



## Creating Safety for GLBT Youth

Tips from The GLBT Youth Support Project

### Create a Safe Environment

Host training for staff on issues facing GLBT youth.

Make sure your agency or school's policies on harassment and non-discrimination include sexual orientation and gender identity.

Address your agency's policies on supporting GLBT youth and staff at orientation for all new staff, volunteers, and clients.

Address homophobic slurs, jokes, comments, and actions in the same manner in which you would address racist, sexist, or other disparaging comments.

Use a young person's chosen name and pronoun, even if you have previously known him or her by a different name or pronoun.

### Provide Culturally Appropriate Care to GLBT Youth

Train all staff in how to respond if a youth comes out as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

Help GLBT youth connect with other GLBT youth or adults who may serve as role models or mentors.

Don't make assumptions about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity based on their appearance or behavior.

Provide relevant health information based on what they tell you about their lives – not based on assumptions.

Provide access to **safe space** for transgender or gender-transitioning youth to change clothes or use the bathroom.

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Creating Safety for GLBT Youth, continued

Create a Comfortable and Inclusive Environment
Use inclusive terms such as "partner," "significant other," and "parents".
Use inclusive language and images in all agency publications and on the website.
Display posters, brochures and other materials that specifically address or are inclusive of GLBT youth.
Show a movie that includes GLBT characters at a movie night for youth.
Use same-sex examples as well as opposite-sex examples during presentations.
Create a consistent message for staff to use in responding to homophobic comments.
Support openly GLBT staff as role models for all youth.
Provide <i>Spousal Equivalency</i> benefits to unmarried partners of GLBT and straight employees.

Provide Support for GLBT Youth and Their Families
Offer a support group for GLBT clients and/or provide supported referrals to existing GLBT youth groups.
Provide family support and intervention (or referral if more appropriate) for family members of GLBT youth.
Recruit clients, staff, foster parents, and mentors from GLBT publications, community centers, and list-serves.
Address GLBT youth issues with potential, new, and existing biological, foster, and adoptive families.
Develop a referral list of local youth support groups, parent support groups, GLBT-welcoming congregations, and other resources.