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Topic: An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Youth Mental Health First Aid in Texas Teachers.

Project Summary

This project will explore whether the Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) curriculum appropriately addresses the unique cultural and systemic factors affecting LGBTQ+ adolescents in Texas schools and communities. Sexual minority adolescents face mental health disparities relative to heterosexual adolescents, and in recent studies, have been found to account for an alarmingly increasing proportion of all adolescent suicide attempts (Raifman et al., 2020). The harassment of sexual minority students by their peers is often overlooked by educators, partially due to bias for heterosexuality (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2011). While peer-to-peer bullying, a form of lateral violence, has dire consequences, it is important to recognize discrimination is also a form of bullying and that many sexual minority adolescents are victims of vertical violence from teachers and school officials. School administrators and other policymakers may focus more on sexual minority adolescents for punishment for their sexual behaviors or feel less inclined to consider extenuating circumstances such as self-defense as a mitigating factor (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2011). Therefore, this unique project will examine the mental health literacy, mental health self-efficacy, and measure bias of teachers in Texas.