

Inclusive Practices for Tumultuous Times:

Environmental Educators' Role in Supporting the LGBTQIA+ Community

Libby VanWyhe, Yarrow Koning & Charissa V. Jones





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Environmental Educators' Role in Supporting the LGBTQIA+ Community

WELCOME!

Please drop the following in the chat:

- Name
 - Pronouns (optional)
 - Where you're calling in from
 - Include an emoji to describe how you're doing today
- 

Co-Presenters



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*Can't Stop Change: Queer Climate
Stories from the Florida Frontlines*



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Agenda

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Political Climate

The volatile state of LGBTQ+ legislation

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Impacts

Personal and collective impacts in the EE field

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Principles of Inclusion

Framework for supporting educators and students

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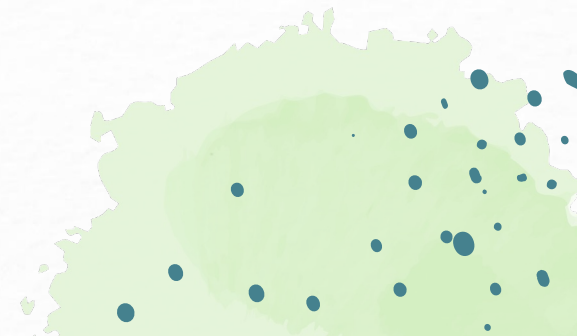
Resources and Strategies

For continued learning and motivation



POLITICAL CLIMATE

The volatile state of LGBTQ+
legislation in the United States



LGBTQ+ Rights: A Defining Issue of the 2020s



Photo Credit: Top, L-R: Florida Phoenix - Brooke Baitinger; Dallas Morning News- Elias Valverde II; Them Magazine - Pride Liberation Project
Photo Credit: Bottom, L-R: Moms for Liberty; Steven Monacelli; Vice - Shannon Burnstein

Major Types of Anti-LGBTQ Legislation



Healthcare



Bathrooms



Sports Bans



Censorship



Outing

Health Care Criminalization

Bans and criminalizes access to gender-affirming care (e.g. hormones, surgeries, puberty blockers) for trans youth and sometimes adults



Photo credit: Matt Hrkac www.matthrkac.com.au



Sex Separated Facilities “Bathroom Bills”

Prohibit transgender and non-binary people from using restroom and changing facilities aligns with their gender

Sports Ban

Bans transgender and non-binary athletes (especially women and girls) from playing on sports teams that align with their gender identity





Censorship

Censorship of LGBTQ+ inclusive materials and instructional content, as well as the behavior, self expression, and free-speech of LGBTQ+ youth and adults

Outing

Mandates teachers, administrators, and counselors non-consensually “out” LGBTQ+ youth to their parents and sometimes to other students and other students’ parents



Anti-LGBTQ Policy Disasters



Clip from [Can't Stop Change: Queer Climate Stories from the Florida Frontlines](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9arA9Zvep8w)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9arA9Zvep8w>

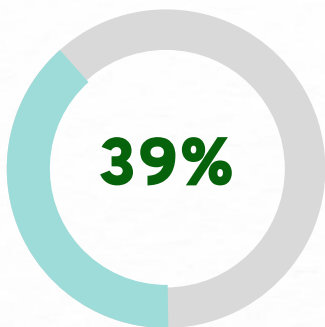


IMPACTS

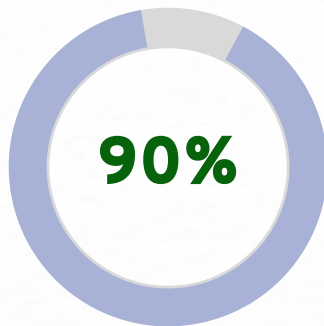
Personal and collective impacts in
Environmental Education



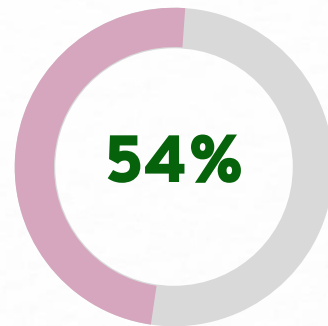
Mental Health LGBTQ+ Youth Ages 13-24



Seriously **considered attempting suicide** in the past year, with higher rates for transgender and non-binary youth, as well as LGBTQ+ youth of color

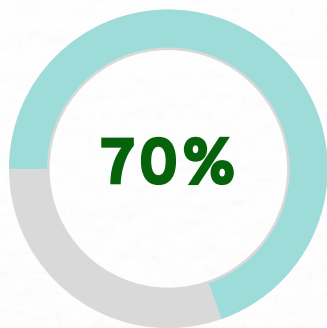


Reported that their well-being was negatively impacted due to **recent politics**

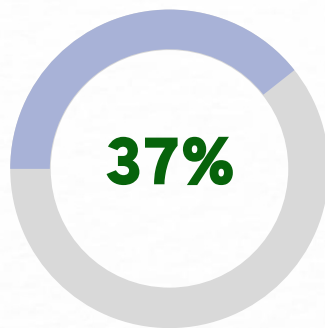


Transgender and nonbinary young people found their school to be gender-affirming, and those who did reported lower rates of attempting suicide.

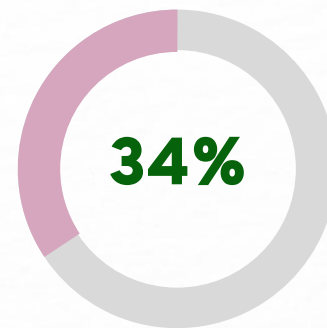
Risks for LGBTQ+ Employees



70% Transgender respondents experienced workplace discrimination or harassment in the past year.



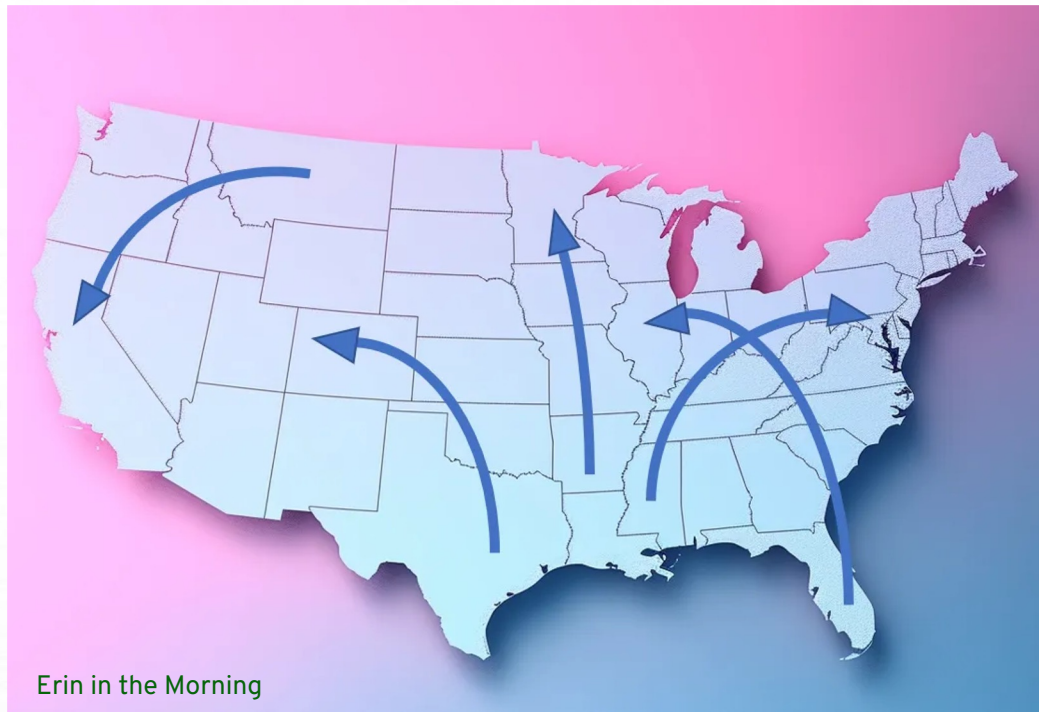
LGBTQI+ individuals have experienced verbal harassment in the workplace in the past year



Have left a job due to treatment they received from their employer

**Center for American Progress, Discrimination and Barriers to Well-Being:
The State of the LGBTQI+ Community in 2022
UCLA, Williams Institute Study on Workplace Discrimination 2021**

The Great LGBTQ+ Migration



“No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.” - Warsan Shire.

Breaks Up Families and Communities

Migration tears the social fabric of already strained families and communities.

Loss of Institutional Knowledge

When LGBTQ+ EE staff flee, it can lead to a loss of institutional knowledge for their organizations.

Why Migration Matters

Intersectional Risks

LGBTQ+ people with other marginalized identities, like QTBIPOC, must navigate additional threats to safety.

Loss of Place-Based Knowledge

Educators displaced from their bioregions, lose ecological knowledge.

Strained Relationships in the EE Profession



JEDIA Resources

Join the Discussion:

ABOUT PROGRAMS
AFFILIATES NEWS

eeLEARN Module:

PRO Equity & Inclusion
Equitable & Inclusive

MEMBERSHIP

DONATE NOW

NAAEE is committed to being a champion for promoting justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. We believe that a wide array of perspectives allows all organizations to be more effective, more creative, and more relevant, and we honor the beliefs, attitudes, languages, interpersonal styles, and values of all individuals.

Our goal is to create an environment that is inclusive, respectful, and equitable, and to employ the talents of people with different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to accomplish the mission of NAAEE.



LGBTQ+ Experiences in Environmental Education



LGBTQ+ people in environmental and outdoor education fields experience the same forms of discrimination found in other spaces.



LGBTQ+ people may feel disconnected to nature due to safety concerns and claims that LGBTQ+ people are “unnatural”.

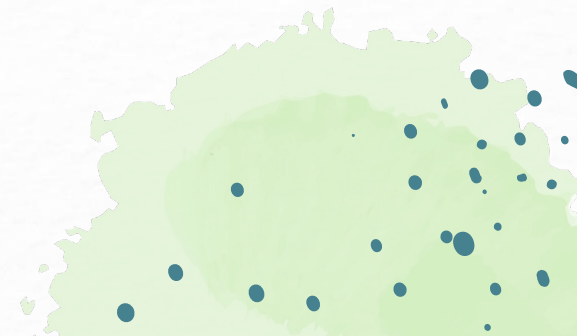


Same-sex behavior has been documented in over 1500+ species, and the list keeps growing! (Monk et al., 2019)



PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION

Framework for supporting
educators and students



Supporting Through Culture



Be Open and Supportive

Allow people to explore their identities, and LISTEN deeply.



Language Matters

Using correct names, pronouns, inclusive language



Transition Care

Be understanding of physical challenges and changes



Question Your Assumptions

Examine how gender-essentialism limits yourself and others

Supporting Through Policy

“Put it in the mission”



Explicitly Include LGBTQ+ people in DEI efforts and consider protections for LGBTQ+ people central to your mission.

Nondiscrimination Policies



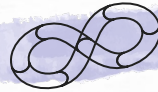
Adopt and enforce anti-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identities

Universal Design for Inclusion



Creating supports for the most marginalized individuals, creates safety for the most people.

Inclusive Facilities



Offer gender inclusive facilities (bathrooms, cabins, changing rooms, etc) for staff and participants.

Supporting Through Advocacy



Stay Informed

Keep up with LGBTQ+ legislation in your area and get involved in the fights ahead.



Think Beyond EE

Anti-LGBTQ+ policy in any realm impacts EE, because LGBTQ+ are our students, learners, teachers, staff.



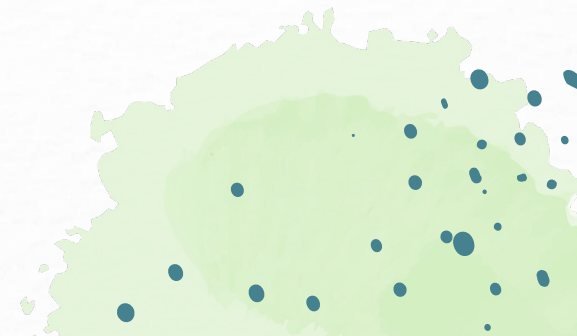
Courageous Action

Find concrete ways to get involved in LGBTQ+ movements. It's the right thing to do, even if it involves personal or organizational risks.



RESOURCES & STRATEGIES

For continued learning, motivation,
and staying hopeful for the future





RESOURCES

Sharing resources for continued
learning and action

bit.ly/LGBTQinEE



Personal Strategies

Allyship in Action



Question assumptions and bring your whole self to work



Attuning to queer and trans experiences in the natural world





In the Chat

Please share one of your own strategies for resilience and hope.



Thank You

Resources: bit.ly/LGBTQinEE