

SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH IN COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) youth benefit from community programs, and community programs benefit from a fully inclusive environment. This sheet provides some rationale for inclusivity, and specific steps to cultivate a truly inclusive environment.

Like all youth, LGBTQ youth develop a positive sense of self based on group membership and social connectedness.

LGBTQ youth face the same developmental tasks as heterosexual peers

- Navigating school
- Developing a sense of self
- Leaving home

LGBTQ youth may face additional developmental transitions

- Social pressures to deny their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Parental and school rejection and victimization
- Limited socializing opportunities
- Missed opportunities to build interpersonal, peer, and group relationships

LGBTQ youth who do not have supportive parents report the following outcomes:

- 68% reported suicide attempts or (64%) depression
- 37% reported heavy drinking or (72%) substance use
- 46% reported unprotected, casual sex or (33%) an STI

Many LGBTQ youth experience school victimization:

- 64% feel unsafe due to sexual orientation or (44%) gender expression
- 82% were verbally harassed due to sexual orientation or (64%) gender expression
- 38% were physically harassed due to sexual orientation or (27%) gender expression

Victimized students were **THREE** times more likely to miss school because they felt unsafe

Community-based programming provides critical and unique opportunities for LGBTQ youth

Improving Community-based programming for LGBTQ youth

Community-based organizations have long formed a vital source of support and connectedness for the positive social and psychological development of LGBTQ youth because social supports buffer against depression, anxiety, shame, and suicidality.

Community-based programming provides:

- Socializing opportunities with hetero and LGBTQ peers, and role models and mentors
- Access to LGBTQ relevant information as well as general support for civic engagement
- Information for navigating family and romantic relationships and accessing health care

Community-based organizations can improve their programming for LGBTQ youth by:

- Training providers to improve knowledge, skill, and intention to support LGBTQ youth
- Working to change homophobic attitudes within a program
- Being an ally to LGBTQ youth by improving access to and comfort in a program
- Improving the affective environment through signs and symbols of inclusivity

Intake forms provide valuable information about how to competently serve various communities. LGBTQ youth's need remain unmet when their identities and issues are not represented on intake forms, questionnaires, and or other information seeking documents.

HOW TO ASK THE QUESTIONS

For Future Reading

- Allen, K. D., Hammack, P. L., & Himes, H. L. (2012). Analysis of GLBTQ youth community-based programs in the United States. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 59, 1289-1306. doi:10.1080/00918369.2012.720529
- Irazábal, C., & Huerta, C. (2015). Intersectionality and planning at the margins: LGBTQ youth of color in New York. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 1-19. doi:10.1080/0966369X.2015.1058755
- Reitman, D. S., Austin, B., Belkind, U., Chaffee, T., Hoffman, N. D., Moore, E., & Ryan, C. (2013). Recommendations for promoting the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender adolescents: A position paper of the society for adolescent health and medicine. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52(4), 506-510. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.01.015
- Snapp, S. D., Watson, R. J., Russell, S. T., Diaz, R. M., & Ryan, C. (2015). Social support networks for LGBT young adults: Low cost strategies for positive adjustment. *Family Relations*, 64, 420-430. doi:10.1111/fare.12124

- ✓ Ensure items are not stigmatizing or troublesome to gender minority youth (e.g., avoid an "other" option).
- ✓ Ensure items are understandable to the general adolescent population.
- ✓ Ensure items reliably identify gender minority youth and do not misidentify cisgender youth.
- ✓ Ensure items regarding sexual orientation are not conflated with items regarding gender identity.

What sex were you assigned at birth?

- Male
- Female
- Not Assigned

With what gender do you identify?

- Male
- Female
- Genderqueer
- Trans (MTF)
- Trans (FTM)
- _____

Sex is assigned at birth; gender is how a person feels. When a person's sex and gender do not match they may think of themselves as transgender. Are you transgender?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Suggested citation:

McGuire, J. K., & Catalpa, J. M. (2016) Sexual Minority Youth in Community Centers. University of Minnesota Cooperative Extension.

On average, how do you think other people would describe your appearance, style of dress, or mannerisms?

- Very Masculine
- Mostly Masculine
- Somewhat Masculine
- Very Feminine
- Mostly Feminine
- Somewhat Feminine
- Equally Feminine & Masculine

