

# BARRIERS AND BRIDGES TO LGBTQ+ STUDENT SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- **Barrier: Mental Health and Stressors** (including mental healthcare barriers like cost/affordability, cultural competency, recovery from conversion therapy, etc.)
  - **Simple Bridges**
    - Social transition support (e.g. from high school to college, in the closet to coming out, transitioning, etc.)
    - Mentoring programs
  - **Systemic Bridges**
    - Hiring dedicated LGBTQ+ mental health counselors
- **Barrier: Financial Insecurity** (including homelessness, loss of family support, food insecurity, lack of insurance/benefits, etc.)
  - **Simple Bridges**
    - LGBTQ+ specific scholarships and financial assistance (including emergency funding)
    - Basic needs support, such as food pantries
    - Free legal assistance for students
    - Childcare
    - Technology Access Support
  - **Systemic Bridges**
    - LGBTQ+ inclusive insurance (including affirming and culturally competent medical providers, access to Trans-specific healthcare services, etc.)
- **Barrier: Harassment, Bullying, and Violence** (job and housing discrimination, criminalization of Trans and QTPOC, misgendering, bigotry and ignorance, etc.)
  - **Simple Bridges**
    - Explicit inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression in nondiscrimination policies
    - LGBTQ+ sensitivity and awareness trainings
    - Campus Police Trainings
  - **Systemic Bridges**
    - Universally Accessible Facilities Policies (to protect Trans students in restrooms and locker rooms) to all-gender multi-stall restrooms and increased single-stall restrooms
- **Barrier: Erasure, Invisibility, and exclusion** (isolation and lack of community, policy, marketing, lack of identity options on forms and paperwork, lack of data collection, etc.)
  - **Simple Bridges**
    - Pronouns in email signatures
    - Syllabi statements for support/resources for LGBTQ+ students
    - Programming and events (including highlighting history/heritage months, current affairs, etc.)

- Updating governing documents (e.g. faculty handbook, student code of conduct, etc.) with inclusive and gender-neutral language (e.g. switching he/she to they)
  - Symbols of inclusivity (e.g. rainbow crosswalks, flags during pride month, support messages from administration, institutional sponsorship and participation in local Pride celebrations, Pride gear for sale with funds to student scholarships, etc.)
  - First Year Experience programs and summer bridge programs including curriculum and practices inclusive of LGBTQ+ students
  - LGBTQ+ literature and cultural artifacts in libraries and exhibits
- **Systemic Bridges**
  - Comprehensive LGBTQ+ Admissions Application Questions (for data collection, targeted services and programming, tracking, etc.)
  - Institutional LGBTQ+ Steering/Advisory Committees
  - Textbook and curriculum inclusion of LGBTQ+ history, culture, experience, and expression
  - LGBTQ+ Studies Program and/or course offerings
- **Barrier: Lack of resources and access** (identity specific support, access to healthcare/insurance/benefits, access to name/gender marker change resources, etc.)
  - **Simple Bridges**
    - Active support (including financial support) for Queer Student Associations and campus LGBTQ+ centers
    - First year Experience programs and retreats specifically for LGBTQ+ students
    - Recruitment and retention efforts
    - Simplified processes for updating name/gender markers on institutional platforms (Banner, Canvas, Zoom, etc.)
  - **Systemic Bridges**
    - All-gender and/or LGBTQ+ housing