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- American Psychological Association (APA)
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- Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR)

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Diana
Bruce

ADVOCATE
for THRIVING
STUDENTS

Pairing Empathy with Policy to Support the Health and Wellbeing of the Transgender Student

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Today, we'll create a …

-

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ADVOCATE for THRIVING STUDENTS

Group Agreements

Risks – take them!

Pairs – only share for yourself.

Confidentiality – keep it in the room.

Stay present.

Diana Bruce
ADVOCATE for THRIVING STUDENTS

Hello, I’m Diana Bruce.

- 25+ years working at intersection of health and education equity
- National expert on LGBTQ supports and transgender accommodations
- School administrator: school health, SBHCs, COVID-19, HIV/STI prevention, parenting students, Title IX, Section 504, wellness, LGBTQ issues
- Parent of college student and recent graduate!

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Why do I do this?

Our job is to ensure

every student learns;

to learn, *they* must thrive.

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Why do you do this work?

What's your North Star?

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Objective:

The participants will be able to articulate the need to support transgender students in school and healthcare settings and replicate the process of creating a core group of advocates to further the mission of gender equity in a school setting.

Agenda

1. Develop Empathy
2. Use Sound Public Policy
3. Engage Communities (of Experts)
4. Create Student-Centered Solutions

Diana Bruce
ADVOCATE for THRIVING STUDENTS

My approach

Pair radical empathy with sound public policy to engage communities in creating student-centered solutions

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ADVOCATE for THRIVING STUDENTS

Identify the Pain Points

What questions need to be answered?

What are the biggest fears?

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ADVOCATE
for THRIVING
STUDENTS

Identify the Pain Points

What do I mean by transgender, and why focus on these kids?

Aren't kids too young to talk about gender?

If I stick my neck out, **who's got my back?**

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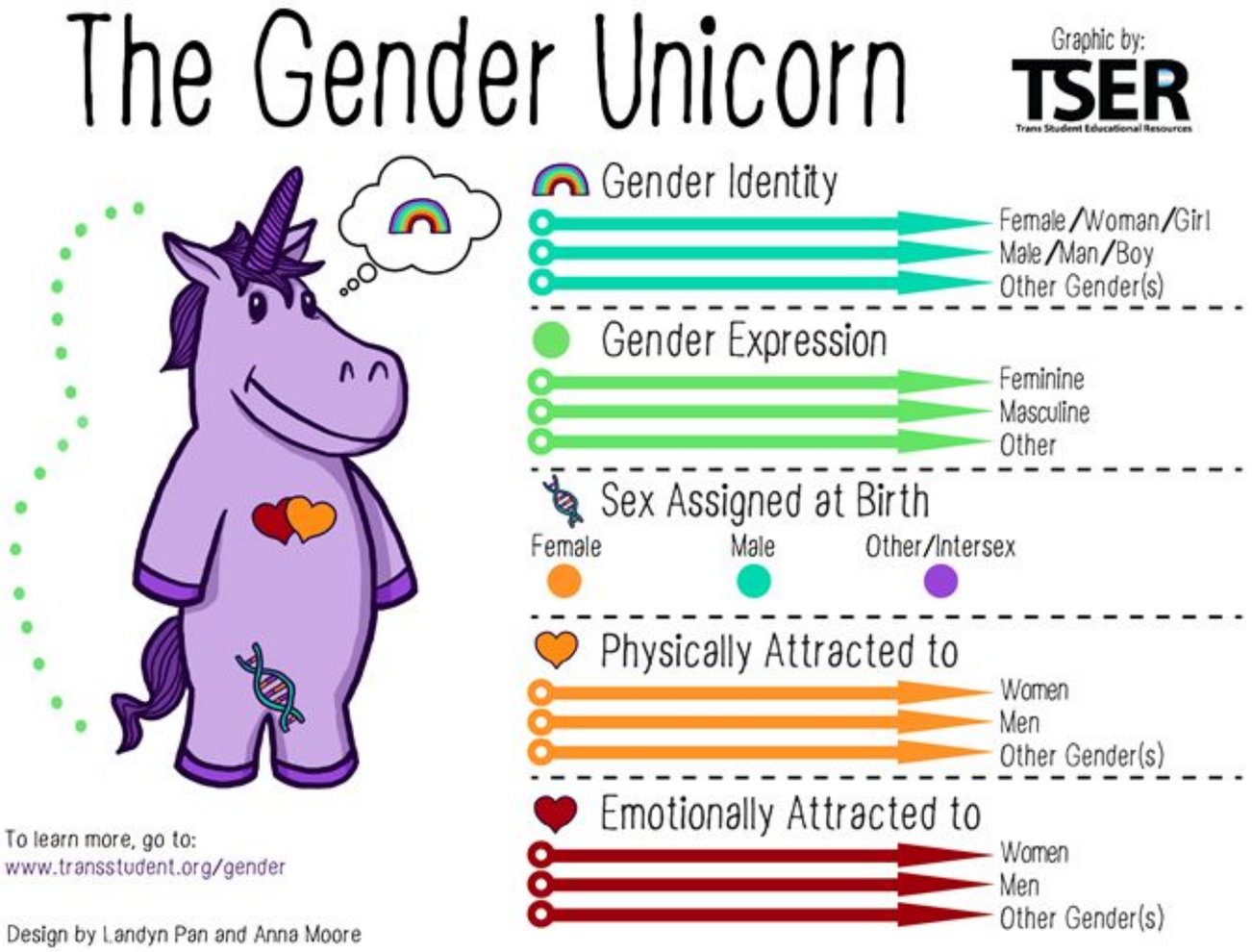
The Gender Unicorn



What is a pain point in your SBHC/school district/community?

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Radical Empathy

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Empathy Is Essential to Effect Change

Empathy is seeing the perspective of someone else.

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Radical Empathy is ACTIVE

active in our understanding of ourselves,
active in our understanding of others,
active in our sharing of other's feelings,
active in showing up authentically, and
caring like it's your child who needs the support

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Empathy Is Hard Right Now

It’s been a rough four years.

Compassion fatigue is real.

Take your time.

Have empathy for those you’re asking empathy of.

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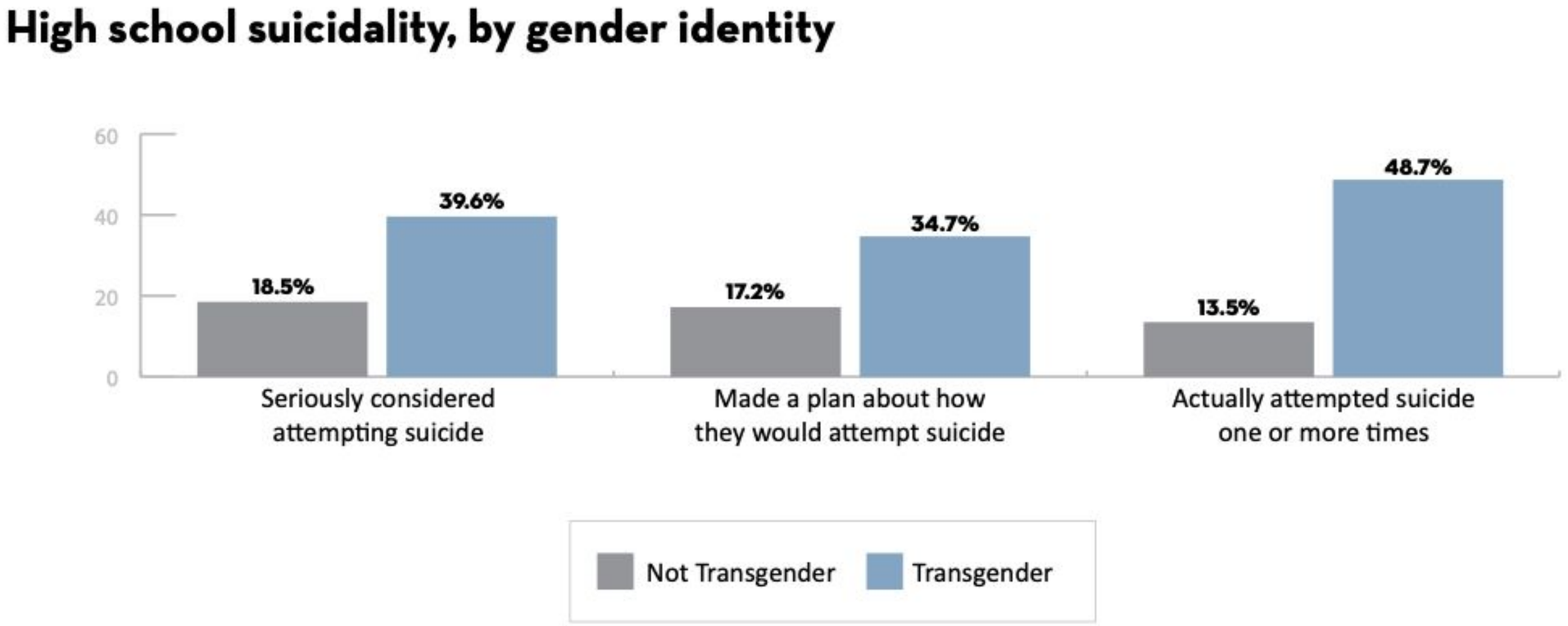
The Need



2019 DC Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Affirming our Children Improves Their Health

Transgender teens able to use their chosen names at school, home, work and with friends:

71 percent fewer symptoms of severe depression

34 percent decrease in reported thoughts of suicide

65 percent decrease in suicidal attempts.

Steven Russell, PhD University of Texas

A Window and a Mirror

“Children need windows and mirrors. They need mirrors in which they see themselves and windows through which they see the world.”

RUDINE SIMS BISHOP,

#ANTIRACISTBOOKCLUB

/Hanscom Schools Blog websites

When have you used empathy or storytelling to build your case?

Did it work?

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Sound Public Policy

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What is public policy?

A shared set of rules or guidelines for a community

–

laws, regulations, policies, procedures, protocols, etc

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Policy Authorizes Change

Existing policies describe your authority.

Creating policy allows you to set the boundary for change.

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Policy Is Hard Right Now

500+ anti-LGBTQ+ bills so far in 2024

Extreme bills are becoming law.

Use what you have.

Change what you can.

Source: ACLU website

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Where Policy Exists

FERPA and HIPAA

Title IX

Bostock v Clayton

State/local nondiscrimination law

Bullying prevention law/policy

School's nondiscrimination policy

SBHC's nondiscrimination policy

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Where Else Does Policy Exists

AAP News

AAP reaffirms gender-affirming care policy, authorizes systematic review of evidence to guide update

August 4, 2023

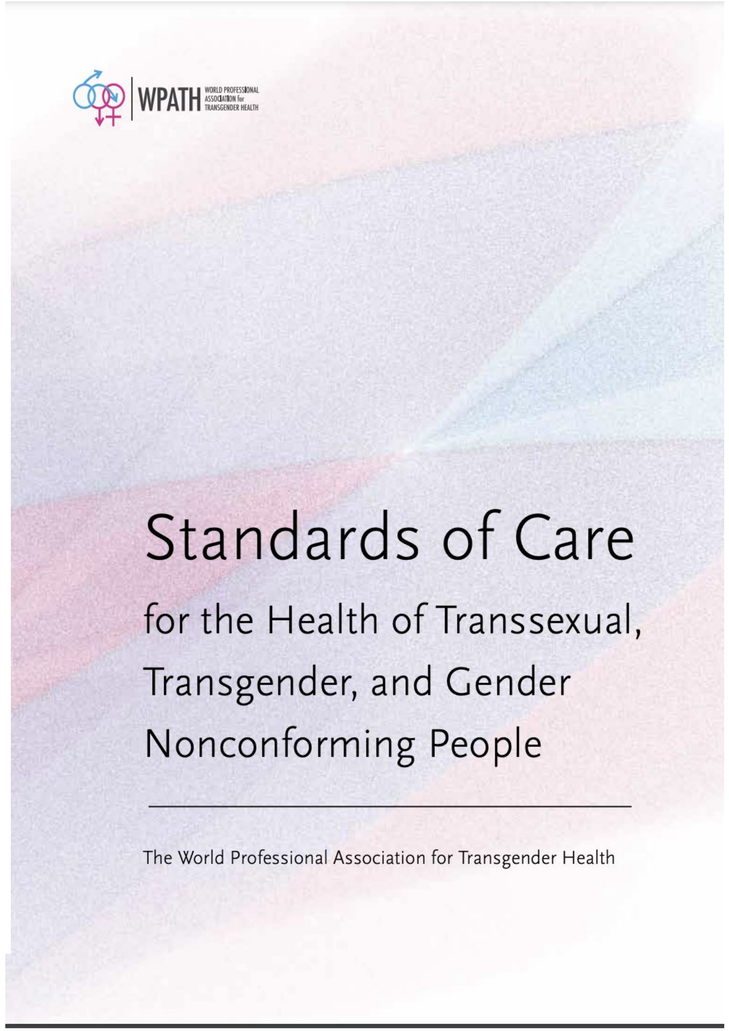
Alyson Sulaski Wyckoff, Associate Editor

Article type: News

Topics: Advocacy, Diversity, equity and inclusion

The AAP Board of Directors voted to reaffirm the 2018 AAP policy statement on gender-affirming care and authorized development of an expanded set of guidance for pediatricians based on a systematic review of the evidence.

An updated policy statement, plus companion clinical and technical reports, will reflect data and research on gender-affirming care since the original policy was released and offer updated guidance. The board recognized the value of additional detail with five more years of experience since the 2018 policy statement was issued.



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What do you have?
(What's working?)

What changes do you think you can make?

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Engage Communities
(of experts)

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Why Build a Community?

Two heads are better than one.

Buy in is essential.

You can’t do it alone.

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Who do you engage?

Those whose voice is important to the product.

Those whose decision is essential.

Those who will do the work.

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Communities (of Experts)

Students are experts in their own experiences.

SBHC staff are experts in how their centers are run.

School leaders are experts in how their school runs.

Title IX Coordinators are experts in gender equity.

General Counsels are experts in the law.

Families can experts in their own children's lives.

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Who else is an expert?

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Communities (of Experts)

They don’t have to be in the same room at the same time.

You may need to tier their engagement.

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Tiered Engagement

1. School/SBHC leader who wants change (that might be you)
2. Core Group (who will do the work)
3. Students (GSAs, interviews, core group)
4. Others (whose voice needs to be heard)

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Big Questions for the Core Group

What are we doing well?

Where is there room for growth?

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Let Your Core Group Do the Work

Draft the policy change.

Review, tear it up, repeat.

Ensure student voice.

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Do you have a community engagement process you already use?

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Student-Centered Solutions

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Enable Students to Thrive … to Learn

Put the students' needs to thrive at the center of the decision making process.

(NOT the institution)
(and watch out for adultism)

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Enable Students to Thrive … to Learn

Get there with empathy

And data (student surveys are great)

And student voices (story telling)

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What does it look like to prioritize the students' needs over the institution's?

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What Are Some Student-Centered Solutions?

Names and Pronouns

Dress Code

Privacy/Confidentiality

Staff Training

Bathrooms & Locker Rooms

Gender-Based Activities

Bullying and Harassment

What Are Some Patient-Centered Solutions?

Waiting room signage

Names/Pronouns

Forms/EHR

Inclusive Provider

All-gender restroom

SSHADESS/Exam

Staff Training

Confidentiality

Image from AAMC website

What are other patient-centered solutions for transgender and non-binary students?

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Strategies for Success

Education is key.

Don’t overlook the dark horses.

Allow for extra time.

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Low Hanging Fruit

Use model policies, and personalize them!

Start small, but definitely start!

Small culture shifts can lead to big swings!

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Finally (Actually, Another First Step)

Policy made and not implemented - did it really happen?

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Provider Resources

AAP

WPATH

National LGBTQ+ Health Education Center

Transline

Fenway Health

Preventing Trans Suicide

Image from AAMC website

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Questions?

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Let's Stay Connected!

www.dianabruce.com

1. Sign up for my newsletter on my website.
2. Follow me on LinkedIn: @dianakbruce
3. Reach out! dbruce@dianabruce.com

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