Know Your Rights
A Guide for LGBT Youth Experiencing Bullying

What the statistics say

- 90% of teens hear antigay remarks at school on a regular basis
- 60.8% of LGBT students report feeling unsafe at their school because of their sexual orientation
- 86.2% of LGBT students experienced harassment at school
- 75% of our nation's teachers are not educated about LGBTQ students and the factors that place them more at risk for bullying, harassment, and suicide
- 82.9% of LGBT students report that faculty or staff never intervened or intervened only some of the time when present and homophobic remarks were made
- 4 out of 5 students in school don't know one supportive adult in their school environment

You don't have to take it

If you are being bullied, threatened, called names, or physically harmed because of your sexual orientation, report it to your principal, counselor, or trusted adult in school.
Public schools are required under federal law to remedy the abuse of lesbian and gay students.
If the school does not do anything to protect you after you tell them about the bullying or harassment, they can be held legally responsibe.
Keep a record of the bullying or harassment, and include details- what happened, when it happened, who was involved, and to whom you reported it.
If the school still does not do anything to protect you, contact your local ACLU affiliate.

If I stand up, will they out me?

The school does NOT have the right to out you to anyone without your permission.
If school faculty, staff, or administrators threaten to tell your parents or anyone that you are gay and you don't want them to, make it clear to them that it is against your wishes.
If you want to be out, it is your constitutional right to be out of the closet at school, even if your school tries to silence you.
The only time your school has the right to silence you is if you cause significant disruption in the classroom. Be respectful and don't give your school any excuses for treating you badly.

Get support

Identify a supportive adult in your school and use them as a resource.
Connect with a group for LGBT youth, such as your school's Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA).
If your school doesn't have a GSA, look into starting one at your school.