

Seeking Support: A Resource for Educators



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Overview

How To Use This Resource

This resource provides information and resources for educators in supporting LGBTQ+ young people and their families.

It features lived experiences stories from LGBTQ+ individuals and their families that can be used to educate, support and guide students, parents/carers and staff

Each featured story is accompanied with suggested activities and links to access further support.

Important

All resources and links provided should be checked by staff for suitability and age appropriateness. Each video has a recommended age phase and one video is recommended for use in staff training only.

Featured Stories

There are 3 featured stories that form part of this resource:

<u>Des' Story</u> - This video can be used in staff training, assemblies and PSHE lessons.

<u>Helen's Story</u> - This video can be used in staff training, PSHE lessons and parent/carer support.

<u>Ash's Story</u> - This video can be used in safeguarding training with staff.





Des' Story WATCH HERE

Story Overview

Des talks about his experiences as a parent of two gay sons. He talks about his two sons' differing experiences at school and highlights the importance of schools creating a safe environment for LGBTQ+ young people.



Content notes: This video references homophobic language and bullying and the difficulty of coming out at school and to friends, which some viewers may find challenging or upsetting. We recommend this video for Year 8 and above.

Using This Resource

Student Assembly

As part of an assembly on the impact of language.

Des talks about his son's experience in having to challenge his own friends on the use of homophobic slurs and the difficulty he had in coming out due to the environment his peers had created. This theme is also covered in **this resource** which contains suggested activities and questions on this theme.

Secondary PSHE Lesson

Secondary PSHE lesson on the importance of seeking support.

See page 5 and 6 for suggested questions and page 9 and 10 for activities linked to this resource. Also featured are links to further Role Model stories and activities on prejudice language, coming out and bullying.

Staff Training

This video may be used in staff training on the importance of challenging prejudice language or supporting LGBTQ+ young people. Diversity Role Models also provide training for staff on embracing difference, challenging prejudice language and supporting LGBTQ+ young people. Click here to find out more or see page 23 for contact details.



Des' Story - Secondary PSHE Lesson

See Appendix 1 for a worksheet featuring these questions.

Suggested Questions 1

1. Why did Des' son Jack feel he couldn't come out as gay at his school?

Lots of homophobic bullying at his school (not directed at him); atmosphere didn't feel safe; felt he couldn't confide in his friends; he didn't feel he could be himself

2. How did this affect Jack?

Des said that before coming out as gay, Jack had been unhappy for a while and it impacted Jack's mental health.

3. Why did Jack eventually come out as gay at school?

His friends were discussing their favorite homophobic slur, Jack felt he needed to call them out and told them how this impacted him.

4. How do you think Jack felt coming out to his friends in this way?

Allow students to explore this - Des describes Jack as brave - explore why this was a brave action with students.

5. What support did Des say Jack was lacking at school?

Jack felt he had no support from his teachers, no support from his friends, no allies around him. Des described this as a 'very lonely time' for Jack.

6. How was Matthew's experience at school different from Jack's?

He was able to come out as gay much earlier; he had the support of friends; he had allies around him; he felt safe to be himself; he was out and proud.



Des' Story - Secondary PSHE Lesson

See Appendix 1 for a worksheet featuring these questions.

Suggested Questions 2

7. What positive actions did Matthew and his school take to make the school a safer place for LGBTQ+ students?

Matthew challenged the school to be more active; formed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion club; School celebrated Pride Month and flew a Pride flag

8. Both Matthew and Jack's family were really supportive when the came out as gay, what impact do you think this had on them?

Allow students to explore this question. Draw out the importance of having support and the positive impact this can have.

9. Why does Des volunteer for Diversity Role Models and share his story?

Allow students to explore this question. Draw out the importance of learning from others experiences; it brings representation to the classroom; others can learn to create a safe environment; it raises the importance of having support and having allies at school.

Extension ideas:

The theme of **allyship** is covered in **Jamie's** story and **this resource**.

The theme of **coming out** is covered in the stories of <u>Jenny</u>, <u>Barry</u> and <u>Melissa</u> and <u>this</u> resource.

The theme of **prejudice language** is covered in the stories of <u>Jenny</u>, <u>Keith</u> and <u>Simon</u> and in <u>this resource</u>.



Helen's Story WATCH HERE

Story Overview

Helen talks about her experience as the parent of a trans son. She talks openly and honestly about her journey from when they first came out to the present day, the guidance and support that her family received, and offers advice to families who may be on a similar journey.



Content notes: This video references coming out to family and at school, which some students may find challenging or upsetting. We recommend this video for Year 9 and above.

Using this resource

Staff Training

This video may be used as part of staff training on supporting transgender young people and their families. It highlights the important role schools/colleges can play in creating a safe and supportive environment, highlighting some best practice that schools can adopt. Diversity Role Models also provide training for staff on supporting trans young people. Click here to find out more or see page 23 for contact details.

Secondary PSHE Lesson

Secondary PSHE lesson on the importance of seeking support. See page 8 for suggested questions and pages 9 and 10 for activities linked to this resource. The theme of gender transition is also covered in the stories of **Riley**, **Miguel** and **Kate** with a **resource** available featuring questions and activities for students. Gender identity is also explored in the stories of **Mon**, **Kim** and **Alix**.

Support for Parents/Carers

This video may provide a supportive resource for parents/carers of a trans or gender questioning young person. Helen offers advice on how she navigated her son coming out and talks about the importance of parents providing that support to their child. She also notes the importance of seeking support on this journey as a parent/carer. See pages 14 and 15 for support for parents/carers.



Helen's Story - Secondary PSHE Lesson

See Appendix 2 for a worksheet featuring these questions.

Suggested Questions

1. What was Helen anxious about for her son and why?

That when he went to secondary school, he wasn't going to be accepted and fit in, Helen had been bullied at school and didn't want her son to experience this.

2. How did Helen's son come out to her and why do you think he chose to come out this way?

Via text message. Allow student to explore the second part of the question - discuss possible reasons.

3. What most worried Helen when her son came out?

That he wouldn't be loved or accepted for who he was.

4. What did Helen want to make sure was in place before her son came out at school?

That the school were prepared, that they had the foundations of knowledge and understanding, so that he could have the best experience.

5. How did Helen's son's school support him?

The teachers at school had training; they respected his privacy by only sharing this information with his teachers; they had discussions with Helen's son.

6. What advice did Helen give on how a person can show support?

Listen and be a safe and calm person they can talk to.



Secondary PSHE Lesson - Seeking Support

Both Des' and Helen's stories can be used as part of a PSHE lesson on the importance of seeking support and creating a safe and supportive environment in school. The activities below can be used to accompany the video resource and suggested questions.

Activities

1. Get students to make two lists. One lists what 'support is...' the other what 'support is not..' - see appendix 3 for worksheet.

Students to pick one or two from each side and give a specific example. Links can be made to Helen and Des' stories.

2. Matthew had the support of his friends and allies when he came out as gay. Helen's son had the support from his school and teachers.

Why is it important to have support from others when you are going through a difficult time?

How can you be a supportive friend?

Write a script for a Tik Tok video aimed at students your age. This video should explain to viewers the importance of seeking support but also the importance of being a supportive friend and ally.

Extension idea: Get students to act out and film their Tik Tok videos. These can be showcased to raise awareness and encourage other students to be supportive/an ally to others.

Matthew, Jack and Helen's son's had support from their family when they came out.

What other forms of support are available for LGBTQ+ young people? (students may want to do some further research here).

Design a school webpage for LGBTQ+ young people seeking support. It should highlight sources of support at school and how to access these as well as make links to other organisations (see links for additional support on page 16) that can offer support for LGBTQ+ young people.



Further Activities

1. Matthew challenged his school to take action in creating a more supportive and safe environment for LGBTQ+ students at his school. Helen says her sons school provided fantastic support. What action could your school take to do the same?

In small groups draft some ideas of actions your school could take in creating a more inclusive environment for all students (including LGBTQ+ students).

Extension idea: Choose one idea from your list and draft an action plan of how you could implement this at you school.

One of the hardest things for Jack was hearing his friends use homophobic language. On tables or in different places around your classroom will be "graffiti boards"—pieces of chart paper displaying the questions below. Students go to each board and add comments (answers or reflective thoughts).

Note: Graffiti boards should be prepared in advance; students may circulate freely or, depending on space limitations, move around the classroom in a more structured way. See appendix 4 for graffiti board questions.

Explore comments with students. Focus on the final question and divide ideas into actions for the school and actions for the students. Ask students to select one of the 'student actions' and get them to reflect on how they could personally action this.

Coming out to family and friends can be a difficult thing for some young people. The fear of rejection, bullying, and not being supported means that it can take a lot of bravery to finally tell those you are closest to. Imagine a close friend has just come out to you. Think about what words and actions would be supportive, and also what words and actions may make the experience more difficult. See appendix 5 for the worksheet linked to this activity.

Extension idea: Helen's son came out via text message. Imagine a friend of yours has come out to you in the same way. Write a supportive response back to your friend.



Ash's Story WATCH HERE

Story Overview

Ash talks about his pride in being part of the LGBTQ+ community, and his various roles as a volunteer, both past and present. He also talks about his experiences as a survivor of childhood abuse and the importance of seeking support.



Content notes: Ash is a survivor of abuse and speaks openly about the physical, emotional and sexual abuse he suffered as a child. This topic can be very sensitive for anyone who have survived abuse or been impacted by abuse in any way. In the video Ash talks about how he sometimes went to stay with a family friend to escape the abuse he faced at home. Care should be taken to explore how this was also a form of abuse by the family friend as Ash doesn't name this explicitly in the video.

Diversity Role Models recommend this resource for use in staff training in relation to safeguarding rather than for use in the classroom.

Idea's for using this resource

Safeguarding Training

Ash's story could be used as a case study as part of your school's safeguarding training. You could create different scenarios to explore what members of staff could have done to better support Ash when he was at school. See page 12 for how Ash's story links to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

You could ask staff:

- What could the school have done to better support Ash?
- How did Ash's home life leave him vulnerable to abuse by a family friend?
- What signs should we be looking for that a child may be being abused?



Ash's Story - Further Guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

This video can help illuminate section 203-205 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023. Ash refers to knowing he was gay from a young age. However, not having a trusted and safe adult at home that he could speak to as a result of domestic abuse, left him vulnerable to exploitation by a family friend. This video could be used in a staff training to help illustrate the statutory duties and moral imperative to create "a safe space for (LGBTQ+) young people to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff".

PSHE/RSHE Statutory Guidence

By the end of secondary students should learn 'the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.' This video can help staff in considering how they teach these topics in an inclusive way, ensuring content and information is made relevant to students who are LGBTQ+.

Further support and guidance:

Galop

Galop is a UK based LGBT+ anti-abuse charity. They work with and for LGBT+ victims and survivors of abuse and violence.



Survivors UK

Survivors UK offer advice and support for boys, men and nonbinary people aged 13+ who have experienced sexual violence at any time in their lives.



NSPCC Guidance

NPSCC have information and guidance on best practice for protecting LGBTQ+ children and young people.





Ash's Story - Further Guidance



Ash mentions his involvement with a range of community groups related to HIV/AIDS. AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome and is the result of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infection that has progressed to the point that someone is very sick. HIV affects many people from a variety of backgrounds and identities but has disproportionately affected some groups that already suffered from social prejudice such as gay and bisexual men, black and minority ethnic communities and people who inject drugs. Social prejudice, including homophobia, led to a slow response from governments to the HIV/AIDS crisis and increased prejudicial attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community. Whilst this stigma is improving, it still exists today and is a source of discrimination faced by members of the LGBTQ+ community.

If HIV is discussed in a lesson, teachers need to be mindful of how they cover this content if they have a student in their class who is living with, or has a loved one who has been affected by, HIV and are advised to consult their Designated Safeguarding Lead for guidance. Some activities could lead to conversations about safe sex which could fall under sex education or the national curriculum for science.

Teachers must be aware of students who have been withdrawn from aspects of the sex education curriculum and plan their lesson accordingly.

Further Support On HIV

The links below are to aid teachers' research.

Any additional materials used in the classroom should be assessed to ensure they are suitable for your students.

- <u>National AIDS Trust</u>: teaching resources for on HIV.
- <u>Terrence Higgins Trust</u>: statistics on HIV that highlights how it affects people of any sexual orientation.
- World AIDS Day: a day to commemorate those who have died from AIDS related illnesses.



Support for Parents/Carers

When Your Child 'Comes Out'

When your child comes out as LGBTQ+, or is exploring their sexuality or gender identity, you may feel unsure how to help them, not know what to say, or how to relate to what they're going through. The aim of the resource is to provide some further support and guidance for you as a parent/carer in supporting your child on their journey.



Understanding The Vocabulary

When your child comes out they may use vocabulary that you are not familiar with or are not quite sure of the meaning. It is ok to ask your child what this word means to them and to seek understanding and clarity. It can be as simple as, 'That word is new to me, what does it mean to you?'



You may find Stonewalls list of LGBTQ+ Key Terms useful.

Further Support And Guidance

The following links provide further information, support and advice, specifically for parents/carers of LGBTQ+ young people:

- Young Minds: <u>Supporting A Young LGBTQ+ Person When They Come Out</u>
- NSPCC: <u>Tips for supporting your child</u>
- FFLAG: <u>Parents: Quick Tips for Supporting Your LGBTQ Kids-and YOURSELF</u>

Transgender and Gender Identity specific support:

- Young Minds: Gender Identity A guide for parents/carers
- Mermaids: Resources for parents/carers
- GIDS: <u>Gender Identity Development Service Advice and Guidance for parents/carers</u>
- FFLAG: My child's Transgender

There are a nationwide support groups for LGBTQ+ parents/carers search **here** to find one near you.



Tips for supporting your child

1

Listen

Listening without judgement is an important first step. Remember that transitioning or questioning your gender identity or sexuality can be a stressful and difficult experience for some young people. There is often a worry of how friends and family will react. Actively listen, try not to interrupt, focus on their feelings and how best to support them.



2

Offer Support

It can be hard for young people to fully open up and talk about their feelings. Having started this conversation will have been a huge first step for many. Let them know that you are there for them when they are wanting to talk.

Always ask if there is anything they need from you.



3

Let Them Lead

Give your child the time and space to explore their sexuality/gender identity. This should be done at their pace and be **led by them**. Remember that for some young people exploring their sexuality/gender identity, how they identify may not stay fixed. Your child may wish to use pronouns that reflect their gender identity, or change their name. Try to use the correct pronouns and name and be mindful that they may wish to make these changes with extended family, friends and school. Again, this should be at their pace and **led by them**. Avoid making assumptions about what they may want.



4

Seek Support

It is important that you feel supported during this journey. Seeking the support of friends and family members where possible can help you feel supported and heard. There are many support groups for parents/carers that can help you process and discuss many of the feelings and questions that may arise for you as a parent/carer.





Support for Students

Organisations that provide further support and resources for teachers, parents and carers on some of the topics raised in this resource. These links are to support teachers, parents and carers to access further information, lead discussions or to signpost to students for research and support. Diversity Role Models can take no responsibility for the content hosted on other organisations platforms or shared directly, and we recommend that all signposted resources be checked for suitability by staff before use.

LSWITCHBOARD

<u>Switchboard</u> is the national LGBTQIA+ support line for anyone, anywhere in the country, at any point in their journey.

They have a text, email and phone service to discuss anything related to sexuality and gender identity, in addition to information on their website: https://switchboard.lgbt/

The Mix is the UK's leading support service for young people.

They offer young people a free, confidential helpline and a counselling service, as well a whole host of information and advice on a range of topics (including LGBTQ+) via their website: www.themix.org.uk/



Useful resources for staff supporting LGBTQ+ students:

- Brighton and Hove Trans Inclusion Toolkit
- NEU Supporting trans and gender questioning young people
- NPSCC: Safeguarding LGBTQ+ young people



Support for Students

Organisations that provide further support and resources for staff, parents, carers, and students on bullying. These links are to support teachers to access further information, lead discussions or to signpost to students for research and support. Diversity Role Models can take no responsibility for the content hosted on other organisations platforms or shared directly, and we recommend that all signposted resources be checked for suitability before use.

NSPCC

The NSPCC understands how difficult it is for children to talk about bullying. Professionals can contact the NSPCC Helpline by calling **0808 800 5000**, emailing-help@NSPCC.org.uk or completing-help@NSPCC.org.uk or completing-help@NSPCC.uk or <a href="mailing



The Anti-Bullying Alliance has lots of videos and resources for young people who might be a victim of bullying, or know someone who is being bullied.

View the resources <u>here</u> or visit their website at: <u>https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk</u>



Childline can be contacted 24/7. Calls to 0800 1111 are free and confidential.

Childline has lots of advice about <u>different types of bullying</u> and about <u>dealing</u> <u>with peer pressure</u>.

Children can also contact **Childline online** here: www.childline.org.uk

Appendix

Printable worksheets for use with students and example activities for staff.

- 1. Des' Story Questions Printable worksheet (2 pages)
- 2. Helen's Story Questions Printable worksheet
- 3. What does support look like? Printable worksheet
- 4. Graffiti Board Questions
- 5. Useful definitions Printable resource for students, staff and parents/carers

Note: Resources can be printed out in greyscale to save on coloured ink.



Des' Story

1. Why did Des'	son Jack feel he could	n't come out as gay at	his school?



3. Why did Jack eventually come out as gay at school?

4. How do you think Jack felt coming out to his friends in this way?

5. What support did Des say Jack was lacking at school?

6. How was Matthew's experience at school different from Jack's?



Des' Story

7. What positive actions did Matthew and his school take to make the school a safer place for LGBTQ+ students?

8. Matthew and Jack's family were really supportive when they came out as gay, what impact do you think this had on them?

9. Why does Des volunteer for Diversity Role Models and share his story?



Helen's Story

1. What was Helen anxious about for her son and v

2. How did Helen's son come out to her and why do you think he chose to come out this way?

3. What most worried Helen when her son came out?

4. What did Helen want to make sure was in place before her son came out at school?

5. What did Helen's son's school do to support him?

6. What advice did Helen give on how a person can show support?



What does support look like?

Support is	Support is not



Graffiti Board Questions

Questions for graffiti boards:

- What do you think of when you hear the word "gay"?
- In what ways have you heard the word "gay" used?
- Why do you think people sometimes use the phrase "that's so gay"?
- How would you feel if someone said "that's so gay" about something you were doing or about something you liked?
- What would you do if you heard someone say "that's so gay" or another homophobic slur?
- How can we stop homophobic slurs and other prejudice language at this school?

Example:







Useful Definitions

Ally: a person who supports and respects people who have different identities to themself

Gay: a man who is attracted to men or a woman who is attracted to women.

Lesbian: a woman who is attracted to other women.

Bisexual: someone who can be attracted to more than one gender (e.g. men and women)

•

Pansexual: someone who can be attracted to people of any gender – someone who is attracted to the person for their personality, so gender does not matter.

Transgender: a person whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Queer: an umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight/cisgender or an identity that is more fluid. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, it is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBTQ+ community. The term "queer" can often be used interchangeably with LGBTQ+.

+: used to denote that there are more identities that comprise the LGBTQ+ community than those listed in the acronym.

Cisgender: a person whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Often abbreviated to 'cis'. The majority of people are cisgender.

Trans man: a person who was assigned 'female' at birth, but identifies and lives as a man. (Note: 'trans man' is two separate words.)

Trans woman: a person who was assigned 'male' at birth, but identifies and lives as a woman. (Note: 'trans woman' is two separate words.)

Non-binary: a person whose gender identity does not fit the binary categories of 'male' or 'female'. Non-binary can be used as an identity, or an umbrella term for numerous identities including but not limited to 'agender' or 'genderfluid'.



Contact Details

Get in touch

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Find us online

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Find out more

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