

The background is a colorful, abstract composition of various shades including red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, with a textured, painterly appearance. A paintbrush with a black handle and a blue-tipped brush head is positioned in the upper right corner, pointing downwards.

An Educator's Guide to Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students

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Introduction and Overview

As educators and caring adults, we hope to create safe school environments for all students in North Carolina's schools. Unfortunately, we know that some students are at increased risk for experiencing violence, including child maltreatment, bullying, suicide, sexual violence, and teen dating violence. For those students, feeling safe and connected at school can make the difference—often a life or death difference—in how they view themselves and whether or not they believe they deserve safety and care.

Some startling statistics about 2SLGBTQIA+ youth:

- 18% of LGB high school students have been physically forced to have sexual intercourse (vs. 5% of heterosexual students).
- 18% of LGB high school students reported physical dating violence (vs. 8% of heterosexual students).
- 10% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.
- 34% were bullied on school property.
- 28% were bullied electronically.
- 40% of homeless youth identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ (compared to 7% of the general population of youth identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+), the majority of whom were forced out or ran away due to their identity, and over a third of whom experienced abuse at home.
- For youth who have had others try to convince them to change their identity or orientation, there is an increased risk of suicide. 6% of youth who had experienced conversion efforts reported their teacher as the person who tried to change them.

For 2SLGBTQIA+ youth without supportive parents, home may not be a safe place.

This makes it all the more important to ensure schools are safer, growth spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, like their peers, to feel brave and empowered to learn in an environment where they are free from harassment, and where they feel supported. Positive school environments have been shown to reduce depression, suicidal feelings, substance use, and unexcused school absences among 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.

For transgender youth in particular, a recent study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health found that for each additional context (i.e., at home, school, work, or with friends) in which a transgender youth's chosen name is used, their risk of suicidal behavior is reduced by more than half, and that depression, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior were lowest when chosen names could be used in all four contexts.

And because educators and staff often model and strengthen the behavior expectations that their students will use with one another, it is essential that school administration, faculty, and staff understand the needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and are committed to fostering supportive environments.

Preventing Violence Against 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth

The North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA) is an inclusive statewide alliance working to end sexual violence through education, advocacy, and legislation. Our prevention team works with the North Carolina Division of Public Health (DPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) using a public health framework to prevent sexual assault. In partnership with DPH, we co-facilitate the North Carolina Sexual Violence Prevention Advisory Council (SVPAC) as well as its workgroups, which include the K-12 Sexual Violence Prevention Workgroup. Because rigid adherence to gender norms is a risk factor for perpetrating sexual violence, and 2SLGBTQIA+ young people are at unique and increased risk for experiencing sexual violence, this workgroup identified a need for increased support for this population.

We know that risk factors for sexual violence increase the likelihood of sexual violence perpetration, even if the relationships are not causal. These risk factors include:

- general aggressiveness and acceptance of violence;
- adherence to traditional gender roles;
- history of violent victimization;
- hyper-masculinity;
- emotionally unsupportive family environment;
- poor parent-child relationships, especially with fathers;
- association with sexually aggressive, hypermasculine, and delinquent peers;
- cultural norms that support violence against others;
- and harmful norms around masculinity and femininity.

These risk factors for perpetrating sexual violence overlap with the harms commonly experienced already by 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Because 2SLGBTQIA+ people are more likely to experience family problems that lead to homelessness and to experience hurtful assessments of and commentary on their gender presentation, they are also at an increased risk of sexual violence in their homes, communities, and schools.

But there's hope!

We also know that protective factors either reduce the likelihood of sexual violence occurring or support survivors in their healing if they've experienced harm. These protective factors against sexual violence include:

- connection/commitment to school
- connection with a caring adult
- affiliation with prosocial peers
- emotional health and connectedness
- And empathy and concern for how one's actions affect others

This means that **you** are in a unique position to serve as a protective factor for 2SLGBTQIA+ students, as well as your other students. Your example and encouragement can be a protective factor. You can help foster safer and more supportive learning environments, greater peer understanding, and a deeper connection to school. Teachers who respect student's pronouns have a unique role in supporting transgender students: "Transgender and nonbinary youth who report having their pronouns respected by all or most of the people in their lives attempted suicide at half the rate of those who did not have their pronouns respected." You are a protective factor not just for reducing sexual violence, but for reducing other forms of violence, including bullying, teen dating violence, and more!

This toolkit is organized like a syllabus—a curated list of brief readings and short videos to help you build your capacity to support safer school environments for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.

As you read through it, be sure to visit the links for essential readings and resources, as the knowledge and discussion built into the toolkit builds on prior knowledge. You will occasionally find two kinds of supplemental activities. Opportunities to "unlock more learning" are designated with a key graphic, and are optional resources for deeper learning if you are interested in a topic we cover. Reminders to "take it to heart" are designated with a heart graphic, and offer self-reflective questions and activities to help you connect on a deeper emotional level both with the material presented and with 2SLGBTQIA+ students in your classrooms. We strongly recommend you complete the "take it to heart" activities. These facilitate an understanding of the "why," "what," and "how" of this toolkit.

- **Part One** lays the foundation with an overview of language and terminology to help you better understand your 2SLGBTQIA+ students.
- **Part Two** looks at the individual level—at you—with a series of resources and reflections to help you identify any areas of personal work you might want to do to increase your active allyship.
- **Part Three** moves into the relationship level—at how you, personally, can better understand 2SLGBTQIA+ youth needs and be a better support to them.
- **Part Four** addresses what support might look like at the community or school level, and how to incorporate the principles you’re learning into the classroom or school setting.
- **Part Five** closes out our toolkit with a reflection on how what you’re doing on the personal, relationship, and school level to support students equips them long after they’re out of your classroom with social-emotional skills, confidence, and a felt experience of healthy relationships. This toolkit also includes a series of additional resources in our appendices, to include lesson plans sorted by health education standards and additional resources for ongoing professional development.

We hope you appreciate An Educator's Guide to Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ Students, and invite you to reach out to NCCASA’s prevention team by emailing prevention@nccasa.org with any questions.

Creating Emergent Spaces

Perhaps you have heard of “safe spaces” to allow students who have experienced trauma the ability to feel safe and connected. You might also have heard of “brave spaces” to encourage students to share and bring their voice even to challenging conversations, which often requires bravery. Sometimes, these models are discussed as if they are in contradiction to each other. We believe they are not, but we also believe some of the nuance around how to facilitate either of those kinds of spaces has been lost in the debate. Therefore, we are proposing a new framework, based on Adrienne Maree Brown’s *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*.

Emergent spaces allow for growth and change, which is essential to creating safer school environments for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. To create an emergent space, you spend time on the front end of challenging discussions building trust and a safer container, articulating expectations about communication across difference, and modeling/practicing compassion and clarity in less-charged discussions so that the container will be strong for trickier discussions.

An emergent space gives 2SLGBTQIA+ students a sense of safety and trust in their peers and teachers, and models effective questioning and self-regulation so that individuals seeking information, or who are new to the idea of 2SLGBTQIA+ acceptance, grow in their ability to ask with respect and remain open to learning. You may want to read *Emergent Space: Finding An Alternative* before diving in to the rest of this document. We will discuss application of the emergent space framework to the classroom later in this toolkit. For now, keep it in mind as you work your way through these lessons.

*Note: Many of you reading this may yourselves identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, and still want to learn how to become better allies and supports to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. While much of this resource is especially helpful for straight allies in mind, many of the ideas will also be applicable for **all** adult allies. Even as 2SLGBTQIA+ adults, we might have internalized bias that impacts how we show up for the youth in our classrooms.*

History & Language

2SLGBTQIA+ HISTORY AND LANGUAGE RESOURCES:

Website: [LGBT Rights Timelines in American History](#)

Video: [What is Intersectionality?](#) (2 minutes)

Video: [Introduction to the Gender Unicorn](#) (Under 8 minutes)

Website: [More About the Gender Unicorn](#)

Reading: Pages 40-42 of [GLSEN's Safe Space Kit](#)

NOTE: Any terminology that is indicated as “derogatory” should not be used in a classroom setting by teachers or other students, even if some 2SLGBTQIA+ students occasionally use that language to refer to themselves Reading: Pages 1-9 of [Schools In Transition](#)

OPTIONAL “UNLOCKING” 2SLGBTQIA+ HISTORY AND LANGUAGE RESOURCES:

Website: [Lesson plans for teaching about Stonewall](#)

Video: [Kimberlé Crenshaw's TED Talk on The Urgency of Intersectionality](#)

Website: UC Davis [glossary of 2SLGBTQIA+ terminology for adults](#)

So what are we talking about when we say “LGBTQ”? This can stand for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (meaning: people who are currently questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation). While “queer” was historically a slur used against 2SLGBTQIA+ people, some people have reclaimed the term and use it to describe themselves, so for many people, the “Q” in 2SLGBTQIA+ may also represent “queer.” In some fields or writing, you may also see this population referred to as GSM, or gender and sexual minorities. Learning about 2SLGBTQIA+ history, frameworks, and language can be an essential first step toward creating safe spaces for your students. In this section, we will address the history and culture of 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and go over some of the common language and descriptions people might use in talking about their identities and experiences.

Note: Native and indigenous Americans may identify as Two Spirit (the 2S in the acronym we use). This is not encompassed in other terms that conceptualize gender differently. Additionally, many Native people describe not feeling represented in the LGBTQ movement in terms of prioritized political and social efforts, as well as cultural norms. Why do we put a plus sign at the end of 2SLGBTQIA+ in this document? We do this to indicate that there are many other identities that fall under the spectrum of gender and sexual minorities, which may include nonbinary and other terms that could potentially make that acronym really, really long! By adding a “+” we are acknowledging that this umbrella term includes many other identities not represented in these letters.

History and Culture

History

Often, 2SLGBTQIA+ folks experience “erasure,” which means that many of their experiences are left untold. Students who do not learn examples of how people like them have contributed to history may not realize the value of their contributions to their communities, and students who do not learn about the history of 2SLGBTQIA+ rights may not recognize how those rights impact their safety. Being intentional about learning and teaching 2SLGBTQIA+ history is one way to create more inclusive spaces. Here is a great place to begin learning about 2SLGBTQIA+ history that is accessible. Pause for a moment and go read the [LGBTQ Rights Timeline in American History](#).

2SLGBTQIA+ people have been around throughout the world and U.S. history. If you teach a specific subject, you might want to spend some time learning about well-known 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals who have contributed to your field so that you can share about their experiences, insights, and innovations in the classroom.



The Stonewall Riots are considered by many to mark the modern era in 2SLGBTQIA+ rights. You can find information about Stonewall, as well as [lesson plans for teaching about Stonewall](#) on Teaching Tolerance's website.

Intersectionality



Regardless of our identities, we have all experienced harm and struggles in our lives. We have all had to be creative and resourceful in the ways we have dealt with challenges in our lives. Sometimes, when we experience difficulties, it makes us assume that everyone else's difficulties are similar. Then if we overcome them, we assume that so should everyone else.

This does not reflect an awareness of the complexities of systemic power differences and oppression, and the ways that different people are targeted or experience harm.

Sometimes, in order to fully empathize with others, we have to ask ourselves what hurt we are carrying around that might stop our ability to be fully open to the experiences of others. Some questions you could ask yourself (or journal about) are:

- What are ways I've experienced discrimination that may be similar or different to what I've read about in this toolkit?

- How do my own experiences of struggle or discrimination inform my ability to empathize with and understand 2SLGBTQIA+ youth experiences?
- How do my own experiences of struggle or discrimination limit my ability to empathize with or understand 2SLGBTQIA+ youth?
- What are the tools or coping strategies I've used in my own life? How does this affect what assumptions I might have for how 2SLGBTQIA+ youth should react to their own experiences of trauma and discrimination?



Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe the way people's different identities impact their experiences of the world. Pause your reading to go watch the following 2-minute long video for an introduction: "[What is Intersectionality?](#)".

Find and act on opportunities to create intersectional allyships. What do we mean by "intersectional allyship"? If you have experienced one kind of harm, you can still show up for people who've experienced other kinds of marginalization. Remember that while marginalization has some similarities regardless of the kind of marginalization experienced, different forms of marginalization might have unique characteristics. Remember not to discount someone else's marginalization just because it doesn't align with your own.

2SLGBTQIA+ students' other identities often impact how they experience the world. Students cannot simply separate their identities or the effects of them, so it is important to understand how those identities interact, or as Crenshaw puts it, intersect.



Do you want to learn more about intersectionality? Go above and beyond and watch Kimberlé Crenshaw's TED Talk on [The Urgency of Intersectionality](#).

TAKE
IT TO
HEART

Think about your identities. This might include your race, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education level, ability, socioeconomic class, or background. Now think back on your K-12 education.

Did your education include examples in each of your subjects of people who share those identities, who looked like you, accomplishing great things? Did you learn about their inventions and contributions to society? Did you read literature and see art from people like you?

Alternatively, were most of the representations you saw of people like you of them feeling empowered, or of them being harmed? How did that feel as a child, and how did this impact how you envisioned your future?

You may want to journal some of your responses or discuss them with a trusted friend or colleague.



Frameworks, Language, and Terminology

Now that you have started building your knowledge about 2SLGBTQIA+ history and intersectionality, it is important to understand how students might understand their gender identity and sexual orientation, and the impact of language and terminology.

Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Romantic/ Sexual Orientation

So what's the difference between transgender and gay? What does "gender identity" mean? Can someone be both bisexual and nonbinary? Check out the Gender Unicorn for a simple description.

Pause your reading to go watch this short video by Pop'n'Olly for an [introduction to the Gender Unicorn](#). (Under 8 minutes)

You can find more about the Gender Unicorn at [Trans Student Educational Resources](#).



Print out the Gender Unicorn Coloring sheet and fill in your own gender identity, expression, attraction, and assignment at birth.

Think through your childhood and younger years. Does the way you fill it out for you now match how you might have in the past? At what age do you first remember being aware of your gender identity or orientation?

Common Terminology

When we use inclusive language, it is an effort to make sure everyone feels heard and accepted. This is particularly important for youth. Using appropriate terminology and language from an early age can lead to youth feeling more validated, included, and accepted, which are all necessary for creating an environment conducive to learning and growth. For an introduction to common terminology, follow this link to read pages 40-42 of [GLSEN's Safe Space Kit](#).

NOTE: Any terminology that is indicated as "derogatory" should not be used in a classroom setting by teachers or other students, even if some 2SLGBTQIA+ students occasionally use that language to refer to themselves.



You may hear some students use other terms related to sexual orientation, identity, or sexuality. This [glossary](#) from the University of California at Davis includes clarification around language that is more common to adults but that you might hear, especially among older youth.



If you do not identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, think back to your childhood. What words did you hear used to describe 2SLGBTQIA+ people? In your family? Among your friends? In music, television, and movies?

What kinds of words and messages do you hear even now, in popular culture, workplaces, and in-person and online communities? Are those words that uplift and praise 2SLGBTQIA+ people for their inherent worth and dignity? Or do they maybe convey shame, ridicule, or that someone is deserving of harm? What might it feel like to grow up hearing these same words, and realize that they might be describing people like you?

If you want, journal your thoughts on this. Consider how you might provide support and encouragement to 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender-expansive youth in your classrooms so that they are hearing positive messages about how special and precious they are, and how worthy they are of safety.

If you **do** identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, consider the above questions from the perspective of how they've impacted your self-perception and understanding of your identity. Do you feel like you have experienced trauma that was based on your family or community's perceptions of your identities? How are you taking care of your trauma? Do you feel like you've experienced joy or empowerment as a result of your identities? How do your experiences impact how you engage with students about these topics?

Special Guidance for Working with Transgender and Gender-Expansive Students

Gender expansive and transgender students have unique needs. For an overview of some common language and relevant child development information, please read pages 1-9 of [Schools In Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools](#).



Sometimes we get so wrapped up in trying to “get it right” that we lose sight of the young person in front of us. We want to use the right language, and seem knowledgeable, and let kids know we care. And it is important to remember that the words we use have meaning, and that using validating language helps 2SLGBTQIA+ youth feel seen, acknowledged, and safe. And it’s also true that we will sometimes mess up.

Remember that the way you respond when you make a mistake says so much about your interest in supporting that student, so never underestimate the value of a brief apology and trying again with the right name or words.

Is there a student, friend, or colleague whose name or pronouns you are struggling with? Practice saying their correct name and pronouns using compliments while you’re alone, with repetition. This will help it come more naturally when you are around them! “I am so proud of Aaron. He has worked so hard on his handwriting. He practices every day, even when he is tired. I am glad I have connected with him...” “I appreciate getting to work with Kayce. They have so much to offer. They are a very talented teacher, and their students love them.”





2SLGBTQIAT YOUTH NEEDS RESOURCES:

Blog: [NCCASA's post on "Ally Versus Accomplice"](#)

Website: [SafeSchoolsNC](#)

Definition: [Virtue Signaling](#)

OPTIONAL "UNLOCKING" 2SLGBTQIAT
YOUTH NEEDS RESOURCES:

Article: [Passive Oppression in Education: Fueling the Achievement Gap](#)

Website: [Videos on the importance and use of pronouns](#)

In Part One, you were encouraged to reflect on what kinds of messages you might have internalized as a child about 2SLGBTQIA+ people. For many of us, we have been so inundated with problematic messaging that we might not even realize which of our assumptions still need to be unpacked. This can be true for allies as well as people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, as we often carry internalized messages about our own identities as well as other identities. Cisgender lesbian, gay, and bisexual people may also still hold harmful or inaccurate beliefs about transgender people.

Learning 2SLGBTQIA+ history, language, and frameworks is important, and a great start! However, even for those of us who learn the right language, we still have to continually revisit and rethink our beliefs, assumptions, and habits. It is unrealistic to think we can tease apart decades of cultural influence with a few short tutorials. For this reason, the best thing you can do to be a better support to 2SLGBTQIA+ students is to start by working on yourself and to make a commitment to continuing to do so.

You may be new to learning how to be an ally to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, you might be well on your journey, or maybe you are 2SLGBTQIA+ yourself but want to learn new ways to support students whose experiences may be different from your own (even if they share some of your identities). In all of these cases, working on ourselves is an important ongoing process.

We can start by continuing to build empathy and explore our own thoughts and behaviors. Be honest—did you do the “Take it to heart” activities in Part One? If not, one way you can commit to self-work to better support students might be to go back and complete those activities, and commit to completing them going forward.

Another commitment you can make is to be conscious of and work to avoid “performative allyship.” By “performative allyship,” we mean: using allyship to uplift your own social status or to appear “woke” without educating yourself, standing up for others, or listening to the communities you claim to serve. Performative allyship also uses virtue signaling, which is “the sharing of one’s point of view on a social or political issue, often on social media, in order to garner praise or acknowledgment of one’s righteousness from others.”

Allyship that is performative or self-serving is harmful to marginalized communities because it distracts from issues that specifically affect marginalized communities and diverts attention to the feelings of people in positions of power. Performative and self-serving allyship also re-centers those who are performing in place of the marginalized people whose voice should have the focus. This form of allyship puts even more work onto marginalized communities, instead of allies using their privileges to advocate for marginalized communities.



The following are prompts for self-reflection that encourage you to improve your allyship to people with different marginalized identities from your own:

1. Is your allyship restricted to only speaking about marginalized people on social media? If so, try to learn ways to speak up in person and to other people in positions of power (like administrators), even when it can be uncomfortable. Also, you can educate those people about what you've learned. This can be tricky, but remember to start small; courage can be built over time through continual practice.
2. Do you ask marginalized people about their experiences before doing searching online or reading books about what affects their communities? For example, asking a transgender person about whether or not they've had any surgeries or what body parts they have, asking a Black person if they knew their dad, asking an immigrant about whether or not their immigration was legal, or asking someone with a disability if they get special help or privileges that "give them an advantage."

These kinds of questions are inappropriate, hurtful, and reinforce stereotypes and bias, and often indicate that someone has not done their own work before asking intrusive or assumptive questions.

If this is something you may have done, it's okay to make a change now! When we know better we do better. Take some time to do your own reading before asking people about their personal experiences. Remember that your colleagues, friends, and students who hold marginalized identities are not there to be your educators. Start with your own research; save any questions for after.

3. Have you used your privilege to help students of marginalized identities when you witness bullying or discrimination?

If not, realize that for marginalized students, even having one adult who believes in them or serves as a role model, can have long-term impacts on their mental health and overall wellness. As an educator, you have an immense amount of potential to positively impact the lives and outcomes of your students, and showing up as a caring adult is one way you can do that.



Throughout this toolkit, we offer suggestions for you to begin that work. Remember, when people don't stand up for others and actively work against the systems that hold students back, they are involved in passive oppression. Here are eight actions you can take to be an accomplice:

1. Find ways to get 2SLGBTQIA+ voices (and specifically 2SLGBTQIA+ youth voices) to the table to provide leadership and guidance (not just opinions) on policies, programs, and projects.

2. Empower youth leadership.

3. Partner with culturally-specific programs and subject experts in administrative funding decisions. Support 2SLGBTQIA+ specific programming and organizations within your school, both for faculty/staff and for students.

4. Seek out, use, and elevate curricula, program models, and strategies that are created by and for the people the strategies address. Be wary of erasure of 2SLGBTQIA+ identities in curriculums, and prioritize representation of 2SLGBTQIA+ folks in films, history, documentaries, literature, etc. Be sure that the representations of 2SLGBTQIA+ life in your curricula include showing joy and accomplishment instead of just trauma.

5. Use your position and connections to support community-wide programs and practices to address systemic inequity. Have resources accessible for 2SLGBTQIA+ students so that you can quickly direct them to extra support.

6. Use your voice or privilege to speak up against racism and oppression both in the classroom and behind the scenes in board meetings, teacher workshops, and to your school's administration. This includes using a student's correct name and pronouns even when other staff isn't, even if that student isn't there.

7. Use inclusive language intentionally and encourage the use of pronouns in classrooms.

8. Create group agreements for your classroom to help 2SLGBTQIA+ students feel safer and supported.

One of the greatest ways you can continue that self-work is to commit to ongoing professional development, training, and networking to better support 2SLGBTQIA+ students. Connect with Safe Schools NC (<https://www.safeschoolsnc.org/>) to learn how you can get involved. Attend their trainings and events, and invite your colleagues.



Many people struggle with pronouns for transgender and gender-expansive students, especially if those pronouns changed during the time they knew a student. Some people find they/them pronouns confusing. Others might not understand how normalizing sharing pronouns offers support to students, or how to correct themselves or a colleague if someone gets a student's pronouns wrong.

FORGE is a national training provider for organizations working with transgender survivors of violence, and they have a [series of tutorials on pronouns](#) available on their website. Commit to doing one or two of these pronouns each week until you feel more confident!

Focus on Youth Needs

2SLGBTQIA+ YOUTH NEEDS RESOURCES:

Website: [Gender Across the Grades](#)

Website: [Children and Gender Identity](#)

Article: [How to Support 2SLGBTQIA+ Students of Color](#)

OPTIONAL "UNLOCKING" 2SLGBTQIA+ YOUTH NEEDS RESOURCES:

Film: [Creating Inclusive Curriculum](#)

Website: [Theories on LGBTQ Development](#)

Report: [GLSEN's Shared Differences](#)

Report: [Native and Indigenous LGBTQ Youth](#)

Report: [Black LGBTQ Youth](#)

Report: [Latinx LGBTQ Youth](#)

Report: [Asian American and Pacific Islander Youth](#)

Article: [Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#)

Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth at Different Developmental Stages

The needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ differ throughout developmental stages. According to Gender Spectrum, “children can very often express ‘atypical’ gender behavior as early as age two or three.” It’s important to affirm this gender behavior instead of discouraging it and asking children to stick to a gender binary. Educators can help aid families in understanding their child’s gender identity and expansiveness in ways that “will have a significant impact on the health and well-being of the family and the child.”

By being an ally, educators have the potential to provide support and understanding even when family members and other faculty aren’t supportive. This can have an enormous positive impact on children’s lives and development. Gender Across the Grades explains how educators can support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth at any age and grade. Click “Read More” to learn about supporting gender-expansive youth for the age group you work with.

Educators can also help parents better understand their children’s gender expansiveness. Parents can often feel confused, hurt, or even see their child’s gender expression as an act of rebellion. You have the unique opportunity to advocate for children with parents who are not accepting of their child’s gender expansiveness. Educators can learn more about gender expansiveness themselves to teach it to others. Most importantly, educators have a chance to teach students what safety feels like through their example, acceptance, and kindness, which is especially important for students who may not have that safety in other areas of their lives. For examples of language to use and model for parents, see the Mayo Clinic’s great resource on Children and Gender Identity.



Now that you’ve learned how to support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in different grades, you can apply what you’ve learned in the classroom and in Creating Inclusive Curriculum. This contains a film that can be used to educate young students and teachers on what gender inclusivity looks like in the classroom. You might even consider organizing a screening for administrators, teachers, and support staff at your schools!



Want to delve deeper into how youth and adolescents in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community develop their own sexualities? You might find [Theories on LGBTQ development](#) interesting.



Many of the gender assumptions we hold were taught to us at such a young age that even young children have a concept of what behaviors are associated with a boy or a girl. What gender stereotypes did you hear in your childhood? How did those stereotypes affect the way you viewed yourself and how you should act? Did you feel like you fit into those stereotypes as a child? Were you ever punished or ridiculed because your behavior didn't align with gender stereotypes? If so, how did it make you feel?

You may want to journal your responses and reflect on how your students' feelings may compare, or share with a friend or colleague. Understanding the feelings associated with "gender policing" can help you understand what your students may be feeling and advocate more effectively for their wellness.

Needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth of Color

Now that you know how to support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth of all stages of development, you can further expand your knowledge on 2SLGBTQIA+ youth by focusing on the specific needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth of color. 2SLGBTQIA+ students of color can often struggle to find community with people who understand the intersectionality of their experiences, as they experience multiple forms of oppression.

It's important to remember that their experiences aren't additive (person of color + queer), but that they are often multiplicative. For example, being queer or trans can make Black students more vulnerable to anti-Black and racist harassment. They may experience racism from within their 2SLGBTQIA+ support communities, or homophobia or transphobia within their racial communities.

Read "[How to Support 2SLGBTQIA+ Students of Color](#)" in the appendix of this syllabus for statistics on 2SLGBTQIA+ students of color and ideas for how to best support them. The information from this document comes from [GLSEN's Shared Differences report](#).



[GLSEN's Share Differences Report](#) summarizes and compares Native American and Indigenous, Latinx, Black, and Asian American and Pacific Islander 2SLGBTQIA+ youth experiences. However, each racial group has its own set of unique challenges associated with their racial histories and lived experiences.

To learn about each racial group in U.S. schools individually, you can refer to these documents: [Native and Indigenous LGBTQ Youth](#), [Black LGBTQ Youth](#), [Latinx LGBTQ Youth](#), and [Asian American and Pacific Islander LGBTQ Youth](#).



Reflect on how you can use your privilege to defend and advocate for 2SLGBTQIA+ students of color both in the classroom and in the school system and how you can validate their experiences.

What can you do on a personal level? Are you able to advocate for and implement [restorative practices](#) to disrupt racial inequity in disciplinary outcomes? Can you commit to listening to 2SLGBTQIA+ students of color, validating their experiences, and protecting their safety and wellbeing?

In-School Applications

2SLGBTQIA+ YOUTH NEEDS RESOURCES:

Website: [LGBTQ Non-Discrimination in the States](#)

Website: [National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2020](#)

Website: [A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools](#)

Toolkit: Read pages 30-34 of [Schools In Transition](#)

Article: [“How dress codes criminalize males and sexualize females of color”](#)

Law: [Anti-bullying law](#)

Website: [What is Conversion Therapy?](#)

Website: [“Dos and Don’ts for Working with Transgender Students”](#)

OPTIONAL “UNLOCKING” 2SLGBTQIA+ YOUTH NEEDS RESOURCES:

Website: [National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2020](#)

Book: [Emergent Strategy](#)

Blog: [New Study: The “Adultification” of Black Girls](#)

Webinars: [GLSEN Webinars and Workshops](#)

Toolkit: [DRESS CODED: Black Girls, Bodies, and Bias in D.C. Schools](#)

Map: [LGBTQ Equality by State](#)

For many students, parents, teachers, and administrators, schools are a community where they can receive support, guidance, and growth. However, 2SLGBTQIA+ students aren't always given a chance to take part in this community and grow in it because of bullying, harassment, discrimination, and sometimes school policies. Schools should be a place where all students feel safe and accepted. As an educator, you have a critical role in creating this environment and fostering the growth of your students.

North Carolina Laws and Policies Regarding 2SLGBTQIA+ Issues

You've learned about how to do the work on the individual and personal relationship level, and now, we'll learn how to advocate for youth in school. Freedom for All Americans notes: "There are currently no explicit, comprehensive statewide non-discrimination protections for gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender people in North Carolina." However, through an executive order from Roy Cooper, North Carolina became the first Southern state to ban public funding for conversion therapy for minors. This has potentially life-saving impacts, given that 19% of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth who attempted suicide reported someone in their life attempting to convince them to change their identity or orientation (compared to 8% among those who had not attempted suicide).

Despite movements toward banning conversion therapy, 60% of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth reported experiencing efforts by others to convince them to change their identity or orientation. Of those, 6% of those identified teachers or school counselors as the person who tried to convince them to change.

Although North Carolina has a long way to go in order to achieve equal protections for 2SLGBTQIA+ folks, there is one specific law regarding 2SLGBTQIA+ youth that all educators should know. This anti-bullying law prohibits bullying and harassment of students on the basis of sexual orientation. The policy makes clear that bullying of any sort, particularly identity-based bullying, should not be tolerated in any school within North Carolina. In addition to state law, ten municipalities in North Carolina have now passed discrimination bans.

North Carolina has also imposed laws that have harmed LGBTQ students such as the infamous "bathroom bill," HB-2 and its follow-up, HB142. While this particular law has since expired,

86% of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth reported current politics has had a negative impact on their mental health. Because of this, it's important for educators to influence their community and create schools that are safer places for 2SLGBTQIA+ students.

Currently, 61% of transgender and nonbinary youth indicate not having access to a bathroom that aligns with their gender identity and identified school as the most common location for bathroom discrimination. Remember, 22% of youth who experienced discrimination attempted suicide, compared to the 8% of youth that didn't experience discrimination.

Want to know how to better support your transgender students?

- Safe Schools NC has a "[Dos and Don'ts for Working with Transgender Students](#)" that can help make your school safer for transgender students.
- Read page 46 and 69-73 of [Health Impact Assessment of House Bill 2 and House Bill 142](#) on 2SLGBTQIA+ North Carolinians to learn about how schools can aid 2SLGBTQIA+ students after HB-2.



Are you curious about the different laws and policies in our state, specifically as they relate to equality and protecting 2SLGBTQIA+ folks?

Explore this [interactive Equality Map](#) from the Movement Advancement Project. Notice how North Carolina lines up with other states. Do you notice any patterns or discrepancies? How do these statewide policies affect your school's policies?



To learn more about the statistics of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and the impact discrimination, harassment, and conversion therapy have on their mental health, The Trevor Project released data from their [National Survey on Mental Health 2020](#). This interactive data can help reveal more reasons to support 2SLGBTQIA+ students and stay informed about the ways 2SLGBTQIA+ students are harmed through certain practices.

Emergent Spaces in the Classroom

Emergent spaces can be used in the classroom or in other group settings in order to encourage the growth of all individuals in the space. You may have heard of “safe spaces” or “brave spaces.” We propose a model that brings together the best of each of those frameworks and is intentionally oriented towards growth and healing while centering marginalized folks, including 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. It takes more work (especially on the front end), as well as individual responsibility, to create an emergent space. However, the rewards are many and include redirecting harmful conflict into healthy growth, understanding new perspectives, increasing the likelihood of participants feeling heard, and more. Curious as to how to implement emergent spaces in your classroom? Refer to [Emergent Space: Finding an Alternative](#), which provides the framework behind emergent spaces and tips for implementation.



Want to learn more about the theories of emergence and/or emergent strategy? Read the book “[Emergent Strategy](#)” by Adrienne Marie Brown that inspired the conceptualization of emergent spaces.



Reflect on how you plan to create emergent spaces in both your life and in your classroom this year. How do you plan to prepare for these spaces?

Self-work is one of the pillars of emergent spaces, so what tools will you choose from in order to do the self-work? Perhaps you'll read new literature, pick up a new podcast, or spark conversations among your friends and family.

How then will this translate to the school setting? Maybe you could spark similar conversations about emergent spaces with colleagues or as the advisor of a student-led group or GSA club (Gay-Straight Alliance). Also, challenge yourself to think about creating emergent spaces in both a real classroom setting and in a virtual classroom setting.

School Policy and Protocol

So how do you advocate for 2SLGBTQIA+ students in your school? First, learn about your school's policies and protocols around issues that affect 2SLGBTQIA+ students. Are there any policies surrounding bathroom usage? Are preferred names and pronouns updated in the school system? If so, are there clear and accessible instructions on how to update names and pronouns? What is your school policy surrounding bullying and harassment? Does your school have a GSA? These questions can help you better understand how your school has or doesn't have policies in place to support and protect 2SLGBTQIA+ students.

Second, if there aren't many policies and protocols in your school that aid 2SLGBTQIA+ students, you can talk to your school's administrators or work on your own to make school safer for 2SLGBTQIA+ students. If there's no GSA at your school, you can create one. If the school doesn't update preferred names and pronouns, update them in your own roster and ask for them at the beginning of the year. Let students use the bathroom they choose or suggest a gender-neutral option. All of these actions can help create a safer environment for 2SLGBTQIA+ students and make them feel supported. School can be a safe haven for 2SLGBTQIA+ students who don't have supportive families.

Lastly, you can be an ally to 2SLGBTQIA+ students by learning how to communicate and interact with unsupportive families. Read pages 30-34 of Schools In Transition to learn how to engage with unsupportive parents.

Dress Code, Over Policing, and Gender Expression

Dress codes are often framed as benevolent and gender and race-neutral. However, these policies are culturally specific and target Black and Brown students. For example, prohibiting headwraps, scarfs, or “baggy pants” are discriminatory towards Black girls and boys because these are culturally specific clothing. Also, the dress code can limit folks who are gender non-conforming when dress codes specify, for example, that girls can wear skirts and dresses, but that boys cannot. Read [“How dress codes criminalize males and sexualize females of color”](#) to understand the issue more.

Also, it is important to be aware of the fact that Black and Brown bodies are policed more often than others, not just in school settings but on a society-wide level as well. Black girls are disciplined for dress code at a higher rate than white girls. In general, [Black girls are 20.8 times more likely to be suspended from D.C. schools than white girls](#). Stereotypes about Black girls and women contribute to the discrimination they face in school. Black girls are subjected to [adultification](#), which causes people to see Black children as more adult and as needing less care. The criminalization of Black and Brown bodies starts within the education system as Black and Brown bodies are overpoliced with dress codes and punitive disciplinary action.

Gender expression is also policed in schools, in the form of dress codes and other restrictions on expression. Because teachers and school administrators often expect students to adhere to rigid gender roles (i.e. girls wear dresses and boys don't). It's important to let students identify with their chosen gender identity and expression. This promotes acceptance and better mental health outcomes. For example, The Trevor Project found that [transgender and nonbinary youth who were able to access gender-affirming clothing and undergarments](#) that helped them align their bodies with their gender identity reported lower rates of attempting suicide in the past year compared to transgender and nonbinary youth without access to those items.

Transgender and nonbinary students also have a legal right to their own gender expression. The Southern Poverty Law Center has a list of [2SLGBTQIA+ rights](#) that 2SLGBTQIA+ students can use in school. Educators can be helpful in encouraging 2SLGBTQIA+, and especially transgender and nonbinary, youth gender expression by allowing them to embrace and express their full selves.



Professional development is one of the ways that you can learn more about 2SLGBTQIA+ students. GLSEN has a [list of webinars and workshops](#) that you can use to learn more about 2SLGBTQIA+ students and their experiences. It can also give you insight into how you can support them.

You can also read "[DRESS CODED: Black Girls, Bodies, and Bias in D.C. Schools](#)" by the National Women's Law Center. This resource is specific to Black girls, but it provides insight into how they are policed and has recommendations for educators.

TAKE
IT TO
HEART

Dress codes often disproportionately affect students of color and gender non-conforming students and is often a way to police others' bodies. Dress codes and punitive school policies are some of the first ways that Black and Brown students are policed and end up in the school-to-prison pipeline. It is one of the ways that 2SLGBTQIA+ students' gender identity and expression are invalidated. Often, the assumption that "boys can't wear dresses" and that "Black students are more adult" is implicit.

In order to explore some of your own implicit biases, take this [Transgender Implicit Association Test](#), [Race Implicit Association Test](#), and [Sexuality Implicit Association Test](#).

After getting results from these tests, ask yourself what images, messages, etc. you have seen that may contribute to those biases. How can you be more aware of your implicit biases? How could your implicit biases harm marginalized folks, and how can you prevent that?



Wrapping It Up

Here is what we know about 2SLGBTQIA+ youth: Because of stigma, they are at increased risk for bullying, sexual violence partner violence, suicide, and other forms of violence than their peers. When those vulnerabilities are added to other marginalized identities and experiences, such as compounded by racism, xenophobia, ableism, or poverty, the risk is increased in devastating ways.

We cannot protect 2SLGBTQIA+ youth with individual responses or inconsistently-implemented school policies, although these are both important and essential. What will ultimately work to keep 2SLGBTQIA+ youth safer is the accumulation of cultural shifts grounded in intersectional advocacy. No one of us alone can change the societal conditions that stigmatize, isolate, and harm 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. Together, however, we can be a force for change – the change these young people desperately need.



Take some time to explore intersectionality and how different forms of oppression overlap and relate to one another. Review the [How Do We Relate?: The Relationships Between Forms of Oppression](#) tool created by Southerners on New Ground and consider the facilitator questions at the end.



As you reflect on what you've learned in this course and on your unique part in creating societal change, journal your responses to the following questions:

1. What are three small steps you can take to create inclusive, safer, braver, and emergent spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in your family? In your community? In your school?
2. Think of a recent time you have heard someone in your family, social circles, or workplace say something that shows a lack of understanding or compassion for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. What are three possible ways you could respond to statements like this in the future? For example, if you hear someone misgender a trans person, you could consistently repeat the comment or question while accurately referring to the person.
3. Does your school have a [GSA or other organization](#) supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ youth? Contact them to ask how you can support their work! If not, reach out to [SafeSchoolsNC](#) to find out how you can bring their work to your district or school.
4. What are some local, state, and national organizations working on 2SLGBTQIA+ safety and rights in your community, profession, or hobbyist communities? One place you may look is this [database of North Carolina nonprofits](#). Follow them on social media, sign up for their emails, and watch for ways to get involved in their work.
5. What are three longer-term ways you can shift the narratives in your school and community? What are three ways you can let 2SLGBTQIA+ youth know you support? See the Resources section for toolkits and additional examples to get you started.



Appendices & Resources

FOR 2SLGBTQIA+ ADULTS WHO WANT TO BE ALLIES TO
2SLGBTQIA+ YOUTH

STANDARDS MET BY LESSON PLAN

LESSON PLANS BY STANDARD

ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES

Additional Teacher Support Resources
Youth Specific Resources (Local and National)

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SAFETY DURING THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC

FOR 2SLGBTQIA+ Adults who want to Be Allies to 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth

The primary focus of this toolkit is to help adult teachers and mentors who do not identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ to better support youth who do. We have worked to build empathy and understanding, and to offer additional opportunities for support and learning along the way. However, just because you do identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ doesn't mean that being a supportive adult will be intuitive or easy. For this reason, we would like to offer additional and specific guidance to 2SLGBTQIA+ adults who are in schools.

1. First, take a few deep breaths. While many of the challenges your students face will be different from yours, some may be similar. It can be difficult to watch a young person you care about struggle with issues you also struggled with because you know how painful it can be and how impactful the consequences often are. Remember: you are one supportive adult in that young person's life and someone who can give them hope for queer adulthood. That can make a difference, even if you cannot change the other challenges they face.
2. Second, remember that your experiences are not the same as their experiences, which means that some of the things that worked for you might not work for that student. Be careful not to project or give overly-specific advice. Encourage that student to explore their own needs and solutions. Leave room for learning.
3. Third, remember that your students will have many identities that impact the way they experience queerness, homophobia, and transphobia. Racial and ethnic stereotypes, class privilege, gender assigned at birth, and religious or cultural expectations not only mean that the student experiences additional oppressions or privileges that you might not have, but that they likely experience different kinds of homophobia, transphobia, or queer community than you did and do. Similarly, remember the ways in which you still have power and privilege. For example, cisgender gay white men are still capable of bias against transgender, BIPOC, noncitizen youth, and may even struggle with internalized homophobia.

4. Fourth, systems can be hard to navigate, especially when you are trying to support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in a school or district that is making that difficult or when you are not able to be “out” yourself. Remember that even when you are unable to make some of the changes you hope to see, you can continue to work behind the scenes for greater understanding, awareness, and allyship among your administrators and community members.

5. Finally, take care of yourself and build opportunities for connection and solidarity. Join an educator group (local or online) for 2SLGBTQIA+ educators and share support and strategies. Connect with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community regularly to build wellness and reduce burnout.

Standards Met by Lesson Plan

[2SLGBTQIA+ themed lesson plans and NC Healthful Living Standards met.](#)

Lesson Plans by Standard

[2SLGBTQIA+ theme lesson plans sorted by grade and NC Healthful Living Standard.](#)

Additional Readings and Resources

Additional Teacher Support Resources

ThinkB4YouSpeak Educator's Guide

This educator's guide has a wide range of educational activities and discussions that educators can use in their classrooms to teach a more inclusive curriculum.

Unheard Voices: Stories and Lessons for Grades 6-12

This resource provides a collection of interviews from 2SLGBTQIA+ figures, and it also provides lesson plans on 2SLGBTQIA+ discrimination and history. This lesson also amplifies the importance of oral traditions and storytelling.

LGBTQ-Inclusive Sexual Health Education

GLSEN provides a comprehensive resource for sexual health education inclusive to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. In this resource, you can find videos, classroom resources, and a fact sheet about making sexual health education more inclusive.

Share My Lesson: Celebrating Pride Month

This resource provides free lesson plans for educators to teach students about 2SLGBTQIA+ history and figures. It can also provide lessons on how to explain current events in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Our Family Coalition: Resources for Educators

Our Family Coalition provides professional development for educators to understand 2SLGBTQIA+ students and issues more. They also have in-depth lesson plans for educators about 2SLGBTQIA+ history, timelines, books, media, and podcasts.

Teachers as LGBTQ Allies

This resource provides educators with definitions of terms in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and advice on how to be an ally. It also includes action items and tangible steps educators can take to make their spaces more inclusive of 2SLGBTQIA+ students.

A Teaching Tolerance Guide for School Leaders

This resource provides suggestions for "Best Practices" for creating a 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusive school environment. This short guide addresses a range of different school events and settings in which school leaders can encourage inclusivity.

Gender Diversity

This organization provides training and resources specific to gender diversity and inclusion. Their training “provides accurate, up-to-date, accessible information regarding the best practices schools can implement to create an inclusive environment for all students, regardless of gender status, and on an age-appropriate level.”

GLSEN's GSA Specific Resource

This resource by GLSEN provides numerous tools for both educators and students to use for forming, organizing, and supporting youth-led GSAs.

PBS News for Students and Teacher Resources 6–12 Grade Level (2SLGBTQIA+ Specific)

PBS provides updated resources, including videos and lesson plans, surrounding prominent 2SLGBTQIA+ history and current events.

Supporting LGBTQ Youth Is Violence Prevention

This resource by FORGE and The National Research Center for Reaching Victims offers practical tips for supporting LGBTQ youth.

Youth Specific Resources (Local and National)

Now that you have all the tools you need as an educator to create more inclusive spaces, here are some resources you can direct to students or youth (particularly 2SLGBTQIA+ youth) who may need extra support outside of academia.

GLSEN (National)

“GLSEN works to ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ students are able to learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment.”

GSA Specific Resource

This resource by GLSEN provides numerous tools for both educators and students to use for forming, organizing, and supporting youth-led GSAs.

The Trevor Project (National)

“Founded in 1998 by the creators of the Academy Award®-winning short film TREVOR, The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) young people under 25”

It Gets Better Project (National/Global)

“The It Gets Better Project inspires people across the globe to share their stories and remind the next generation of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth that hope is out there, and it will get better.”

National Youth Advocacy Coalition (National)

This Youth Guide provides a number of different materials such as blog posts, advice, and videos for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth

QORDS (Southeastern US)

“By empowering Southern queer youth and building community through music and the arts, QORDS is a vehicle for expressing gender and sexuality, and harbors an environment of self-discovery and social change.”

OUTright Youth (Catawba Valley, NC)

“OUTright Youth is the ONLY PLACE in the Catawba Valley that provides a unique, youth-centered, safe environment for LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, and Questioning) youth ages 12-21, and their allies, to come together, receive unconditional support, and make friends who understand who they are as they struggle with sexual orientation, gender identity, and other issues.”

Time Out Youth (Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC)

“Time Out Youth Center offers support, advocacy, and opportunities for personal development and social interaction to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) youth ages 11-20.”

Youth Safe (Greensboro/Guilford, NC)

“YouthSAFE is a Greensboro-based organization providing an environment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and Agender youth to find community, share resources and build skills for responding creatively to the world around them.”

InsideOut180 (Triangle Area, NC)

“iNSIDEoUT is a youth-led organization that hosts community events for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. We provide resources, opportunities for leadership, and safe, affirming spaces for queer youth.”

LGBTQ Center of Durham (Triangle Area, NC)

“The LGBTQ Center of Durham is committed to serving the City and County of Durham as well as the surrounding counties to ensure all folks have the resources necessary to live full, joyful lives. We provide space and resources to all people.”

LGBTQ Center of Raleigh (Triangle Area, NC)

This LGBTQ Center of Raleigh has a number of resources and services, including but not limited to community programming for youth and adults, an LGBTQ library, and HIV/STI testing 40

North Star LGBTQ Community Center (Winston-Salem, NC)

“North Star’s mission is ‘To foster community across intersecting identities through advocacy, compassion, education, and service.’”

Guilford Green Foundation & LGBTQ Center (Greensboro, NC)

“Guilford Green Foundation seeks to courageously unite our community through meaningful participation and by fostering organizations that advance LGBTQ persons and issues.” This includes creating events that focus on and center all LGBTQ people.

Considerations for Safety during the COVID-19 Pandemic

You may be wondering how you will implement your new skills and tools to support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth during and after absences from school—whether that be related to COVID-19 or routine school breaks such as summer, winter, or spring break. Due to the current spread of the coronavirus, classroom stability remains uncertain throughout North Carolina. Educators are facing the enormous challenge of having to put themselves and students at risk of catching COVID-19 or learning how to adjust their instruction for an online platform.

Regardless of whether instruction takes place in-person or remotely, it is critical that educators continue supporting students, especially those with marginalized identities. It is also important that you find ways to support yourself, so that you may continue to effectively support your students. This [resource from NCDPI](#) (North Carolina Department of Instruction) provides ways in which educators can both support themselves, fellow educators, and of course, students through these difficult times.

In the event that learning is remote, whether completely or partially, it is important for educators to recognize that staying at home or with family may result in more harm, abuse, and violence, especially for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth who are not supported in their homes. You should also be aware that for low-income students, remote learning can be inaccessible. Internet access, a device to access the internet, and even a quiet space to do work are all privileges not all students are afforded.

But, the good news is that there are still ways that you, as an educator, can take actions to better ensure the safety of your students. The Human Rights Campaign recently released this [resource](#), which provides more detail about the effects of COVID-19 on 2SLGBTQIA+ youth safety, as well as ways in which educators can help.