

LGBTQ+ YOUTH WELL-BEING



LGBTQ+ youth report much higher rates of depressive symptoms than their peers.

CONTEXT

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and queer (LGBTQ+) youth have historically had more negative experiences in school than their peers. However, much has been done over the past decades to make improvements. National data collected through the GLSEN National School Climate Survey in 2007 found that about 72% of LGBTQ+ students reported being sexually harassed at school; in 2017, this percentage decreased to 57% of LGBTQ+ students.¹

GLSEN also found that schools that have a gay-straight alliance (GSA) and comprehensive anti-bullying policies have seen improvements for LGBTQ+ student success and well-being.¹ In Arlington, all high schools and most middle schools have a GSA. In addition, Arlington Public Libraries has a teen group that meets monthly, providing an opportunity for teens to connect with one another outside of school. The Metro DC Chapter of PFLAG sponsors two groups that also meet monthly

in Arlington. They are (1) Arlington PFLAG Community Group, which provides support and community for parents and family members of LGBTQ+ youth and LGBTQ+ adults, and (2) ALY, Arlington LGBTQ Youth and Allies, which is a safe-space group for ages 12-19.

FINDINGS

Much has been done in Arlington to provide support for LGBTQ+ youth. In 2017 GLSEN found that 57% of LGBTQ+ youth nationally reported being sexually harassed compared to 42% of LGBTQ+ youth in Arlington. This percentage is actually slightly lower than that experienced by cis female (female at birth) youth.² Additionally, LGBTQ+ youth report that they would talk to a family member about a serious concern with nearly the same likelihood as youth in general.² However, LGBTQ+ youth experience bullying slightly more (22%), as compared to 18% of 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students overall. LGBTQ+ youth also report much higher rates of depressive symptoms.²

