



# CREATEing Equality



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FOUNDATION

## WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ

Being in care can be challenging, so when a young person also identifies as LGBTQ, here are some things you can do as a worker or carer to support them.

### DO's

- 1. Offer Support** – When we come out to you, offer us the opportunity to look into/take us to support groups & counselling. This shows us your support and that you want us to feel safe.
- 2. Make yourself available** – Put aside one-on-one time with every young person. This builds relationships. Sometimes it's just a matter of us needing you to be available for us to share our problems or to have an opportunity to come out.
- 3. Respect confidentiality** – Appreciate that we don't necessarily want all workers to know. Don't tell other workers, especially ones that don't need to know, don't tell family members or other young people either.
- 4. Coming out at own time** – We should have the opportunity & support to come out to other workers, care team, family (both foster & biological) and other young people. You should let us come out at our own pace.
- 5. Support on being ourselves** – Allowing, supporting & encouraging us to wear the clothes that we want, using the correct pronoun (he/him, she/hers, they/their etc.) that we have asked for and using the name that best reflects our true self. Don't presume gender.
- 6. Accept that our identity is our choice** – Our identity is how WE want to be and that can't be changed by anyone else.

### DON'Ts

- 1. Don't judge** – Don't judge us for our identity by making remarks that are negative towards LGBTQ people or having body language that suggests that you don't support our identity. Not wanting to talk to us, avoiding us and not making eye contact once we've come out will make us feel judged.
- 2. Don't treat coming out as a 'phase'** – For majority of us this is going to be the rest of our lives, so how you nurture our coming out now could shape our future coming out journey.
- 3. Don't assume coming out/being LGBTQ is a bad thing** – Every young person is different and some of us might be excited and joyful about coming out. Some of us won't necessarily have negative experiences related to being LGBTQ.
- 4. Don't shame or punish young people** – We shouldn't be shamed or made to feel guilty or bad for identifying as LGBTQ. We shouldn't be punished or have different restrictions on us compared to straight young people. We should be allowed to talk about our identity & feelings without being shamed or punished.

***“Young people need a supportive worker or carer to listen, to be open & responsive to how young people feel, to listen to what they have to say and what they need.”***