

# Online Anti-Bullying Training to Help LGBTQ Students

**Wilmington** – A 2011 Delaware school based survey indicates that 14% of 8th graders and 20% of 11th graders felt they were bullied on school property in the past 12 months. The risk for being bullied is even higher for students who identify themselves, or are perceived to be Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender or Questioning (LGBTQ).

That's why the Children's Department's Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (PBHS) is making the Kognito Step In, Speak Up Anti Bullying Training available free to any educator in the State. Step In, Speak up is an online interactive training program to empower educators and other school-or community-based staff to effectively curtail harassment and bullying, identify challenges faced by LGBTQ students, and connect them with additional local resources. The goal is to reduce the high rates of psychological distress, including suicide attempts, among LGBTQ middle and high school students. The Step In, Speak up training can be accessed at <http://www.kognito.com/delaware>.

"October seemed like the perfect time to launch this training, since it is also National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month," said Jennifer Ranji, Secretary for the Delaware Children's Department. "We're pleased to be able to provide educators with resources like this one to help vulnerable children."

"Bullying damages the physical, social, and emotional well-being of its victim and creates a climate of fear, callousness, and disrespect," according to Susan Cycyk, Director for PBHS. "Offering trainings such as this, along with support services in elementary and middle schools, help us fulfill our vision of 'resilient children and families

living in supportive communities'."

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. It includes threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. It can be physical, social, or online (cyber) in nature.

Children may be bullied for: Being over/under weight, wearing glasses, being new to school, being unable to afford what's considered "cool"; being considered weak and/or unable to defend themselves; having low self-esteem or becoming depressed; having few friends and are less popular than others. Children who are bullied are at greater risk for substance abuse, suicide attempts, and poor academic performance.

Children who are more likely to bully others are typically those who: Are overly concerned about their popularity, have social power, like to dominate or be in charge; have less parental involvement or have issues at home; have difficulty following rules; view violence in a positive way.

Research has shown that when adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior this can stop bullying behavior over time. During the act of bullying, adults are advised to: intervene immediately, separate the kids involved, make sure everyone is safe, meet any immediate medical or mental health needs, and stay calm.

There are several resources adults and young people alike can take advantage of. Parents concerned about bullying should talk directly with their child's teacher and/or school administrator. Additionally, bullying can be reported to the Department of Justice's School Crimes and Bullying Hotline, 1-800-220-5414. Youth who need someone to talk to can reach out locally to Delaware's Contact Lifeline 1-800-262-9800 or

the National Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800273-TALK (8255).

The Children's Department provides services to children who have been abused, neglected, are dependent, have mental health or substance problems, have been adjudicated delinquent by the Courts, as well as prevention services targeted toward all youth. For more information, please visit [www.kids.delaware.gov](http://www.kids.delaware.gov).