



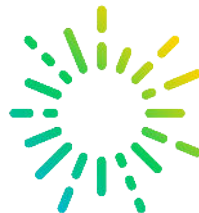
# Understanding & Supporting Gender Diverse Students

February 9, 2022

**Presented by**

Todd A. Savage, Ph.D, NCSP

School Psychologist



eLuma

**Presented by**

Dr. John Kelly

& George Dayton

# Agenda

|                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Introduction</b> | 5:00 pm EST (5 min)  |
| <b>Presentation</b> | 5:05 pm EST (40 min) |
| <b>Q&amp;A</b>      | 5:45 pm EST (10 min) |

# Who is eLuma?

- ▶ Dedicated to solving problems in the areas of special education and mental health
- ▶ Provides live services online with dedicated therapists
- ▶ Founded in 2011
- ▶ 300+ dedicated team members
- ▶ Over 29k+ students served in 36 states
- ▶ Follow us on Twitter @eLumaSolutions



# The Webinar

## A few facts:

- ▶ Part of our Webinar Series, “Creating Better Mental Health and Wellness in Our Schools.”
- ▶ Recording link, Slide Deck and Certificate of Attendance will be sent after the webinar.



The banner features a green header bar at the top. Below it, the text "eLuma Webinar Series" is centered. Underneath, the title "Creating Better Mental Health and Wellness in Our Schools" is displayed in a larger font. A row of five circular headshots of speakers is shown, each with their name and date below. The bottom section is a teal bar containing the eLuma logo, the dates "Jan 12 - Feb 9, 2022", and the text "Watch in-person or on-demand".

eLuma Webinar Series

Creating Better Mental Health and Wellness  
in Our Schools

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| John<br>Kelly<br>1/12   | Eric<br>Rossen<br>1/19  | Peter<br>Faustino<br>1/26   | Benjamin<br>Fernandez<br>2/2  | Todd A.<br>Savage<br>2/9  |

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# The Presenter

## Todd A. Savage, Ph.D, NCSP

- ▶ Professor in the school psychology program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF).
- ▶ Earned his doctorate from the University of Kentucky in 2002.
- ▶ Past president of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).
- ▶ Scholarly research interests include LGBTQ+ issues in education with an emphasis in gender diversity; cultural humility; social justice matters; and school safety and crisis prevention, preparedness, and intervention.



# Understanding and Supporting Gender Diverse Students

Todd A. Savage, Ph.D., NCSP  
Professor, University of Wisconsin-River Falls  
Pronouns: He/Him/His

eLuma Webinar Series  
February 9, 2022



# Session Objectives

To enhance participants' awareness of gender identity and gender diversity matters in schools;

To augment participants' knowledge base related to gender diversity as well as the impact of trauma and other factors on gender diverse students;

To highlight strategies participants can employ to support gender diverse students and to improve school climate as it pertains to gender diversity.



# NEA's Position

Teaching Strategies (<http://www.nea.org/tools/30420.htm>)

“NEA believes that a great public school is a fundamental right of every child - free from intimidation and harassment, and safe for all students, including those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered.”

“There is only one real issue for educators: We are responsible for our students' safety and education. We must ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to achieve and thrive.”



# Principal Professional Associations

- ❖ National Association of Elementary School Principals
  - <https://www.naesp.org/communicator-may-2016/new-resource-supporting-transgender-students>
- ❖ National Association of Secondary School Principals
  - <https://www.nassp.org/who-we-are/board-of-directors/position-statements/transgender-students?SSO=true>

# NASP's Position

## ❖ Position statements

### ➤ [Safe Schools for Transgender and Gender Diverse Students \(2014\)](#)

- “The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) supports efforts to ensure that schools are safe and inclusive learning environments for all students, family members, and school staff, including those who are transgender or gender diverse. NASP respects a person’s right to express gender identity, and the right to modify gender expression when necessary for individual well-being. In addition, NASP supports all students’ right to explore and question their gender identity....NASP acknowledges that having a transgender identity or being perceived as gender diverse are not disorders, and that efforts to change a person’s gender identity are ineffective, harmful, and discriminatory. NASP works to ensure that settings in which school psychologists work are safe and welcoming and provide equal opportunity to all persons regardless of actual or perceived characteristics, including gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and any other personal identity or distinguishing characteristics.”

### ➤ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth \(2011\)](#)

- “NASP believes that school psychologists are ethically obligated to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity for the development and expression of their personal identity in a school climate that is safe, accepting, and respectful of all persons and free from discrimination, harassment, violence, and abuse. To achieve this goal, education and advocacy must be used to reduce discrimination and harassment against LGBTQ youth by students and staff and promote positive social-emotional and educational development.”

# Additional Statements

❖ American School Counselor Association

❖ [ASCA: The School Counselor and Transgender/Gender-nonconforming Youth](#)

❖ School Social Work Association of America

[SSWAA Resolution Statement: School Social Work Supports the Educational and Civil Rights of Transgender Students](#)

❖ American School Nurses Association

[NASN: LGBTQ Students](#)

# Think/Pair/Share

- ❖ What is your understanding of what it means to identify as ‘transgender’ or ‘gender diverse’?
- ❖ How is ‘gender identity’ distinct from ‘sexual orientation?’
- ❖ When do individuals become aware of their gender identity?

# Definitions

## Sex

Think biology - Female/Male

## Gender

Social construction that is culturally-mediated -  
Girl/Woman, Boy/Man

## Gender Identity

Lived/defined by the individual

## Gender Expression

How people communicate their gender identity to others

## Gender Role

Culturally-mediated ways people live out gender -  
Feminine/Masculine

## Sexual Orientation

One's primary psychological, social, emotional, and erotic attractions to other people



# Definitions (continued)

## Cisgender

Gender identity matches the sex and gender one was assigned at birth

## Transgender

Gender identity does not match the sex and gender one was assigned at birth

Consistent, persistent, insistent

## Gender Diverse

Broader category that captures the range of gender identities



# Transgender Youth

- 80% of TG-identified adults knew they were 'different' before leaving elementary school
- Less than 4% of TG-identified persons realized they were TG after the age of 18
- Average age of trans-spectrum self-realization: 7.9
- Average age of learning the 'words' to communicate feelings: 15.5  
Consistent, Persistent, Insistent
- Transitions pre-puberty are social in-nature; some persons make seek medical transitions around puberty or later

# Gender Diversity and ASD

- ❖ Numerous anecdotal observations and emerging research are demonstrating an association between gender diversity and autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- ❖ Children and adolescents on the autism spectrum are seven (7) times more likely to be gender diverse
- ❖ Children and adolescents at appearing at gender clinics are 6-15 times more likely than their same-aged peers to have ASD

*Strang et al. (2017)*

# Mental Health Issues

- ❖ Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)
  - Gender dysphoria
- ❖ Higher rates of depression and anxiety; lower levels of self-esteem; high rates of substance use/abuse and risk-taking behaviors
- ❖ Suicide attempt rate
  - 41% of TG/GD adults report attempting suicide in their lifetime
  - 10-20% of LGB-identified persons
  - 3-5% of the general population

# School Issues

## Transphobia:

School Climate, Bullying, Biased Remarks, Harassment

- ❖ 43% report feeling unsafe at school because of the climate
- ❖ 40% report avoiding gender-specific spaces because of climate
- ❖ 77% report avoiding extra-curricular activities and 72% report avoiding school functions
- ❖ 17% of LGBTQ+ students changed schools because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable at school

[GLSEN 2019 National School Climate Survey](#)

# School Issues

## Transphobia:

School Climate, Bullying, Biased Remarks, Harassment

- ❖ 33% of LGBTQ+ students missed at least one entire day of school in the past month because of negative school climates and 9% missed four or more days in the past month
- ❖ 92% heard negative gender expression remarks
  - 53% heard these remarks frequently
- ❖ 87% heard negative trans-specific remarks
  - 44% heard these remarks frequently

[GLSEN 2019 National School Climate Survey](#)

# School Issues

## Transphobia:

School Climate, Bullying, Biased Remarks, Harassment

- ❖ 67% heard negative gender expression remarks from adults
- ❖ 57% verbally harassed at school
- ❖ 22% physically harassed at school
- ❖ 58% LGBTQ+ sexually harassed at school

# Effects of a Hostile Climate

- ❖ Three times more likely to have missed school in the past month
- ❖ Have lower GPAs than non-harassed peers
- ❖ Twice as likely to report not to pursue PSE
- ❖ Twice as likely to have been disciplined at school



# Legal & Policy Matters

## Title IX (Patsy Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act, 2002)

- U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights considers gender identity and gender expression as protected classes under Title IX
- The DOE-OCR and the U.S. DOJ have filed and won lawsuits in this regard

## FERPA

- According to Lambda Legal, students (ages 18+) and/or parents or legal guardians have the right to request a school change the name and gender marker on a student's records if they are incorrect, misleading, or violate one's privacy [34 C.F.R. section 99.7(a)(2)(ii)]

## Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

- Gender identity is not a disability in-and-of itself
- Focus on disability in the 504 plan, not on gender identity
- If the disability for which one is seeking accommodations centers on mental health sequelae associated with one's gender identity and that impacts one's education, it would be appropriate to develop a 504 plan in this situation



# Strategies



**Tier 3:**

Child Protective Services  
Mandated reporting  
Coordination of services  
Releases of information in both directions  
Referral to community-based medical services  
Referral to community-based mental health services

**Tier 2:**

Individual counseling  
Group counseling  
'Deeper dives' with those who pop up on screenings  
Family support initiatives  
Gender Transition Plan Development  
Gender Support Plan development  
School climate 'booster shots'

**Tier 1**

Access to mental health professionals and services  
Universal mental health education, depression and suicide awareness education, and screening  
Anti-bullying prevention and bystander education  
Access to curricular and instructional materials  
Access to gender-safe spaces  
Inclusive language  
Trauma-informed/trauma-sensitive schools  
Gatekeeper training  
Confidentiality and respect  
Policy development, revision, updates  
Establishment and maintenance of an overall positive school Climate

# Resources

[National Association of School Psychologists \(NASP\)](#)

[Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network \(GLSEN\)](#)

[Transparenthood \(Blog\)](#)

[TransActive Gender Center](#)

[Welcoming Schools](#)

[Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center](#)

[TransYouth Family Allies](#)

[Philadelphia Trans-Health Conference](#)

[TNET - PFLAG's Transgender Network](#)

# References

- Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. (2020). *The 2019 National Climate Survey*. New York: Author.
- Gender Spectrum. (2015). *Schools in transition: A guide for supporting transgender students in k-12 schools*. Oakland, CA: Author.
- Hyun, J. H., Raff, R., & Trier, B. (2012). *Helping transgender youth*. Presentation made at the annual meeting of the Washington School Counselors Association Meeting.
- Reeves, M. A., & Brock, S. E. (2011). *PREPaRE workshop 1: Crisis prevention & preparedness: Comprehensive school safety planning (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Savage, T. A., Springborg, H. L., & Lagerstrom, L. (2017). *District and school transgender and gender diverse readiness assessment form*. Minneapolis, MN: Authors.
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- Will, M. (2019, September 18). Teachers on front lines of making schools safe for transgender kids. *Education Week*, 39(5), 1 & 14.

# Questions?

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A group of diverse children, including a young boy with a missing tooth and a girl with a large afro, are smiling. The image is overlaid with a green and yellow gradient.

**Questions???**

# Next Webinars



**Laurie  
VanderPloeg**

## Addressing the Special Education Shortages

Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 5 pm EST

As the nation continues to face the Educator Shortage issue, former OSEP Director and lifelong special educator, Laurie VanderPloeg will discuss how to move your system from information to implementation! Through this presentation, strategies, innovation practices, exemplar models, funding flexibilities and supporting resources will be shared -- so that educators can collectively make a difference.

<https://www.elumatherapy.com/webinars/>

# Next Webinars



**Charles Barrett,  
PhD, NCSP**

## It's Always About the Children: Educators Bringing Their Whole Selves to the Profession\*

Wednesday, March 2, 2022 at 5 pm EST

Given the myriad challenges facing all educators—more than ever before, everyone needs encouragement. Using personal experiences as a child with a stutter, and anecdotes that inform his teaching and clinical practice, Dr. Charles Barrett will inspire and motivate attendees to view their respective roles serving children through the lens of purpose, which leads to passion, and ultimately unlocks the potential of young people.

\*This is part of our Webinar Series, "Creating Better Mental Health and Wellness in Our Schools." You will receive an email with the watch link as the webinar gets closer.

# Thank You

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