



Wellness and
Community Centers

www.MetroTampaBay.org

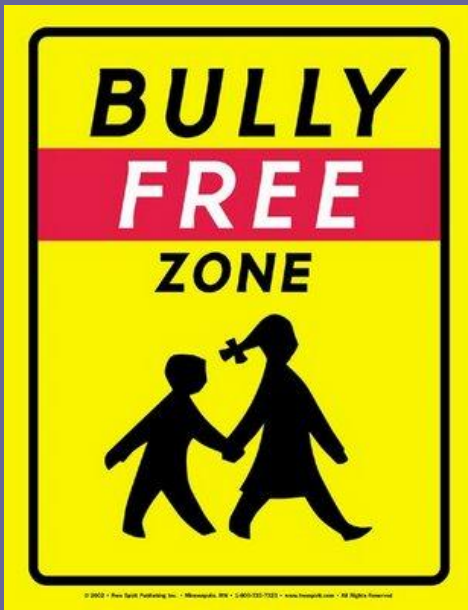
LGBTQ Youth Program



Tampa Group Co-Sponsored by:



Why do we need LGBTQ youth groups?



- Youth are coming out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) at younger ages than ever before.
- LGBTQ Youth are at high risk for depression, anxiety, homelessness, and suicide.
- LGBTQ students are subjected to widespread harassment and alienation in schools.
- Education leads to acceptance.
- “Safe Space” for LGBTQ youth helps ensure on going health and well being.

Harassment, Bullying, and Violence

- Approximately **28%** of gay and lesbian youth drop out of high school because of discomfort (due to verbal and physical abuse) in the school environment.
- LGBT youth hear anti-gay slurs about **26** times per day. Faculty intervention only takes place in approximately **3%** of these cases.
- Compared to their non-LGBT peers, LGBT youth are **3** times more likely to be bullied and/or harassed at school.
- In one study, **26 percent** of gay teens who came out to their parents/guardians were told they must leave home.

*Information Provided by the Gay and Lesbian Task Force
www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research

More Harassment and Bullying

- Nearly **58%** of LGBT students have had property stolen or deliberately damaged at school.
- **64%** of students who were harassed or assaulted in school *never* reported it to school staff, and **56%** *never* told a family member about the incident.
- Among students who did report incidents to school authorities, only **28%** said that reporting resulted in effective intervention.

*Information Provided by Lambda Legal “Youth in the Margins”
(<http://www.lambdalegal.org/our-work/publications/youth-in-the-margins.html>)

Gay Youth Suicide

- Remafedi et al. (1998) found that **28.1%** of gay or bisexual males in grades 7 through 12 had attempted suicide at least once during their lives, while only **4.2%** of heterosexual males in those grades had attempted suicide.
- Safren & Heimberg (1999) found that **58%** of LGB youth who had attempted suicide reported that they had really hoped to die. In contrast, **only 33%** of heterosexual youth who had attempted suicide reported that they had really hoped to die.
- 33% of all reported teen suicides are from the LGBT community, yet LGBT people comprise only 2-4% of the population. Clear disproportionate risk for LGBT youth.

Information provided by www.sprc.com

Metro Wellness Responds

- Created LGBTQA support group at St. Petersburg location.
- Offers up to 5 free therapy sessions for LGBTQ youth (ages 13-22) who are being harassed or bullied at school or at home.
- With support from Tampa GLSEN, LGBTQA support group begins at Ybor location.

LGBTQ Youth Group – St .Pete

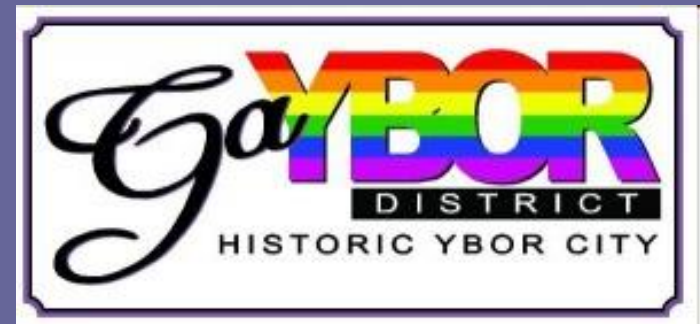
- Began January 2011.
- Meets weekly with dinner and other incentives.
- Highly diverse group.
- Attendance began with 6-10 per group now average is 15 per group.



LGBTQ Youth Group - Tampa

- Began on June 14, 2011.
- Weekly meetings with dinner and other incentives.
- Outreach has brought in a diverse group of teens from across the bay area.
- Over 30 teens have attended at least one group session, with 5-10 attending on a regular basis.

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Barriers

- Transportation
 - Bigger issue in Tampa than St. Pete.
 - Offer free bus passes.
- Funding
 - GLSEN group (Tampa).
 - Metro held a fundraiser specifically for youth program.



Additional Barriers

- Networking
 - St. Pete has coordinated county wide GSA network, Tampa does not have this.
- Age requirements (St. Pete and Tampa).
- Outreach – mailings, internet, presentations, etc.
- Sub-Group/cliques within the group.

Outreach

- Networking
 - GSAs – presentations, mailings, emails.
 - Facebook, MySpace, Tumblr, Other LGBTQA Websites, Metro Website and Listserve.
 - Coordinated with Tampa GLSEN, PFLAG.
 - Presentation at Hillsborough Kids Inc.
 - Attended LGBTQ Roundtable meeting at The Springs of Tampa.
- Advertising
 - Flyers regularly distributed to local LGBTQ establishments.
 - Advertised in Watermark (local gay newspaper).
 - Article in Tampa Tribune about Gay Youth Bullying.



Outreach - GayStraight Alliance

- St. Pete has coordinated GSA groups
 - From local high school GSAs.
 - Metro participates in their events.
- Tampa does not have coordinated GSA groups
 - GSA leaders from 3 high schools are working with Metro to host a Tampa GSA event.



LGBTQA Youth Group Activities

- Bullying
- Coming out stories
- Gay history
- Gay charades
- Gender issues
- Fear Bag
- Creating a Safe Space
- Sexual assault
- Problems with parents
- Relationship issues
- Sexual health
- Expressions through art and music
- Gay Movie Nights
- Game Nights



What has worked?



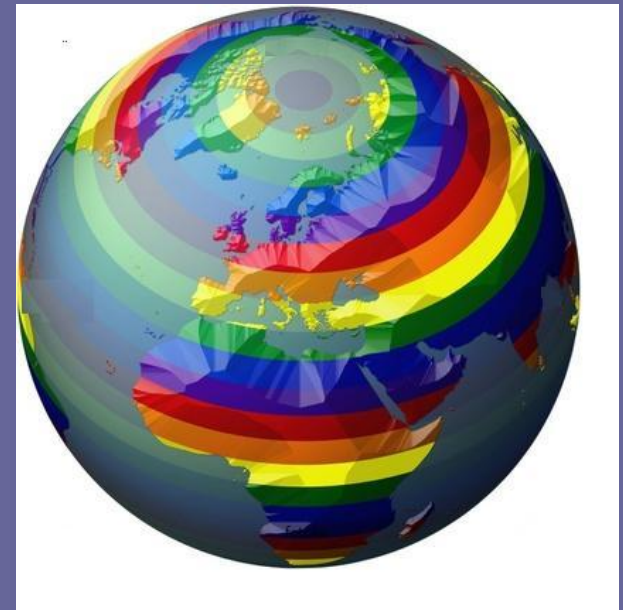
- Establish “Safe Space”.
- Regular review of rules and guidelines.
- More structured groups/specifically planned agenda.
- Guest speakers
 - trans speakers, drag speakers, safe sex workshops.
- Coming out, gender issues and dating.
- Group bonding activities, i.e. “gay charades”, “fear bag”.

LGBTQA Youth Group Difficulties

- Open/unstructured sessions aren't as successful.
- Scheduling events that the youth must commit to, e.g. - Rays game, "Beyonce Night".
- Requires on going outreach and networking

Based on our experience...

- Establish “Safe Space”.
- Review Rules and Guidelines.
- Network, Network, Network
Regular contact with local schools, GSA groups, other LGBTQ services, etc.
Central GSA coordination is key.
- Stay in touch with youth
Facebook, MySpace, Twitter,
Daily text messages, Emails.
- Secure funding early.
- Plan fun but structured activities with specific LGBTQ focus.





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