

RESOURCES, BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH LGBTQ YOUTH

DO:

- Be conscious of increased vulnerability and trauma, such as *heightened risk for physical and sexual assault, bullying, trauma, and verbal harassment*.
- Role model behavior with staff to demonstrate care/responsivity to specific needs of LGBTQ youth.
- Involve LGBTQ youth to decide what capacity they want to be “out” when deciding appropriate housing, employment/school referrals, and other services.
- For trans and GNC youth, ask where they would like to be placed in gender-specific and gender segregated spaces.
- Defend LGBTQ youth if their identities are challenged or disrespected. They may not be able to defend themselves in that moment or situation, so it is your job to advocate for them (based on the degree to which they are “out” in that situation).

DO NOT:

- DO NOT excuse threats, harassment, or incidents of violence. Your response will impact the level of trust LGBTQ persons provide in return.
- DO NOT make any assumptions about whether and to whom an LGBTQ youth is “out.”
- DO NOT make any assumptions which pronouns they prefer, that they identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, or their sexual orientation. Always ask!
- DO NOT ask about sexuality or gender identity in front of other service providers, family members, or anyone else. Always ask in private and confidentially, then proceed based on the individual’s comfort levels and needs.
- DO NOT disregard LGBTQ youth’s needs because it is “inconvenient” or ask them to “compromise” their identities to make placements easier for you.

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SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK LGBTQ+ YOUTH

“What do you want to be called? How do you want people to refer to you? What are your preferred pronouns?”

“In order to make the most appropriate service plan, I may need to disclose your gender identity to the following people. What would you like me to say? I’m willing to listen and work with you.”

“Is there anyone you would prefer not know how you identify? Is there anyone you prefer know?”

“Are you currently out to _____? In what capacity are you out to them?”

“Which name and gender pronouns should I use when I call your family?”

“When I talk to _____, would you feel safer if I used your legal name or chosen name? What about your assigned pronouns or your preferred pronouns?”

RESOURCES FOR BEST PRACTICES, LANGUAGE, AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

<http://thelinkmn.org/resources/> : MN based youth services non-profit specializing in sexual exploitation and LGBTQ youth

<http://www.bisexualorganizingproject.org/> : MN based non-profit for the advocacy of and education for the bisexual community

<http://www.lambdalegal.org/> : A national organization that focuses on LGBTQ policy. Visit their publications page.

<http://www.nclrights.org/> : National Center for Lesbian Rights. Visit their publications page.

<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/> : Breakdown of LGBTQ terminology, resources

Perry, J.R. & Green, E.R. (2014). *Safe & Respected: Policy, Best Practices & Guidance for Serving Transgender & Gender Non-Conforming Children and Youth Involved in the Child Welfare, Detention, and Juvenile Justice Systems*. New York City, NY: New York City’s Administration for Children’s Services. Accessed from www.hivlawandpolicy.org.

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