

# Step In **Speak Up!**

Online Training for K-12 School Personnel to Support LGBTQ Youth

## OVERVIEW

30-minute online, interactive training course

Includes role-play conversations with virtual students

Listed in the SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry ([sprc.org](http://sprc.org))

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) youth are at higher risk than their non-LGBTQ peers of being verbally or physically harassed or assaulted with negative consequences for their mental and physical health as well as their academic achievement.

*Step In, Speak Up!* is a 30-minute online interactive training program that helps youth-serving adults understand the challenges that LGBTQ youth face and gives them a chance to practice techniques for creating a safer and more supportive environment, including 1) curtailing instances of harassment and use of homophobic language, and 2) connecting with a student who has been the target of harassment.

*Step In, Speak Up!* is the result of a collaboration between Kognito Interactive and The Trevor Project.

**View Demo at:** [www.kognito.com/products/stepin](http://www.kognito.com/products/stepin)



## INSTITUTIONAL BENEFITS

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- ✔ Increases staff confidence and likelihood to intervene in harassment, social isolation, and bullying when it is observed.
- ✔ Increases school connectedness and enhances school climate and safety.
- ✔ Reduces educators' anxiety about approaching and dealing with non-gender-conforming students.
- ✔ Maintains a record of who has taken the training for compliance and legal purposes.

## OUR PARTNER

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Kognito's partner for *Step In, Speak Up!*, The Trevor Project, is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) young people ages 13-24. Every day, The Trevor Project saves young lives through its accredited, free and confidential phone, instant message and text messaging crisis intervention services. A leader and innovator in suicide prevention, The Trevor Project offers the largest safe social networking community for LGBTQ youth, best practice suicide prevention educational trainings, resources for youth and adults, and advocacy initiatives.

Learn more at [TheTrevorProject.org](http://TheTrevorProject.org).

## CLIENTS

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*Step In, Speak Up!* has been piloted in Arizona, New York and Washington State. It has recently been adopted for statewide use in:

**Illinois** - part of the Illinois Department of Public Health's Illinois Youth Suicide Prevention Program, funded by a federal State Youth Suicide Prevention grant from SAMHSA.

**Maryland** - part of a statewide program administered by the University of Maryland on behalf of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

**Delaware** - offered statewide by the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Families.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

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Kognito and The Trevor Project are currently collaborating on a national study to examine the effectiveness of the training to change attitudes, skills, and actual behaviors of those who complete the training. Please contact us if you are interested to learn more about this study.

In addition, this course shares a learning approach with 12 similar Kognito training simulations that have undergone extensive evaluation to examine their impact on skills, attitudes and actual behaviors of the learners. Three of these simulations are listed in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP), making them the first and only simulations included in this prestigious registry.

View research study results at [kognito.com/efficacy](http://kognito.com/efficacy).

## COURSE

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*Step In, Speak Up!* is a 30-minute online, interactive training simulation that helps adults understand the challenges that LGBTQ students face and gives them the opportunity to practice techniques for creating a supportive environment by engaging in a series of virtual role-play scenarios with virtual students. School personnel and other youth-serving adults who complete the training will know how to:

- Recognize the needs and obstacles of high-risk student populations such as LGBTQ students
- Promote a “safe space” for all students with effective classroom management techniques
- Initiate a conversation with a student about sensitive topics, such as bullying
- Know when and how to ask a student if they are thinking about suicide

## WALKTHROUGH

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During the training, users assume the role of a teacher and engage in role-play conversation with fully-animated, emotionally-responsive virtual students. In this process, they learn how to create a safe and respectful environment for all students. Users practice confronting biased language, responding to an incident of harassment, and checking in with a student who has been the target of harassment. During and after the conversations, users receive personalized feedback based on their performance.

Throughout the course, learners have access to additional resources, including a link where they can access a listing of local and national LGBTQ, mental health and crisis resources; and a printable course summary that they can refer to once they have completed the training.

The course unfolds in five separate modules; it can be taken in one or multiple sittings.

### 1

#### The Library

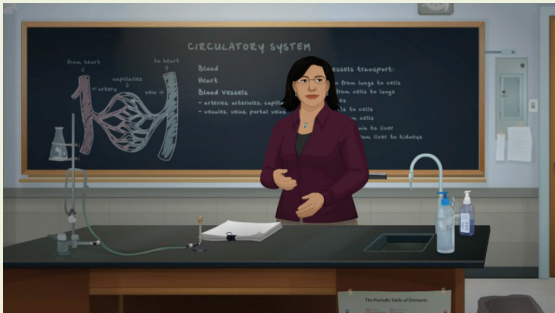


Snapshot of virtual library with virtual student guides. The guides explain what it's like to be “different” and how educators can help.

Users meet three students – Dani, Tyler, and Casey – who explain the difficulties and dangers LGBTQ students face, such as physical and verbal harassment, absenteeism, homelessness and thoughts of suicide. They guide the user through the course and demonstrate how to best support students in need.

## 2

### Preventing Harassment



Users assume the role of Ms. Yazzie, a teacher who observes two separate incidents where students insult each other using the terms “fag” and “gay”. The user must decide how Ms. Yazzie should handle the situation, using the navigation menu to choose what topics to bring up and which classroom management tactics to employ.

## 3

### Reaching Out

Finally, Ms. Yazzie must speak directly to Zach, a student who’s been harassed by another student. Her goal is to express her concern, and, if he is at risk of self-harm, refer him to counseling resources.

The user controls the conversation by choosing which topic to discuss and what specific things to say or ask. The available topics change each time the user makes a new decision.



Users “talk” to Zach by choosing what to say

Throughout the conversation, users receive encouragement and constructive criticism on their decisions to reinforce best practices. As the conversation unfolds, users may decide, based on their own comfort with the topic, whether or not to refer the student to other staff. The coaches help the user integrate best practice communication techniques and educate about issues such as confidentiality and disclosure.

## 4

### Conclusion



Student Guides provide tips for creating a safer learning environment

Upon concluding the conversation module with Zach, the student guides summarize the most important learning points and provide additional guidance on what to do with a student who is at immediate risk for suicide. They also highlight additional tips and resources included in the course for creating a safe and supportive environment for students. Finally, learners are asked to complete a short post-training survey before printing their personalized certificate of completion.

## PROGRAM FEATURES

### Online, 24/7 Accessibility

The course is accessible 24/7 from any computer with Internet access. Learners can complete the training in multiple sittings.

### Implementation Manual and Outreach Materials

Clients receive a manual with best practices for promoting the course to learners. The manual includes electronic copies of outreach templates such as: email language to learners, a customizable flyer, presentation slides, and a video trailer about the program.

### Customizable Local Resources Web Page

The course includes a customizable web page with information on local resources for supporting LGBTQ students.

### Certificate of Completion

Users can print/download a personalized certificate upon course completion.

### Role-Play Conversation with "Virtual Humans"

The simulation is designed as a hands-on practice environment where users learn by engaging in a series of role-play conversations with fully-animated and emotionally-responsive virtual students.

### Usage Reports

The course records the names and email addresses of users and tracks their progress throughout the course. Clients can access and download this usage data at anytime via a secure link.

### Assessment

The course can be configured to include online pre, post, and 3-month follow-up surveys to assess longitudinal changes in skills, attitudes, and behavior.

### Hosting and Technical Support

The course is hosted on Kognito's secure web server. Kognito provides technical support to all users.





## PRICING

Agencies, schools, districts and other institutions can purchase a license to make the *Step In, Speak Up!* program available to educators and other youth-serving adults. The cost of the license depends on the size of the institution or coverage area and the length of time the training will be available to learners (e.g., 1 year). The licensing fee includes hosting, technical support, usage reports, assessment, customized local resources page, implementation manual, outreach materials and client support from a Kognito account manager. Please contact us at 212-675-9234 or [info@kognito.com](mailto:info@kognito.com) for a quote.

Individuals interested in buying the course for personal use can do so via our online store at [www.kognito.com/store](http://www.kognito.com/store).

A portion of the revenue for this program is donated to The Trevor Project to support its charitable mission.

## CONTACT KOGNITO

Please contact us with questions or to receive a quote

[info@kognito.com](mailto:info@kognito.com)  
(212) 675-9234

If you or someone you know is in crisis or thinking about suicide, call the Trevor Lifeline (866-488-7386). It's free, confidential and available 24/7.

## RELATED PROGRAMS



Kognito collaborated with The Trevor Project and Campus Pride to create versions of this course for faculty, staff, and students in higher education institutions called *LGBTQ on Campus*. In addition, Kognito offers general suicide prevention trainings for middle school and high school educators that have been adopted for statewide use in over 10 states.

To learn more about this and other Kognito programs visit: [www.kognito.com](http://www.kognito.com)