
Appendix B

How to Create a Climate of Safety and Convey Support for Children and Youth

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5 According to the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), LGBTQ and gender non-
6 conforming children and youth are at a higher risk for:

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8 A. Emotional or physical abuse from their family members.
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10 B. Failed out-of-home placements.
11
12 C. Institutional neglect or abuse than their heterosexual counterparts.
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14 Psychologically, LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children and youth are at substantially
15 greater risk than their heterosexual counterparts for:

- 16
17 A. Suicide attempts.
18
19 B. Runaway behavior.
20
21 C. Homelessness.
22
23 D. Substance abuse.
24
25 E. Emotional and physical victimization
26
27 F. High-risk sexual behaviors.
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29 G. Pregnancy.
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31 H. More likely to withdraw from or miss school due to fear, intimidation, or threats from
32 other students.
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34 LGBTQ and gender non-conforming youth often assess situations and people to determine and
35 predict their safety and/or potential threats. Staff can share about their experiences as an ally or
36 being supportive of someone (other children or youth, a parent, sibling, friend, neighbor, etc.)
37 who is LGBTQ or gender non-conforming while maintaining professional boundaries. Such
38 disclosure may help to normalize the prevalence and experiences of LGBTQ individuals in the
39 broader community.

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41 A. Know that your tone of voice and non-verbal behavior will have an impact on a child or
42 youth's perception of your authenticity in supporting them.
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- 44 B. Empathize with individuals when they are considering disclosing their sexual orientation
45 or gender identity.
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- 47 C. Assure the child or youth that you understand the need for confidentiality and explain
48 how the Child and Family Services' Practice Guidelines support the child or youth's right
49 to participate in decision-making. This includes how information regarding sexual
50 orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be shared, including clarification
51 for exceptions to confidentiality that are based on keeping the child or youth safe.
52

53 Preferred Name and Pronouns

54 As part of their disclosure, many children and youth will want to practice names and pronouns
55 within safe places before disclosing to parents, extended family, and friends. Keep in mind the
56 identity of a child or youth is fluid. Name and pronoun preferences may shift over time. Staff
57 will check in regularly with children and youth regarding their preferred name and pronouns.
58

- 59 A. Which name would you prefer for me to use when I call your (family, teacher, counselor,
60 etc.)?
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- 62 B. Which gender pronoun should I use for you when I call your (family, teacher, counselor,
63 etc.)?
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- 65 C. When I call your (family, teacher, counselor, etc.), would you prefer that I use your legal
66 name or your preferred name?
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