

# Emerging Practices for Supporting LGBTQI+ Young People Across Human Services Programs

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This infographic highlights emerging practices that human services agencies, programs, program staff and leaders, as well as others such as policymakers and technical assistance providers are using to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, or intersex (LGBTQI+) young people and their families. The information included was gathered from a federal project that included an environmental scan of human services programs serving LGBTQI+ youth and young people, and key informant interviews with human services providers, parents/guardians, LGBTQI+ young people, and federal staff (link to full project brief and webinar below). All activities of the project and this infographic were co-created with an LGBTQI+ young adult steering committee.

## What are human services providers doing to better support LGBTQI+ young people?



### Center services around LGBTQI+ young people's needs and intersecting identities.

Programs listen to and engage with LGBTQI+ young people to understand the many facets of their identity (racial, ethnic, religious, etc.) and what would be most helpful for them. For example, programs are following the young person's lead on talking about their sexual orientation or gender identity and allowing them to engage as much or as little as with the services they feel are the most useful to them.



### Coordinate services and make them easier to access.

Many programs and agencies serving LGBTQI+ young people coordinate services by serving as a "one-stop shop" where young people can receive several services, including health, behavioral health, and housing assistance. Young people find this helpful, so they don't have to explain themselves to different people or go to multiple service providers.



### Create a safe space.

Programs are creating safe spaces for LGBTQI+ young people by using the young person's preferred pronouns and/or chosen name, having visual cues such as pride flags within the organization, and offering affirming services and supports such as gender-neutral housing and bathrooms. These and other markers of support can help young people feel welcome and affirmed when they engaged with services.



### Understand and strengthen family-youth connections.

Programs are offering education, counseling, and peer supports to help build acceptance and capacity among families and caregivers at various stages of acceptance. Some programs are using a relationship-based approach to meet families where they are in terms of acceptance and tailor services accordingly. For families that are not open to acceptance, the focus is on a "chosen family" of supportive adults and peers.



### Provide staff with training and continuous education.

Programs are providing foundational training to staff about concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity, risk and protective factors experienced by LGBTQI+ youth, and how to apply intersectional and trauma-informed approaches. In addition to providing specific trainings, some programs have LGBTQI+ liaisons that support staff's ongoing learning about best practices.

## Similar to the emerging practices outlined above, young people say some of the best emerging practices include:

- Our needs and intersecting identities being addressed comprehensively. Supports are most helpful when they are built around our individual needs and preferences, not deadlines or rules.
- Helping us connect to mental health providers and treatment that are affirming and affordable.
- Staff being provided resources and supports to care for themselves so they can better serve us.
- Coordination of services and supports to make them easier for us to access and minimize the number of times we have to tell our story.

For more information and resources use the links below to access the full brief and webinar on Emerging Practices for Supporting LGBTQI+ Young People Across Human Services Programs and youth.gov's page on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

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[Brief and Webinar](#)

[Youth.gov](#)