

A statement from the Delaware Psychological Association on recent legislation targeting LGBTGEQIAP + youth and families:

Recent proposed legislation and guidance from state governments has directly targeted LGBTGEQIAP+ youth and their families in many states. The American Psychological Association (APA) recently addressed the impact of this type of legislation. The Delaware Psychological Association (DPA) shares APA's position and condemns legislation discriminating against the LGBTGEQIAP+ community.

Regarding proposed legislation in Florida, APA stated:

"Prohibiting classroom discussion on these topics sends the message that identifying as LGBTGEQIAP+ is inherently wrong, stigmatizing, and marginalizing children who may realize their difference at a young age. Psychological research has shown that increased social isolation and stigma can lead to depression, anxiety, self-harm and even suicide.

Psychological research has also demonstrated that variations in sexual and romantic attraction and behavior, as well as gender identity and gender expression, are normal variations of human sexuality. Sexual orientation isn't just about sex; it includes romantic, emotional, mental and spiritual attraction to other people -- personal relationships that meet deeply felt needs for love, attachment and acceptance."

Regarding recent legislation in Texas, APA stated:

"This ill-conceived directive from the Texas governor will put at-risk children at even higher risk of anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicide. Gender-affirming care promotes the health and well-being of transgender youth and is provided by medical and mental health professionals, based on well-established scientific research. The peer-reviewed research suggests that transgender children and youth who are treated with affirmation and receive evidence-based treatments tend to see improvements in their psychological well-being.

Asking licensed medical and mental health professionals to 'turn in' parents who are merely trying to give their children needed and evidence-based care would violate patient confidentiality as well as professional ethics. The American Psychological Association opposes politicized intrusions into the decisions that parents make with medical providers about caring for their children."

To Support Colleagues:

1. Affirm your organization's stance on diversity, equity, and inclusion, including support for transgender and gender diverse employees and patients. Release a statement denouncing legislation that blocks access to life-saving medical care for transgender and gender diverse youth.
2. Consider hosting a program-wide listening session that allows trans and gender diverse colleagues and their allies to speak freely about the impact this legislation has on their own well-being.
3. Consider organizing a group of providers within your practice who have experience working with transgender and gender diverse clients. Encourage providers to consult with this group when questions arise with the families they are treating.

To Support Families:

1. Make it a practice to share your pronouns at the beginning of sessions, on your ID badge, and in your email signature. This is a quick way to let youth and families know that they are in an affirming space.
2. Do not make assumptions about gender identity just because someone does not share a different name or pronoun.
3. When possible, spend some time with youth one on one and remind them of the bounds of confidentiality to increase comfort with discussing gender.
4. Families may have concerns about the documentation of their visits. Discuss confidentiality in detail to reassure families as to who can access their visit notes.
5. Develop a list of local resources and supports to help increase connection to the LGBTQ+ community and safe spaces. If possible, make this list available and easily accessible on your organization's website.
6. When providing crisis resources, include the Trevor Project hotline.

Resources

- Criminalizing Gender Affirmative Care with Minors Suggested Discussion Points With Resources to Oppose Transgender Exclusion Bills
- APA RESOLUTION on Gender Identity Change Efforts
- See Gender Health SIG statement for broad citation list

Crisis and Support Lines

Several organizations offer immediate help if you are in a crisis, just need to talk to someone or have questions. Their confidential services are available 24/7.

Trans Lifeline: Trans Lifeline, which offers emotional and financial support to transgender people, has a peer support hotline for trans and questioning callers. The hotline is staffed by transgender volunteers.

- 877-565-8860
- translifeline.org/hotline

The Trevor Project: The program offers crisis intervention and suicide prevention for LGBTQ+ people younger than 25.

- 866-488-7386
- thetrevorproject.org
- Online instant messaging: TrevorChat
- Text-based support: TrevorText

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: This national network of local crisis centers has a hotline to provide emotional support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

- 800-273-8255
- suicidepreventionlifeline.org