

Best Practices for Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth

1. Examine and overcome homophobic biases.
2. Use language that does not assume or privilege one sexual orientation over another.
3. Provide sex education resources for all sexual orientations.
4. Do not place any youth in a homophobic placement; it is not healthy for any youth (no matter if they are gay or straight).
5. Follow up on all homophobic complaints immediately.
6. Place a safety zone sign in your cubicle.
7. Seek out and provide LGBTQ resources while knowing what is available in your community (i.e. local activities and events, drop-in centers, websites, etc.).
8. Be familiar with LGBTQ culture, language, terms, and slang, yo!
9. Bond with youth outside of home – it may make youth feel safer to talk about how their placement is.
10. Ensure that ALL youth are treated fairly in the home.
11. Provide/request more trainings to foster parents and social workers on LGBTQ foster youth.
12. Screen out homophobic foster families and recruit LGBT foster parents.
13. Provide information/education to other youth in the placement and ensure that no youth is being abused because of his/her sexual orientation, or assumed sexual orientation.
14. Recognize and challenge homophobic remarks (“that’s so gay,” “he’s a faggot,” etc.) and break stereotypes.