



Public Statement: LGBT YouthLine's removal from Toronto Catholic District School Board resources January 11th, 2021

On the afternoon of Friday, January 8th, 2021 we received an email from the Chief of Mental Health Strategy and Staff Well-Being of the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB). In the email, we were informed that we had “inappropriate material” on our site, and therefore they had to take our link off of the TCDSB resources website. In this email, they linked an article from Joe Volpe, published on Corriere Canadese, titled “TCDSB website hosts Pornographic site defended by trustees.” The title of this is in reference to our website and its resources.

LGBT YouthLine is a 2SLGBTQ+ youth-led organization that has been providing peer support and leadership opportunities to youth across Ontario for over twenty-five years. Our HelpLine is one of the only supports available to most youth (29 & under) across Ontario – especially during this pandemic when in-person supports are few and far between. We are the only service that youth can access anonymously through chat, text, and phone allowing them to get the information, resources, and support they need.

There is a long history accusing 2SLGBTQ+ people of pedophilia and of “corrupting” children and youth and the article explicitly uses these arguments against us. This rhetoric is harmful, unacceptable, and is overt homophobia and transphobia. Volpe wrote this article to clearly de-legitimize YouthLine’s work, including attacking the ways that we support Indigenous and Black youth.

As a 2SLGBTQ+ youth organization, homophobic, transphobic, and racist attacks on our work are sadly not new. What’s extremely concerning is that the TCDSB felt it appropriate to remove our much-needed service from their resources based on an article that is homophobic, transphobic, and racist. The article was posted on Friday and our website was removed from the TCDSB resources page within hours. The removal of our website is a validation of homophobia and transphobia by the TCDSB and has blocked access to our critical service to 2SLGBTQ+ youth attending their schools.

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We are demanding that the TCDSB:

- Immediately re-instate LGBT YouthLine in their resources for youth;
- Connect with us to have YouthLine posters and information available at each school, similar to hundreds of schools across Ontario; and
- Issue a statement taking accountability for the harm they have caused by removing YouthLine due to an inflammatory and hateful article.

We are grateful to our supporters, and those that continue to fight for 2SLGBTQ youth, especially in Catholic schools across Ontario. We are proud and humbled to have been voted NOW Magazine's Best Youth Organization for two years in a row. We don't take this lightly and work hard to keep the trust that youth (and those that support them) have in us.

For parents/guardians, educators, or youth looking for resources to support 2SLGBTQ+ youth, our website and Resource Database is available to you at www.youthline.ca. You can also order outreach materials from our site.

For inquiries, please contact Berkha Gupta at 416.962.2232 x224 or berkhag@youthline.ca.

About LGBT YouthLine: LGBT YouthLine is a Queer, Trans, Two-Spirit youth-led organization that affirms and supports the experiences of youth (29 and under) across Ontario. We do this by:

- Providing anonymous peer support through our HelpLine and referrals;
- Training youth to provide support to other youth; and
- Providing resources so youth can make informed decisions.

YouthLine has been operating since 1994. Our HelpLine provides info, resources, and support through trained peer supporters ages 16-29 with a diversity of 2SLGBTQ+ identities and lived experiences. We are open Sunday-Friday, 4:00 pm – 9:30 pm EST.



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