

opening sounds of a crowd talking and bustling about
“crowd sounds” fade out as “coniferous forest” track fades in

narrator: There’s a deficit in education around the world that is constantly letting down vulnerable students; those students are transgender or gender non-conforming, and they make up at least 1.6 million people in the American population over the age of 13 alone according to the Williams Institute at UCLA. Of those 1.6 million, 18% are between the ages of 13 and 17, and that’s just those who self-report. My name is Beau, and I am one of those 1.6 million; I personally felt the lack of representation in my academic upbringing, and throughout my life, I have connected with many of my fellow trans siblings who endured the same.

narrator: So, why is this important? Well, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, queer students are 4 times more likely to attempt or commit suicide than their cisgender, heterosexual peers and consistently report higher rates of bullying and violent harassment in school settings. Predictably, this often leads to a disengagement or aversion to school— leaving some of our most vulnerable students at an even more vulnerable disadvantage. Hope isn’t lost, however, because research has found some common-sense and easy-to-enact solutions that can be implemented with little cost to schools. The Journal of School Psychology reports that “transgender youth who can identify at least one supportive adult at school have better social-emotional outcomes”. I was curious what difference, if any, this would have made for the people in my life...

interviewee 1: [response to the following questions: “were there transgender adults or visible allies in your schools growing up? how would the presence of [more of] those individuals have improved your experience as a young trans student?”]

track “good night” fades in, to background

narrator: We know that we need to have representation reflected in the school’s staff, but what about in the material? Most courses, whether they be in college, high school, or

younger, don't include any readings on the trans experience. What few do include LGBTQ+ materials rely on sources that are largely cisgender. The stories of queer and trans people should be told by queer and trans people. The journal *Nurse Education Today* found that "Nursing education that includes LGBTQ+ content in its curriculum helps nurses provide better care in the field." Unsurprisingly, having inclusive content about the future patients they might encounter allowed the nurses in this study to go on and have better bedside manners in practice. They entered the medical world with an equal familiarity with trans and cis bodies and with the unique intricacies of both queer and straight relationships. Because of this, they were able to interact with queer patients more holistically and without the judgment or discrimination trans people face when visiting their practitioner's office.

interviewee 2: [response to the following questions: "in your school experience, did you ever encounter reading material on the LGBTQ+ community? how would you have benefitted from a more accurate portrayal of transgender people and queer relationships in your educational career?"]

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narrator: We've seen that there are obvious benefits to having LGBTQ+ people working with students in schools, just as there are very practical advantages to including queer and trans perspectives in course curricula. But these are only two parts of a holistic classroom solution; the addition and combination of both in educational environments is where we see the longest-lasting and most impactful results in students' lives. A study conducted by the journal *English in Australia* revealed that "inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in the classroom helps combat homophobic and transphobic practices." Researchers used surveys and interviews to assess how pre-service teachers felt about interacting with LGBTQ+ curricula in their own education, and how that would affect the lesson plans and classroom environments they created once they became fully-fledged educators. Interestingly, the study concluded that pre-service teachers who were exposed to pedagogy that included comprehensive LGBTQ+ perspectives were more comfortable, and thus more likely, to plan a curriculum that

contained the same representation. These future teachers were more motivated and confident in their ability to “increase inclusion, reduce bullying, promote safe environments in schools, and adhere to the social justice tenants of education.”

interviewee 3: [response to the following questions: “do you feel that the college education you and your peers received prepared you for working with LGBTQ+ kids in educational settings? what effect has that had on how you and your peers teach classes?”]

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narrator: So what can we do? Some of the most effective strategies involve calling your local school district and city representatives, as a constituent, and asking them to introduce legislation that would improve LGBTQ+ visibility in educational settings. Another tactic is the utilization of materials that directly call for a change, such as posters hung up around campuses or pamphlets handed out near school district offices; if you feel your voice isn’t being heard, there is always the option to demonstrate through protests and rallies. Making your voice heard today can help make a positive change in the lives of students tomorrow!

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