



Five Best Practices for Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex (LGBTQI+) Learners

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs can empower all students, regardless of their background or identity. It is our responsibility to break down these barriers and create inclusive environments where every student feels safe and supported to thrive.

Here are five best practices to guide you in fostering an affirming CTE program for LGBTQI+ students:

- 1. Cultivate a Safe and Supportive Environment:** Use gender-neutral language and avoid assumptions about students' identities. Establish and enforce a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Display LGBTQI+ symbols and resources in your classrooms and common areas. Highlight the contributions of LGBTQI+ pioneers in your chosen CTE field.
- 2. Educate and Model Inclusivity:** Train staff on LGBTQI+ identities, practices that encourage belonging, and recognizing and responding to bias. Invite LGBTQI+ professionals and community members to share their experiences and perspectives. Encourage open conversations about LGBTQI+ issues in a safe and respectful environment.
- 3. Foster Visibility and Representation:** Incorporate LGBTQI+ history, experiences, and contributions into your curriculum, where appropriate. Highlight the achievements of LGBTQI+ individuals in your CTE field. Encourage students to find inspiration and connect with mentors. Support student-led clubs and organizations dedicated to LGBTQI+ issues and inclusivity.
- 4. Address Specific Challenges:** Ensure access to gender-neutral restrooms or individual stalls. Review your dress code policy to ensure it affirms diverse gender expressions. Partner with guidance counselors and social workers to provide resources and support for LGBTQI+ students facing challenges.
- 5. Continuous Improvement:** Regularly seek feedback from LGBTQI+ students on their experiences in your CTE program. Identify areas for improvement and adapt your strategies accordingly. Track the progress and outcomes of LGBTQI+ students in your program. Use data to identify disparities and inform your efforts to close achievement gaps. Collaborate with LGBTQI+ community organizations and advocacy groups to share best practices and leverage resources.

By implementing these best practices, you can build bridges of understanding, dismantle discriminatory barriers, and empower LGBTQI+ students to pursue their dreams with confidence and pride. Take the first step today. Open the doors of your CTE programs wide and witness the transformative power of making every student feel welcomed, respected, and celebrated.

Resources: [Making CTE Classrooms More Inclusive for LGBTQ+ Students](#) • [Department of Education: Resources for LGBTQI+ Students](#)