACT 5:**

# **Steps can be taken to support LGBT students.**

## **Safer-School Policies**

Anti-homophobia (etc) measures

Teacher PD re: sexuality issues

LGBT-inclusive curriculum

LGBT-sensitivity in university B.Ed. training

Support/promote gay-straight student alliances

Consult with community organizations

Pay particular attention to vulnerable students

Single-occupant washroom facilities

**FACT 5:**

# **Steps can be taken to support LGBT students.**

## **Communication**

Respect the person's privacy

Be sensitive to the person's comfort level

Be aware of your setting

Be wary of your phrasing

Ask permission to ask questions

Focus on FEELINGS

Talk in a manner that conveys respect and acceptance

Avoid comparisons to other people

**FACT 5:**

# **Steps can be taken to support LGBT students.**

## **Attitudes**

Suicide is an **INDIVIDUAL** decision  
Seeing individuals as members of groups is not helpful

Sexuality is not the most urgent issue –  
**SUICIDE** is.

# References

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