

Thriving in College

Navigating LGBTQ+ Resources and Support

LGBTQ+ young adults face challenges on U.S. campuses amid anti-LGBTQ+ laws and policy rollbacks. Yet many students thrive by building supportive communities, accessing affirming resources and leaning on inclusive policies. Thriving in college is possible when you foster resilience, connect with peers and choose environments where you feel safe and affirmed. This guide highlights ways LGBTQ+ students can navigate campus life and thrive.

Finding Community in College

Being out as LGBTQ+ in college may mean you are seeking and building community, interested in leading change at your college and exploring what it means for you to thrive. College is a great place to build relationships that can last a lifetime. Your campus may have activities, clubs, and events that bring people together through shared culture and identities, focus of study, and personal interests. Consider these activities:

- * Join LGBTQ+ student groups or peer support networks
- * Celebrate at cross-cultural events that reflect your identity
- * Attend LGBTQ+ pride events on campus and in the community
- * Go to panels and workshops to recognize important advocacy days
- * Visit your campus LGBTQ+ Resource Center
- * Locate your nearby LGBTQ+ community center via [CenterLink](#)

Mental Health, Self-Care and Safety

College can be stressful, and protecting your mental and physical well-being is essential. Taking care of yourself helps you stay grounded and thrive in your academic and personal life. Think about what makes you feel safe, balanced, and affirmed, and make those practices a priority. In addition to personal wellness practices, you can:

- * Create a personal safety plan that includes trusted contacts, safe spaces on campus and crisis resources.
- * Set healthy boundaries in social, academic, and online environments to protect your emotional well-being.
- * Seek affirming mental health support, including counselors trained in LGBTQ+ issues or peer support groups.

Affirming Living and Learning Spaces

Your living and learning environment should feel supportive. To build your supportive environment, you might:

- * Request gender-inclusive housing and, if possible, choose roommates who are LGBTQ+ affirming to ensure a supportive living environment.
- * Enroll in classes or programs that focus on social justice, queer studies, or are led by departments known for inclusive values.
- * Seek out faculty or academic advisors who have completed Safe Zone training or openly support LGBTQ+ students.

Thriving in College

Navigating LGBTQ+ Resources and Support

Set Academic and Personal Growth Goals

- * Clarify what thriving means to you, whether it's emotional well-being, academic performance, or building meaningful connections.
- * Set achievable short-term goals, such as connecting with one LGBTQ+ peer or enrolling in an affirming course.
- * Check in regularly on your progress with a trusted mentor, advisor, or accountability partner to stay aligned and supported.

Advocacy on Campus

New laws and policies may limit what your college can provide to LGBTQ+ students. Even with these restrictions, you can be part of efforts to make the campus safer and more inclusive. If you want to take action, you might:

- * Advocate for inclusive student policies.
- * Collaborate with faculty and staff to implement LGBTQ+ staff trainings.
- * Promote inclusive campus LGBTQ+ well-being resources.
- * Review and update referral lists for LGBTQ+-friendly local services.
- * Support your LGBTQ+ resource centers and advocate for them to remain open. Find an LGBTQ Campus Center through the [Consortium of Higher Education](#).
- * Engage in safe protest demonstrations: [HRC's Tips for Preparedness, Peaceful Protesting, and Safety](#).

Policy Literacy: Know Your Rights

Familiarize yourself with federal and state-level LGBTQ+ laws and policies.

- * [HRC Equality Hub](#): mobilizing for LGBTQ+ Rights
- * [HRC State Equality Index](#): a comprehensive state-by-state report
- * [ACLU Know Your Rights](#): up-to-date LGBTQ+ rights
- * [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#): federal student privacy

Know your campus policies and student protections. It is important to understand these policies and how they protect students based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression and affirm student identity:

- * Nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policies
- * Anti-bullying and anti-violence policies
- * Health and counseling services policies
- * Inclusive restroom and facility access



Thriving in College

Navigating LGBTQ+ Resources and Support

Transgender and Non-Binary Support

Transgender and nonbinary inclusive policies can directly shape your safety, belonging and access to education. Supportive policies can affirm your identity and protect you from discrimination. When you review your campus's policies, look for:

- * Chosen name and pronoun use: Your ability to use your name and pronouns on class rosters, IDs, email and learning platforms without unnecessary legal steps.
- * Gender marker updates: Clear processes for updating your gender in records.
- * Inclusive housing: Options for gender-inclusive or identity-affirming housing so you can live in a safe and supportive environment.
- * Health care access: Availability of gender-affirming services on campus or through referrals to providers in the community.
- * Nondiscrimination protections: Campus policies explicitly include gender identity and gender expression across all student experiences.
- * Learn more about trans-inclusive campus policies in the Consortium of Higher Education [campus policy guidance](#).

Moving Forward

LGBTQ+ students face heightened challenges due to anti-LGBTQ+ policies, but can thrive through resilience, strong networks, inclusive services, and affirming environments. Thriving means not just enduring adversity but actively building community, advocating for rights, and shaping inclusive spaces. LGBTQ+ students can succeed academically, emotionally, and professionally by combining personal resilience with the use of affirming resources, supportive networks, and active engagement in advocacy and community building.

If you're struggling, know that support is out there—don't hesitate to reach out to a trusted mental health hotline or resource.

[The Trevor Project](#): 24/7 crisis counseling & resources

[Trevor Lifeline](#): Chat with a crisis counselor at 1-866-488-7386

[Trevor Chat](#): 24/7 crisis counseling via online chat feature

[TrevorText](#): Chat with a crisis counselor by texting START to 678-678

[LGBT National Help Center](#): LGBTQ+ crisis support and resources

Youth Talkline (Under 25): 1-800-246-7743

[Support Chat](#): 1-on-1 online peer chat

[Rainbow Youth Project](#): Crisis line specifically for LGBTQ youth: 317-643-4888