

# A Guide to Stand Up Awareness Week



Supporting LGBTI+  
Young People in Ireland

November 15th-19th 2021





Above: Students from Loreto College Crumlin, Dublin celebrating Stand Up Awareness Week in 2020.



Even one dedicated staff member  
can increase LGBTI+ students'  
feelings of wellbeing and safety.



This icon signifies a useful item in our online Toolkit to support your Stand Up Awareness Week activities available from [www.belongto.org/standup](http://www.belongto.org/standup)

BeLonG To Youth Services is the national organisation supporting LGBTI+ young people in Ireland through LGBTI+ youth groups, crisis counselling with Pieta and digital support services. Learn more at [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)

Cover Image: Students and staff from Loreto Secondary School Letterkenny celebrating Stand Up Awareness Week in 2020.

# WELCOME,

It's a new school year, and thanks to you, many LGBTI+ young people are returning to environments where they feel more protected and respected. Here's why – research shows that even one staff member there to support LGBTI+ young people increases their feelings of wellbeing and safety.<sup>1,2</sup> By taking part in Stand Up Awareness Week, you are showing young people that you accept who they are and that you want to create a school, Youthreach, or youth service that recognises and celebrates the LGBTI+ community.

Stand Up Awareness Week is an annual campaign run by BeLonG To Youth Services, which gives second-level schools, Youthreach, and youth services the opportunity to celebrate and recognise their LGBTI+ community. It is a time when we show solidarity with young people and our colleagues to ensure they feel seen, heard, and safe, and to ensure everyone knows that biphobic, homophobic, and transphobic language and bullying will not be tolerated.

Stand Up Awareness Week takes place from November 15th-19th this year, but you can host the week any time that works for your school or service. We encourage second-level schools, Youthreach, and youth services to take part in the campaign and take steps to create a safe, supportive space for LGBTI+ young people.

The landscape of Ireland has changed for members of the LGBTI+ community over the past few decades, from the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1993 to the vote for Marriage Equality for same-sex couples in 2015. With these changes, some people may wonder if there is a need for a campaign such as Stand Up Awareness Week.

Research tells us that we still have work to do to support LGBTI+ young people to feel safe and accepted in their schools and communities. In 2019, as part of our School Climate Survey<sup>1</sup>, 73% of LGBTI+ young people told us that they do not feel safe at school, with 68% of respondents hearing homophobic remarks from other students and 77% of LGBTI+ students experiencing verbal harassment. The impact of such isolation, bullying, and discrimination is harrowing. LGBTI+ young people are two times more likely

to self-harm, three times more likely to attempt suicide, and four times more likely to experience extreme stress, anxiety, and depression compared to their non-LGBTI+ friends.<sup>3</sup>

By participating in Stand Up Awareness Week, you are taking an essential first step in creating an environment where LGBTI+ young people feel safe to be who they are. In this year's Guide, we outline seven steps to running a successful week. Our online Toolkit is packed with useful resources, including a planning template and activity ideas and is available from [www.belongto.org/standup](http://www.belongto.org/standup)

As part of this year's campaign, we are focusing on sustaining the inclusive and celebratory feeling experienced during Stand Up Awareness Week beyond November. Learn more about creating lasting LGBTI+ inclusivity through inclusive policies, an inclusive environment, and an inclusive curriculum on pages 12-15. We delve into the topic of harmful language as part of our #ComeIn campaign on page 16 and invite you to encourage your students to #ComeIn to school wearing a jumper in their year's colours on Friday 19th November, the last day of Stand Up Awareness Week.

We hope that you, your colleagues, and young people will join us and stand up for the LGBTI+ community this November. By participating in this campaign, you are playing an important and life-saving role in the lives of the LGBTI+ young people you work with. For this, we thank you.

In Pride,



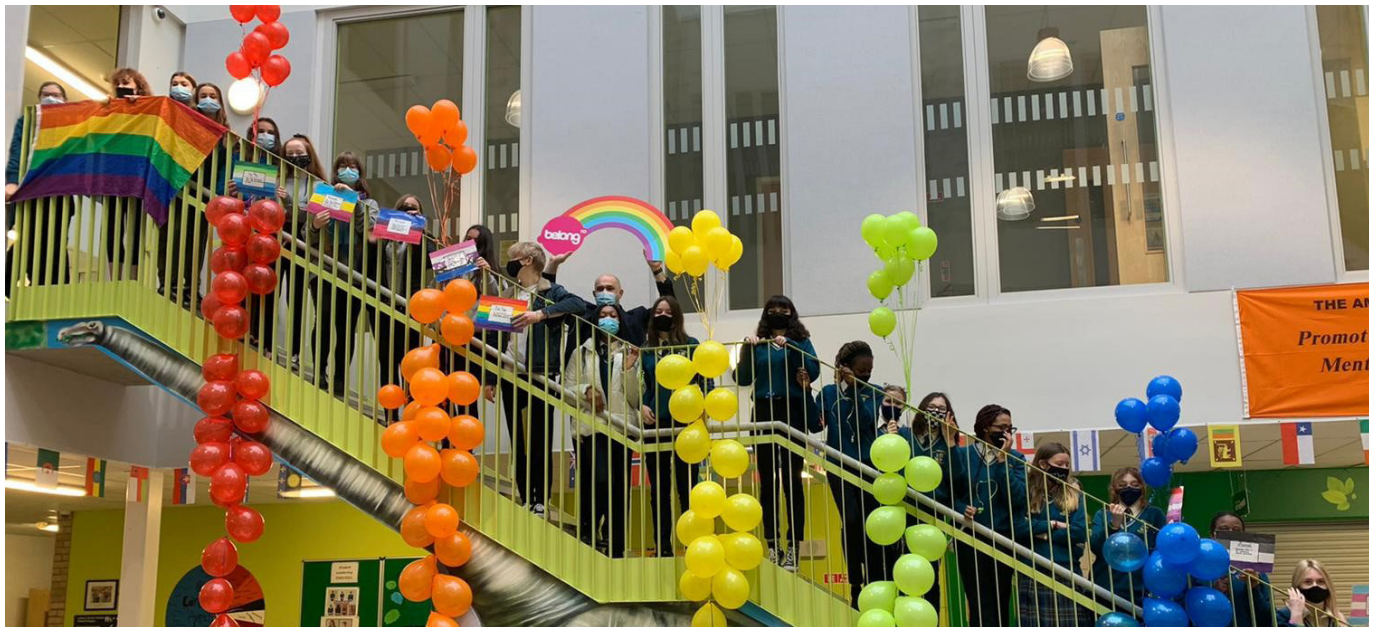
A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Moninne Griffith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Moninne Griffith (she/her)**  
CEO, BeLonG To Youth Services

1 Pizmony-Levy, O., BeLonG To Youth Services (2019). *The 2019 Irish National School Climate Survey Report. Research Report*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

2 Kóltó, A., Vaughan, E., O'Sullivan, L., Kelly, C., Saewyc, E. M., & Nic Gabhainn, S. (2021). *LGBTI+ Youth in Ireland and across Europe: A two-phased landscape and research gap analysis*. Dublin: Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

3 Higgins A. et al. (2016). *The LGBTIreland Report: national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Ireland*. Dublin: GLEN and BeLonG To Youth Services.



# LGBTI+ LANGUAGE

The most important thing you need to know about language and terminology is that you don't need to know it all. Most people want to use LGBTI+ inclusive language, but they are not sure where to begin and LGBTI+ terminology can feel like a minefield. A good place to start is to learn some of the key concepts and understand what the letters in LGBTI+ stand for. Terms change over time and some people prefer certain words to others. The terms in this Guide are relevant and accurate at the moment. Their meaning and definition will gradually change, and new terms will be introduced. If a term comes up that you aren't familiar with, it is OK to ask what this means or to ask an individual what term they prefer.

## You Don't Need To Know It All

We can support LGBTI+ young people by becoming more mindful of the language we use everyday. As society tells us that being cisgender and heterosexual is the norm, we can often use gendered language without seeing other options. Consider the following word replacements:

### LGBTI+ inclusive alternatives for teachers and youth workers

Sometimes we say...	=	Why not try:
"Good morning girls/boys"	=	"Good morning everyone"
"Hi guys"	=	"Hi folks"
"Your girlfriend/boyfriend"	=	"Your partner"
"Your brothers/sisters"	=	"Your siblings"

## Language Can Be Harmful

People who use harmful terms may not intend for the words they use to be hurtful. They often think that it's OK or harmless to use such terms as a joke or passing comment e.g. 'that's so gay'. The use of such language can make LGBTI+ people more vulnerable to mental health difficulties and may make other heterosexual or cisgender people around them less compassionate towards them.

This is not OK and can have serious impacts on the wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people. Those who work with young people have a responsibility to help all young people and their colleagues learn that language matters and to help them to understand what is and is not acceptable in a way that helps people to grow and learn to be inclusive, rather than making them feel ashamed.

## Pronouns

A pronoun is the way in which you refer to yourself. It is often connected to the way you experience your gender. Pronoun examples include: he/him, she/her and they/them. To be inclusive and respectful of gender diversity, use the gender-neutral pronouns, they/them/theirs, when referring to any person whose pronouns you do not know until you have a chance to find out how they identify or what pronouns they use. If you aren't sure of someone's pronouns, it's best to ask rather than making an assumption.

By using your own pronouns in your email signature, Teams/Zoom account, forms and anywhere else you see an opportunity, you are sending a clear message to young people and your colleagues that you understand the importance of pronouns and are an ally.

# LGBTI+ TERMINOLOGY

<p><b>LGB</b> Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual:</p> <p>Our Sexual Orientation is our sexual and romantic attraction to other people.</p>	<b>Lesbian:</b>	A woman who is mainly attracted to other women.
	<b>Gay:</b>	Someone who is mainly attracted to people of the same gender.
	<b>Bisexual:</b>	Someone who is attracted to more than one gender e.g. both men and women.
	<b>Related Terms:</b>	
	<b>Pansexual:</b>	Someone who is attracted to any person, regardless of their sex assigned at birth or gender identity.
<p><b>T</b> Trans:</p> <p>Our Gender Identity is our personal sense of our own gender.</p>	<b>Queer:</b>	Some people use this word as an alternative to LGBTI+. Other people may use it to explain their gender, sexual or political identity.
	<b>Transgender or Trans:</b>	A term describing a person's gender identity that does not match their assigned sex at birth. This word is also used as an umbrella term to describe some groups of people who transcend conventional expectations of gender identity or expression.
	<b>Related Terms:</b>	
	<b>Sex assigned at birth:</b>	The designation of a person at birth as male or female based on their anatomy (genitalia and/or reproductive organs) or biology (chromosomes and/or hormones).
	<b>Non-Binary:</b>	People whose gender identity is neither exclusively woman or man or is in between or beyond the gender binary.
	<b>Pronouns:</b>	The words used to refer to a person other than their name e.g. he/she/they.
	<b>Cisgender:</b>	Someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.
<b>Gender Expression:</b>	How we show our gender through our clothes, hair etc. This is different to gender identity. Gender identity refers to how we feel inside, and gender expression is how we present ourselves outside.	
<p><b>I</b> Intersex:</p>	This is an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations that do not fit typical binary notions of male and female bodies, for example variations in hormones or chromosomes.	
<p><b>+</b></p>	The 'plus' is used to signify all of the gender identities and sexual orientations that are not specifically covered by the other five initials.	

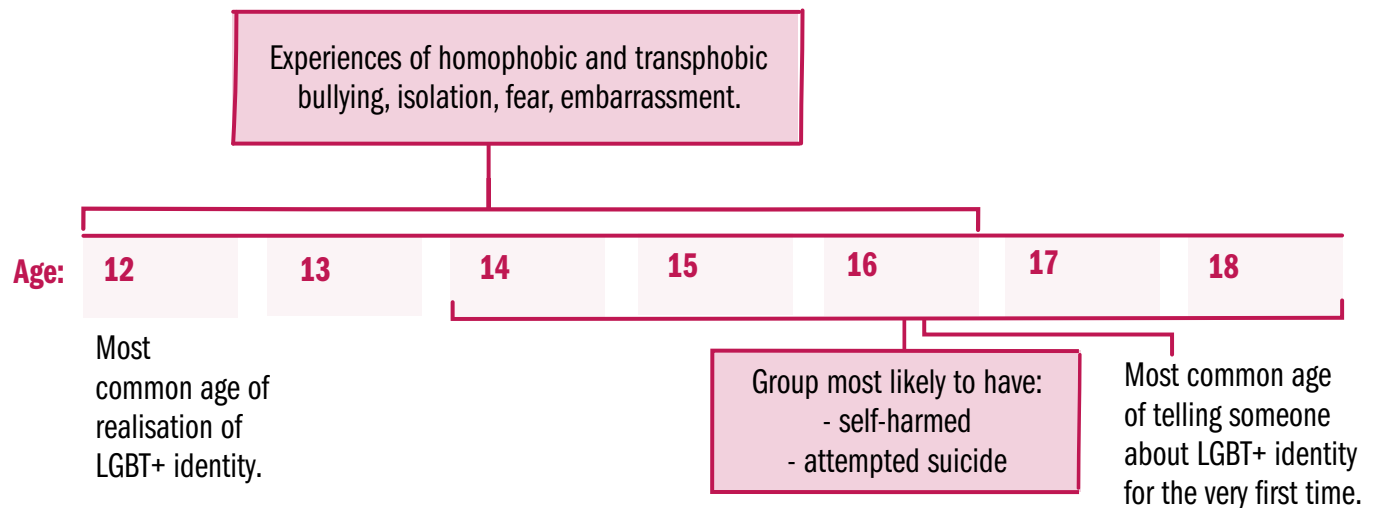
## Toolkit resources



Learn more about terminology in our online toolkit at [www.belongto.org/standup](http://www.belongto.org/standup)

# WHY WE NEED TO STAND UP

## LGBTI+ Young People's Mental Health



### Challenging Times

Although there have been a number of positive legislative developments for the LGBTI+ community in Ireland in recent years, including same-sex marriage, being an LGBTI+ young person can be challenging at times.

From the burning of Pride flags in Waterford this summer to the recent ban of materials seen to promote LGBTI+ issues to minors in Hungary, we are witnessing an increase in discriminatory policies, hate speech and violence against the LGBTI+ community here in Ireland and beyond.

The transition from adolescence to adulthood can be a struggle for many teenagers, but for LGBTI+ young people there are added difficulties, such as increased risk of mental health issues and substance abuse due to stigma, bullying and discrimination.

### How Many People Are LGBTI+?

Research shows between 6–10% of any group of young people may identify as LGBTI+ and 2% identify as Intersex.<sup>4</sup> It makes sense to presume that there are LGBTI+ students in your class, Youthreach or youth service, and to consider that they may be coming to terms with their sexual orientation or gender identity and may be experiencing mental health challenges as a result.

### Struggles With Coming Out

Growing up LGBTI+ can be challenging - particularly when someone is hiding their sexual orientation or gender identity. For LGBTI+ young people, discovering and beginning to accept their identity is often associated with a sense of isolation, fear of rejection and confusion. Many LGBTI+ young people do not feel safe to come out, or to share their sexual orientation or gender identity with people in their life. According to LGBTIreland Report<sup>3</sup>, on average, LGBTI+ young people become aware of their identity at age 12. However, the most common age to tell someone that you are LGBTI+ is 16. The intervening years of silence can be a lonely and isolating time for LGBT+ youth. The period leading up to telling someone, or 'coming out', can be particularly stressful as people struggle with anxiety and a fear of rejection.

**6–10%** of any group of young people may identify as LGBTI+

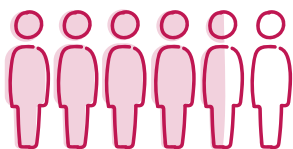


<sup>4</sup> Dooley, B, O'Connor, C, Fitzgerald, A, & O'Reilly, A (2020). *My World Survey 2: National Study of Youth Mental Health in Ireland*. Jigsaw and UCD School of Psychology.

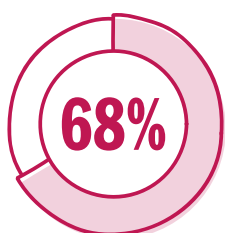
## Results of 2019 School Climate Survey<sup>1</sup>



**73%** of LGBTI+ students feel unsafe at school.



**77%** of LGBTI+ students are verbally harassed.



68% of LGBTI+ students hear homophobic remarks from other students.

**1 in 3** LGBTI+ students reported that other students are not accepting of LGBTI+ identities.

**48%** of LGBTI+ students hear homophobic remarks from teachers/staff members.

Compared to their non-LGBTI+ friends

## LGBTI+ Young People Experience...<sup>3</sup>

Twice the levels of self-harm.

Three times the levels of attempted suicide.

Four times the levels of extreme stress, anxiety and depression.

### Difficulties LGBTI+ Young People Face

Alongside higher incidence of mental health challenges, recent research<sup>2</sup> also shows that LGBTI+ people in Ireland continue to face on-going difficulties, including:

- Discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- School bullying and higher rates of school dropout;
- Family rejection;
- Difficulties with professionals failing to understand LGBT+ issues;
- Discrimination in accessing services;
- Lack of access to appropriate healthcare for trans people; and,
- Increased physical and sexual health difficulties.

### LGBTI+ Young People's School Experience

In 2019, we spoke to 788 LGBTI+ young people as part of our School Climate Survey with Columbia University in the USA. Findings indicate that in the 2018-2019 school year, an alarming 73% of LGBTI+ students felt unsafe at school in Ireland.

Running Stand Up Awareness Week is the first step to create a school, Youthreach or youth service where LGBTI+ young people feel safe. It is important to note the positive outcomes when staff members, school policies and the school curriculum are inclusive of LGBTI+ identities. There are remarkable teachers and school staff across Ireland saving lives by creating safe and supportive spaces for LGBTI+ students. Findings from the School Climate Survey indicate that, where such support existed, LGBTI+ students were more likely to feel accepted by their peers, had an increased sense of belonging and were less likely to miss school to avoid victimisation.<sup>1</sup>

It is vitally important for education and youth services to create an environment where all young people can be themselves and feel welcome, celebrated, safe, and supported.



## GETTING STARTED

Hosting Stand Up Awareness Week in your school, Youthreach or youth service is a proactive move towards creating a safe and inclusive space that acts as a protective factor for LGBTI+ young people. A world first, Ireland's National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy<sup>5</sup>, informed by the views of thousands of LGBTI+ young people and those who support them, recognises that “young LGBTI+ people can flourish when they have consistently positive interactions with those around them, and supportive experiences in the services with which they most engage.”

Recent research<sup>2</sup> on LGBTI+ young people in Ireland and across Europe identified five emerging themes on improving school for LGBTI+ students:

- the creation of safe spaces or support groups, and addressing bullying;
- affirming LGBTI+ identities;
- formal education on LGBTI+ themes in class;
- promoting inclusion, diversity and equality; and,
- training for teachers.

Here you will find an outline of how to plan and roll out Stand Up Awareness Week in your school, Youthreach or youth service, and strategies to sustain LGBTI+ inclusivity beyond Stand Up Awareness Week.

### Seven Steps to Stand Up:

The process of reflection, brainstorming and planning is just as important as the week itself. Our seven steps offer you a best practice process guide to hosting Stand Up Awareness Week.

### Meet the Education & Training Team:

Our Education and Training Team are here to provide guidance to ensure you feel equipped to run Stand Up Awareness Week in your school, Youthreach or youth service. Sharon and Stephen are available to chat if you have any questions or if you would like to discuss ideas or work through challenges.



**Stephen Cassidy (he/him)**  
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**Sharon Heron (she/her)**  
Education & Training Coordinator  
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### Inclusivity Themes:

True LGBTI+ inclusion is about making LGBTI+ inclusivity part of everyday life. An inclusive environment, inclusive curriculum and inclusive policies have been shown to be some of the main protective factors for young LGBTI+ people. On pages 12-15, we outline these key themes, encourage reflection and suggest activity ideas.

### BeLong To Stand Up Awareness Week Toolkit:

Throughout this Guide you will see references to the Stand Up Awareness Week Toolkit which has detailed activities and lesson plans to supplement this Guide. This can be downloaded from our website [www.belongto.org/standup](http://www.belongto.org/standup)

<sup>5</sup> Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2018). National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy 2018-2021. Dublin.





# SEVEN STEPS TO STAND UP

Stand Up Awareness Week is one week in the calendar, but a lot of preparation and planning happens in advance of this week. Below are seven steps you can take to run a successful week in your school, Youthreach or youth service.

- Step 1: Team Up
- Step 2: Train Up
- Step 3: Come Together
- Step 4: Time to Plan
- Step 5: Roll it Out
- Step 6: Send it
- Step 7: Sustain it

## Step 1: Team Up

Talk to your Principal or Coordinator. Senior management can offer great support and advice as you prepare to roll out your Stand Up Awareness Week activities.

Encourage other staff to get involved and invite young people to lead this with you in your school, Youthreach or youth service. Using a peer-led approach will empower the young people in your organisation to effect positive change in their own community. Remember the Education and Training Team at BeLonG To are always here to support you so if you feel alone, know that we are your team.



### Toolkit resources

- The Importance of Stand Up Awareness Week - information for Senior Management and the Board of Management.
- Promotional posters

## Step 2: Train Up

BeLonG To offers training on LGBTI+ topics for professionals working with LGBTI+ young people. During October, we also offer specific training on planning and rolling out Stand Up Awareness Week. This will help you get started and give you activity ideas.

### 90-minute E-learning Module: Creating LGBTI+ Inclusive Schools and Youth Services

Available from: [training.belongto.org](http://training.belongto.org)

This interactive training includes videos, exercises and quizzes to equip you in effectively listening to, understanding, responding to, and supporting LGBTI+ young people. Sign up to our free e-learning which will give you a foundation in the following:

- Terminology And Language
- LGBTI+ Mental Health
- Managing Our Own Attitude And Bias
- Gender And Young People: Non-binary And Transgender Identities
- Coming Out
- Improving Your Practice

### Stand Up Awareness Week Online Training

Register for our online Stand Up Training this October! Our Education and Training Team will bring you through the steps to run Stand Up Awareness Week in detail and provide you with guidance and activity ideas.

To book your place, visit [www.belongto.org/standup](http://www.belongto.org/standup), email [standup@belongto.org](mailto:standup@belongto.org) or call 01 670 6223.



### Step 3: Come Together

Set up a time and space for your team to meet, so that you can brainstorm ideas and reflect. This could happen over one or several meetings, depending on the time you have available.

To get you started, here is a suggested meeting format:

- a. Discuss respectful communication to create a safe space for your team. Getting started is often the most daunting part. Your Toolkit and training will give you guidance and ideas on how to approach discussing LGBTI+ topics within your school, Youthreach or youth service.
- b. Explain what Stand Up Awareness Week is to everyone and outline the process you will follow.
- c. Talk through the terminology poster to make sure everyone understands what the various terms mean. You don't have to be an expert on language – the poster is there to help you, too!
- d. Bring your team through the three Inclusivity Themes, inviting them to answer the reflection questions – keep notes as you go.
- e. Based on the answers which will be unique to you and your school, Youthreach or youth service, brainstorm action and activity ideas. You can use some of the suggested ideas or design your own. Draw inspiration from other schools by looking at the pictures in this pack.



#### Toolkit resources

- Respectful Communication
- Introducing LGBTI+ Topics

### Step 4: Time To Plan

This is your Stand Up Awareness Week, so it's important you consider what will work best for you and the young people and staff within your organisation. If this is the first time you are organising Stand Up Awareness Week, you may choose to focus on one area or activity and build from there in future years. If you are more experienced, you might choose actions from all three Inclusivity Themes or create your own. You can structure your Stand Up Awareness Week in a way that suits you.

For example, you might decide to plan:

- One LGBTI+ action per day or the same action by different groups each day.
- Presentations to different groups followed by a whole school/Youthreach/youth service action.
- In-class actions or lunchtime actions.

Research has highlighted the potential cumulative positive impact of repeated events like Stand Up Awareness Week<sup>1</sup> so there is value in taking your time and ensuring your actions have a strong and clear impact, rather than trying to do too much at once. Think quality over quantity. Discuss your plans with Senior Management as they might have some ideas or resources to help you. Perhaps some of the young people in your school or youth group could present their plans at a staff meeting and invite staff to support them. This is a great way to spread the word and encourage involvement.



#### Toolkit resources

- Stand Up Awareness Week Planning Template



## Step 5: Roll it Out

After all the planning, it's time to roll out Stand Up Awareness Week from November 15th-19th. Spread the word and engage as many people as possible. Photograph and video your events and consider engaging your local media. Keep in regular contact with your team members during the week to make sure everything is going to plan.

At the end of the week, make sure to have a post Stand Up Awareness Week meeting to recognise and celebrate what you have achieved. Invite the team to write down any learnings they have and what recommendations they would have for others or for future years.



### Toolkit resources

- Media Guide

## Step 6: Send It

### [www.belongto.org/sendit](http://www.belongto.org/sendit)

Now that all the hard work is complete, congratulate yourself on a successful Stand Up Awareness Week!

We would love to hear from you about how it went and see your photographs and videos.

Visit [www.belongto.org/sendit](http://www.belongto.org/sendit) to fill in an evaluation form and upload your pictures and videos. Every school that completes step six will receive a Stand Up Awareness Week certificate and some exciting swag for your school!

We will share your great work on our website and social media platforms and spread the word about the incredible work you are doing to create a safe environment for LGBTI+ young people.

## Step 7: Sustain It

To create a truly inclusive environment and support LGBTI+ young people, we need to think about how we can ensure that this feeling of safety and reduced peer discrimination continues beyond Stand Up Awareness Week. Here are some suggestions:

### Create an LGBTI+ Club:

Some members of your Stand Up Awareness Week team may want to continue meeting up year round. We can support you in setting up an LGBTI+ Club or what's known as a Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA). GSAs foster connections between LGBTI+ and allied young people and builds community. A GSA brings young people together to have fun, connect, receive support and campaign to make changes about issues important to them.



### Toolkit resources

- Setting up an LGBTI+ Club/GSA

### Proactive Intervention by Staff:

Stand Up Awareness Week gives schools, Youthreach and youth services the opportunity to really consider whether the anti-bully policies, procedures and Code of Behaviour are being followed. A major protective factor for LGBTI+ young people is observing clear and consistent proactive intervention when any form of homophobic/biphobic or transphobic bullying is observed. All staff should be clear on how to intervene and document any breaches of these policies. This should continue after Stand Up Awareness Week.

### Representation:

LGBTI+ families, identities and relationships continue to be represented throughout the school, Youthreach or youth service in policies, the curriculum and the environment.



### Toolkit resources

- Posters and Image Bank



# ABC OF INCLUSION

True LGBTI+ inclusion is about making LGBTI+ inclusivity part of everyday life in your school, Youthreach or youth service. An inclusive environment, inclusive curriculum and inclusive policies have been shown to be some of the main factors in creating a space where LGBTI+ young people feel equal, safe, and valued.

## A: Inclusive Environment

Stand Up Awareness Week is an ideal opportunity to think about your environment and creatively consider how you can ensure the environment is visually LGBTI+ inclusive. Here are a few ideas:

### Reflection Questions:

- Think about your school/Youthreach/youth service – would a member of the LGBTI+ community know that you support them? How might you show that?
- Consider whether LGBTI+ families, relationships and identities are represented in images around your school /Youthreach/youth service? Is it just in one area or at a certain time?
- Do trans and non-binary young people feel supported in your school /Youthreach/youth service? Are there facilities for trans young people e.g. gender-neutral bathrooms?
- If an LGBTI+ or questioning young person wanted to talk to someone or join an LGBTI+ group, are there posters showing who to talk to or where to go?

### Creating an Inclusive Environment Visibility: LGBTI+ Flags and Colours:

Check out the 'Create your LGBTI+ Flag' activity in your Stand Up Awareness Week Toolkit. You will see lots of flags representing different LGBTI+ identities. Perhaps these flags and the related identities might be placed around the building to educate, inform and support.

You can use the Pride rainbow flag colours in many ways to represent your support. Here are just some action ideas:

- Create rainbow murals with chalk, paint or collage.
- Make rainbow friendship bracelets.
- Rainbow badges/sashes.
- Wearing jumpers with the different colours of the rainbow.
- Use rainbow face paint.
- Paint rainbow steps (with permission of course!).
- Create rainbow bunting.
- Bake rainbow cakes and biscuits.



### Toolkit Resources

- Create your LGBTI+ Flag



### Representation:

While promoting the rainbow flag and colours are wonderful ways to show the LGBTI+ community you care, it is just as important, if not more so, to think about how LGBTI+ rights, families, identities and relationships are represented in your environment. Check out the Image Bank in our Stand Up Awareness Week Toolkit. Here you can find free images representing the LGBTI+ community. Here are some additional action ideas:

- Ensure age-appropriate LGBTI+ literature is available in the library.
- Whenever a family/relationship/identity is represented in a poster, try to make sure different types of families are represented.
- Create a photo collage/mural or exhibition representing all types of families/relationships or identities.



#### Toolkit resources

- Create your LGBTI+ Flag
- Image Bank

### Classroom/Environment:

Let young people know that your classroom/youth group is an LGBTI+ safe space with stickers and posters. Staff could also put a sticker on their laptop or back of their diary so if young people see you on the corridor, they know that you are an ally. This small step can make a huge difference in a young person's feeling of safety and belonging.

It's important to follow through and challenge any biphobia/homophobia and transphobia in the classroom or in your presence, to ensure young people know that the space really is safe.



#### Toolkit resources

- Challenging biphobic/homophobic and transphobic language

### Specific Supports for Trans and Non-Binary Young People:



Your Stand Up Awareness Week Toolkit has a specific guide on "Supporting Trans and Non-Binary Young People" in your school, Youthreach or youth service.

This guidance, created by trans and non-binary young people, focuses on respecting pronouns, names and gender identity, along with practical considerations on respecting and including trans and non-binary young people in your environment.

### Community Environment:

There are LGBTI+ youth groups across Ireland offering spaces for LGBTI+ young people to connect, have fun, and get support.

Connect with your local LGBTI+ groups/services and create a poster advertising the service. Include the details of a supportive adult in your organisation that young people could go to if they need to talk.

Visit [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org) to find information about LGBTI+ youth groups nationwide.

## B: Inclusive Curriculum

Including LGBTI+ identities in the curriculum has been shown to result in a more positive school environment, by promoting more positive feelings about LGBTI+ issues and persons among their peers.<sup>3</sup> Including LGBTI+ identities in your lesson-plans is a great way to include positive representation of LGBTI+ identities and help all students learn about diversity.

Findings from our 2019 School Climate Survey<sup>1</sup> showed us that including LGBTI+ related topics in the curriculum means students are 26% more likely to feel accepted by the student body, 20% more likely to feel like they belong at school and 9% more likely to not to miss days of school due to feeling unsafe.

### Reflection Questions:

- Think about what you learn in class/group. When and where are LGBTI+ families, relationships and identities represented in subjects or programmes?
- How could staff be more inclusive of the LGBTI+ community in classes or programmes?
- Is LGBTI+ history discussed? Do people understand why Pride is still so important?

### Potential Actions:

At BeLonG To, we have reviewed most junior cycle subject curricula to find opportunities to integrate LGBTI+ related topics, relationships and identities. This resource is available on our website. Why not send the website link to your colleagues and they can find ideas specifically for their subject?

### List of subject ideas available:

- English
- Modern Foreign Languages
- Mathematics
- Business Studies
- Science
- History
- Geography
- Home Economics
- Visual Art
- Music
- Classics
- CSPE
- SPHE
- Digital Media Literacy
- Philosophy

Here are some ideas to bring the curriculum to life outside the classroom or group setting:

- Put up posters with LGBTI+ terminology.
- Hang a world map showing where LGBTI+ people are still punished and persecuted just for being LGBTI+. You can use the IGLA world map of sexual orientation laws available in our Toolkit.
- Create a photo collage/mural of famous LGBTI+ people including historical figures, scientists and musicians.
- Create a presentation on the history of Pride for all classes/groups. You could host a table quiz with fun prizes at the end to test people's knowledge.



### Toolkit resources

- Terminology Poster
- ILGA World Map



## C: Inclusive Policies and Practices

Making a specific reference to homophobic and transphobic bullying in your Anti-Bullying Policy or Code of Behaviour sends a powerful message that your organisation does not tolerate such behaviour. Not only does this show your solidarity with LGBTI+ students, but it also aligns with the mandate of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) 'Anti-Bullying Procedure' to deal explicitly with homophobic and transphobic bullying in your school.

According to DES Circular 0045/2013: "these procedures require that the prevention of bullying must be an integral part of a school's anti-bullying policy. The education and prevention strategies that the school implements must be documented in the anti-bullying policy and must explicitly deal with the issue of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying."

There is strong evidence to show that students who attended schools with visible safe school policies and programmes reported more positive psychological outcomes.

In our School Climate Survey second-level students reported that while 88% of schools had anti-bullying policies and procedures, only 29% explicitly mentioned sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.<sup>1</sup>

### Reflection Questions:

- Does your Anti-Bullying Policy or Code of Behaviour explicitly mention homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying?
- Do all staff and young people know that homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic language or actions will not be tolerated?
- Do staff proactively intervene if they hear or observe someone using homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic language?
- Is the expression 'That's so gay' used without challenge?

While the existence of policies and procedures is valuable, they cannot be effective without **proactive intervention by staff** when they hear or observe homophobic, transphobic or biphobic bullying.

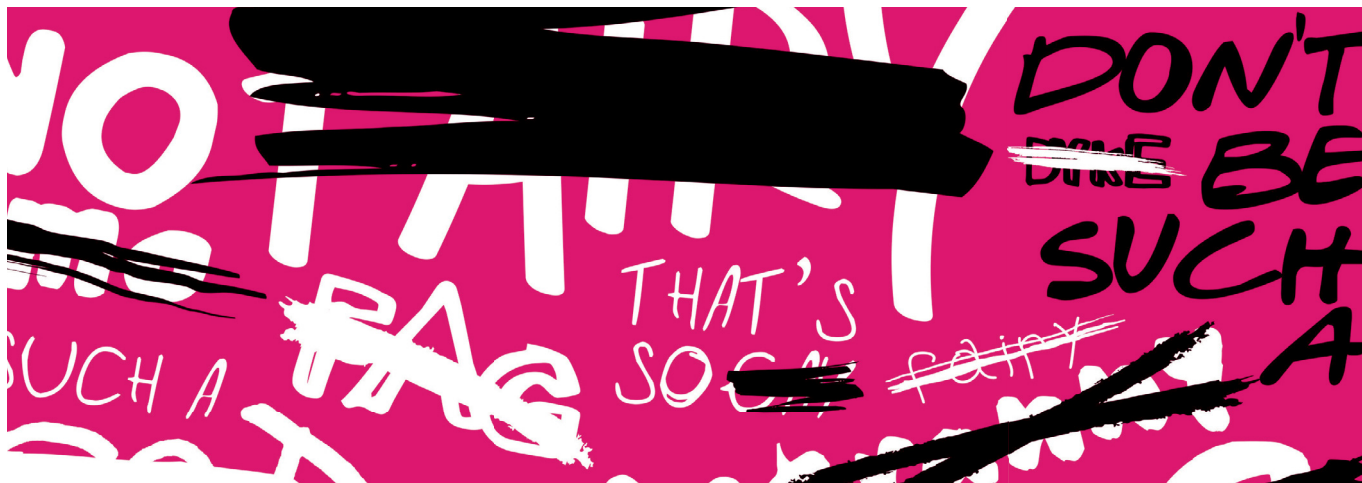
### Potential Actions:

- Review your Anti-Bullying Policy in line with the DES Action Plan on Bullying (2013) and the Anti-Bullying Procedures, ensuring that:
  - All staff are aware of the policy and their role in implementation, particularly in relation to homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic language and name-calling.
  - A 'no tolerance' approach is taken by all staff in relation to homophobic and transphobic language and name-calling.
  - Make explicit reference to the nine grounds of Equality Legislation, including sexual orientation and gender in the policies.
  - Homophobic/transphobic bullying is recorded as such in the DES Anti-Bullying Procedures 'Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour' and monitor related trends.
- Invite all staff to increase their understanding of LGBTI+ students' experience by completing our 90-minute E-learning Module: Creating LGBTI+ Inclusive Schools and Youth Services available from [training.belongto.org](http://training.belongto.org).
- Survey staff and young people to see if they are aware of the organisation's Anti-Bullying Policy or Procedures.



### Toolkit resources

- Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools



## #COMEIN

### Choose words that heal, not hurt

Language is powerful. As part of this year's #ComeIn campaign, with 2FM, we are focusing on words that heal instead of hurt. We can't say derogatory, homophobic slurs on TV, radio or across print yet so many people still use these words casually every day. Through this year's #ComeIn campaign and posters, we want to encourage people to unlearn this hurtful habit. Addressing harmful language plays a significant role in creating a safe environment for LGBTI+ young people. Our 2019 School Climate Survey showed that 68% of LGBTI+ students heard homophobic remarks from other students, with these comments bothering and distressing over 50% of LGBTI+ students. Nearly 50% of LGBTI+ students heard negative remarks about trans people.<sup>1</sup>

It's important to note the positive outcomes when staff members intervened in homophobic remarks, with LGBTI+ students then 5% more likely to feel accepted by the student body, 15% more likely to feel that they belong in their school, and 8% less likely to miss days of school due to feeling unsafe. By calling out homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and slurs consistently, you are sending a clear message that this is not accepted in your school or youth service.<sup>1</sup>

Share the information below with your class/youth service and carry out the suggested activities to promote further understanding and behavioural change.

### Harmful Language and Hate Speech

Harmful language includes words and phrases that are insulting, offensive and abusive. Harmful language is often upsetting, hurtful and distressing to the person or group of people it is directed towards. We know that not all harmful actions can be considered bullying, as bullying is hurtful behaviour that is repeated, usually over time. In the same way, not all harmful language can be considered hate speech.

'Hate speech' is any kind of speech, writing or communication that attacks or expresses prejudice against a particular person or group on the basis of their identity, as defined by the United Nations. Their identity might relate to their gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, nationality or religion.<sup>6</sup>

In Ireland it is a crime to publish, share or play material which is threatening, abusive or insulting towards, or is likely to stir up hatred against a person or group of people with a protected identity. This includes publicly displaying, behaving or speaking in a way that is threatening, abusive, insulting, or likely to stir up hatred. The current law names a number of protected identities, including sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity including membership of the Travelling community.

A new law on hate speech and hate crime is currently being put together by the government. It is called the Criminal Justice (Hate Crime) Bill 2021. This law will update our hate speech legislation to include gender identity or expression as a protected ground. It will also create a number of 'hate crimes', some of which relate to hate speech. For example, under the new law if someone is harassed, or is publicly verbally abused or insulted on the basis of their identity, this is considered a hate crime. The law will also cover

<sup>6</sup> United Nations (2019). United Nations Strategy And Plan Of Action On Hate Speech. Available from <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/UN>



hate speech or hate crimes committed online, including on social media sites.

Some examples of LGBTI+ hate speech in a school, Youthreach or youth service environment include:

- Using anti-LGBTI+ slurs e.g. 'that's so gay';
- Harassing someone because they are LGBTI+ or questioning;
- Cyberbullying or trolling, such as 'outing' someone online, or setting up a fake profile which uses insulting language about someone's LGBTI+ identity;
- Stereotyping, for example saying that someone cannot or should not do something, such as play a certain sport, because they are LGBTI+ or questioning; or
- Threatening or encouraging others to threaten an LGBTI+ or questioning person.

### Reflection Questions:

- Think about the books you've read and the films you've watched at your school/Youthreach/youth service. Did they include examples of harmful language or hate speech? How might you address this during a group discussion?
- Harmful language and hate speech are often based on stereotyped ideas about LGBTI+ people, and people belonging to other groups. What can you do to challenge these stereotypes?
- If a young person wanted to report harmful language to your school/Youthreach/youth service, would they know who to speak to?

### Activity Ideas:

#### Hurtful Words

Check out the Beyond Hate Activity Book from the National Youth Council of Ireland available on our website. Here you will find activities to support young people to develop ways to eradicate hurtful language, to recognise hate speech and how it is used in everyday language.

#### Solidarity Wall

Create a solidarity wall where allies can show support for the LGBTI+ community by signing their name or leaving uplifting messages of support for the community. This can be on a whiteboard in your classroom, in a shared space e.g. a canteen, or consider working within your community, for example in partnership with your local library, bank or credit union spreading the positive messages of solidarity beyond the school gate.

### Stand Up Soapbox

Many early activists, politicians and writers began their involvement in campaigning by speaking out about equality issues on a soapbox on a city centre street. The term originates from the days when speakers would elevate themselves by standing on a wooden crate originally used for shipment of soap, or other dry goods, from a manufacturer to a retail store. Why not create a soapbox during Stand Up Awareness Week?

Invite young people to speak for 3-5 minutes about topics such as LGBTI+ solidarity, the impact of harmful language or how to tackle homophobia, biphobia or transphobia in your school or youth service.

### #ComeIn Rainbow Jumper Day

Encourage your students to #ComeIn to school wearing a jumper in their year's colours on Friday 19th November, the last day of Stand Up Awareness Week or in rainbow clothes. Ask them to beg, borrow or buy a jumper in their year's colours so that the whole school will make up the LGBTI+ rainbow flag: 1st yrs red, 2nd yrs orange, 3rd yrs yellow, 4th yrs green, 5th yrs blue and 6th yrs purple. Please make sure to use #ComeIn when you are sharing your photographs.





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Thank you to our Stand Up Awareness Week funders:



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Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth



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Stand Up Awareness Week is endorsed by



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Supporting LGBTI+  
Young People in Ireland