

How to support LGBTQIA+ young people in your community

This guide has been developed based on the feedback and recommendations of LGBTQIA+ young people. It should not be considered an exhaustive list of ways to help and ACYP would recommend that if any person wants to support the LGBTQIA+ young people in their lives, they should have a conversation with those young people about how best to do so.

DO:

- Promote and support young people to get involved in LGBTQIA+ celebrations and events such as Mardi Gras, Pride Month, Wear it Purple and International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia.
- Point and help connect LGBTQIA+ young people to local and online peer-based support groups.

Young people reported that they felt a sense of belonging, inclusion and connection to the LGBTQIA+ community when they participated in these activities.

- Use gender neutral and inclusive language, recognising the diversity of all people.
- Put public displays of support in your workplaces, on your cars and in your homes including stickers, flags, signs and posters to show your support for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Young people identified public displays of support in the community as important for creating a sense of safety and inclusion.



Remember:

Be genuine. Any efforts to be supportive of the LGBTQIA+ community must be genuine to support inclusivity and not a tokenistic gesture.

When a young person comes out to you:



- **Don't** make a big deal of it.
- **Don't** tell them "it's just a phase".



- Take the time to learn the facts – teach yourself about LGBTQIA+ concepts.
- Ask them what their preferred pronouns are and make an effort to use them.
- Respect their confidentiality – it is not your story to tell.

Young people reported that negative reactions to their 'coming out' caused them to feel alone and unaccepted. They expressed a desire for a time when there was no need for such an announcement, because of the normalisation of LGBTQIA+ identities.

If you witness or know that a young person is being bullied, harassed or discriminated against (either in person or online) based on their gender or sexuality:



- **Don't** tell the young person to change their behaviour or appearance to avoid being a target.



- Call out discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- Encourage the young person to make a complaint to the eSafety Commissioner (if incident occurred online), to Anti-Discrimination NSW (if the incident involves discrimination, harassment or vilification) or to the Australian Human Rights Commission (if discrimination is related to a breach of your Human Rights).
- Encourage the young person to seek legal advice if they have experienced discrimination, such as reaching out to a community legal centre.

Episodes of bullying and discrimination are unacceptable and cause LGBTQIA+ young people to feel unsafe. Young people recounted either being told by others to be less obvious about their identity to avoid further incidences or made the decision themselves to conceal their identity.