



Affirmation & Allyship to LGBTQIA+ Houseless Youth

Dana “TherActivist” Johnson, MSW
(they/them/he)

*Director of Youth Housing & Trainer,
Rainbow Community Center of Contra
Costa County*



About Rainbow

~ MISSION ~

Rainbow Community Center builds community, equity, & well-being among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning & Intersex (LGBTQIA+) people & our allies.

~ VISION ~

Rainbow envisions a society that advocates for and celebrates gender and sexual diversity, racial justice, safety, and liberation for all through healing centered engagement.

~ VALUES ~

Authenticity. Bravery. Education. Healing. Liberation.



Presenter Bio...

Dana “TherActivist” Johnson, MSW (they/ them/ he)

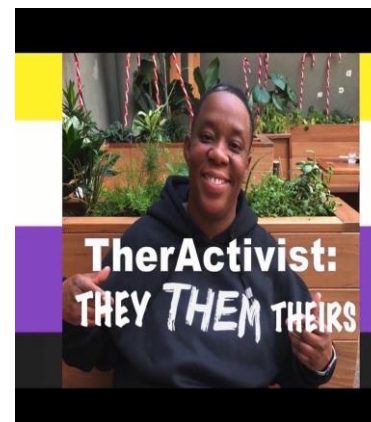
- dana@rainbowcc.org
- Identify as Transgender Nonbinary
- Director of Youth Housing & Trainer, Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County
- LGBTQIA+ Activist; Author & Documentary Filmmaker of TherActivist: They/ Them/ Theirs
- I have 18 years of experience working in the Juvenile Justice System with system-impacted youth




TherActivist: They/ Them/ Theirs Book & Film

- **Identity, Intersectionality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.** The TherActivist embodies a therapeutic activism approach, while servicing and empowering people of color, LGBTQ+ communities, and marginalized populations. For further details on empowering your "therapeutic activism," check out: TherActivist: They/Them/Theirs documentary.

www.theractivist.com



Agenda

- 
- Welcome & Introductions
 - SOGIE Terminology
 - Interactive Activity
 - Effective Allyship
 - Resources
 - Closing



Agreements

- ❑ This is a brave & safe space.
- ❑ This is a confidential space.
- ❑ Please use "I" statements.
- ❑ Make, Take & Share Space.
- ❑ Respect feelings as all feelings are valid.
- ❑ This is a learning environment

How Are You Feeling Today?



About HETAC

❖ The Homeless Education Technical Assistance Center (HETAC)

- Is funded by the California Department of Education (CDE) to serve as the state's homeless education technical assistance center
- Is operated jointly by the Contra Costa, Los Angeles, and San Diego County Offices of Education

HETAC Lead Contacts

- ❖ *Contra Costa County Office of Education*
 - ❖ **Alejandra Chamberlain**
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- ❖ *Los Angeles County Office of Education*
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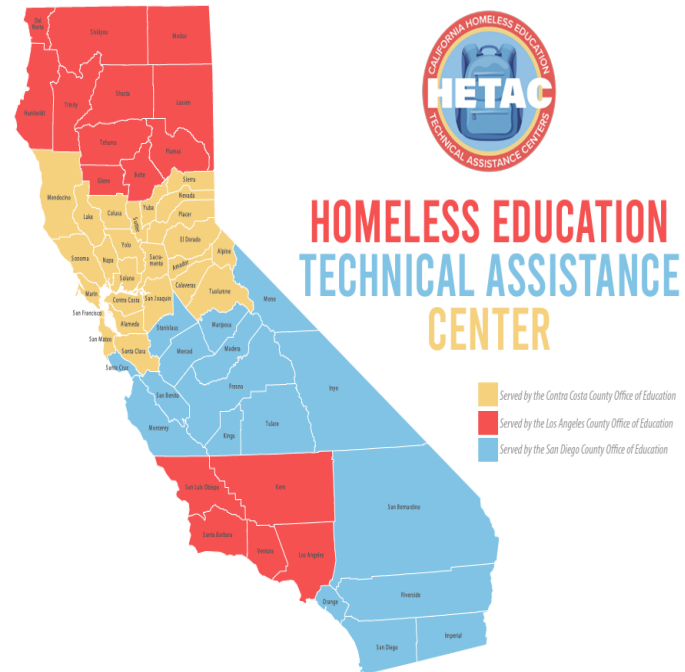


Diving Deep Into Implementation

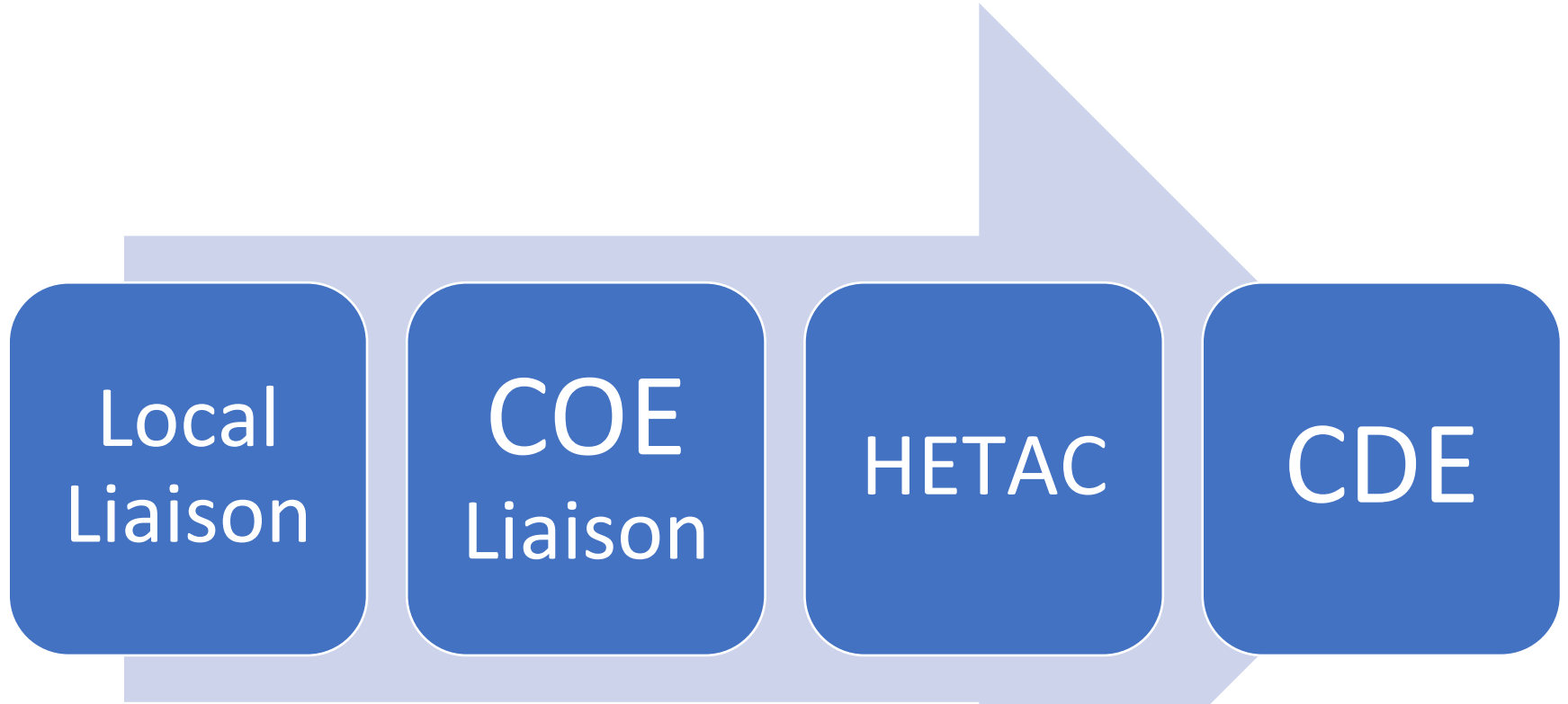


Regionalized

- **Contra Costa – Yellow**
- **Los Angeles – Red**
- **San Diego – Blue**



Relationship between CDE, HETAC, COE and LEAs



Homeless Education Technical Assistance Center (HETAC)



Website: www.hetac.org

Additional Resources:
[HETAC LGBTQIA+ Resource List](#)

"Which HETAC serves my county?"
[Download the HETAC flyer to learn more.](#)

ABOUT	STATUTES AND GUIDANCE	RESOURCES	TRAINING AND EVENTS	GET HELP
Credit Accrual	Extracurricular Activities	Rural Education		
Data	Higher Education	School Selection		
Determining Eligibility	High School Completion	Special Education		
Disaster Preparation and Response	Gas and Gift Cards	Title I, Part A		
Dispute Resolution	Identification	Transportation		
Early Care and Education	Immigrant, Migrant, and Refugee Students	Unaccompanied Homeless Youth		
Engaging People with Lived Experience	LGBTQIA+ Students	Wellness for Practitioners		
Enrollment	Parent Engagement			



Houseless Transitional Youth Program (HTYP)

Help We Offer

- Hotel Vouchers
- Transportation/LYFT/BART/Bus
- Food and Clothing
- Medication OTC - Prescription
- Relocation Funds
- Legal Assistance
- Housing Assistance
- Counseling Services
- Youth Support Groups



HTYP benefits LGBTQIA+ youth and transitional age youth from age 15 to 24 who are experiencing houselessness, have been victims of violence, and are in crisis



Intersectionality



- Multiple identities are interwoven into an individual's experience and cannot be examined independently of each other (Crenshaw, 1989)
- Justice and inclusion work must acknowledge the complex relationships between levels of oppression experienced simultaneously



What is SOGIE?

SEXUAL ORIENTATION is a person's physical, romantic, emotional, aesthetic, and/or other form of attraction to others. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. *Who you love or are attracted to.*

GENDER IDENTITY refers to the individual identification of a person's gender, as defined by that person, and can differ from their sex assigned at birth. It is one's internal sense of being a "man or woman", neither of these, both, or other genders. *Deeply held sense of who you are.*

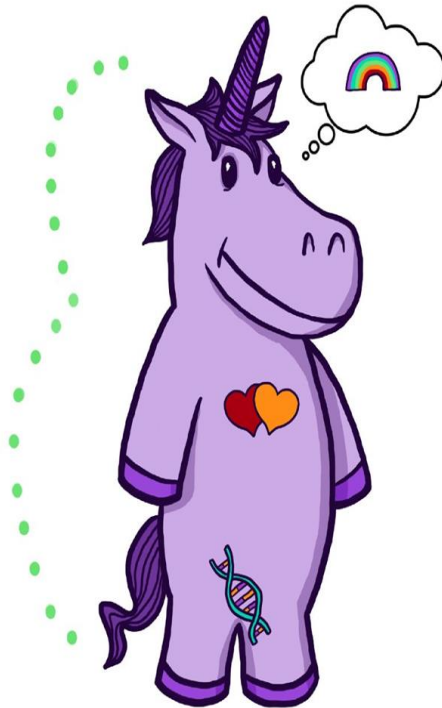
GENDER EXPRESSION refers to the way one expresses their gender identity. It is the physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. *How you communicate your gender to the world.*



Gender and Sexuality Spectrum

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

Sexuality Versus Gender Terms



Sexual Orientation (Who you're attracted to)

- **Gay**
- **Lesbian**
- **Same-gender-loving**
- **Bisexual**
- **Heterosexual**
- **Pansexual**
- **Asexual**
- **Queer**
- **Questioning**
- **Two-Spirit**



Gender Identity (How you understand yourself)

- **Transgender**
- **Cisgender**
- **Nonbinary**
- **Gender non-conforming**
- **Genderqueer**
- **Gender fluid**
- **Pangender**
- **Agender**
- **Questioning**
- **Two-Spirit**

Pronouns Checklist

- ✓ Check with the students individually to see how they would like to be referred to
- ✓ Follow-up with the class to create an understanding on how names and pronouns will be used
- ✓ Allow students to share or not share based off of their own assessment of safety
- ✓ Set an example with an introduction and explanation for your own name and pronouns
- ✓ Check in periodically with the class to see if what you have agreed upon still works for them



Our Family Coalition, ourfamily.org



Coming Out Story Guidance

Instructions:

In a moment we are going to be doing an activity about coming out. Before we jump into the activity, please write down the following 5 things.

Write down a list of the following:

1. Name of a person (friend/loved one)
2. Name of a family member or relative
3. A hobby/passion you enjoy
4. A material possession that you wouldn't want to lose
5. A dream job

Activity: Coming Out Story Debrief

How did this activity make you feel?

What surprised or impacted you in the story?

What does this activity teach us about the process of “coming out” for LGBTQI+ people?

What would be a supportive response if someone took the vulnerable risk to come out to you?

“I was like ‘so what is the whole point of life?’ I’m just homeless, you know, and everyone is making fun of me for **being homeless and for my gender.**”

Youth Testimonial

Source: [California Homeless Youth Project \(2018\)](#)

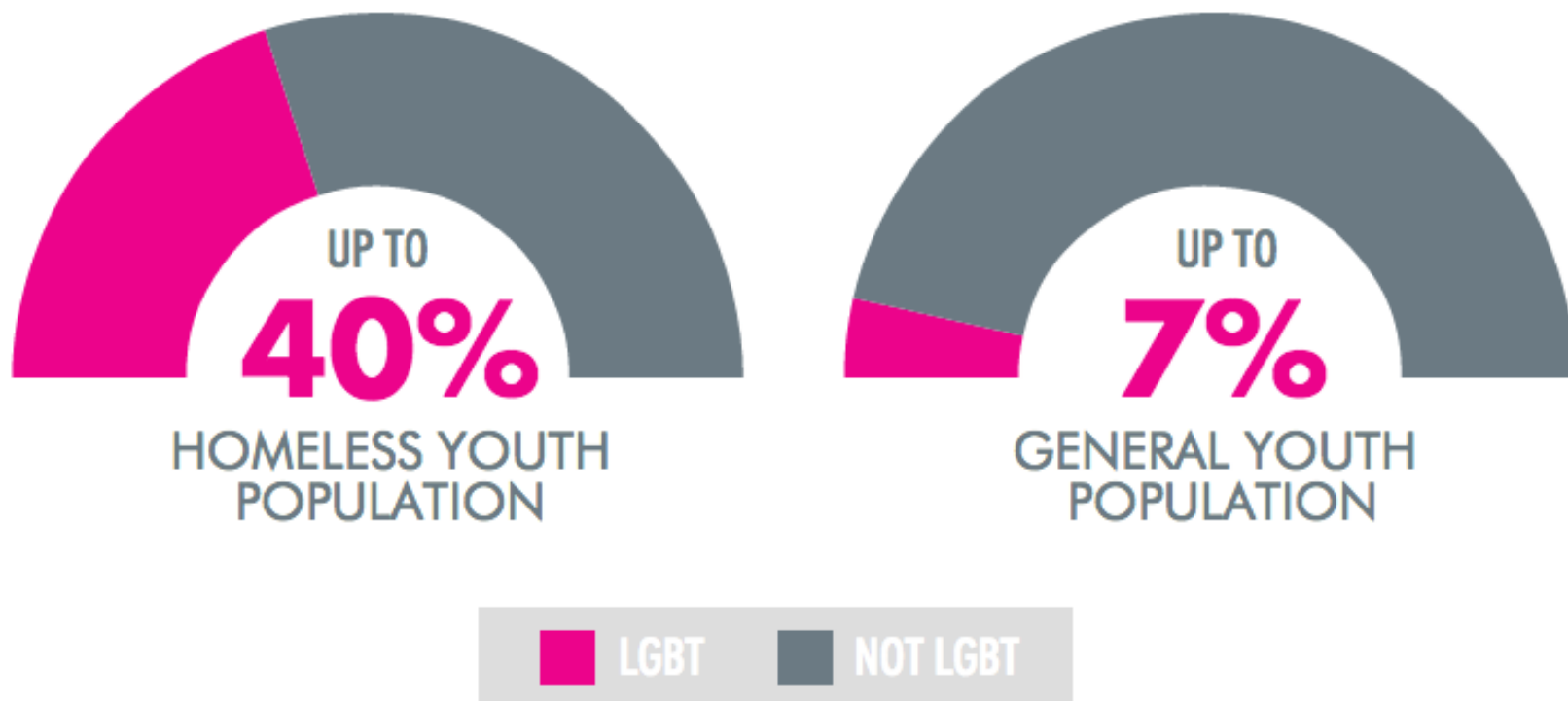
Protective Factors for Youth

THE TREVOR National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2022

1. Transgender and nonbinary youth who report having their chosen name and pronouns respected by all or most of the people in their lives attempted suicide at **half the rate** of those who did not
2. LGBTQ youth who had access to spaces that **affirmed their sexual orientation and gender identity** reported lower rates of attempting suicide.
3. Among LGBTQ youth with a history of foster care, those who reported **attending an LGBTQ-affirming school had more than 50% lower odds of reporting a past-year suicide attempt** compared to those who attended a school that was not LGBTQ-affirming
4. LGBTQ youth who have at least **one supportive adult** reported lower rates of attempted suicide

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>

LGBTQIA+ Youth are **120%** More Likely to Experience Homelessness



Source: [True Colors United \(2015\)](#)

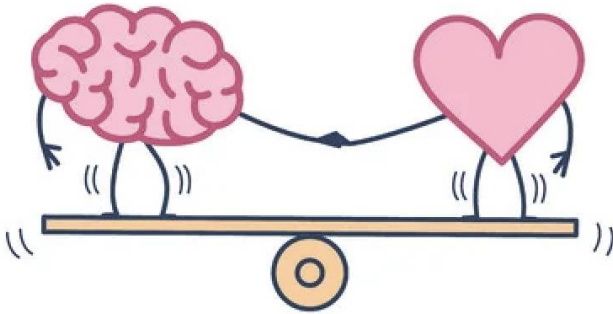
4 Entry Points to Expansive Allyship



Internal



Interpersonal



Instruction



Institutional

Internal Entry Point



- Read the SOGIE Handbook
- Read the Supporting LGBTQIA+ Homeless Youth Toolkit
- Attend an LGBTQIA+ training or workshop
- Watch an LGBTQIA+ movie or read a book
- Attend an LGBTQIA+ event or conversation



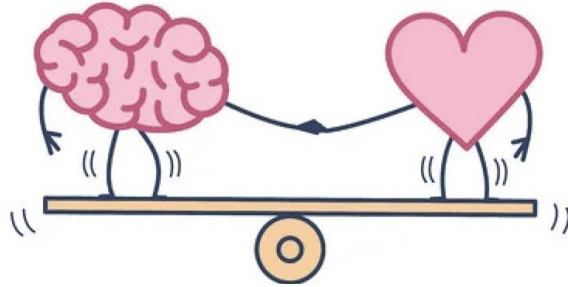
Interpersonal Entry Point



- Talk to my family about LGBTQIA+ topics
- Post a Pride flag in my space & share why
- Interrupt witnessed anti-LGBTQI+ bias
- Share my pronouns w/people I see every day



Instructional Entry Point



- Share about LGBTQIA+ people in my curricula
- Read a book in with LGBTQIA+ characters in my class
- Change scenarios or word problems to be inclusive of LGBTQIA+ identities
- Create a system and practice for sharing pronouns in class



Institutional Entry Point



- Provide ongoing training and learning opportunities for all staff
- Forward communicate and educate on policies that exist to protect LGBTQIA+ youth
- Add pronouns to email signatures, bios, name badges, etc.
- Start a Gender and Sexualities Alliance (GSA) or Rainbow Club at every school in your district



ANYONE CAN BE AN ALLY

- Check your own **biases**:
Notice your own reactions to racism, ableism, sexism, heteronormativity (**flight, fight, freeze**)
- **Continue learning** about areas that you have limited exposure to
- **Intervene** when you observe biased language & behaviors
- Use everyday opportunities to make change (**share pronouns, use gender inclusive greetings, “welcome everyone”, etc.**)
- Educate yourself on appropriate **stress reduction and empowerment strategies** for yourself and people you work with. Share your learning



Social Transitions

- **Help people understand the meaning of words related to gender and transitioning.**
- **Identify a safe person or people on staff for a student to talk to who will check in with them weekly while at school.**
- **Identify key personnel responsible for answering more difficult questions or concerns parents and families may have and who can serve as a resource to others.**
- **Honor a student's pronoun and name. Discuss with the student and their affirming parents/caregivers what name to use on forms and which gender marker to check.**
- **Allow students and families to have the name that a student uses on lists that could be seen by other students or families.**
- **Be clear about restroom accessibility.**
- **Avoid situations that force children to make gendered choices, such as lining up by boys and girls. Instead, divide students by last names, colors they're wearing or common interests.**
- **Educate adults in the school about the complexity of gender and the importance of gender inclusive classrooms for all students.**

Interrupt the Bias

- Girls should play with dolls and do feminine things for playtime
- Boys should play with trucks and do more masculine things for playtime
- Boys should be directed to like blue and green; girls toward red and pink.
- Boys should not wear dresses or other clothes typically associated with "girl's clothes"

**an educators job is to debunk myths and stereotypes, show the difference between patterns and rules, showcase examples of how gender does not determine our capabilities, likes/dislikes, or future.

Interrupter Examples

When to interrupt:

Discuss, question, or intentionally use a dead name (former name) in any setting (e.g. one-on-one, in public, or in private).

Threaten to prove that an individual is a different gender than how they identify.

Intentionally misgender or make reference to an individual's perceived gender other than how they identify.

Intentionally use pronouns that are not congruent with how an individual identifies.

Stereotyping behaviors, interests, and appearances as “only for boys” or “that’s for girls.”

How to interrupt:

- **The moment you notice it, intervene by saying: “Those words can make our school unsafe” or “those words need to stop.”**
- **Challenge the harasser's perception on gender: ie “Why do you think that color is only for boys?”, “I do that and I'm not that gender, so anyone can do it!”**
- **Do an emotional check-in with the student experiencing the harassment. Do not assume their identity while doing so.**
- **Documenting the incident as harassment in school records is important for all parties.**

Be an Ally on Your Campus or in your office!

- **Ensure the Physical Space is Welcoming**
 - o Inclusive signs/posters
 - o Private/Gender Neutral Restrooms/Changing Rooms
 - o Resources/books
- **Use Bias-free Language And Refrain From Assumptions**
 - o Ask for Gender Pronouns & Names (for substitutes also)
 - o Gender neutral language
- **Include & represent LGBTQIA+ people in school events – career days, health fairs, multicultural celebrations**



Ally Spectrum

Behold, the Straight for Equality Ally Spectrum®:



<https://www.straightforequality.org/allyspectrum>

Family Behaviors that Increase Your LGBTQ Child's Health & Well-Being

Research from the Family Acceptance Project[®] found more than 50 family accepting behaviors that help protect your lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer-identified (LGBTQ) child against health risks like depression, suicide and illegal drug use and help to increase your LGBTQ child's self-esteem, health and well-being. A little change makes a difference in decreasing your child's isolation and risk and giving them hope that their family will be there for them.

Family support saves lives!

BEHAVIORS THAT HELP...

Tell your LGBTQ / gender diverse child that you love them

Support your child's gender expression

Talk with your child or foster child about their LGBTQ identity and listen respectfully –

Require other family members to treat your child with respect

Show affection when your child tells you or when you learn that your child is LGBTQ

Ask your child if – and how – you can help them tell other people about their LGBTQ identity

Welcome your child's LGBTQ friends to your home

even when you feel uncomfortable or think that being gay or transgender is wrong

Bring your child to LGBTQ groups and events

Get accurate information to educate yourself about your child's sexual orientation, gender identity and expression

Find a congregation that welcomes your LGBTQ / gender diverse child and family

Participate in family support groups and activities for families with LGBTQ and gender diverse children to get support for yourself and your family and guidance for supporting your LGBTQ child

Use your child's chosen name and the pronoun that matches their gender identity

Tell your LGBTQ / gender diverse child that you're proud of them

Tell your LGBTQ / gender diverse child that you will be there for them – even if you don't fully understand

Talk with your religious leaders to help your congregation become supportive of LGBTQ people

Stand up for your child when others mistreat them because of their LGBTQ identity or gender expression – at home, at school, in your congregation and in the community

Speak openly about your child's LGBTQ identity

Welcome your child's LGBTQ partner to family events and activities

Connect your child with LGBTQ adult role models

Express enthusiasm for your child having an LGBTQ / gender diverse partner when they're ready to date

Believe that your child can be a happy LGBTQ adult – and tell them they will have a good life

Family Behaviors that Increase Your LGBTQ Child's Risk for Serious Health & Mental Health Problems

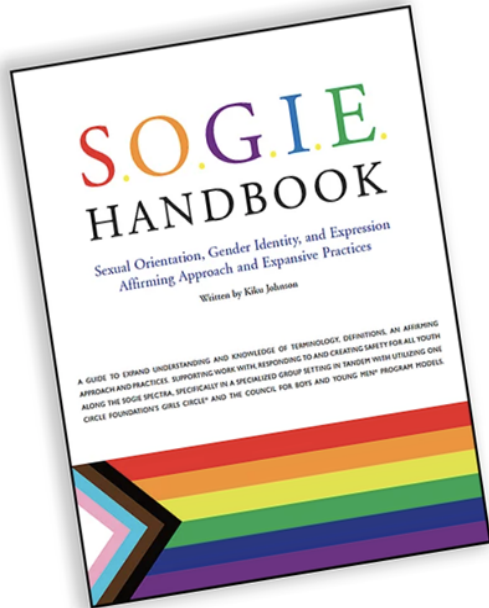
Research from the Family Acceptance Project® shows that more than 50 family rejecting behaviors contribute to serious health risks for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) youth. These include depression, suicidal behavior, illegal drug use, HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Family rejection increases risk for homelessness and placement in foster care and juvenile justice facilities.

Most parents and families that engage in these behaviors do so out of care and concern – to help their LGBTQ / gender diverse child fit in, have a good life and to protect them from harm. Help families understand that these and other rejecting behaviors are harmful!

BEHAVIORS THAT HURT...

Prevent your child from having an LGBTQ friend	Don't talk about your child's LGBTQ identity	Blame your child when others mistreat them because of their LGBTQ identity / gender expression	Try to change your child's LGBTQ identity or gender expression	Exclude your LGBTQ child from family events & activities
Tell your LGBTQ child that you're ashamed of them	Pressure your child to be more (or less) masculine or feminine	Don't use the name or pronoun that matches your child's gender identity	Don't let your child participate in LGBTQ support groups or services	Let others speak badly about LGBTQ / gender diverse people in front of your child
Tell your child that being LGBTQ is "just a phase"	Take your child to a therapist or religious leader to try to change their LGBTQ identity	Hit, slap or physically hurt your child because they are LGBTQ / gender diverse	Don't let your child talk about their LGBTQ identity	Don't let your child wear clothes or hairstyles that express their gender identity
Use religion to reject your child's sexual orientation, gender identity and expression	Make your child pray or attend religious services to change or prevent their LGBTQ identity	Call your child negative names because they are LGBTQ / gender	Tell your child that God will punish them because of their sexual orientation or gender identity	Make your child leave home because they are LGBTQ

SOGIE Handbook



S.O.G.I.E Handbook FREE Download Now Available!

Open source, free, and downloadable, **SOGIE Handbook** written by Rainbow's Executive Director! **Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression Affirming Approach and Expansive Practices** for anyone who connects with anyone and wants a helpful tool. Funded by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and supported by the New York State Department of Health and Cornell University.

DOWNLOAD



https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/sexual_violence/docs/sogie_handbook.pdf

SOGIE HANDBOOK QR CODES



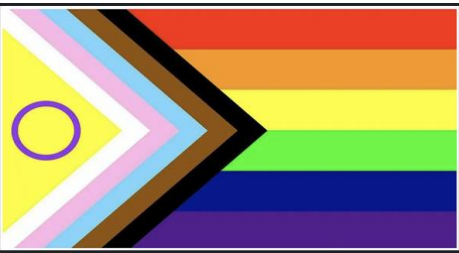
ENGLISH VERSION

Español versión





LGBTQIA+ Homeless Youth/ Students Toolkit



Servicing, Supporting and Allyship to LGBTQIA+ Homeless youth/students

TOOLKIT

- *Written & Created By: Dana TherActivist Johnson, MSW (they/ them/ he), Director of Youth Housing, Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County*
- *In Collaboration with Contra Costa County Office of Education- HETAC Program.*

Allyship Action Items

- What is something you want to do to educate yourself?
- What will you implement in your Instruction?
- What needs to be added to your community, school culture, conversations?
- What systems or procedures could you impact?



Closing/ Questions.....



Q & A

Ask a question
or
Share an
appreciation