



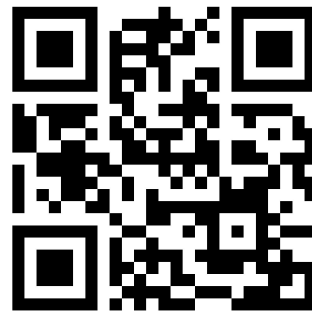
Navigating Stakeholder Friction to Support LGBTQIA+ Youth & Other Historically Excluded Audiences



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Affinity Group
& Resources
←

LGBTQ+ Youth & Community Champion Group
Part of 4-H PLWG's Access, Equity, & Belonging Committee



LGBTQ+ Youth & Community Champion Group
PLWG's Access, Equity, & Belonging Committee

Hi!

We're glad
you are here.

AEBC Champion Groups

- LGBTQ+ Youth & Community
- Youth Living in Poverty
- Youth in Foster Care
- Mental Health & Well-being
- Immigrant & Refugee Youth
- Black & African American Youth
- Latino Advisory Committee
- American Indian / Native American Youth
- Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders
- Youth Involved with the Juvenile Justice System
- Unstably Housed Youth
- Youth with Disabilities

<https://access-equity-belonging.extension.org/>



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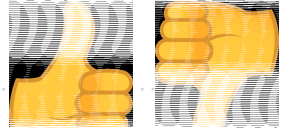


What is an example of pushback you, or a colleague, have received related to ensuring equitable access to programming in Extension?

Share in the chat box.



Inclusive Practice can be Points of Friction



Would you deal with pushback if . . .

- Rainbow safe space symbols are used on program recruitment materials?
- You redirect resources from a program that historically served middle-class white youth to a program focused on immigrant and refugee youth?
- Non-binary is added as a gender option on program registration?
- Your local program marches in a Juneteenth parade?
- A long-time staff is dismissed for refusing to respect a youth's chosen name and gender?
- Gendered dress code policies are removed (e.g., boys must wear... girls must wear...)?
- Youth in foster care automatically receive 100% program fee coverage?
- Authentic inclusion of unstably-housed youth is listed as a program priority?
- Staff share their pronouns in group introductions?
- You require all personnel to participate in social-justice youth development training?
- Overnight youth programs include gender-inclusive housing options?

*We suffer more often in
imagination than in reality.*

- Seneca

Let's prepare
for reality!

Curious to learn more?

Check out **Fear-Setting**

(define/prevent/repair → benefits → cost of inaction)

*"...what we don't often consider is the
atrocious cost of the status quo." - Tim Ferriss*



<https://tim.blog/2017/05/15/fear-setting/>

Your Actions Matter

Historically excluded youth can thrive in youth programs when we...

Provide supportive environments where they experience belonging.

Adhere to comprehensive non-discrimination & anti-bullying policies.

Provide inclusive programmatic curricula within trauma-informed instruction.

Respect their identities (*especially culture, names, pronouns, local knowledge*).

Empower youth voice; listen to their needs, wants, and concerns.

Life saving work! E.g., affirming names can reduce trans+/non-binary youth suicide attempts by 65%
(Russell et al., 2018).

Urgent work! Hate crimes reported in U.S. schools nearly doubled between 2018 and 2022. Black youth, followed by LGBTQ and Jewish youth were more likely to be targeted (FBI, 2024).

Disconnection, Distress, and Depression

- In 2021, **42% of youth felt persistently sad or hopeless**, with 22% seriously considering suicide and 10% attempting (CDC, 2021).
- Suicide is now the second leading cause of death for youth people ages 10-24 (CDC, 2023).

These experiences are worse for youth with historically excluded and/or marginalized identities.

- Black youth are more likely to attempt suicide than youth of other races and ethnicities (CDC, 2021).
- In 2021, **45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered suicide**--including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth and 1 in 3 cisgender youth (Trevor Project, 2022).
- Of LGBTQ+ youth who attempted suicide in 2021:
 - 21% are Native/Indigenous
 - 20% are Middle Eastern/Northern African
 - 19% are Black/African American
 - 17% are multiracial
 - 16% are Latinx/Latine
 - 12% are Asian American/Pacific Islander
 - 12% are White (Trevor Project, 2022)

Your Actions Matter

There is a significant difference between
“all are welcome here” and
“this was created with *you* in mind.”

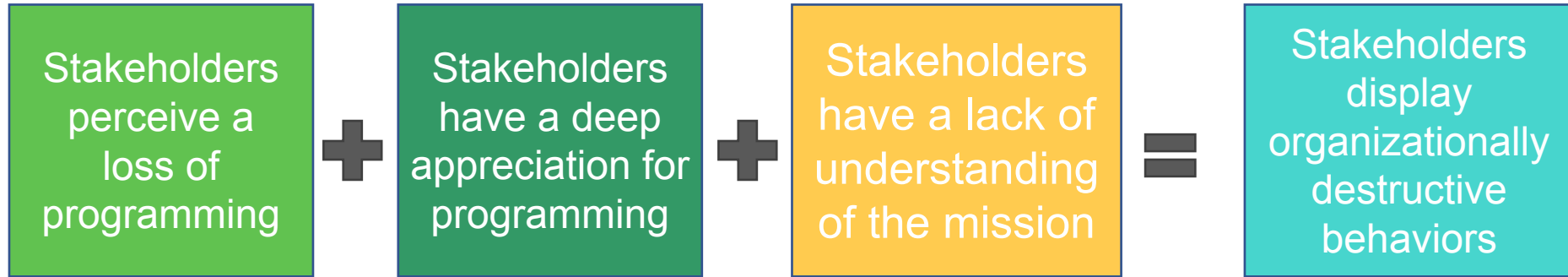
Marcus Harrison Green

Founder of the South Seattle Emerald, The Seattle Times columnist

Change is not smooth.



Shifting Focus Friction



A Case of Shifting Focus Friction: Extension Directors and State 4-H Program Leaders' Perspectives on 4-H LGBTQ+ Inclusion (Elliott-Engel et al., 2021)

<https://open.clemson.edu/joe/vol59/iss4/14/>



Mitigating & Responding to Shifting Focus Friction

- Identify common ground by acknowledging stakeholders' deep appreciation for the organization's programming and work to frame difficult dialogue within mutual values.
- Explore perceived or actual losses to seek appropriate solutions and craft targeted messaging. If true, focus on reassuring stakeholders' that valued experiences are not disappearing.
- Pinpoint areas of mission misunderstanding and craft clarifying messaging designed to create a shared understanding of the organization's mission.
- Focus on building relationships, trust, and open dialogue; developing a shared mission and vision.



Communication Tools - *Two Favorites*



Start With



Contrast



Start With Heart



Stay focused on what you really want.

- For me / for the program / for the youth?
- For the person/s you're communicating with?
- For the relationship with the person/s you're communicating with?

What do you want to avoid?

How would you communicate if this is what you really wanted?

Start With Heart

A parent is upset that bathroom access at day camp is by gender, not sex-assigned-at-birth; they're worried cisgender girls will be unsafe in the bathrooms. (*Cisgender = assigned female at birth, identifies as a girl; not transgender.*)



Start With Heart

A parent is upset that bathroom access at day camp is by gender, not sex-assigned-at-birth; they're worried cisgender girls will be unsafe in the bathrooms.

What do I really want?

- **For me?**
 - I want to feel safe and confident in this conversation and my job.
 - I want to do a good job in communicating our rules and reasons clearly.



Start With Heart

A parent is upset that bathroom access at day camp is by gender, not sex-assigned-at-birth; they're worried cisgender girls will be unsafe in the bathrooms.

What do I really want?

- ***For me?***
- ***For the program / youth?***
 - I want our program to protect kids, even when it's tough.
 - I want trans and all gender-diverse youth and adults to be welcome and safe here.
 - I want our program to be known as a place for all people to belong.



Start With Heart

A parent is upset that bathroom access at day camp is by gender, not sex-assigned-at-birth; they're worried cisgender girls will be unsafe in the bathrooms.

What do I really want?

- ***For me?***
- ***For the program / youth?***
- ***For the relationship with the parent?***
 - I want the parent to trust that we listened to their concern.
 - I want the parent to feel that we respected their concern.



Quick de-escalation via respect and recognition:

“I agree that...” ...youth safety is crucial. ...this is important.

“After listening, I learned that...” ...this topic is really important to you.

Start With Heart

A parent is upset that bathroom access at day camp is by gender, not sex-assigned-at-birth; they're worried cisgender girls will be unsafe in the bathrooms.

What do I really want?

- *For me?*
- *For the program / youth?*
- *For the relationship with the parent?*



What do I want to avoid?

- I want to avoid an unproductive/unhealthy back-&-forth.
- I want to avoid being unclear or apologetic about our policies or program stance.

Start With Heart

A parent is upset that bathroom access at day camp is by gender, not sex-assigned-at-birth; they're worried cisgender girls will be unsafe in the bathrooms.

What do I really want?

- *For me?*
- *For the program / youth?*
- *For the relationship with the parent?*



What do I want to avoid?

How would I communicate if this is what I really wanted?

- *With Respect* -- Don't share anything I wouldn't want the world to see.
- *With Appreciation* -- Acknowledge their appreciation for the program and our mutual values.
- *With Clarity* -- Connect to the program's mission/vision and relevant policies or best practices.
- *With Connection* -- Share an invitation to stay in communication if appropriate.

Contrast

When others misunderstand your (or the program's) purpose or intent, **contrast**. It can be helpful to start with what you *don't* intend or mean, then explain what you *do* intend or mean.



Address their main concern.

We don't ...



Affirm your respect or clarify your/4-H's real purpose.

We do ...

Contrast

A parent is upset that bathroom access at day camp is by gender, not sex-assigned-at-birth; they're worried cisgender girls will be unsafe or uncomfortable.



Address their main concern.

We don't want anyone in an unsafe situation.



Affirm your respect or clarify your/4-H's real purpose.

We do...

We do...

Contrast

A parent is upset that bathroom access at day camp is by gender, not sex-assigned-at-birth; they're worried cisgender girls will be unsafe or uncomfortable.



Address their concerns about respect or purpose.

We don't want anyone in an unsafe situation.



Affirm your respect or clarify your/4-H's real purpose.

We do work hard to keep all kids safe. Here's how...

We do ensure equal access/opportunity for all kids. Here's how...

Putting it all together



“We value your commitment to 4-H and know the program is important to you and your family. It’s important to us too, and we are so proud of the life-changing opportunities 4-H provides youth and their communities. I agree that youth safety is crucial, and I’m glad you contacted me about your concerns. We don’t want anyone in an unsafe situation and work hard to keep kids safe. Ensuring our youth are safe at 4-H, especially in private spaces, is essential. This is why all chaperones and staff are screened, including a national criminal and sex-offender background check. This is also why all camp leadership, adults and teens, are trained on and follow best practices of youth safety (e.g., not being alone with one camper in a closed or distant room).

It’s important to clarify that as a public access program 4-H that follows federal, state, and university non-discrimination laws and policies, which in alignment with positive youth development best practices, guide us to ensure that no one is made to feel unwelcome or unable to use camp facilities because of their sex, gender or gender expression. We know that identity doesn’t define behavior, so we work to provide equal access, care, and treatment for all our participants.

Please reach out if you have questions about our safety or non-discrimination practices or need support identifying how your family’s participation in 4-H works within our positive youth development practices.”

Additional Resource & Response Example

Change Without Friction is No Change At All: Approaches for the Organizational Leader Experiencing Change

J. Elliott-Engel, A. White, J. Rand (2024)

The Agricultural Education Magazine, pg 22-26



<https://www.naae.org/naae/document-server/?cfd=/naae/asets/file/public/magazine/volume96/2024%2003%20--%20march%20april.pdf>



Prepare for Reality

Common shifting focus friction themes to 4-H's work in access, equity, and belonging. (White et al., 2022)

- 1. This topic is political.** "Most of US farmers are not super liberal politically. ...If 4H goes [too] far to the left they will lose those farm kids..."
- 2. This topic is inappropriate for youth.** "This is not what young kids should be thinking about."
- 3. This topic is inappropriate for an agricultural organization.** "Wow....4H, let's stick to agriculture and not issues that need to be left at home. I am done with you."
- 4. This topic isn't necessary.** "There is no need for this, I have never seen any discrimination of any kind in 4-H."

Consider the friction you expect to receive and create a response plan.



Set Yourself Up for Success



Whenever possible, **take time** or **make time** to reflect and create a clear and concise response.



“I’m glad you called, but I have a meeting in a few minutes. Is it better for me to call you back this afternoon or tomorrow?”

“One moment, you caught me on the way to the bathroom. I’ll come find you in a few minutes.”

“Thanks for reaching out. I want to ensure I get the right info to you, but I will need a little time to do so, as I have a busy few days coming up. Just wanted to let you know we got your question and I’ll connect back soon.”

Set Yourself Up for Success



Whenever possible, **take time** or **make time** to reflect and create a clear and concise response.

“

“Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret.”

– Ambrose Bierce

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Questions?

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