

Mental Health for BIPOC LGBTQ2SIA+ Community

*This policy recommendation affects Tribes and formal Tribal Consultation must be done to honor Tribal Sovereignty and their unique political autonomy. Legislative Concepts and programs shall not be developed without proper Tribal engagement, according to the state statute [ORS 182.162-168](#) created from [Senate Bill 770](#) (2001). There are resources available for state-tribal government-to-government relations law, including the [Legislative Commission on Indian Services](#) (LCIS) and state agency Tribal Liaisons. Contact the OACO's Health Equity team to learn more: health.equity@oac.oregon.gov

Related: [Affordable, Culturally-Specific Counseling Services for BIPOC...](#), [BIPOC Traditional Health Workers](#)

Problem: Black, Indigenous, and other people of color within the LGBTQ2SIA+ community face significant barriers in accessing mental health services at the intersection of both identities. There are inadequate support systems and unsafe environments, particularly in schools and healthcare settings with limited funding for tailored mental health programs and underrepresentation within mental health professions.

Draft Solution: Community-Based Mental Health Programs

Develop and implement programs within community-based mental health programs (CMHP) that are specific to, and co-created with BIPOC LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals. These programs should include support groups, counseling services, and workshops on mental health topics that are relevant to the community's cultural and intersectional challenges. Integrate BIPOC-led mental health services and gender-inclusive healthcare policies into existing preventive health community programs.

Compelling Statistic and/or Quotes:

The following quotes in the section are sourced from [HEAL meetings agendas and notes coded public](#) community-driven feedback.

“Mental health for the LGBTQ community-because of what’s happening in the political scene right now. Need more support in that area. Not enough mental health providers available. Some people have tried for months. Kaiser was using out-of-network folks and still taking a long time.” Page 2

“Part of the issue is getting funding to go into that profession. People of color, people who are queer. Some of the access issues about education pathways.” Page 2

“People who are Queer need more support in the political side especially for youth. [Keeping] in mind the intersectionalities.” Page 24

“Young people are open about it, but sometimes others on the reservation don’t talk about it. We call it Two-Spirit. (Queer community members).” Page 25

“Not just in Oregon, but with other states as well, trans rights, queer rights, to keep people as safe as possible for as long as possible” 61

“School district- Queer students get bad reactions from school administrations. White ranchers kids have a business degree, but Latino kids feel that they have to work in the fields- it’s in the environment. People pay taxes, but school doesn’t serve them so they have to go somewhere else. Only one or two Latino teachers- racism is obvious, and gender too, it’s worse. Not feeling safe to go to the school [and] if we say anything- they dismiss it.” Pages 66-67

“Representation is most important, making sure we have representation not just across racial/ethnic groups, socio-economic status, ability, queer community” Page 86

- This community member suggested working with the African Family Holistic Health Organization. <https://www.afhho.org/>

“Culturally-specific prevention care monthly- transgender month, women’s month, each specific month. preventative health (i.e. check-ups, testing for XYZ)” Page 61

“80% of requests to school-based clinics were mental health related.”
Sen Janeen Sollman – Legislative champion for this recommendation

Potential Costs (Investment):

Community Source for Idea: [HEAL meetings agendas and notes_coded_public](#)

Potential State Agency Partners:

Oregon Health Authority - [Behavioral Health Division](#) (OHA BHD), [Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists \(OBLPCT\)](#), [Trauma Informed Oregon](#) (TIO – partnership with OHA & Portland State University)

Potential Community Partners:

[Portland Mental Health & Wellness](#), [Project LETS](#), Q Center, PFLAG (multiple chapters throughout state), [Oregon Family Support Network](#), GLSEN chapters, Bravery Center, Full Spectrum Therapy, Cascade AIDS Project (CAP), GLSEN Oregon, Lotus Rising, Lower Columbia Q Center, Oregon Safe Schools & Communities Coalition, Prism health, Rainbow Youth, Sankofa Collective Northwest, SMYRC, The Living Room (TLR), TransActive Gender Project, TransPonder, African Family Holistic Health Organization, [InReach](#)

Additional Information/Resources:

- National:
 - [H.Con.Res.134 - Expressing the sense of the Congress that there should be established a Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month to enhance public awareness of mental illness, especially within minority communities. 110th Congress \(2007-2008\)](#) (Federal resolution)

- [BIPOC Mental Health Month](#) (National)
- [A crisis call line run by Native youth, for Native youth](#)
- [CMS Behavioral Health Integration Services Fact Sheet](#)
- [BIPOC Mental Health](#)
- [Live Another Day](#) Resource Page
- [National Queer & Trans Therapists of Color Network](#)
- [Therapy for Queer People of Color](#)
 - There are no listings in Oregon
- [Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective](#)
 - [Oregon](#)
- Deconstructing the Mental Health System (DMHS)
 - [Oregon](#)
- [Questions to Help QTBIPOC Find Affirming Mental Health Providers](#)
- Oregon
 - [OHA Demographics and Practice](#)
 - [Behavioral Health Reports & Data](#) from OHA BHD
 - [Oregon Labor Force Participation Rates by County, 2023 – Oregon Labor Force Participation Rates by County, 2023 – QualityInfo](#)
 - [In Their Own Words: Analysis of Student Short Answers](#)
 - Students made several comments about mental health needs and lack of access to appropriate counseling services, including, “if you need to talk to someone there is no one to talk to.” Students also expressed concerns about the confidentiality of what they discuss in schools, with one criticizing a school’s reporting of a student mental health need and another saying “I feel like we should have a [therapist], because...we want someone [adult] we can trust that won't tell anyone else.”
 - Oregon’s [Comprehensive School Counseling Standards](#) lay out ODE’s vision for school counseling, which includes access for every student – districts and schools should review the resources available through these standards to ensure that student needs are met. Funding to expand

counseling and mental health staff may be available through the [Student Investment Account](#).

- Nationally, nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ2SIA+20 students missed at least one entire day of school in one month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. In Oregon, these students were three times as likely as other students to have stayed home from school because they were afraid for their safety.²² A lack of response from school staff in intervening when derogatory or harmful comments are made about LGBTQ2SIA+ students can contribute to or exacerbate feeling unsafe in school or a lack of belonging. [Promising practices to support LGBTQ2SIA+ students' sense of belonging](#) can be found below.
- [Oregon Classroom WISE : Mental Health](#)
- [Student Sense of Belonging in Schools: Predictive Factors](#)
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that school connectedness was a protective factor for high school students' mental health during the pandemic. Connection with a school adult decreased the prevalence of poor mental health, persistent feelings of sadness/hopelessness, and having seriously considered dying by suicide.
 - Counseling services have been expanded throughout multiple districts and schools. Schools report HSS/SIA funds have had a significant impact on their ability to serve students' and families' mental health and basic needs. Having certified counselors or social workers in each school provides students with access to supports and services and partnerships have been established with community mental health providers in instances when outside referrals to additional services are necessary. Smaller districts have partnered with their ESDs to share personnel if their funds do not support establishing a full-time position, such as a family support liaison who has established a Service Integration Team consisting of

district personnel, business owners, community organization leaders, and local hospital staff to support students and their families with basic needs. Although some schools report an increase in problematic behaviors during the 2022-23 school year, behavior support systems funded through HSS/SIA have helped school personnel to meet students where they are and provide the support they need. Adult staff have become more trauma aware. They recognize that many students have trauma-impacted lives and this alters their behavioral patterns. Knowing this information, and focusing on resiliency techniques, allows teachers to communicate with students in ways that maintain relationships and avoid unnecessary conflict. Counselors manage school [MTSS](#) systems and keep up to date with those students flying under the radar in many instances.

- Students who expressed a gender identity other than male or female were also more likely to report they experienced bullying than their male and female counterparts. Similarly, students who self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or a sexuality other than straight or heterosexual also reported higher rates of bullying.
 - Mental health and access to mental health supports and resources also impact students' sense of belonging.⁴⁸
- Districts
- support students' mental health by ensuring that there are systems in place to quickly identify students needing extra
 - support, providing clear messaging around the importance of mental health and the resources available to students and
 - families, and ensuring that every student has a trusting relationship with at least one school staff. The Student Investment
 - Account funds strategies aimed to support student mental and behavioral health.

- The ODE [Mental Health Guidance and Resources](#) site contains resources for [Students and Families](#); [Educators and School Staff](#); and [Administrators, School Counselors, and Other Mental Health Professionals](#).
 - The [Centering Health and Well-Being in Education](#) document is a resource and planning tool to center health in education strategies.
- Schools create more welcoming, supportive school climates when there is a culture of acceptance, which includes policies and interventions that affirm and support students' identities, as well as policies that address bullying and hate speech. In schools that implemented policies to specifically support non-binary, transgender and gender expansive students, these students were significantly less likely to be prevented from using their name or pronouns and using facilities aligned with their gender and were overall more likely to feel a part of their school community.
 - Additionally, LGBTQ2SIA+ students in schools with Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) and inclusive curriculum were less likely to feel unsafe regarding their sexual orientation, gender expression or gender. LGBTQ2SIA+ students in schools with a GSA “felt greater belonging to their school community, performed better academically in school and were more likely to plan on pursuing postsecondary education.” LGBTQ2SIA+ students in schools with inclusive curriculum were more likely to report that their classmates were accepting of gender-expansive people. When schools codify inclusive practices, and school staff feel more equipped to adequately support LGBTQ2SIA+ students, these students are more likely to have the supports needed to meaningfully engage in schools and with their education.

- [Supporting Gender Expansive Students: Guidance for Schools](#) offers guidance and tools for districts as they foster educational environments that are safe, free from discrimination, and aligned with state and federal laws.
- ODE offers the [Every Student Belongs \(ESB\) Guidance](#) which outlines the ESB rule and approaches to address harm.
- Racism and biased use of discipline impacts student mental health, creates difficulty in concentration and decision-making, and creates reduced feelings of closeness with people at school. The School Discipline, Bullying, Restraint and Seclusion page offers resources on reducing harmful and exclusionary practices in schools.
 - The [Basic FBA \(Functional Behavior Analysis\) to BIP \(Behavioral Intervention Plan\)](#) offers modules for educators and behavior specialists to build capacity in schools to support students and develop supportive school cultures. BIPs are about how adults can change behaviors to make the school environment more tailored to meet the needs of students.
- In the spring of 2023, OEII launched the [Engaging Equity: Equitable Mindsets, Practices, and Systems](#). Racial Equity Foundations, the first cluster of four modules within this professional learning series, was designed to help districts respond effectively to emerging needs of their school communities — while taking steps to mitigate some of the systemic disparities experienced by many students and families. Gaining skill in culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy and practice within instruction is all about meeting every student where they are — in their strengths and needs. The series equips educators to create positive connections and strengthen

community and learning conditions to improve student outcomes. Every student can benefit from these universal and targeted approaches.

- [Linn County will launch mobile mental health services - OPB](#)
- [Long-delayed Oregon program for people in mental distress nears reality | The Lund Report](#)
- [Mental health resources expand in rural Oregon](#)
- [A young man's death exposes holes in Oregon's mental health system](#)
- [Study: Oregonians with addiction and mental health problems face difficulty finding care • Oregon Capital Chronicle](#)
- [Kotek behavioral health presentation leaves questions unanswered | The Lund Report](#)
 - “An analysis [released earlier this year](#) concluded the state would need to spend \$500 million over at least five years to create the 3,000 behavioral health beds needed across the state to meet demands. A more [recent analysis](#) found the state needs to spend \$6.85 billion to have adequate services for substance use disorders.”
- Trauma Informed Oregon
 - [Racial Justice and Trauma Informed Care](#)
 - [TIO Events | Anti-Racism Practitioner's Guide Webinar](#)
 - [‘Death by a thousand cuts’: Microaggressions lead to worse mental health for Oregonians of color - OPB](#)
 - [Practice Guidelines for the Delivery of Trauma-Informed and GLBTQ Culturally-Competent Care](#)
 - Cross-Cultural Supervision
 - [Anti-Racist and Multicultural Practices in Clinical Supervision](#)
 - [Increasing supervisor savvy around culture, race, and identity](#)
 - [‘The Relentless Nature of Whiteness’: Black Psychologists' Experiences of Racial](#)

[Microaggressions in Cross-Cultural Supervision - Ebubedike - 2024 - Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy - Wiley Online Library](#)

- [Skills to Enhance the Efficacy of Anti-Racist Supervision | Journal of Social Work](#)
- [Appeals court hears arguments in Oregon lawsuit on DHS protections for LGBTQ+ kids](#)
- [Oregon beefs up help lines, support services for youth of color](#)
- [Deschutes County suicide rate climbs](#)
- [State of Black Oregon 2015](#)

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL
TRANSGENDER AND QUEER
EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL



*"Whether they're too visible or invisible, LGBT youth too often find themselves swept down a pipeline that typically begins with conflict in the home, continues at school with bullying, leads to suspension and expulsion and eventually the juvenile justice system."*⁹

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REROUTING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE TOWARD SUCCESS

For many Black students in Oregon, tough disciplinary actions like suspension or expulsion lead to poor academic outcomes:



Suspended or expelled students repeated their grade at least once.



Those disciplined 11 times or more had a 40 percent graduation rate.

These tough disciplinary policies can then lead to juvenile justice involvement:



Black youth

are only **3%** of the youth population in Oregon, but they comprise more than **11%** of those held in close custody in Oregon facilities. White peers represent **71%** of the youth population compared with **53%** of those in close custody.¹⁰

“Policies to Eliminate Racial Disparities in Education: A Literature Review,” released by PSU’s Center to Advance Racial Equity, is a robust compilation of research examining a set of system changes that will keep students of color engaged in the classroom.¹¹

Recent strides have been made to advance this work. Portland’s Parkrose and Centennial School districts have set target goals to reduce school exclusionary practices, using culturally specific strategies and interventions.

WHAT WE CAN DO:

- **Uphold state mandate:** Oregon’s legislature repealed “zero tolerance” policies in 2013, a first step toward eliminating poor and unfair discipline practices in schools. The goal was to increase education outcomes for all students, especially students of color. The Oregon Department of Education is responsible to uphold this mandate and ensure that school districts are taking concrete steps toward compliance.
- **School districts and boards of directors** must provide public leadership, funding and resources that directly meet the needs of students of color. Policy change can shift school culture by naming negative teacher perceptions, and unconscious or conscious bias, as the instigator of school exclusion.¹² Mandating racial equity strategies will best support teachers, school administrators, parents and students. This includes improving the hiring and retention of teachers of color.
- **Superintendents are responsible for** creating and overseeing multi-level change strategies that specifically outline effective pedagogy and training. Culturally Responsible Positive Behavioral Supports (CRPBIS) and Restorative Justice are two approaches proven to keep students in the classroom and improve achievement outcomes.

- Across the country, it's acknowledged that racial disparity exists within America's institutions. We see this especially in the number of Black children in the child welfare system and the sea of Black individuals in the correctional systems. For example, in Oregon, Black people make up nearly 10 percent of the prison population despite being only 2 percent of the overall population. Black children are removed from their families by child welfare agencies at seven times the rate of White children.
- Case Study 3, pg 40
 - Donelda says Black students in her school district are being disproportionately and unfairly disciplined compared with their White counterparts. Furthermore, many parents either don't know or feel too discouraged by the school system to take action.
 - Donelda says tapes of the district's school buses show similar behaviors between White and Black children. But White kids rarely get kicked off the bus. The students paying to use the city bus and walking to school are primarily low-income and children of color.

Contact Information of partners interested in developing this recommendation:

mika.ingram@oac.oregon.gov
health.equity@oac.oregon.gov

Compelling Data for presentation:

Queer Data Project Report ([Queer Data Project](#))

- According to data collected by Gallup between 2015-2017, LGBTQ people make up an estimated 5.6% of Oregon's adult population. Approximately 207,000 people in ages 13+ identify as LGBTQ in the state

Bias Crimes (2021) Report Per Senate Bill 577 ([Oregon Criminal Justice Commission](#), page 5)

- “The Oregon Criminal Victimization Survey (OCVS) 2021: 1.8% of people in Oregon are victims of bias crimes yearly. Rates are higher for Asian individuals (2.6%), Native Americans (3.4%), persons ages 18-24 (3.5%), and those who identify as non-binary (4.7%), gay (6.3%) or bisexual (4.2%).” ([Source](#), page 5)
- The Oregon Values and Beliefs Center (OVBC) surveys: 18% of BIPOC people in Oregon surveyed in 2021 personally experienced or witnessed a family member being a victim of a race-motivated assault, and a quarter of people in Oregon have experienced or witnessed race-motivated harassment (i.e., bias incident). About 20% of victims reported their experiences to law enforcement, 30 and Asian reporting rates are even lower.³¹ In a follow-up survey spanning October 2021 to January 2022, 8% of Asian individuals in Oregon experienced or witnessed a family member experiencing a race motivated assault, 19% personally experienced race-motivated threat of personal or property or witnessed this happening to a family member and 49% heard someone use racially degrading