



Lets #DoBetter in Ontario Catholic Schools January 14th, 2021

Update on YouthLine's removal from the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB)

On the afternoon of Monday, January 11th, 2021, we put out a statement '[LGBT YouthLine's removal from Toronto Catholic District School Board resources](#)', which provided information about the email we received informing us of our removal from TCDSB's resources. In our statement, we demanded that 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.

On Wednesday, January 13th we met with TCDSB Trustee Norm Di Pasquale and Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Ed, and Community Relations. After that meeting, **TCDSB reinstated our website to their list of resources**. Trustee Di Pasquale, who has been a strong advocate and supporter, is presenting a motion tonight (January 14th) to TCDSB's Student Achievement committee asking for a dedicated 2SLGBTQ+ resource page and for secondary schools to be informed about our HelpLine materials ordering process.

While these are great starting points, we hope the Director of Education also makes a follow up statement on his January 13 [statement](#), to acknowledge the lack of support for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, the harm caused by their decisions, and a clear plan forward to fill the gaps in support.

What's Next

This last week highlighted major gaps in supports for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Catholic Schools across Ontario. Unfortunately, it often takes a negative moment like this to shed light and gain momentum to fix major gaps in support.

While TCDSB may not have taken down our link in reaction to Joe Volpe's article, their quick action to a complaint continues to support structural homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. This consistent gatekeeping, often by homophobic individuals like Joe Volpe, leads to 2SLGBTQ+ organizations, like ours, not being included in resources or removed, once challenged.

This morning, we did a full scan of all 29 Catholic School Boards in Ontario. We found that **NO Catholic School Board had a dedicated resource section to support 2SLGBTQ+ youth;**

www.youthline.ca
info@youthline.ca
1-888-687-9688 / 416-962-2232

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only four school boards had any resource for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, with three of them only listing LGBT YouthLine. [This is what structural homophobia and transphobia looks like!](#)

Today, we are asking you to help us, as a province, to **#DoBetter**. In February 2021, we will be launching 'Do Better: 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Recommendations for Change in Ontario' –this report will present key areas of change that are needed in Ontario, including in schools, and identifies ways that 2SLGBTQ+ youth and their supporters can use the report for their own advocacy. It is based on the results of our Needs Assessment – '[We're Here: 2SLGBTQ+ Youth across Ontario assert Needs and Experiences.](#)'

To continue to #DoBetter, here are some ways you can help:

- **Ensure adequate resources and supports are available to educators, administrators, social workers, and youth in your local school board.** You can visit our [Resource database](#) to find local/regional organizations and groups.
- **Order our HelpLine materials, or [share the link](#)** with educators and administrators, so youth can see our posters in their local schools.
- **Become a [YL BFF with a monthly donation](#), or [make a one-time donation](#)** so we can continue to grow our presence and efforts across Ontario.
- **Follow and amplify our work** – most youth find out about us through personal networks. Sign up for our network to stay up-to-date on our work, or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

For 25 years, we have been here working hard so no 2SLGBTQ+ young person feels alone. We are so grateful for the outpouring of support this week and throughout the years. We know your support means so much for the thousands of youth who are watching, wondering if they are loved and supported.

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.

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



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