

# How to support LGBTQIA+ young people in health services

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.

## Privacy and confidentiality

Consider the additional privacy and confidentiality needs of LGBTQIA+ young people:

- Offer opportunities to see the young person without their parent or carer in the room.
- Where they make disclosures about their sexuality or gender identity, speak with them about how open they are with their parents or carers before referring to their identity in front of their family.
- Consult with the young person if any information will be shared with their parents.
- Remember that a young person may face risks to their safety and wellbeing if they are 'outed' as LGBTQIA+.



- **Don't** make assumptions about what the young person may have shared with their parents or carers, or about the openness of their relationship.

*Parental consent and confidentiality were the greatest barrier that young people faced in accessing healthcare. Experiences and fears of breaches in privacy left young people feeling disrespected, deflated and frustrated by the lack of concern and care by some health professionals.*



### Remember:

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

## Signs of inclusivity

- Clearly display that you are an LGBTQIA+ inclusive organisation by displaying flags, stickers and posters in your services and on your website.
- Provide access to all-gender bathrooms.
- Use gender neutral and inclusive language, recognising the diversity of all people.



*Young people reported negative experiences with some health services, which led to them feeling uncomfortable or reluctant to access healthcare services in future. Clear displays of LGBTQIA+ inclusion helped them find inclusive and supportive services.*

## Referrals

Provide referrals to information about LGBTQIA+ concepts and specialist LGBTQIA+ services:

- Provide links to factual websites with health information.
- Connect young people with local support groups for both social connection and wellbeing.
- Connect with local specialist supports to provide informed referrals to inclusive services.



- **Don't** assume a young person is aware of LGBTQIA+ concepts or has knowledge about services and supports they may be able to access.



*LGBTQIA+ young people reported feeling respected and supported by health professionals who listened and acknowledged their identity and feelings. They also highlighted the importance of staff who were able to support them in gaining access to specialist LGBTQIA+ supports.*