

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Step In, Speak Up Professional Development

Dear School Administrator,

Thank you for implementing *Step In, Speak Up* into your professional development program! This online simulation provides school staff with a better understanding of the challenges some LGBTQ students face and skills and virtual practice addressing harassment and offering support. This can make a lifetime of difference, not only for students, but for their families and communities, as well.

Below are a few ways you can promote and use this program.

Get the word out!

Distribute flyers and email your staff to introduce and promote the program. An email template and program flyer are included in this packet.

Check staff progress.

Keep track of who has completed the program, and send reminder emails to encourage full participation.

Schedule a follow-up workshop.

Schedule a workshop where staff can discuss their reactions and takeaways to the program, role play similar scenarios with each other, and learn the process for referral at your school. This packet contains a workshop facilitator's guide as well as handouts for participants.

Thank you for all you do to support the health and wellbeing of your students!

Sincerely,

The Kognito Team



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About Kognito

At Kognito, we envision a world where all individuals and communities harness the power of conversation to change lives. Kognito's mission is to combine the science of learning, the art of conversation, and the power of virtual-human simulations to empower educators and students with the tools they need to build safe and supportive school cultures. Our model of change is built on the input of thousands of educators and students from across the country.

The Kognito Model

Every day, conversations take place that have the potential to improve social, emotional, and physical health. Unfortunately, these conversations often suffer in quality and effectiveness. Practice-based experiential learning can build the skill and confidence needed to effectively approach these important conversations.

The Kognito model combines evidence-based SEL skills, learning science, and simulated practice with virtual humans to create a learning experience that leads to improved confidence and behavior change. Learners immerse in simulated real-life scenarios, engaging in conversations with virtual humans and receiving feedback from a virtual coach. This model ensures a more reflective and transformational experience.

At Kognito we believe that

- 01. Adults learn best when they *do*.** Kognito's simulations provide key knowledge on conversation and adult SEL skills, followed by practice opportunities. Active experimentation involved in the simulations turns abstract learning concrete.
- 02. Adult learners need opportunities for critical reflection.** The conversations provide coaching and other opportunities for learners to reflect on how they are doing and what steps they can take to improve. These critical reflection points allow for more transformative-learning moments and deeper understanding of the communication strategies taught.
- 03. Adult learning that evokes an emotional response creates a powerful learning experience that is not easily forgotten.** The scenarios are designed to provide these types of "aha" moments by revealing the cause-and-effect relationship between the learners communication strategies and the responses they elicit. The learner is then able to relate their experience in the simulation to past experiences and impart new meaning on previous interactions.

Steps for Successful Roll-Out

Step 1

Meet with your mental health staff to ensure the school's referral process is defined.

In a recent survey, educators ranked lack of knowledge around their school's policies and referral process as the #1 barrier to connecting students with support. If your teachers do not already have a copy of your policy and process, consider creating a reference document. Also, ensure your school's mental health staff are aware of the upcoming training, as they will most likely receive an increase in questions and referrals.

Note: *If your school is going through a period of remote learning, it is critical to adapt referral procedures for at-risk students to assure telehealth options are available to connect students/families with school counselors and mental-health professionals.*

Step 2

Plan how you will implement the program at your school.

Step In, Speak Up can be used as a standalone training, or it can be rolled out in conjunction with an online or face-to-face workshop where staff delve deeper into the issues and skills learned. The blended-learning option is ideal, as it reinforces learning and provides staff a chance to discuss school-specific policies and resources.

Implementation Options:

- 01.** Staff complete the simulation only
 - 02.** Staff complete the simulation, then discuss in a workshop session (recommended)
 - 03.** Staff complete the simulation during a larger workshop, with before and after discussion
-

Step 3

Have your technical contact review the hardware and software requirements.

Most schools will easily meet the minimum requirements, but if you have any questions, please contact the Kognito support team at 866-923-8632 or support@kognito.com.

Steps for Successful Roll-Out



Step
4

Email staff to let them know about the training and provide details on when and how to take the simulation.

We have provided an email template for getting the word out. Personalize these communications to fit with your goals and school voice. Program flyers are also included.



Step
5

Designate someone to lead the workshop discussion.

Designate someone to lead the workshop discussion, as well as a point person for those who are unable to attend. Kognito's Workshop Facilitator's Guide provides step-by-step instructions for leading a valuable workshop discussion. Again, this step is optional, as the simulation can be used as a standalone learning experience.

Email Template

Below is sample content you can use for emails, newsletters, or posts on your school website. Request the principal or school counselor send the email to emphasize the simulation's importance to school goals and student outcomes, and customize the language to fit your needs.

Subject: New PD Resource for Improving School Climate and Safety

Dear {Name},

We have a no-bullying policy at our school. While this is strictly enforced, some students may experience bullying situations that we may not immediately be aware of. These social pressures, both at school and online, can lead to emotional distress, depression, anxiety, and even thoughts of suicide. These conditions may also compromise students' academic achievements affecting their ability to stay in school. According to a recent CDC report, lesbian, gay and bisexual students are two to three times more likely to be bullied than non-LGBTQ peers, are more likely to miss school, and are almost five times as likely to attempt suicide.

At {School or District Name} it is our goal to create a safe environment for all of our students. To help achieve this goal, I am encouraging you to participate in an online simulation focused on learning about the challenges that some LGBTQ students face and how you can address harassment and offer support. Kognito's **Step In, Speak Up!** is made available at no cost by {Sponsor Organization}.

{Add paragraph with details on PD time or designated time that will be set aside to complete the simulation}

A welcoming school climate is essential for student success. As educators, we play an important role in ensuring that all of our students have a safe environment to learn and thrive.


About Step In, Speak Up!

- Available online 24/7 and can be completed in multiple settings
- Helps educators recognize the specific challenges of high-risk student populations such as LGBTQ students
- Includes role-play conversations with at-risk students (both a classroom discussion and a one-on-one talk)
- Is evidence-based learning, listed in the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices
- Created in collaboration with The Trevor Project

Please click the following link to open an account and take the simulation: {link and access instructions}

Our goal is 100% participation. If you have any questions about the simulation or how to refer students for counseling support, please don't hesitate to contact me or {Counselor Name if applicable} at {name@email.edu}.

Sincerely,
{Signature}



ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT AN LGBTQ STUDENT?

Life can be stressful, even for kids. Build the confidence to talk with a student who you're concerned about.

Step In, Speak Up!

Recognize when a student is in distress, initiate a conversation with a student about your concerns, and connect parents and students to support services.

Accredited for 1.0 ANCC CNE contact hours



TO ACCESS THIS SIMULATION:

1. Visit kognitocampus.com
2. Log in or create a new account. Use Enrollment Key:
3. Launch *Step In, Speak Up!*

STEP IN, SPEAK UP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Workshop Facilitator Guide

Print the following pages and use as a guide for leading the workshop. A PDF of the following pages can also be downloaded at:

https://kognito.com/ares_workshop_facilitators_guide

Workshop Facilitator Guide

Facilitator Prep time: 2-3 hours

Workshop Runtime: 1.5-2.5 hours

Preparation

- ✓ Determine how to best implement the training at your school:
 - Decision 1:** Will staff complete the simulation prior to coming to the workshop?
 - We recommend staff complete the simulation on their own and then meet for a 1.5 hour workshop.
 - Alternatively, staff can take the simulation as part of the workshop (on separate computers). Then they rejoin the group for discussion. This would be a 2.5 hour training.
 - Decision 2:** Will the workshop be face-to-face or online?
 - Tips for online workshops:
 - Possible software: Zoom, Google Hangouts, WebEx, or Skype
 - The “breakout rooms” in Zoom allow participants to partner for role plays and discussion.
 - Share your screen to show PowerPoint slides.
 - Assign a co-host to help you manage the workshop.
 - Complete a recording of the online workshop and make it available for those who cannot attend.
- ✓ Review *Step In, Speak Up* and the full Workshop Facilitator’s Guide and corresponding PowerPoint. Customize the PowerPoint to include your school or district’s logo and any mission- or vision-specific details. If you will have less than 2.5 hours for your workshop, customize it to suit your time constraints.
- ✓ Discuss your school’s referral process with the school leader, counselor, and/or mental-health team. Customize slides 18-19 (referral process and local resources) and be ready to present this information to the group. *Be sure to include both the traditional at-school referral process as well as the process for referral and connection if students are learning from home. If you will provide mental health services via telehealth, explain that process.*
- ✓ Cue up the corresponding PowerPoint presentation and make sure you have adequate means to present it to your participants. If needed, you can adjust the length of time of your workshop by adding/removing discussion items or activities.
- ✓ Print or email the workshop handouts.
 - Note-taking guide (if participants will take the simulation during the workshop)
 - One-page summary
 - Local Resources page from the simulation

Sample Planning Timeline

- **60 Days Prior:** Confirm simulation training date and location
- **45 Days Prior:** Ensure account access for district/school staff
- **30 Days Prior (if staff will take simulation prior to workshop):** Confirm registration and that attendees have created their accounts
- **5 Days Prior:** Send reminder to staff

Workshop Flow

Welcome & Hook Activity

10 min

Slide 1: Welcome

- Welcome attendees and thank them for coming.

Slide 2: Your role *[customize]*

- Introduce yourself and (if necessary) your role within the school or district.
- Share contact information. Encourage attendees to reach out to you with questions or follow up after the training.

Slide 3: Workshop overview *[customize this slide if participants will not take the simulation during the workshop]*

- Discuss what participants will learn in the workshop.

Slide 4: Group norms *[customize as necessary]*

- Sample norms: actively participate, be respectful, do not share names or identifying information of students or staff, seek help if you would like to discuss personal mental-health issues, take a break if any of the material is triggering, reach out to me at the end if you are concerned about a student.

Slide 5: Hook activity (5 min)

- Ask attendees to use a scrap piece of paper to describe the image on the slide, using the acronym AEIOU. (1 min)

A
E
I
O
U

Adjective: A word to describe the image.

Emotion: How do you feel about the image?

Interesting: What is interesting to you about the image?

OMG: What surprised you about the image?

Um?: What question do you have about the image?

- Ask participants to share their observations with a neighbor. (1 min)
- Ask participants to share a few answers with the whole group. (2.5 min)



- Quick Debrief: (0.5 min)
 - LGBTQ youth report significantly higher rates of bullying, harassment, and violence, which can lead to feelings of sadness/helplessness.
 - Students might miss school to avoid violence/harassment, it can distract from learning, and in some cases it can lead to thoughts of suicide.

Note: *If staff have taken the Kognito simulation prior to the workshop (recommended), then skip to section 5 (PPT slide 11).*

Preparing for Simulation

Up to 10 min

Slides 6 - 9: Brief overview of Kognito and the simulation they are about to take.

- Kognito's simulations are evidence-based.
- Encourage staff to choose the conversation pathway that best reflects what they would actually say in a real-life conversation.
- Let staff know we are not asking them to become counselors... but to capitalize on the limited time they have with students to provide the most effective support.

Simulation

40 min

Slide 10

- Ensure participants are able to login to their account.
- Provide headphones to all participants.
- Pass out the **note-taking handout** to all participants.
- Proctor the room to allow anyone needing assistance to communicate with you.
- Participants who finish early can begin their break. Write on the board what time the workshop will reconvene for discussion.

Break

10 min

Discussion

40 min

Slide 11: Simulation review (5 min)

- Distribute the **one-page summary**.
- Remind participants about the interactive situations in the simulation (include more detail if the participants took the simulation prior to the workshop).
- Ask a few questions to get the discussion going. Sample questions:
 - How similar did these experiences feel to ones you've had in real life?
 - What new things did you try that you haven't in real life?

Slide 12: Student experiences (10 min)

- Students who identify as LGBTQ are much more likely to report feeling sad/helpless and to consider/attempt suicide, as a result of verbal and physical harassment and feeling isolated and unvalued by their schools, families, and communities.
- Educators have the power to make schools better. They can help LGBTQ students get better grades, lower their risks of dropping out, and save lives!
- Possible discussion questions:
 - What did you learn about the challenges some LGBTQ students face?
 - If you had a student who was in distress, what outward signs might you notice? *(Possible answers: dropping grades, bullying, absenteeism, missed assignments, tearfulness, social withdrawal, low participation, disheveled appearance, weight loss/gain, sleepiness)*
 - Why is it important for teachers to notice these things, reach out to the student, and possibly refer them for support? *(Possible answers: build the student's resiliency by being another adult they know cares; educators in an ideal position to notice when a student needs help and connect them with the resources designed to help them; the earlier a child gets the help they need, the better their overall outcomes might be; students receiving needed support may take less of our time and attention in the classroom and cause less disruption)*
 - What can teachers do in the classroom to show their support for all students? *(Possible answers: use gender-neutral language when talking about relationships, not assume all students are heterosexual/cis, address biased language and bullying)*
 - What did you learn about transgender student issues that will help you be more supportive of trans students in the future? *(Possible answers: recognizing the challenge of bathrooms/locker rooms, using preferred names/pronouns, understanding that gender identity has nothing to do with sexual orientation)*

Slide 13: Addressing biased language and harassment (10 min)

- Possible discussion questions:
 - How often do you hear anti-LGBTQ language or hear about harassment at school?
 - What role do teachers play in creating a more respectful and inclusive environment?
 - What do you do to prevent disrespectful and discriminatory language in your classroom? What has been effective? *(Possible answers: adopting a special curriculum, having students sign a contract, posting signs on the wall)*
 - What do you do when you hear students use disrespectful or discriminatory language?
 - What are some other situations in which you might witness biased language or harassment outside the classroom? How might you intervene in these situations? *(Possible answers: in one-on-one conversations, at school events, at recess/lunch)*
 - Has a student ever come to you and say they were being verbally harassed? What did you do?

Suicide

10 min

Slide 14: Connecting with an at-risk student (15 min)

- Possible discussion questions:
 - Why is it a good idea to reach out to students like Zach whom you've witnessed being harassed?
 - How did you do in the conversation with Zach? Did anything surprise you about approaches to discussing anti-LGBTQ harassment?
 - Why is it unhelpful to advise a student to come out before they are ready? Conversely, why is it unhelpful to advise them to hide their sexual orientation?
 - What strategies worked best in making Zach feel supported and referring him to support?
 - If you have had concerns about one or more of your students in the past and have initiated conversations similar to this one, what worked well for you?
 - Why is it important to ask about self-harm and suicide if you suspect a student is in distress?
 - How might a supportive counselor be able to help a student like Zach?

Slide 15: Suicide warning signs

- According to the CDC survey, 16% of high school students surveyed had seriously considered suicide, 13% had made a plan, and 8% had tried to take their own lives in the past year.
- The presence of more than one of the following warning signs may increase a youth's risk for engaging in suicidal behaviors in the near future:
 - Talking about or making plans for suicide
 - Expressing hopelessness about the future
 - Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress
 - Showing worrisome behavioral or changes in behavior, such as:
 - Withdrawal from or changing in social connections/situation
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability

Slide 16: What to do if you suspect a student may be considering suicide?

- "Suicide is often preventable. If you fear that a student is considering suicide, talk to him or her immediately and be direct. Asking about suicide will not put the idea into a student's head."
- **01.** Gather as much information as the student is willing to share, such as:
 - Are they thinking about suicide?
 - Do they have a plan?
 - Do they intend to act on the plan?
 - Do they have the means to act on the plan?
- **02.** Connect the student immediately and in person to a supportive counselor, staff member, local service provider, or crisis center.
- If you have questions on how to handle a particular situation and you cannot reach anyone in your school administration, you can call The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8522) 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

Slide 17: How to ask about suicide

- Asking a student if they are considering suicide will not put the idea in the student's head.
- Also, the way the question is asked makes a big difference in whether or not the student will give you a truthful answer.
 - NOT EFFECTIVE: "You're not thinking about suicide, are you?"
 - NOT EFFECTIVE: "You wouldn't kill yourself. I know you're smarter than that."
 - **EFFECTIVE: "Are you considering suicide?"**
- Many students who are thinking about suicide will welcome the opportunity to talk about those thoughts if given a chance.
- Get participants to turn to their role play partner, and take turns asking the question.

Our School's Processes

10 min

Slide 18-19: Reporting harassment and referring students

- Ask participants to turn to the back of the **one-page summary** and take notes.
- Pass out copies of the **"Local Resources" page** from the simulation. These are resources that will have been provided by the agency sponsoring your access to the simulation.

Conclusion Activities

20 min

Slide 20: 3, 2, 1 Activity (8 min)

- On a new piece of paper, right down 3 things you learned today, 2 questions you have, and 1 way you're going to change your practice.
- Allow participants to share their answers.

Slide 21: Bridging the Gap Activity (12 min)

- "Let's do some action planning, to think about your school, and commit to some takeaways. Visualize where you are, where you'd like to be, and what it takes to get there."
- **01.** Where You Are: First, list some of your observations.
- **02.** Where You'd Like to Be: Second, list some of the qualities of your ideal school.
- **03.** What It Takes: Finally, list some ideas that might bridge the gap between where you are and where you'd like to be. What could happen to bring your school one step closer to your ideal?
- Allow participants to share their ideas.

Slide 22: Conclusion (4 min)

- Thank participants for their time, remind them of why this topic is important.
- Allow for questions.

STEP IN, SPEAK UP

Note-Taking Guide

Print the following pages and distribute to workshop participants. A PDF of the following pages can also be downloaded at:

https://kognito.com/ares_note-taking_guide

Note-Taking Guide

Responding to Biased Language

Addressing Harrassment

Talk with Zach

Note-Taking Guide

Suicide Warning Signs:

1. Talk about or making plans for suicide
2. Expressing hopelessness about the future
3. Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress
4. Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes, such as:
 - Withdrawal from or changing in social connections/situation
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability

(www.save.org/youthsuicide, 2017)

Connecting with an At-Risk Student

Other Ways to Help

STEP IN, SPEAK UP

Simulation Summary

Print the following handout and distribute to workshop participants. A PDF of the following pages can also be downloaded at:

https://kognito.com/ares_simulation_summary

Simulation Summary

Students who identify as LGBTQ are much more likely to report feeling sad/helpless and to consider/attempt suicide, as a result of verbal and physical harassment and feeling isolated and unvalued by their schools, families, and communities.

Educators have the power to make schools better. They can help LGBTQ students get better grades, lower their risks of dropping out, and save lives!

Lesbian

Gay

Bisexual

Transgender

Questioning/Queer

Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual refer to a person's **sexual orientation**.

Transgender refers to **gender identity**. If the gender a person identifies with is different from the sex they were assigned at birth, they might identify as transgender or "gender non-conforming."

How to Show Support

- **Respond to biased language right away.**
- **Stop harassment.**
- **Don't assume all your students are heterosexual.**
- **Use students' preferred names and pronouns.**
- **Use gender-neutral language when talking about dating/relationships.**
- **Reach out, listen, and talk.**
- **Maintain confidentiality.**
- **Refer to a supportive ally.**

Suicide Warning Signs

- **Talking about or making plans for suicide**
- **Expressing hopelessness about the future**
- **Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress**
- **Showing worrisome behavioral or changes in behavior, such as:**
 - **Withdrawal from or changing in social connections/situation**
 - **Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)**
 - **Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context**
 - **Recent increased agitation or irritability**

Your School's Referral Process

Q. Does your school have a Gender & Sexualities Alliance, Gay-Straight Alliance (sometimes known as GSA), or another LGBTQ-friendly club? If so, who is the sponsor? When does the club meet?

Q. What is your school's policy for reporting harassment?

Q. What is the referral policy in your school? To whom do you make a referral if you are worried about a student in distress that is not deemed an imminent threat to a student's life?

Q. What is the referral policy for students who may be a danger to themselves or others?

Q. When and how would a student's parents/guardians be notified of concerns about their child's distress? Whose role is it to notify them?

Q. What are your policies (could be school, district, or state regulated) for protecting the privacy of students regarding disclosure of their LGBTQ status? This may vary according to state law and district policy.

Stay Connected

Congratulations! You have completed the Kognito *Step In, Speak Up* Program.

You and your school are creating a more positive climate for your community, and the entire Kognito staff is here to celebrate all of your successes!

We also have other amazing learning opportunities. You can check out the full Kognito library at [Kognito.com](https://kognito.com). Other topics include trauma-informed practices, bullying, and dealing with a loss in the school.

Thank you for making a difference with Kognito.

We would love to hear from you. Let us know more about your experience.

Customer Support

Phone: 866-449-8834

Email: Support@Kognito.com