



**LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER**

**RISE**

# **2016 RISE PROJECT OUTREACH AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING PROGRAM MANUAL**

Volume 3



**LOS  
ANGELES  
LGBT  
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# Social Work Practice for LGBTQ and Gender-Variant Youth Manual:

*Skills for reducing barriers to permanency for  
LGBTQ and gender-variant youth in foster care*



# **Social Work Practice for LGBTQ and Gender- Variant Youth Training Manual**

Skills for reducing barriers to permanency for  
LGBTQ and gender-variant youth in foster care

The RISE Initiative is funded by the Children’s Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under grant number 90-CT-0154.

## Introduction

### What is RISE?

- In September 2010, the Los Angeles LGBT Center received a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The grant funds the development and testing of a model program **to address barriers to permanency and well-being for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth in foster care.**
- The RISE Initiative aims to contribute to the understanding of how **to reduce the number of LGBTQ youth in long-term foster care and how to increase permanency through decreasing heterosexism, anti-gay and anti-transgender bias in caregiving settings.** We strive to provide parents, caregivers, and professionals with the support and education needed to nurture durable, lifelong connections for LGBTQ young people.
- In collaboration with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services and over 25 community and foster care partners, the RISE Initiative will develop, implement, and research the effects of a comprehensive multi-component intervention to help LGBTQ youth in Los Angeles County find durable **family connections, achieve emotional permanency, and obtain legal permanency in homes where they feel safe, nurtured, and loved into adulthood.**

### Outreach and Relationship Building Curricula:

The Outreach and Relationship Building (ORB) Team is the RISE project intervention focused on building practitioner competency to reduce barriers in caregiving settings by decreasing heterosexism, anti-gay and anti-transgender bias. The ORB curriculum consists of two trainings (LGBTQ Foundation and Social Work Practice, respectively). The LGBTQ Foundation training provides basic knowledge about terminology and concepts related to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression; the coming out process; the impact of accepting and rejecting behaviors; the positive power of affirming environments; and the legal and professional standards guiding work with LGBTQ youth. The Social Work Practice training consists of five units and provides practitioners with opportunities to combine the knowledge acquired in the LGBTQ Foundation training with common practice skills, such as active listening, motivational interviewing, assessing environments, and responding to specific instances of biases. Participants must attend the LGBTQ Foundation training prior to attending the Social Work Practice training. Each training is 3-3.5 hours in length.

ORB also coordinates the RISE Coaching network, a space for service providing agencies to seek further assistance and guidance in their efforts to best serve LGBT youth in their care.

RISE Skills

The following is an overview of the specific skills the Social Work Training addresses:

Unit/Title	Learning/Behavioral Objective
<b>Unit 6:</b> Skill Building	- Review active listening, motivational interviewing, and self-awareness checks as dynamic tools for working with LGBTQ youth
<b>Unit 7:</b> Language in Practice	- Understand the impact of language and youth self-definition <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Revisit gender identity and increase comfort with pronoun usage</li></ul>
<b>Unit 8:</b> Rejection/Acceptance in Practice	- Identify supports for a youth's coming-out process and the environment's adjustment process
<b>Unit 9:</b> Creating a Brave Space	- Recognize behavior that truly creates an affirming environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Respond to supportive and negative comments and questions</li></ul>
<b>Unit 10:</b> Legal Framework and Professional Standards in Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Review legal and professional standards regarding the disclosure of a youth's sexual orientation and/or gender identity</li></ul>

## Using the learning tools

Below is a list and description(s) of learning tools used in the Social Work Practice training:

<b>Learning Tool</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>How-To Use</b>
Booster(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Content consisting of background information to increase participant knowledge related to permanency issues for LGBTQ and gender-variant youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present boosters based on relevance to the respective unit. Boosters should move knowledge and activities forward.</li> </ul>
Purpose statement/ Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allows a “landing point” and intended direction for guiding and monitoring learning.</li> <li>- Gives flexibility and guidance in adapting instructional content and delivery for diverse audiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guide facilitation of activities.</li> <li>- Facilitators who wish to replace activities in this curriculum with different activities can do so while still meeting intended learning purposes.</li> </ul>
Activity/ Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allow hands-on practice with skill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See “Activity Description” for guidance on delivering an activity.</li> </ul>
Materials/Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide participants with information to review independently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribute as it relates to training content or provide a packet before or after training.</li> </ul>
Unit Duration, Structure, Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides recommended length, sequencing, and delivery of unit content.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Duration: Pacing</li> <li>- Structure: Review the sequencing of slides and activities</li> <li>- Delivery: Provides guidance for content delivery.</li> <li>- Provides key points to address and/or action steps facilitator should complete.</li> </ul>
Key Points/Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide recommended delivery of content.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide facilitator with how-to deliver the content.</li> </ul>
My Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allow space for participants to reflect on learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow activity using discussion prompts in My Next Steps section.</li> </ul>
Discussion Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set tone and guidelines for participation and a productive learning environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivered before training starts.</li> <li>- Explain that guidelines are to create a safe learning environment for discussion and participation.</li> <li>- The trainer must be comfortable facilitating discussions in which people have different points of view.</li> <li>- The listed guidelines are suggestions. The group may change, add, delete, etc.</li> </ul>

## Welcome and Introduction

**Purpose statement:** The purpose of this unit is to:

- Welcome and introduce participants to the ORB team.
- Remind participants of project outcomes and ORB function.
- Review training purpose, format, and structure.

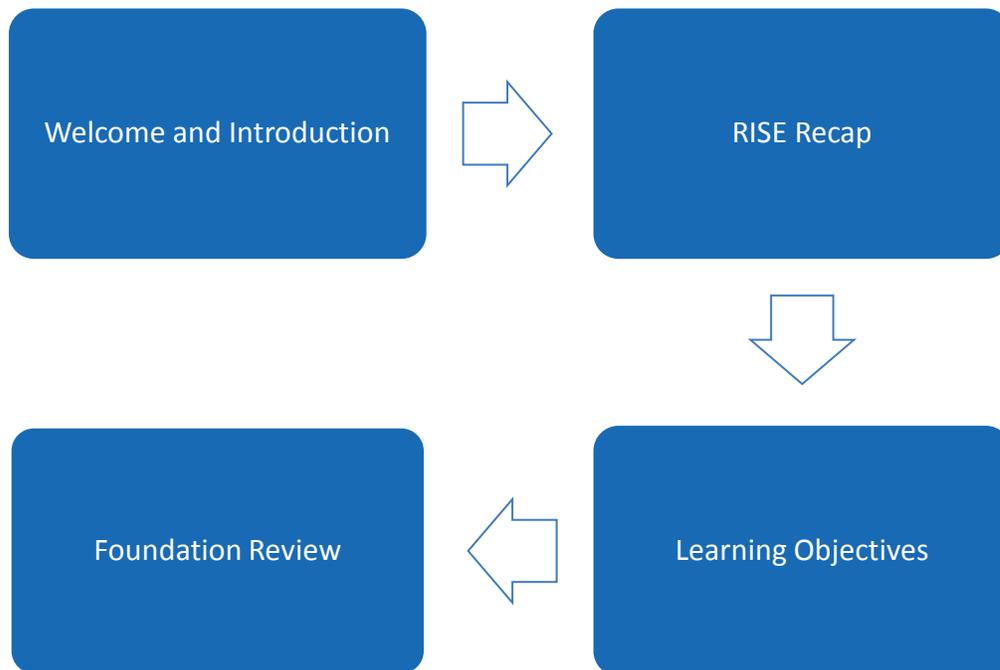
**Learning Objectives:**

N/A

**Materials Needed:**

- Welcome and Introduction Slides
- Remembering Healthy Development

**Unit Structure:**



**Unit Duration:**

## Welcome and Introduction:

Function: Welcome and introduce participants to the ORB team.

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# Social Work Practice with LGBTQ Youth

*Skills for reducing barriers to permanency for LGBTQ and gender-variant  
children/youth in foster care*

The GRANTEE PROJECT/PROGRAM is funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families,  
Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under grant number 90-CT-0154.

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## Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Introduce RISE ORB team
2. Welcome participants to part two of the two-part training series.
3. Present two to three sentences of the facilitators' personal missions (Why Am I Here?).
4. Thank participants and acknowledge time given to participate in training.
5. Explain that our goal is to provide them with the knowledge and support they need to continue their work with LGBTQ youth; we are not here to change personal beliefs.
6. Address housekeeping (e.g. restrooms, cell phones, exits, breaks, snacks, etc.)
7. Inform participants about the purpose of the camera (if applicable).

**Discussion Guidelines:**

Function: Set tone and guidelines for productive participation during the training.

## Discussion Guidelines

- I will share only if I wish...no pressure.
- I will speak from my own experience, whenever possible.
- I will value confidentiality: personal sharing will stay in the group when I leave.
- I will share comments with the general group.
- I will be open to others' thoughts and feelings even when they differ from my own.

Slide from "Creating Inclusive Systems of Care for LGBT Youth

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**Key Points/ Action Steps:**

1. Have participants read the discussion guidelines
  - a. This can be done silently, aloud, or the facilitator can read the guidelines to the group.
2. Ask participants if guidelines work for them, if they need any clarification or if they want to make any additions.

**Question Guidelines:**

- 1) We will answer questions directly related to the current material right away.
- 2) If you ask a question related to upcoming material, we will let you know when and where we will cover that information.
- 3) We will reserve answers to questions unrelated to the training's scope for one-on-one discussion during the breaks or after the training session.

## RISE Recap

Function: Reminds participants of project outcomes and ORB function.



# Recognize Intervene Support Empower



**What are RISE Project outcomes?**  
Reduce the number of LGBTQ youth in long-term foster care and increase permanency through decreasing heterosexism, anti-gay and anti-transgender biases in care-giving settings.

**What is the RISE training?**  
Two-part training series focused on supporting knowledge- and skill-building for child welfare practitioners to meet safety, well-being, and permanency outcomes for LGBTQ and gender-variant youth.

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### **Key Points/Action Steps:**

1. Review the following:
  - “What does RISE stand for?”
    - *Recognize, Intervene, Support, and Empower: Recognize that we have LGBTQ youth in our care. Intervene to combat barriers to permanency. Support LGBTQ youth in care. Empower ourselves and our colleagues to create affirming environments and provide appropriate care for LGBTQ youth to increase the likelihood that they will achieve permanency. RISE is a federally funded research project working to identify a model program for increasing permanency outcomes for LGBTQ youth in care. This is the largest grant given to any non-profit organization outside of academia or health care.*
  - “What are RISE Project outcomes?”
    - *Reduce the number of LGBTQ youth in long-term foster care and increase permanency through decreasing heterosexism, anti-gay, and anti-transgender biases in caregiving settings.*
  - “What is the RISE Training?”
    - *A two-part training series focused on supporting knowledge and skill for child welfare practitioner regarding the safety, well-being, and permanency outcomes for LGBTQ, gender-variant youth.*

## Introduce Training

Function: Review purpose of training.



## Learning Objectives

- **Review** rapport-building skills
- **Assess** the coming-out process
- **Adopt** affirming environments
- **Empower** children and youth guided by legal framework and professional standards

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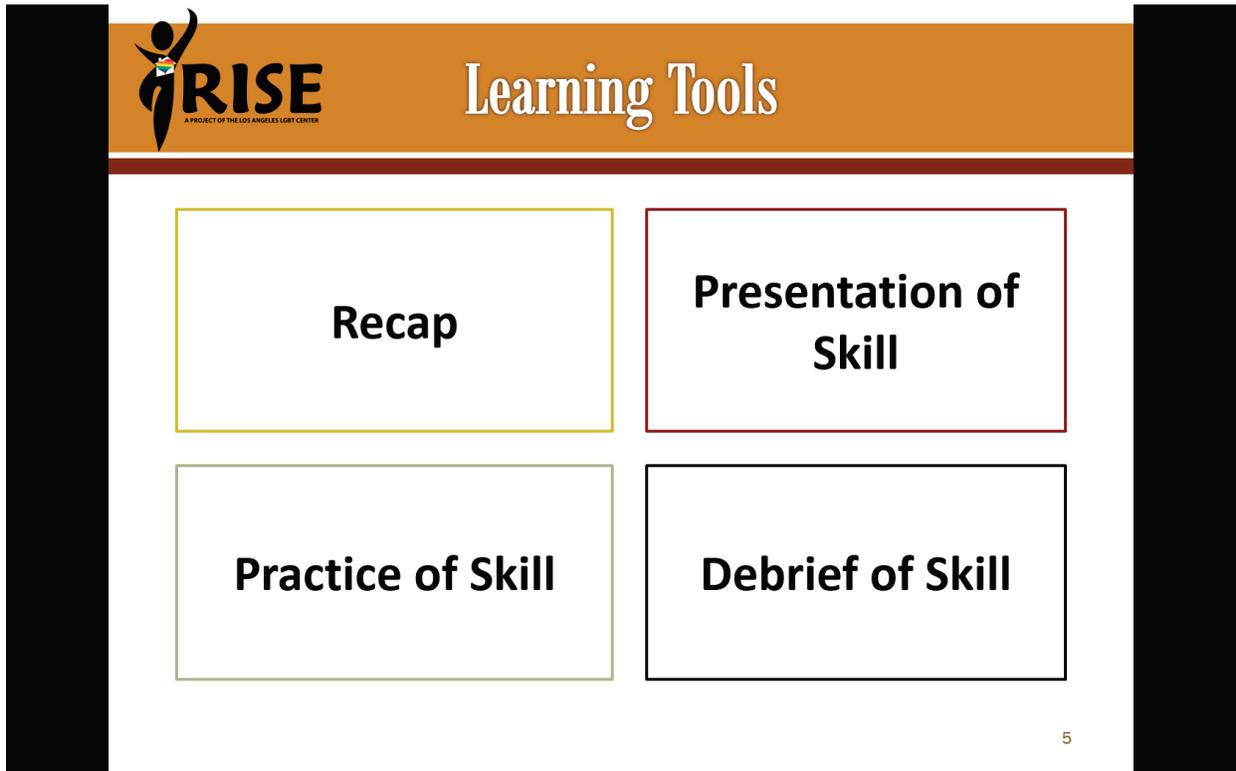
### **Key points/Action Steps:**

1. Explain the following:

*“In the Foundation training, we increased our ability to recognize barriers that LGBTQ and gender-variant youth face in caregiving settings. For this training, we will practice integrating this knowledge into our practice while using tools to reduce those barriers.”*

2. Review training objectives.

## Introduce Training (cont'd)



### **Key Point/Action Steps:**

1. Introduce the learning tools and their functions in this curriculum:
  - Recap: Briefly refresh main points from the LGBTQ Foundation training. Provide applicable recaps throughout the training.
  - Presentation of Skill: A lesson on a specific skill and how to apply it to practice.
  - Practice of Skill: Activities
  - Debrief of Skill: Questions/Summary

## Foundation Review

Function: Remind participants of knowledge applicable to practicing skills in the Social Work Practice training.



### Key point/action steps:

1. Review highlights from the foundation training. Each picture represents an important key point:
  - *"The map represents our knowledge of the pathways to and from permanency."*
  - *"SOGIE images represent our knowledge of language."*
  - *"The Venn diagram represents the three biases that create barriers to permanency for LGBTQ youth in foster care."*
  - *"Image of Family Acceptance Project pamphlet represents our knowledge of acceptance and rejection outcomes."*
  - *"Figure with door represents our knowledge of affirming spaces."*
  - *"The four boxes represent our knowledge of managing disclosures."*
2. Facilitator could use "True or False" format to review the following point(s):
  - Language*
    - Gender expression is not an indicator of sexual orientation.*
  - Barriers to permanency*
    - Heterosexism creates barriers to permanency.*
  - Coming out experiences*
    - There are challenges and benefits to coming out.*
  - Rejection and acceptance*
    - Using a youth's asserted pronoun is an example of an accepting behavior.*

*Health Outcomes*

*Rejecting behaviors have been shown to negatively impact an LGBTQ youth's coming-out process.*

*Affirming spaces*

*RISE Brave Space posters are intended to help youth feel comfortable and safe talking about their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.*

*Legal framework and professional responsibilities*

*LGBTQ youth in foster care have the same rights as non-LGBTQ youth in foster care.*

*Managing disclosures*

*When it comes to managing disclosures, youth permission is fundamental.*

3. Facilitator can also ask participants about the things that stood out, made an impact or that they remembered learning from the LGBTQ Foundation training.
4. Distribute the “Remembering Healthy Development” handout.
  - i. Revisit the LGBTQ Foundation information on basic childhood development and at what ages most youth reach developmental milestones regarding their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
  - ii. Facilitator can mention the First Crush exercise used in the Foundation Training to refresh participants’ memories.
  - iii. Inform participants that this handout is an effective tool for discussing the healthy development of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation with families and youth.

## Unit 6: Getting Started

**Purpose statement:** This unit will refresh participant knowledge of active listening, motivational interviewing, and self-awareness checks. We will also highlight the ways that these skills support our work with LGBTQ youth and their families.

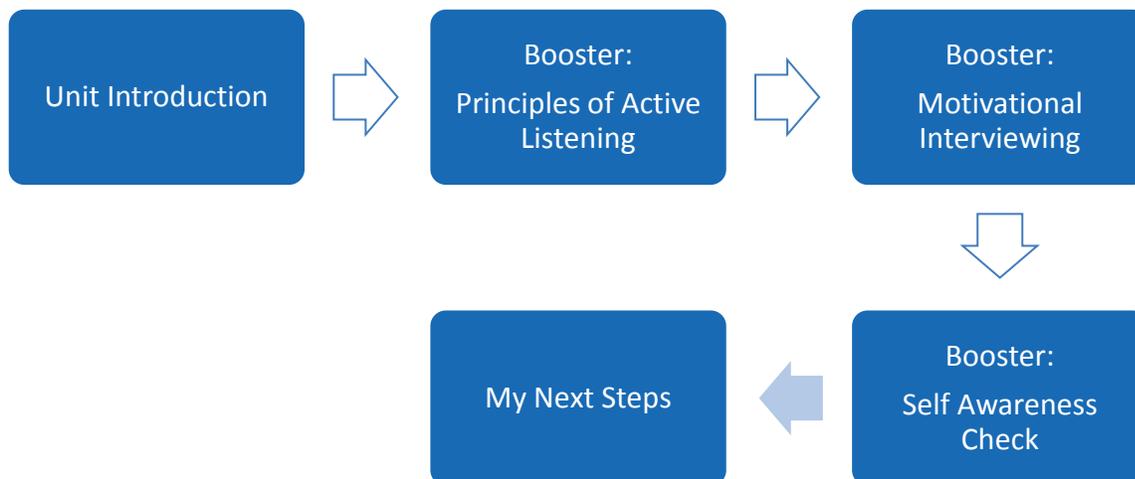
**Learning Objectives:**

Review active listening, motivational interviewing, and self-awareness checks as dynamic tools for working with LGBTQ youth.

**Materials Needed:**

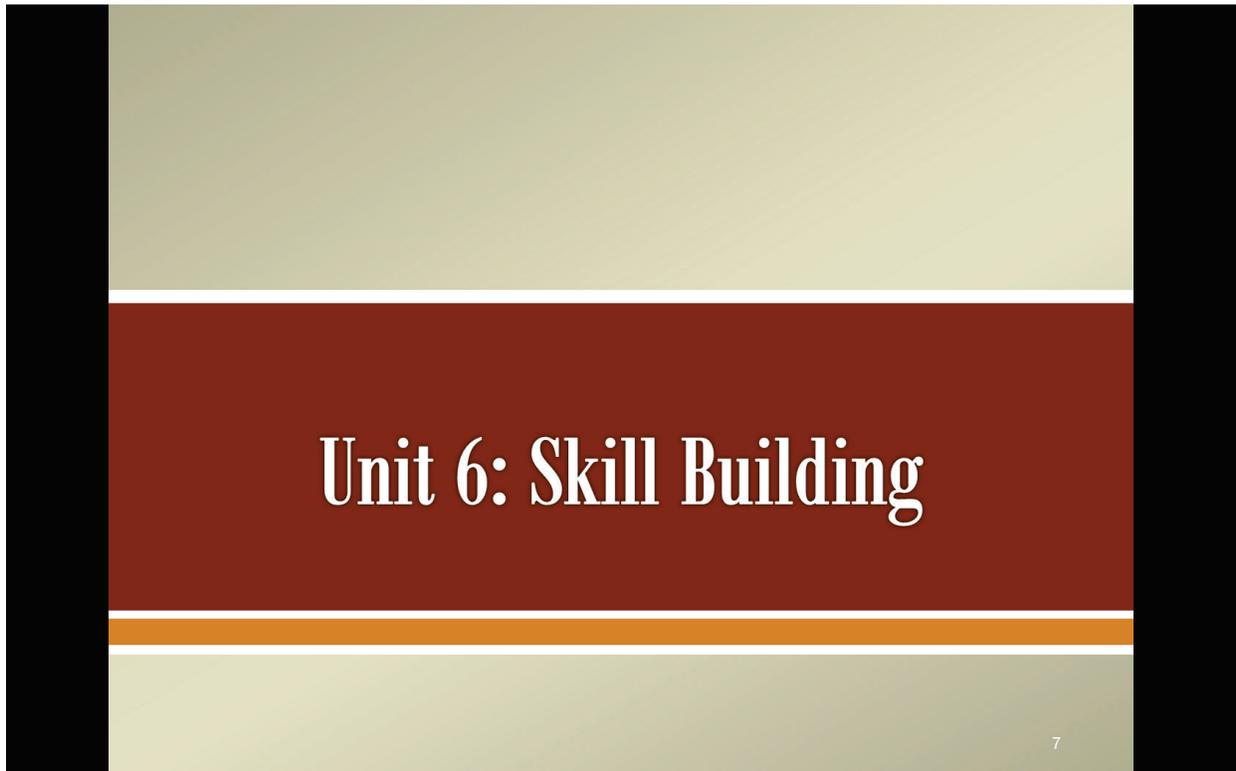
- Unit 6 Slides
- Motivational Interviewing
- My Next Steps

**Unit Structure:**



**Unit Duration:**

## Unit Introduction



### **Key Points/Action Steps:**

1. Present the purpose of this unit to the participants:

This unit will refresh our knowledge of skills necessary for rapport-building with LGBTQ youth (active listening, motivational interviewing, and self-awareness checks). When staff use these skills, LGBTQ youth may feel safer asking for support, help, and resources.

2. **Learning Objectives:** Review active listening, motivational interviewing, and self-awareness checks as dynamic tools for working with LGBTQ youth.

### Activity/ Discussion: Who Do You Call?

Function: Have participants reflect on what makes a good listener and what qualities can hinder open conversations. This activity will lead into the unit on active listening, self-awareness and motivational interviewing.



The graphic features a central white area framed by black vertical bars on the left and right. At the top, an orange horizontal bar contains the RISE logo on the left and the word "Discussion" in white serif font on the right. Below the orange bar, a green speech bubble contains the question: "Who would you call when you're struggling and need someone to listen?". To the left of this bubble is a cartoon drawing of a person on a phone with a question mark above their head. To the right, a red speech bubble contains the question: "Who would you avoid calling when you're struggling and need someone to listen?". A small number "8" is located at the bottom right of the white area.

#### Key Points/ Action Steps:

##### Option to present (limit to 5-10 min):

- 1) Ask participants to work in pairs and respond to the question in the green box. (2 minutes)
- 2) Ask participants to work in pairs and respond to the question in the red box. (2 minutes)
- 3) In large group, ask for three examples of key characteristics of a friend they **would** call when they need someone to listen.
- 4) In large group, ask for three examples of key characteristics of friend they **would not** call when they need someone to listen.
- 5) Recap the positive characteristics discussed as *"active listening skills we bring to our work."*

## Booster: Principles of Active Listening

Function: Review the seven key principles of active listening and their relevant application in working with LGBTQ youth and gender-variant children.

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### Key Principles of Active Listening

**Restating**  
Paraphrasing what you heard in your own words

"I want to make sure I got it..... or Let's see if I'm clear about this. . ."

**Encouragers**  
Brief, positive prompts to keep the conversation going and show you are listening.

"Umm-hmmm"  
"Oh?"  
"Then?"  
"And?"  
::Head Nods::

**Probing**  
Ask professional questions to draw the person out and get deeper and more meaningful information; not for the purposes of satisfying personal curiosity

"What do you think would happen if you. . .?"  
"What would be different if...?"

Adapted from: National Aging Information & Referral Support Center. (2005). 9

### Key Point/Action Steps:

Define each principle and provide a definition. Link active listening back to permanency by asking participants the following: *"Why do you think active listening is so important when working with LGBTQ youth specifically?"*

1. Review: restating, encouragers, probing
  - Restating - Paraphrasing what you heard in your own words
  - Encouragers - Brief, positive prompts to keep the conversation going and show you are listening
  - Probing - Ask professional questions to draw the person out and get deeper and more meaningful information; not for the purposes of satisfying personal curiosity
2. Remind participants that these key principles can help:
  - Build rapport
  - Create safe space
  - Open dialogue
  - Capture information for accurate reporting, documentation and case management

## Booster: Principles of Active Listening (cont'd)



# Key Principles of Active Listening

<b>Silence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow for comfortable silences to avoid dominating the exchange.</li><li>• Gives youth time for thoughtfulness and reflection.</li></ul>	"I appreciate your willingness to talk about...." "I am grateful for you sharing your story with me"	<b>Validation</b> <p>Recognize the worthiness and legitimacy of statements, issues, and feelings.</p>
	"Tell me something that is making you happy right now"	<b>Redirection</b> <p>If the youth is showing signs of becoming overly angry or aggressive, this is the time to shift the discussion to another topic.</p>
	"This seems like its really important to you" or "feeling empowered by telling others about your identity is understandable"	<b>Reflecting</b> <p>Reflecting words in terms of feelings; not about repeating or parroting.</p>

Adapted from: National Aging Information & Referral Support Center. (2005). 10

### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Review: silence, validation, redirection, reflecting
  - Silence - Allow for comfortable silences to avoid dominating the exchange. These silences give youth time for thoughtfulness and reflection.
  - Validation - Recognize the worthiness and legitimacy of statements, issues, and feelings.
  - Redirection - If the youth is showing signs of becoming overly angry or aggressive, shift the discussion to another topic and return to the original topic when the youth is calmer.
  - Reflecting – Reflect the youth’s feelings back to them. This is different from paraphrasing, or repeating, their words.

## Booster: Motivational Interviewing

Function: Review motivational interviewing and its tools. Discuss how to apply motivational interviewing to work with LGBTQ and gender-variant children.

The graphic features the RISE logo (A PROJECT OF THE LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER) on the left. The title "RISE Motivational Interviewing" is centered in a large, bold font. Below the title, the acronym "OARS" is displayed, with each letter in a separate orange box. Underneath each letter is a corresponding box: "O" for Open-Ended Questions, "A" for Affirmations, "R" for Reflections, and "S" for Summary Statements. Below the acronym, the text "+Empathy" is written in a large, bold font. At the bottom, a small line of text reads: "Adapted from: Miller, W. R. & Rollnick, S. (2002). Motivational interviewing: Preparing people for change (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press".

### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. **Motivational Interviewing:** Motivational interviewing is a goal-oriented, client-centered counseling style that assists clients in accomplishing self-motivated changes to achieve their desired outcomes.
2. Distribute **Motivational Interviewing** handout.
3. Present the four key principles of motivational interviewing.
  - Express Empathy - Use words and actions that convey understanding of what the client is presenting.
  - Develop Discrepancy –Help clients see and understand any contradiction between their stated goals and their current behavior.
  - Roll with Resistance – Do not react when clients resist change. Go with the resistance to understand where it is coming from. Meet youth where they are.
  - Support Self-Efficacy – In motivational interviewing, decision-making is client-centered. Support clients as they identify the skills and abilities they have to successfully meet their goals. Honors clients by recognize that they are “experts on themselves.”

### **Example to present:**

*A youth who has recently come out, tells you that he wants to have a better relationship with his biological mom. He decides to call her at least once a week.*

- *Express empathy: It can be hard to repair a relationship.*

- *Develop Discrepancy: You mentioned that you want to have a stronger relationship with your bio mom, but you have not followed through on your weekly calls to her.*
- *Roll with Resistance: I can see that it is really difficult to make the weekly calls to your mom, that's ok. Can we revisit this goal again when you are ready?*
- *Support Self-Efficacy: It took a lot of courage for you to make that phone call a couple of weeks ago.*

**OARS:** Define terms and provide participants with an example of how to use each skill in conversations related to sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression:

- **Open Ended Questions**
- **Affirmations**
- **Summary Statements**
- **Reflections**

***Example to present:***

Continue the example given above during the discussion of motivational interviewing.

*O – Why is strengthening the relationship with your mom important to you?*

*A – It is great that you want to have a better relationship with your mom!*

*R – It sounds like it really upsets you when she doesn't call you back.*

*S – It sounds like if you have more conversations with your mom, you will have a stronger relationship with her. .*

*+Practice empathy at each step in this process.*

## Booster: Self-Awareness Check

Function: To explain how self-awareness can positively impact rapport building by identifying the supports a practitioner may need in their work with LGBTQ Youth.



# Self-Awareness Check



### CHECK QUESTIONS

- What non-verbal communication do I bring to the conversation?
- What past experiences may or may not influence our current interaction?
- What challenges might we have discussing a young person's LGBTQ identity, gender variance, and/or sexual orientation?

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### Key points/Action Steps:

1. Explain to participants that self-awareness checks allow social workers to assess how their non-verbal communication, past experiences, and personal biases can affect relationship and rapport building with youth.
  - *LGBTQ youth in care can be hyper-vigilant when searching their surroundings for signs that they are safe. Your non-verbal communication can convey whether you are a supportive person, and can either help or harm your relationship with the youth.*
2. Present the three key areas to explore when conducting a self-awareness check (and the corresponding "check questions"):
  - **Non-verbal communication**
    - "What words and body language do we bring to the conversation?"
    - "How can you communicate that you are present and engaged?"
  - **Past personal and professional experiences**
    - "What past experiences may or may not influence the current interaction?"
  - **Familiarity (or lack thereof) with LGBTQ issues**
    - "What challenges might we have discussing a young person's LGBTQ identity, gender variance, and/or sexual orientation?"

3. Ask the following questions to participants:
- *“What non-verbal communication do I bring to the conversation?”*
  - *“What past experiences may or may not influence our current interaction?”*
  - *“What challenges might we have discussing a young person’s LGBTQ identity, gender variance, and/or sexual orientation?”*

## Self-Awareness Check (cont'd)



# Working through it.



Find an encouraging space to:

- Express feelings.
- Explore underlying beliefs and attitudes.
- Practice affirming and supportive behaviors.
- Seek more information.
- Have future discussions.

Adapted from: National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins. Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care

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### **Key Points/Action Steps:**

1. Present the checklist to participants.
2. Find an encouraging space to:
  - Express feelings.
  - Explore underlying beliefs and attitudes.
  - Practice affirming and supportive behaviors.
  - Seek more information.
  - Have future discussions.
3. Ask participants if they have a space like this in their agency. Explain the importance of having a space to have these continued conversations.

## My Next Steps

Function: Reflect upon feelings and thoughts regarding the unit content and activities.



## My Next Steps



What is your first plan of action?

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### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Introduce **My Next Steps** worksheet and ask participants to answer the question under the appropriate section on their handouts.
2. Social work practice is all about putting knowledge into action. Encourage participants to consider what they might do differently as a result of what they learned in this unit.
3. When participants are finished, request that a few people share their answers.

## Unit 7: Language in Practice

**Purpose statement:** This unit will increase our skill in using language to impact our work with LGBTQ Youth.

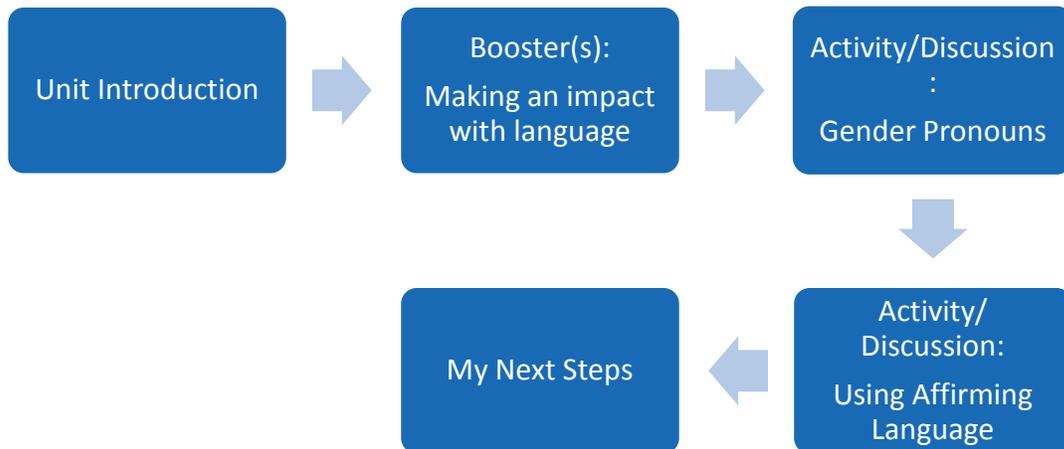
**Learning Objectives:**

- Understand the impact of language and importance of youth’s self-definition
- Revisit gender identity and increase comfort with pronoun usage

**Materials Needed:**

- Unit 7 Slides
- My Next Steps

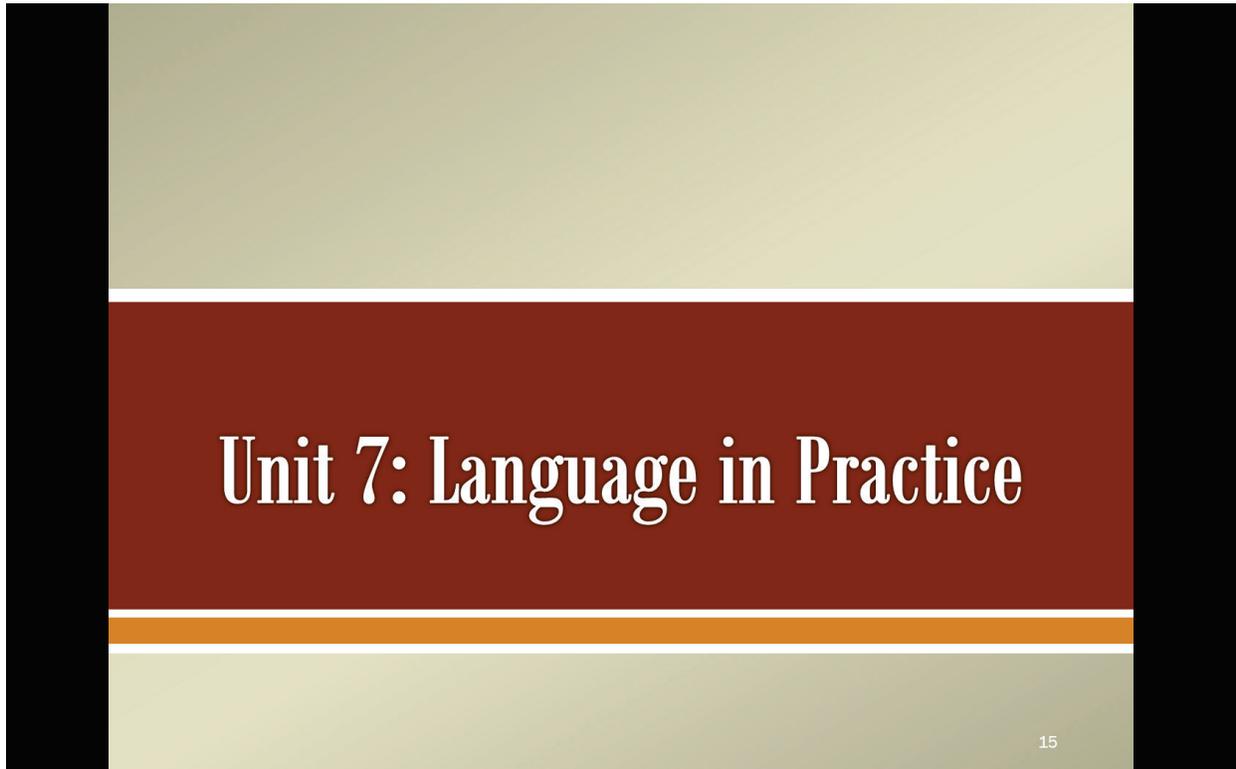
**Unit Structure:**



**Unit Duration:**

**Unit Introduction:**

Function: Present the Unit Purpose.



**Key Points/Action Steps:**

1. Present the purpose of this unit to participants:

In this section, we will discuss language that can create an affirming space for all youth. Language is powerful. Our words can either help or harm rapport-building.

2. **Learning Objective:** This unit will increase our skills in using language to impact our work with LGBTQ Youth.

## Booster: Making an Impact with Language



# Making an impact with language

### Using language

1. Reflect client's language and terminology, self-definition is key.
  - Unsure of the terminology they used? Be gentle and respectful when asking .
2. Use inclusive/gender neutral language (such as partner, significant other, etc.) to avoid assumptions.
3. Practice, practice, practice!



Adapted from: National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins: Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care

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### **Key Points/Action Steps:**

1. Present the slide and explain the following:
2. *These are best practice tips to be used with all youth regardless of known LGBTQ identity, so that these tips become standard practice for interactions with all youth:*
  - *Use inclusive language, such as "partner(s)" or "significant other(s)"*
    - *Instead of asking about a girlfriend, say, "Do you have a partner?" or "Is there someone special in your life?"*
  - *Reflect client's language and terminology, self-definition is key.*
    - *If the youth wants to be referred to as transgender in relation to their gender identity, then refer to the youth as transgender.*
  - *Ask questions to avoid assumptions; be gentle and respectful.*
    - *How do you identify? What are your gender pronouns, so that I may respect your identity?*
  - *Practice, practice, practice!*
  - *Practice asking these questions and using gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression terminology with colleagues.*

## Making an Impact with Language (cont'd)



### Making an impact with language (cont'd)

#### Gender Pronouns (GPs)

1. GPs are pronouns that an individual personally identifies with.
  - Asserted gender
2. GPs can include:
  - She/her/hers
  - He/him/his
  - They/them/theirs
  - All
  - No pronouns
3. Asking for GPs is a way to respect each person's unique identity.
  - Avoid Misgendering.



Adapted from: National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins: Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care

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#### **Key Points/Action Steps:**

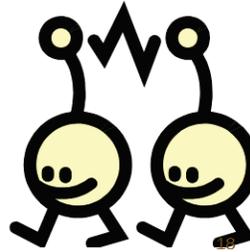
1. Gender pronouns can be referred to as asserted gender pronoun
  - a. You may also hear the phrase "Preferred Gender Pronoun" or "PGP." It is important to keep in mind that an individual's personal experience of their gender is not a "choice." The use of "Preferred Gender Pronoun" may leave a person feeling like you do not respect their gender experience as genuine or valid.
2. There are many gender pronouns in use today. It is best practice to allow a youth to self-define. Gender Pronouns are unique to each individual and thus should be treated with respect and care. Misgendering a person can cause great harm to a person.
3. Misgender means to refer to another person as a gender they do not identify with. This could be done intentionally to cause emotional and psychological harm or unintentionally because of assumptions.
4. Misgendering could damage to the relationship you have with a youth, which could ultimately damage their permanency options.

**Activity/ Discussion: Gender Pronoun Activity**  
Function: Practice Using Asserted Gender Pronouns



## Gender Pronoun Activity

Let's go around the room and say our names and gender pronouns (GPs).



Adapted from: National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins: Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care

**Key Points/Action Steps:**

Inform participants that this activity will help participants practice using gender pronouns (or GPs).

1. Present "Using GPs" activity directions and facilitate the activity:
2. Inform participants that this activity will give them practice using gender pronouns (or GPs).
3. Trainer can choose how to run the activity. Trainer can say, "Let's go around the room and say your name, gender pronoun (or GPS) and one word to describe a value you bring into this work."

### Activity/ Discussion: Using Affirming Language

Function: Practice asking youth about their gender pronoun in foster care settings.



## Practice Using Affirming Language

A new youth, Alex, has joined your facility. You want to make Alex feel welcome and safe in your care, but you are unsure of Alex's gender pronoun. How would you initiate a conversation with Alex to make Alex feel welcome and safe?

19

#### **Key Points/Action Steps:**

1. Inform participants that this activity will help them practice using gender pronouns (GPs) with youth in their care.
2. Ask participants to work in dyads or small-groups and read the "Now Try This" slide.

#### **Suggested Tips:**

1. *Staff members can introduce themselves and state their own personal gender pronouns, and then they can ask for the young person's name and gender pronouns.*
2. *Build rapport by learning about the youth's hobbies, interests, etc. When appropriate, ask Alex, "I want to respect you. How do you want me to refer to you?"*
3. *Don't make assumptions, so avoid using gender pronouns or questions until Alex has self-identified to you.*
4. *Inform the youth where all restrooms are located, including gender-neutral restrooms, if available.*

## My Next Steps

Function: Reflect upon feelings and thoughts regarding the unit content and activities.



## My Next Steps



What is your first plan of action?

14

### **Key Points/Action Steps:**

1. Introduce **My Next Steps** worksheet and ask participants to answer the question under the appropriate section on their handouts.
2. Social work practice is all about putting knowledge into action. Encourage participants to consider what they might do differently as a result of what they learned in this unit.
3. When participants are finished, request that a few people share their answers.

## Unit 8: Rejection/Acceptance in Practice

**Purpose statement:** The purpose of this unit is to investigate and identify supports related to the coming-out process for both a youth and the youth's environment.

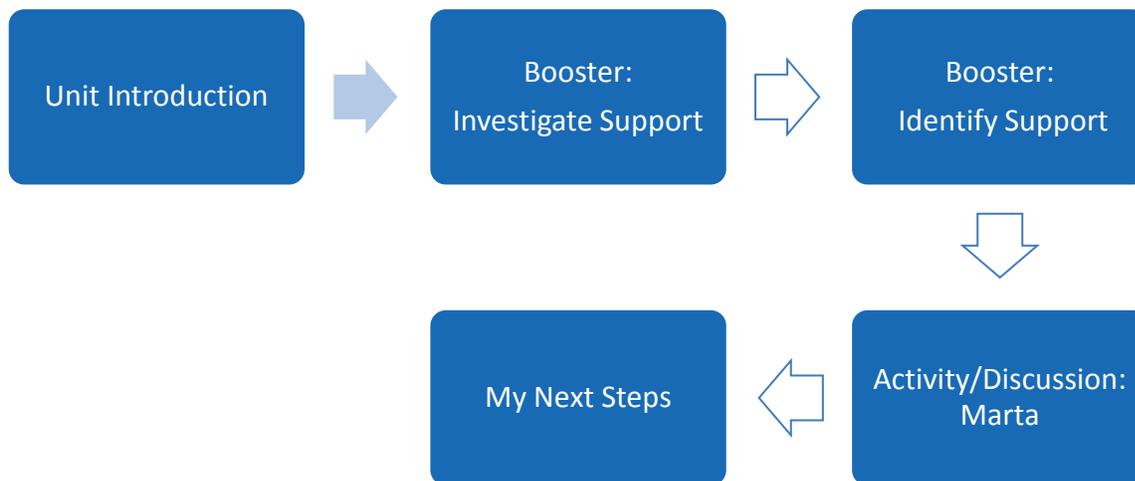
### **Learning Objectives:**

Identify supports for a youth's coming-out process and the environment's adjustment process

### **Materials Needed:**

- Unit 8 Slides
- Assessing Safety and Well-being for LGBTQ Youth
- My Next Steps

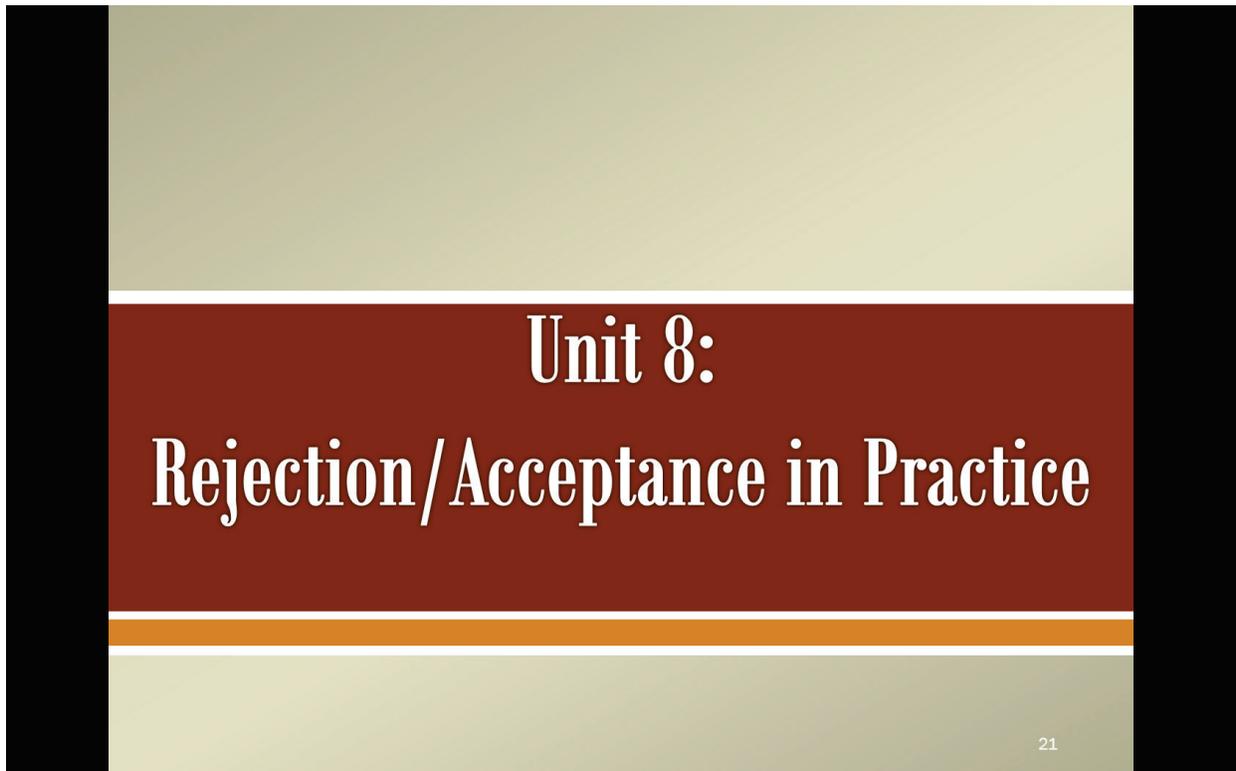
### **Unit Structure:**



### **Unit Duration:**

## Unit Introduction

Function: Present the Unit Purpose.



### Key Points/ Action Steps:

1. Present the purpose of this unit:  
What should you do when a youth comes out to you? This unit will explain the appropriate steps to take to ensure youth are safe and supported.
2. **Learning Objectives:** Identify supports for a youth's coming-out process and the environment's adjustment

## Booster: Investigating Support

Function: Increase knowledge of aspects to consider while investigating support for LGBTQ youth and their families.



## Assessing Safety and Well-being

Find out the following:

- What is the youth experiencing in their coming-out process?
  - Do they need support?
  - Do they feel safe?
  - What are the challenges?

Adapted from: National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins: Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care

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### **Key Points/Action Steps:**

1. Remind participants of the definition to coming out. Coming out is the process of acknowledging your sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression to yourself and then to others. This is a lifelong process.
2. Assist the youth in thinking about their experiences while coming out. Assess who they would like to come out to, the risks and benefits of coming out to certain people, and assess any possible safety concerns.
3. Distribute and explain the “Assessing Safety and Well-being for LGBTQ Youth” handout.
4. If a youth does not feel safe coming out to their social worker, or if the social worker fails to help a youth who is coming out, the youth’s permanency could be hindered.

## Booster: Investigate Support (cont'd)



### Assess the Environment: Is it Safe?

- Best practice tip:
  - Ask for **PERMISSION** from the youth.
- Identify the core issue:
  - Is this about LGBTQ-identity or something else?
- Assess accepting and rejecting behaviors:
  - *Extremely rejecting*
  - *Moderately rejecting*

Adapted from: National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins: Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care

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### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Present slide.
2. Provide examples for the participants.
  - a. Remind participants of rejection, acceptance, and the findings from the “Supportive Families, Healthy Children” pamphlet.
  - b. *Is the problem an LGBTQ issue or something else?*
    - i. *A mother says to her transgender foster daughter “you can’t wear that dress to school.” The foster youth calls the case worker to complain. It turns out the mother supports the youth’s gender expression, but has a rule in her house that dresses cannot go above the knee, no exceptions. In this particular case, the youth’s dress was inappropriate, according to the house rules. This is an issue about the appropriateness of the dress, not an attempt to reject the youth’s gender expression.”*
  - c. *Is the environment extremely rejecting?*
    - i. *Is the youth experiencing violence in the home or verbal harassment?*
  - d. *Is the environment moderately rejecting?*
    - i. *Is the youth receiving mixed messages such as “I love you but I don’t think you should come to the holiday dinner because people will talk?”*

### Booster: Identify support

Function: Increase knowledge relates to assessing how the environment might need support.



## How to Support Relatives and Caregivers

- Acknowledge their process & express empathy for grief and loss
- Provide education to dispel myths and stereotypes
- Recommend spaces that encourage expression of feelings (i.e. support groups)
- Remind them that their behaviors can seriously impact the youth's health and well-being.

Adapted from: National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins: Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care

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### Key Points/Action Steps:

Inform participants that families and caregivers experience adjustment processes when a youth comes out. To determine their needs:

1. Acknowledge their process and express empathy for their grief and loss.
  - a. Emphasize the developmental milestones of the youth's healthy growth and well-being.
2. Provide educational support to dispel myths and stereotypes.
  - a. Reiterate findings from "Supportive Families, Healthy Children" pamphlet.
  - b. Recommend spaces that encourage expression of feelings
    - i. PFLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)
    - ii. TYFA (TransYouth Family Allies)
    - iii. Supportive clergy, priests, pastors, etc.
    - iv. Los Angeles LGBT Center
3. Identify whether the source of discomfort is the youth's LGBTQ identity, gender variance, or something else altogether.
  - a. Correct misinformation.
4. Remind them of the "Supportive Families, Healthy Children" pamphlet, and that families' behaviors can significantly impact the youths' health and well-being.

### Activity/ Discussion: Practice Assessing the Environment

Function: Practice investigating and identifying the needs of youth and the environment as it relates to the coming-out process.



## Practice Assessing the Environment

Marta, a teenager, has lived with the Stevenson foster family since infancy. She has recently come-out as bisexual. She wants to have her girlfriend come to the house to visit. Ms. Stevenson opposes this. Marta's foster sister was able to bring her boyfriend to dinner the month before. Marta calls her caseworker to complain. What should the caseworker do?

25

### **Key Points/Action Steps:**

1. Present the scenario of Marta and ask the participants to work in small groups and discuss the scenario.
2. Ask for a large group share-out and facilitate the group discussion that ties back to the main content.

### Important things to point out:

1. Ask Marta's permission to intervene.
2. Use OARS skills from motivational interviewing to identify the core issues. For example, is this about Marta being in a same-sex relationship or is Marta's girlfriend a bad influence? Marta may be grounded from skipping school and is not allowed to have any friends over. Find out the core issue.
3. Ask Marta for more information and affirm Marta's identity.
4. Understand that her foster parents may be experiencing grief and loss following Marta's coming out.
5. Do not immediately remove Marta without exploring the deeper issues.
6. Ask parents why they are not allowing Marta's girlfriend to come over for dinner.
7. Correct any misinformation the parents may have and offer them support.
8. If the parent(s) express anti-gay bias and are not willing to consider accepting Marta, then this may not be a safe home for Marta.
9. Inform the parents of their legal responsibility to provide non-discriminatory care.
10. Talk to the parents about having rules that apply the same way for all youth, not just for LGBTQ or non-LGBTQ youth.

## My Next Steps

Function: Process/reflect upon feelings and thoughts regarding the unit content and activities.



## My Next Steps



What is your first plan of action?

14

### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Introduce **My Next Steps** worksheet and ask participants to answer the question under the appropriate section on their handouts.
2. Social work practice is all about putting knowledge into action. Encourage participants to consider what they might do differently as a result of what they learned in this unit.
3. When participants are finished, request that a few people share their answers.

## Unit 9: Affirming Environments in Practice

**Purpose statement:** The purpose of this unit is to build and practice skills that assist in adopting an affirming environment for LGBTQ Youth.

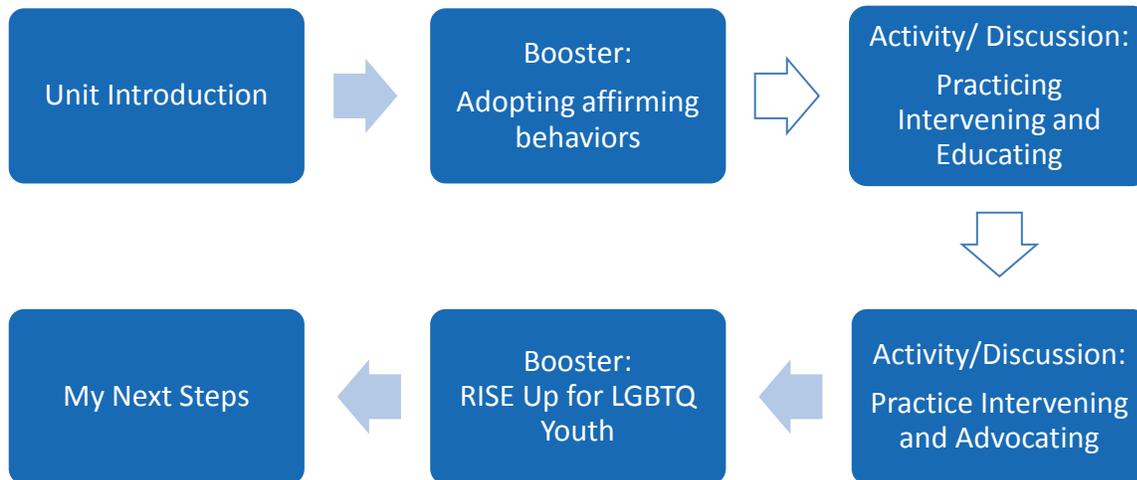
**Learning Objectives:**

- Recognize behavior that truly creates an affirming environment.
- Respond to supportive and negative comments and questions.

**Materials Needed:**

- ☐ Unit 9 Slides
- ☐ My Next Steps

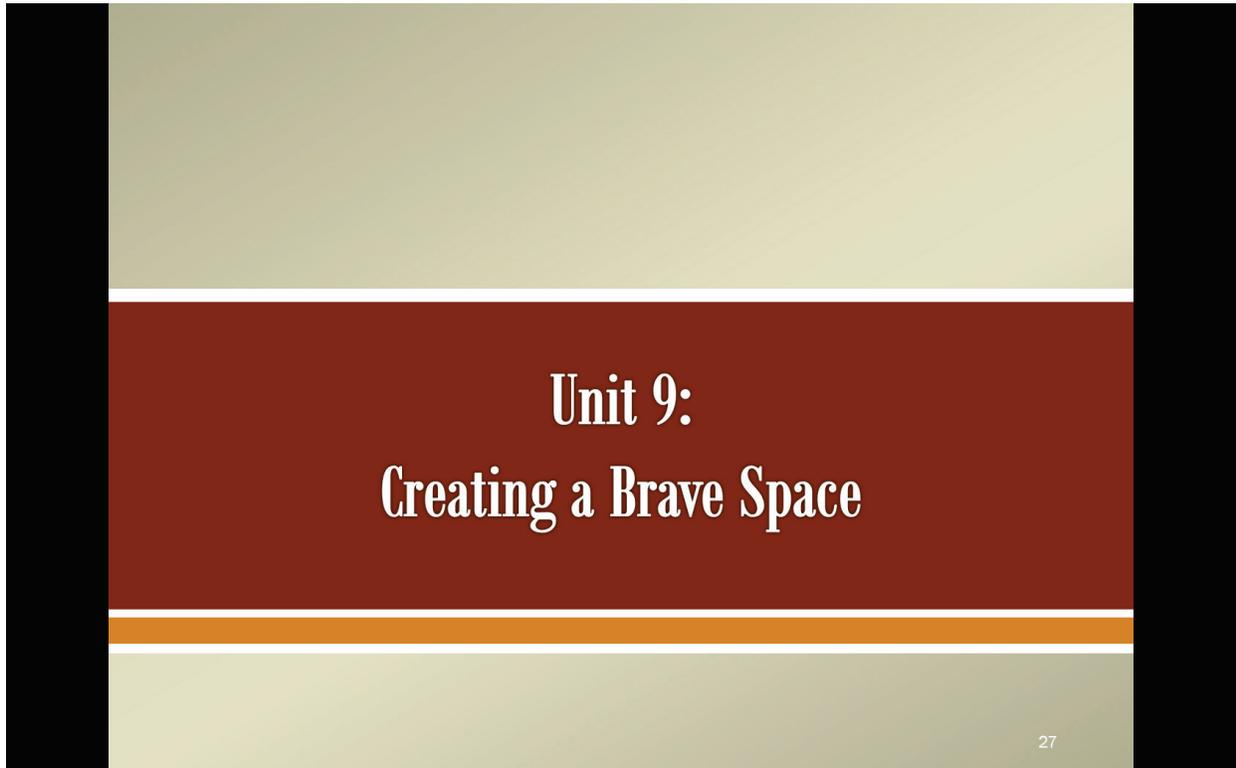
**Unit Structure:**



**Unit Duration:**

## Unit Introduction

Function: Present Unit Purpose.



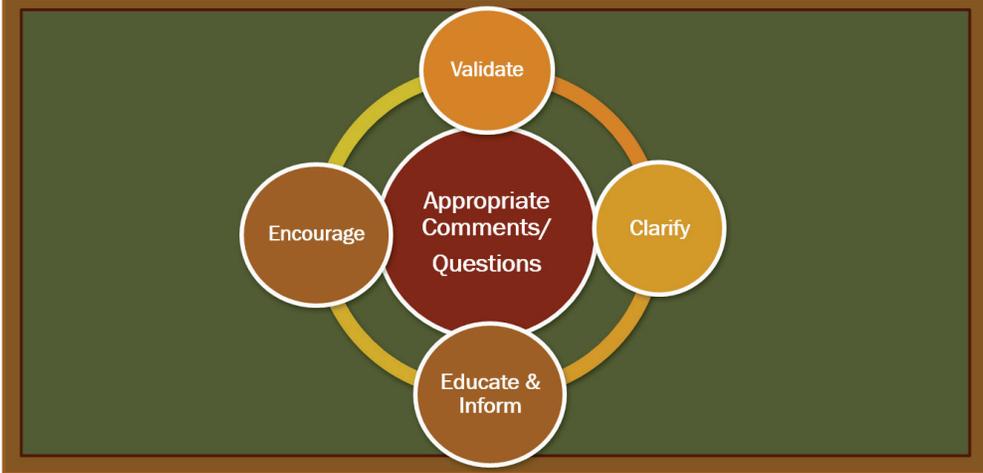
### Key Points/ Action Steps:

1. Present the purpose of the unit to participants.  
Environmental cues alone do not create Brave spaces; our actions must also be affirming. In this unit, we will learn how to educate and intervene in order to maintain a safe and inclusive space for all youth.
2. **Learning Objectives:**
  - Recognize behavior that truly creates an affirming environment.
  - Respond to supportive and negative comments and questions.

## Booster: Adopting Affirming Behaviors



# Opportunities to Educate



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### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Present slide
2. Note: Questions and comments should be viewed as opportunities to educate.
3. Inform the individual that affirming comments can help create affirming environments and encourage positive statements.
4. If it is a question or positive statement, respond in the following way:
  - a. *Validate the individual's question and acknowledge their effort to be informed.*
  - b. *Clarify what it is they are asking about.*
  - c. *Educate and inform them to the best of your ability.*
  - d. *Encourage them to ask more questions and continue seeking information.*

### Examples of questions:

1. *I noticed Angela, who identifies as transgender, is allowed to have her own room. Why can't I have my own room too?*
2. *Why do we have these new rainbow posters in our cottage?*

## Activity/ Discussion: Practice Intervening and Educating

Function: Participants practice responding to negative and questioning/supportive statements regarding attraction and/or gender diversity.

The slide is titled "Practice Educating" and features the RISE logo (A PROJECT OF THE LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER) in the top left. In the top right, there is a "BRAVE SPACE" poster with the text: "EMBRACE ENCOURAGE CELEBRATE WHO WE ARE!" and "NO HOMOPHOBIC, TRANSPHOBIC, BACET OR SCOTT PUT DOWN AND REMAINS ARE TOLERATED." Below the poster is a small cartoon character sitting on a green block with a question mark above its head. Two thought bubbles contain the following text:

Jerry, an 11 year old, approaches her case worker, pointing to the brave space poster and says, "Are we accepting gay kids now?"

A foster mom, Diana, sees the Brave Space poster and asks, "Do I have to take a transgender youth if I want to foster?"

29

### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Inform participants that this activity will help them practice responding to questions and comments in order to create more affirming environments for youth.
2. Ask participants to work in dyads or small-groups and read the slide.
3. In a large group share-out, ask participants to share how they experienced the activity.

### Important Points:

#### Jerry:

1. Validate Jerry for asking the question by saying something like, "Thanks for that question, Jerry."
2. Identify the core issue for Jerry. Clarify what Jerry means by the term "gay."
3. Educate Jerry on the Brave Space poster and why it is important that we respect all youth.
4. Inform Jerry that we accept all youth.
5. If there is anti-gay bias, educate Jerry and let Jerry know that bias will not be tolerated.
6. Talk to anyone who may have heard Jerry's comment so that everyone knows it is an affirming space.
7. Encourage Jerry to keep asking questions.

#### Diana:

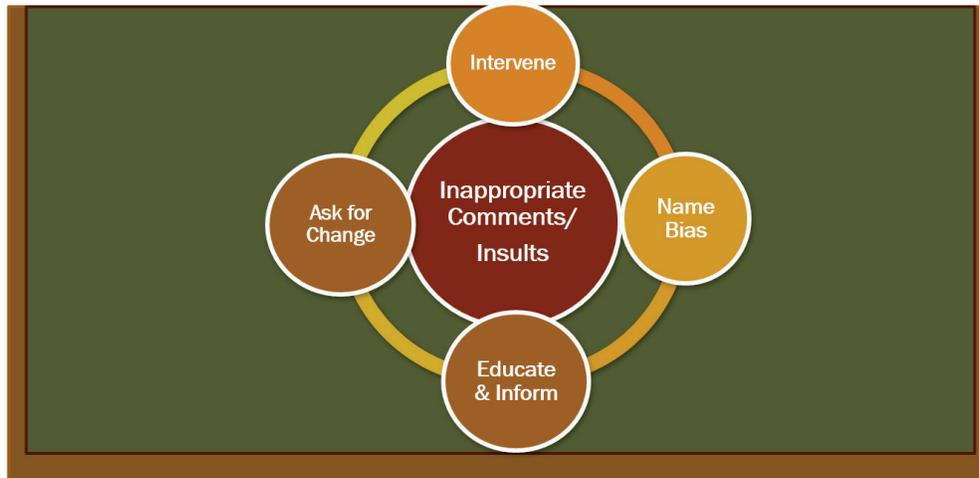
1. Validate Diana by saying, "I'm really glad you asked that question, Diana."
2. Clarify what Diana's concerns are and why she asked the question.

3. Probe to see if there are inherent biases at play or if there is another core issue.
4. Inform her of the significance of the poster to LGBTQ youth and about the issues that this population faces in care (e.g. rejection, abuse, difficulty finding families who support them, etc.)
5. Educate Diana on what LGBTQ means and correct any misinformation.
6. If there is bias and Diana cannot support LGBTQ youth, do not place any youth in her care. We never know someone's identity until they tell us and she may not be able to provide a safe environment to all youth.
7. Inform Diana that there are no requirements, but also no guarantees that a youth placed in her home will not be LGBTQ.
8. Encourage Diana to continue asking questions.

## Booster: Adopting Affirming Behaviors



# Opportunities to Intervene



30

### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Present slide
2. Assess: How do you know if someone is making a negative statement?
  - a. *Pay attention to their tone and the context. Does it sound like there is some bias or negativity within the comment? Inform the individual of your observation.*
3. How to respond to negative statements:
  - a. *Intervene when you witness negative behavior or comments.*
  - b. *Immediately name the bias and describe the harm.*
  - c. *Educate and inform the commenter to the best of your ability.*
  - d. *On behalf of the entire organization, ask for change.*
  - e. *Talk to individuals in the environment who may have overheard the negative statement so that they are aware of the bias and remind them that it is an affirming space.*
  - f. *If available, reference the Brave Space poster as a resource that establishes what the space is about and not about.*

### *Examples of harmful comments:*

1. *Dudes don't wear dresses! You're a freak.*
2. *The zoo is so gay. I'd rather go to a concert.*

Inform participants that environmental cues alone do not create affirming spaces. Our behaviors must support and reinforce the environmental cues we use. The Brave Space poster is a powerful symbol of affirmation. However, if our behaviors do not align with its messages then we create a situation in which

youth may believe they are safe when, in reality, they are not. It is essential to consistently address harmful comments and ill-intentioned questions when creating and maintaining an affirming space.

## Activity/ Discussion: Practice Intervening and Advocating



### Practice Intervening and Advocating

The residential staff took Lena (a 12-year-old female-identified client) to get a hair cut two days ago at Lena's request.  
You overhear the house manager say, "Why did you cut her hair that short? She looks like a boy!"  
How might you respond?

30

#### **Key Points/Action Steps:**

1. Ask participants to work in dyads or small-groups to discuss and propose affirming actions that address the scenario.
2. Facilitate a large group share-out.

#### Important points:

1. Intervene immediately by complimenting Lena's hair and by supporting her gender expression.
2. Later, in a private setting, inform the house manager that it is not appropriate to insult or judge a youth's gender expression.
3. Point out the house manager's statement is biased (heterosexist bias or anti-transgender bias).
4. Explain why the comment could be harmful to the youth: Comments like this create unsafe environments where LGBTQ and gender-variant youth are unable to thrive. Expectations about gender expression that are based on stereotypes can be harmful. It is important to allow youth to self-define and express their gender however they feel comfortable.
5. Talk to anyone else who may have overheard the house manager's comment to reassure people that someone is responsive and advocating for Lena.
6. Ask for change from the house manager.

Inform participants that intervening and responding to negative comments is an affirming behavior. Interventions let youth know that they are safe in your care and that you enforce the message behind the Brave Space poster (and other non-discrimination policies).

Function: Practice adopting affirming behaviors in caregiving settings.

## Booster: What do affirming behaviors look like in caregiving settings?

Function: Increase participants' understanding of actions practitioners can take to show support.



## Discussion

### What do affirming behaviors look like in caregiving settings?

32

#### **Key Points/Action Steps:**

1. Present slide and ask participants for their ideas to support LGBTQ youth.
2. Recall the discussion in the Foundations curriculum around rejecting behaviors in caregiving settings. At this point, we will discuss what affirming behaviors look like in caregiving settings.
3. Some affirming behaviors might include:
  - *“Educate yourself and your co-workers.”*
  - *“Use gender-neutral language when discussing dating.”*
  - *“Increase your comfort in using LGBTQ terms.”*
  - *“Have visible LGBTQ resources in your office or agency and utilize tools for creating affirming spaces.”*
  - *“Acknowledge and address coming out issues with youth.”*
  - *“Be non-judgmental.”*
  - *“Intervene when you witness LGBTQ peer harassment and violence.”*
  - *“Don’t make assumptions.”*
  - *“Talk with youth about their LGBTQ identities.”*
  - *“Express affection when you learn that a child is LGBTQ.”*
  - *“Advocate for a youth when s/he is mistreated because of his/her LGBTQ identity.”*
  - *“Welcome a youth’s LGBTQ friends/partners.”*
  - *“Support every youth’s gender identity and gender expression.”*

- *“Connect youth, families and staff to LGBTQ resources (role models, organizations, events, etc.)”*
- *Use the youth’s gender pronoun, name, and form of address that they are comfortable with.*

## My Next Steps

Function: Process/reflect upon feelings and thoughts regarding the unit content and activities.



## My Next Steps



What is your first plan of action?

14

### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Introduce **My Next Steps** worksheet and ask participants to answer the question under the appropriate section on their handouts.
2. Social work practice is all about putting knowledge into action. Encourage participants to consider what they might do differently as a result of what they learned in this unit.
3. When participants are finished, request that a few people share their answers.

## Unit 10: Legal Framework and Professional Standards in Practice

**Purpose statement:** The purpose of this unit is to use the legal framework and professional standards when managing information in order to meet safety, well-being, and permanency outcomes.

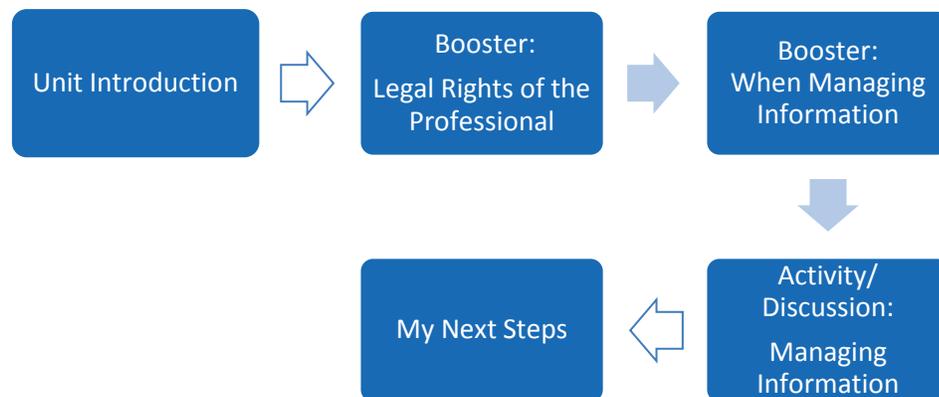
**Learning Objectives:**

Identify assets and challenges in managing disclosures regarding attraction and/or gender diversity

**Materials Needed:**

- Unit 11 Slides
- My Next Steps

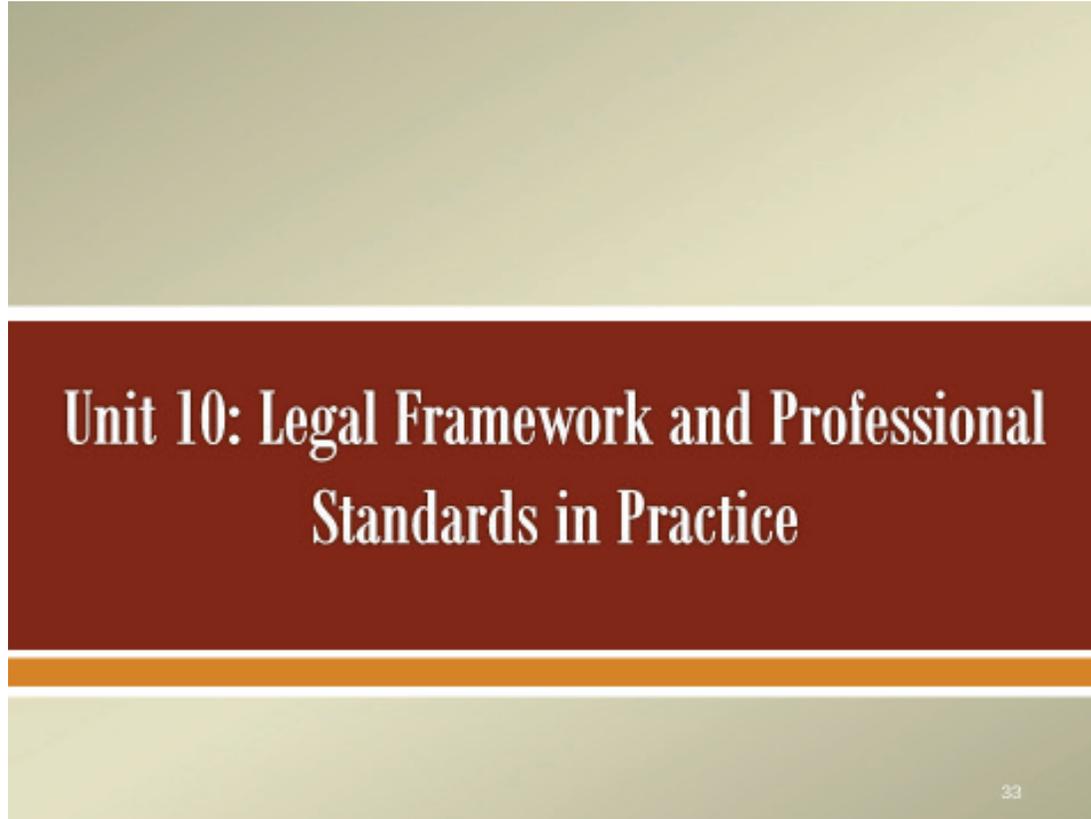
**Unit Structure:**



**Unit Duration:**

## Unit Introduction

Function: Present the unit purpose.



### **Key Points/ Action Steps:**

1. Present the purpose of this unit to the participants.  
The purpose of this unit is to use the legal framework and professional standards in order to positively impact a youth's safety, well-being, and permanency outcomes.
2. **Learning Objectives:** Identify assets and challenges in managing disclosures regarding attraction and/or gender diversity

## Booster and Discussion: Legal Rights of the Professional

Function: Increase participant understanding of youth rights and professional standards in providing fair and equal treatment to all youth, LGBTQ or not.



# Empowering the Professional

All youth have freedom of expression allowing them to be “out”, display symbols of pride, and wear clothing consistent with their gender identity (1<sup>st</sup> Amendment).



Does your agency have a gender-neutral clothing policy/inventory?

35

### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Provide an explanation of the youth’s rights.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Amendment allowing freedom of speech and expression**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment limits the right of public systems to censor a young person’s speech or expression allowing for the right of a youth to be “out”, display symbols of pride, and wear clothing consistent with their gender identity. The 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment also gives youth the right to be free of religious indoctrination.

2. Present the questions to participants and ask them to discuss in large or small groups.
3. Emphasize the importance of looking into agency policies and ensuring that they align with federal and state laws.
4. Provide examples of why each question is essential to protecting the rights of LGBTQ youth in care.
  - a. *Gender-neutral clothing policies/inventories are essential to protect the youth’s Constitutional right to freedom of expression. Such policies/inventories allow all youth to purchase clothing and express their gender however they wish.*
    - i. *Prompt questions to guide discussion: Are biological boys allowed to wear feminine clothing in your facility? Are biological girls allowed to wear masculine clothing in your facility? Does your agency have a different clothing inventory for “boys” and for “girls”?*

## Booster and Discussion: Legal Rights of the Professional

Function: Increase participant understanding of youth rights and professional standards in providing fair and equal treatment to all youth, LGBTQ or not.

All foster youth in California have fair and equal access to services, placements, treatment and benefits. (AB458)

Do you know how to report inappropriate treatment of an LGBTQ youth?

36

### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Provide an explanation of the youth's rights.

#### **AB 458 Adds to rights of foster children**

*"It is the policy of the state that all children in foster care shall have the right to have **fair and equal access** to all available services, placement, care, treatment, and benefits, and to **not be subjected to discrimination or harassment** on the **basis of actual or perceived** race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, **sexual orientation, gender identity**, physical or mental disability, or HIV status." Cal. Welfare & Inst. Code § 16001.9(a)(22)*

2. Present the questions to participants and ask them to discuss in large or small groups.
3. Emphasize the importance of looking into agency policies and ensuring that they align with federal and state laws.
4. Provide examples of why each question is essential to protecting the rights of LGBTQ youth in care.
  - a. *It is essential to know how to recognize and report discriminatory care. LGBTQ youth have the right to non-discriminatory care according to AB 458.*
    - i. *Who would you report discriminatory behavior to? Answers might include:*
      1. Supervisor
      2. House Manager
      3. Regional Administrator
      4. Human Resources

5. *Community Care Licensing*
  6. *The Department of Children Family Services*
  7. *Ombudsman (hotline for youth)*
  8. *Help/hotlines*
- b. *In upholding your professional standards of practice, you are expected to advocate for LGBTQ youth when you see violations of their rights.*

## Booster and Discussion: Legal Rights of the Professional

Function: Increase participant understanding of professional's rights and professional standards in providing fair and equal treatment to all youth, LGBTQ or not.

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# Empowering the Professional

Professionals cannot be subjected to discrimination for standing up for the rights of LGBTQ youth (AB458).

Do you feel confident advocating for the rights of LGBTQ youth?

37

### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Provide an explanation of the professional's rights.

### **AB 458 Adds to rights of providers:**

"It is the policy of the state that all persons engaged in providing care and services to foster children shall have **fair and equal access** to all available programs, benefits, services, and licensing processes, and shall **not be subjected to discrimination or harassment** on the basis of their **clients or their own, actual or perceived** race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, **sexual orientation, gender identity**, mental or physical disability, or HIV status." Cal. Welfare & Inst. Code § 16013(a)

2. Present the questions to participants and ask them to discuss in large or small groups.
3. Emphasize the importance of looking into agency policies and ensuring that they align with federal and state laws.

## Booster: When Managing Information

Function: Increase participants' understanding of the guiding principles that should be respected when managing information regarding a youth's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression.



# Guiding Principles when Managing Information

## Guiding Principles

- ✓ Disclosing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity without their permission can be harmful.
- ✓ Gathering information is a continuous process.
- ✓ Ensure that the information comes directly from the youth.

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### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Present the different guiding principles of managing information regarding a youth's sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
2. Emphasize the importance of youth-driven decisions.
3. Explain why each principle is crucial to strengthening the youth's permanency options.
  - a. *Youth permission is key when managing information. Ask the youth if they want the information recorded and have a conversation with them about the benefits and risks of recording it. When having this conversation, the youth might inform you about safety risks associated with sharing the information. Consider the age of the youth when having these conversations, and consider the context of each situation.*
  - b. *Gathering information is a continuous process. This process happens over the course of a lifetime, and the information could change over time.*
  - c. *Ensure that information is coming directly from the youth. That is the only way to ensure you have the most accurate information. Be aware that information documented on the youth's record may not be accurate.*

### Activity/ Discussion: Managing Information Discussion

Function: Provide participants an opportunity to practice managing information.



## Discussion

You are working with Adrien who is placed in a foster home. When talking with the foster parents, the foster father tells you that Adrien is gay.

How do you proceed?

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#### **Key points/ Action Steps:**

1. Introduce the activity and then ask the participants to discuss the question in small groups. Allot enough time for the conversation.
2. Ask participants for share-outs about the discussion prompt.
3. When necessary, use the following prompts to guide the large group discussion.
  - a. When you are collecting this information, what are some important guidelines to remember?
  - b. If you had to record this information, what considerations should you take?
  - c. What steps would you take when disclosing this information to a third party?
  - d. How can your agency support this process?
4. Use participant responses to highlight the important aspects of collecting information, recording information, disclosing information, and institutionalizing practice.

#### **Option to present:**

Consider why the foster father is telling you this? Are they searching for help? Is the youth in danger? Try and measure the level of rejection and acceptance that may be present.

Consider how the foster father got this information. What does he mean by “gay”?

Did the foster father have the youth’s permission to share this information with you? If so, can you approach the youth to provide support? If not, consider how you can have conversations with the youth about their family dynamics as a backdoor approach.

When recording the information, only record information that is essential. If you have to record it, record the father's statements, and note that the information was not confirmed by the youth.

## Booster: How will you RISE up for LGBTQ Youth?

Function: Increase participants' understanding of actions practitioners can take to show support.



# How will you RISE up for LGBTQ Youth?

**R**ecognize LGBTQ and gender variant children and youth are in your care and caseload.

**I**ntervene to reduce barriers.

**S**upport children and youth.

**E**mpower yourself and co-workers.



Adapted from: "Creating Inclusive Systems of Care for LGBT Youth" 39

### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Ask participants what they plan to do to RISE (Recognize, Intervene, Support, and Empower) up for LGBTQ youth in their care.
2. Some ideas on ways in which to show support
  - *"Recognize that LGBTQ youth are in our care."*
  - *"Educate yourself and your co-workers."*
  - *"Use gender-neutral language when discussing dating."*
  - *"Increase your comfort in using LGBTQ terms."*
  - *"Have visible LGBTQ resources in your office or agency and utilize tools for creating affirming spaces."*
  - *"Acknowledge and address coming out issues with youth."*
  - *"Be non-judgmental."*
  - *"Intervene when you witness LGBTQ peer harassment and violence."*
  - *"Don't make assumptions."*
  - *"Talk with youth about their LGBTQ identities."*
  - *"Express affection when you learn that a child is LGBTQ."*
  - *"Advocate for a youth when s/he is mistreated because of his/her LGBTQ identity."*
  - *"Welcome a youth's LGBTQ friends/partners."*
  - *"Support every youth's gender identity and gender expression."*

- *“Connect youth, families and staff to LGBTQ resources (role models, organizations, events, etc.)”*
- *Use the youth’s gender pronoun, name, and form of address that they are comfortable with.*

## Closing

Function: Closeout training.



## Works Cited

- Jacobs, J., Marksamer, J., Reyes, C., & Wilber, S. (2007). Creating Inclusive Systems of Care for LGBT Youth-OHYAC training.
- Miller, W.R., Rollnick, S. (2002) Motivational Interviewing, Preparing People to Change Addictive Behavior, 2nd Ed (14-29).
- Child Welfare League of America & Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. (2006). Out of the Margins: A report on the regional listening forums highlighting the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth in care.
- Scheingold, Lee. (2009). Active listening. RelayHealth. Retrieved from: [http://www.ovcp.com/mentortraining/10/print\\_bha\\_listen\\_.pdf](http://www.ovcp.com/mentortraining/10/print_bha_listen_.pdf)
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- Guidelines for Managing Information Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression of Child Welfare Systems, Putting Pride Into Practice Project, Family Builders by Adoption, Oakland, CA.

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### Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Answer any remaining question(s).
2. Inform participants about the RISE Coaching Network.
3. Reference and acknowledge contributions made by the individuals and/or organizations in the "Works Cited" slide.

# Assessing Safety and Well-being for LGBTQ Youth

Coming-out is a lifelong process and the level of support youth receive in this process can affect their emotional and physical well-being and safety. Talking with a youth and assessing their safety is key in working towards permanency. Here are some prompts that may help start this conversation and assist in collecting important information that can guide your efforts to support the youth.

## Assessing the Safety



- What makes you feel unsafe about being out?
- What does unsafe look like for you?
- What do you do when you feel unsafe?
- Have you ever felt unsafe at home/school?
- Where are you most uncomfortable being out?

## Assessing the Challenges



- Who are you out to?
- Who would you like to be out to?
- Is there anyone who you feel unsafe around?
- Who would be the most difficult to come out to?
- What makes that person the most difficult to come out to?

## Assessing the Support Network



- Who is the safest person to come out to?
- What makes that person safe?
- What makes you feel safe about being out?
- What does safety look like for you?

Assessing safety and well-being for LGBTQ youth involves having meaningful, youth-centered conversations about their underlying needs. Conversations build rapport, deepen relationships and can empower youth to choose their own paths. Having stronger relationships with youth will increase our ability to intervene and create pathways to their permanency.

Is there anything about being out that scares you?

Is there anything about being out that makes you happy?

If your life was a book, what would you like to write in the next chapter?

If you had a magic wand and could change anything about your coming-out process, what would you change?



The GRANTEE PROJECT/PROGRAM is funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under grant number 90-CT-0154.

# Motivational Interviewing

## The Four Principals

<p><b><u>Express Empathy</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates an atmosphere in which the youth can safely explore conflicts and face difficult realities</li> <li>• Seeks to understand the youths’ feelings and perspectives without judging, criticizing, or blaming</li> <li>• Seeks to understand the challenges and/or resiliency youth may experience related to LGBTQ identity</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Develop Discrepancy</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal is to have the youth, not the worker, present reasons for change</li> <li>• People come to know what they believe by hearing themselves say it</li> <li>• What is the decisional balance?</li> <li>• Involves weighing the options of discussing LGBTQ identity with peers, staff, caseworker, courts, parents, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Support Self-Efficacy</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment on the positive</li> <li>• Goal is to enhance the youth’s confidence in his or her ability to cope with obstacles and to succeed.</li> <li>• The worker’s own belief in the youth’s ability to succeed can have a powerful effect on the outcome—often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy</li> <li>• Recognize resiliency in youth’s ability to accept their own LGBTQ identity, ask for support sharing their identity with others and/or connecting to LGBTQ resources.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Roll with Resistance</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid arguing for change</li> <li>• Do not directly oppose resistance—opposing resistance usually strengthens it</li> <li>• Resistance is a signal to respond differently</li> <li>• Youth are a primary resource in finding answers and solutions</li> <li>• Important to be self-aware. Recognize how your behavior can influence youths’ resistance.</li> </ul>

## Strategy: OARS Method

<p><b>OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage people to talk about whatever is important to them</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish rapport</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gather information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase understanding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Invite others to “tell their story”</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Listen to the person’s response</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Example Questions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ What was most upsetting when your peer was bullying you in school for being LGBTQ?</li> <li>❖ What are the good things and not so good things about being out to others?</li> <li>❖ What concerns you most about telling parents/foster parents/social worker/staff about being LGBTQ?</li> </ul>	<p><b>AFFIRMATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recognize and acknowledge youths’ strengths</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accomplished in the form of compliments or statements of understanding or appreciation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid using the word “I” to start out.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> When sincere and genuine, affirmations support and promotes self-efficacy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Validate youths’ feelings and experiences: e.g., “I hear you.” “I understand.”</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Example Questions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ “Your ability to be a leader in the cottage sets a really good example for other young women who may identify as bisexual or lesbian.”</li> <li>❖ “You showed a lot of patience when you spoke to others about your gender expression.”</li> <li>❖ “What you said today in the meeting about your plan taught me something new about LGBTQ people.”</li> </ul>
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## REFLECTIONS

- Demonstrate you have heard accurately by restating meaning
- A way of checking rather than assuming that you know
- Ensures that communication breakdown does not occur because involves clarifying questions
- Repeating or rephrasing—listener repeats or substitutes synonyms or phrases; stays close to what the speaker said
- Paraphrasing—listener makes a major restatement that infers the speaker’s meaning
- Reflection of feeling—listener emphasizes emotional aspects of communication through feeling statements; deepest form of listening

### Example Questions:

- ❖ “It sounds like you’re having a hard time finding adults who will help advocate for a home that is LGBTQ affirming.”
- ❖ “You’re wondering if your birth mother will support you living with her again now that you’ve started transitioning.”
- ❖ “So you feel angry when the staff laughs at mean jokes about LGBTQ people.”

## SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- Helps to ensure clear communication between speaker and listener
- Reinforce what has been said
- Show you are listening carefully
- Prepares youth to move on

### Example Questions:

- ❖ “Here is what I heard. Tell me if I missed anything ...”
- ❖ “Let me see if I heard this right, ...”
- ❖ “So what I am hearing is ... “

Adapted from: Miller, W. R. & Rollnick, S. (2002). *Motivational interviewing: Preparing people for change* (2nd Ed.). New York: Guilford Press.





## My Next Steps

### Unit 6: Skill Building

What is your first plan of action? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Unit 7: Language in Practice

What is your first plan of action? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Unit 8: Rejection/Acceptance in Practice

What is your first plan of action? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Unit 9: Creating a Brave Space

What is your first plan of action? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Unit 10: Legal Framework and Professional Standards in Practice

What is your first plan of action? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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## Continuous Learning Resources

### Professional Development

1. Brill, S. & Pepper, R. (2008). *The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals*. San Francisco: Cleis Press.
2. Child Welfare League of America & Lambda Legal. (2009). *Moving the Margins: Training Curriculum for Child Welfare Services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care*.
3. Girls Best Friend Foundation & Advocates For Youth. (2005). *Creating safe space for GLBTQ Youth: A tool kit*. Retrieved from: <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advyf/documents/safespace.pdf>
4. Jacobs, J., Marksamer, J., Reyes, C., & Wilber, S. (2007). *Creating Inclusive Systems of Care for LGBT Youth-OHYAC training*.
5. Majd, K., Marksamer, J. & Reyes, C. (2009). *Hidden Injustice: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth in Juvenile Courts*.
6. Mallon, G. (2009). *Social Work Practice with Transgender and Gender Variant Youth* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Routledge.
7. Marksamer, J. (2011). *A Place of Respect: A Guide for Group Care Facilities Serving Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth*.
8. National Center for Lesbian Rights. (2006). *Breaking the silence: LGBTQ Foster Youth Tell Their Stories*.
9. National Center for Lesbian Rights. (2006). *Breaking the Silence Resource CD. LGBTQ Out-of-Home Youth Training Tools and Resources*.
10. Ryan, C. (2009). *Supportive Families, Healthy Children: Helping Families with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Children*. San Francisco, CA: Marian Wright Edelman Institute, San Francisco State University.
11. Wilber, S. (2013). *Guidelines for Managing Information Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression of Child Welfare Systems, Putting Pride Into Practice Project, Family Builders by Adoption, Oakland, CA*.
12. Wilber, S., Ryan, C., & Marksamer, J. (2006). *CWLA Best practice guidelines: Serving LGBT youth in out-of-home care*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.

### Supportive Organizations

1. GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) – Organization that seeks to end discrimination, harassment, and bullying based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in K-12 schools. <http://www.glsen.org>
2. HRC (Human Rights Campaign) – Organization that works to ensure LGBT people of their basic equal rights, and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community. <http://www.hrc.org>
3. Los Angeles LGBT Center – Multi-service organization dedicated to supporting the LGBTQ community. <http://www.lalgbtcenter.org>
4. PFLAG (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays) – One of the nation’s largest family and ally organization that provides support and education for individuals who have an LGBTQ loved

- one(s). Recently PFLAG has grown to develop a *Gender Focus* group and *South LA* group. <http://community.pflag.org>
5. Transforming Family – Family support group aimed to provide a positive environment to explore issues of gender identity. <http://transformingfamily.org>
  6. TransYouth Family Allies – Provides tools and resources for families with gender variant or transgender children. <http://www.imatyfa.org>

## Videos

1. Always My Son
2. LEAD with Love: Strengthening Families through the Coming out Process
3. Tres Gotas de Agua

## Books

1. Always My Child: A Parent's Guide to Understanding Your Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, Or Questioning Son or Daughter by Kevin Jenner
2. Beyond Acceptance: Parents of Lesbians and Gays Talk About Their Experiences by Carolyn Griffin & Marian Wirth
3. Helping your Transgender Teen: A Guide for Parents by Irwin Krieger
4. Prayers for Bobby by Leroy Aarons
5. The Transgender Child by Stephanie Brill & Rachel Pepper
6. Trans-Kin: A Guide for Family and Friends of Transgender People by Eleanor Hubbard & Cameron Whitley
7. Transitions of the Heart: Stories of Love, Struggle and Acceptance by Mothers of Transgender and Gender Variant Children by Rachel Pepper

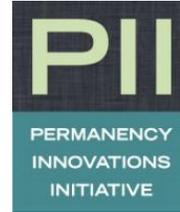
## Pamphlets

1. A Resource Guide to Coming out for African Americans ([http://s3.amazonaws.com/hrc-assets/files/assets/resources/comingout\\_africanamericans\\_042013.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/hrc-assets/files/assets/resources/comingout_africanamericans_042013.pdf))
2. A La Familia: A Conversation about Our Families, the Bible, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity ([http://www.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/A\\_La\\_Familia\\_Final\\_Curriculum\\_Nov\\_2011.pdf](http://www.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/A_La_Familia_Final_Curriculum_Nov_2011.pdf))
3. Coming out as a Straight Supporter ([http://www.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Straight-Supporter\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Straight-Supporter_Guide.pdf))
4. "Dios Nos Ama Por Igual: Una Invitacion al dialogo sobre la orientacion sexual" by Ann Thompson Cook
5. Faith In Our Families: Parents, Families and Friends Talk About Faith, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (<http://community.pflag.org/document.doc?id=494>)
6. Guide to Being a Straight Ally (<http://community.pflag.org/document.doc?id=139>)
7. Nuestras Hijas y Nuestros Hijos: Preguntas y Respuestas Para Padres De Gays, Lesbianas y Bisexuales ([http://www.pflag.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Publications/Nuestras\\_hijas.pdf](http://www.pflag.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Nuestras_hijas.pdf))
8. Our Daughters and Sons: Questions and Answers for Parents of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth and Adults (<http://community.pflag.org/document.doc?id=495>)
9. Se Tu Mismo: Preguntas y Respuestas Para Jovenes Gay, Lesbianas, Bisexuales y Transgeneros ([http://www.pflag.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Publications/SeTuMismo.pdf](http://www.pflag.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/SeTuMismo.pdf))
10. Supporting Your LGBTQ Youth: A Guide for Foster Parents (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/LGBTQyouth.pdf>)
11. Welcoming Our Trans Family and Friends: A Support Guide For Parents, Families and Friends of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People (<http://community.pflag.org/Document.Doc?id=202>)

## Hotline Numbers

The Trevor Project – Crisis intervention and suicide prevention

1(866)488-7386



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## Facilitation Tools

### *Participation guidelines:*

The ORB training team used five participation guidelines to establish initial group norms in each training space. At the beginning of each training, participants were asked to read the following guidelines and agree to them.

1. There is no pressure to share with the group.
2. Participants will only speak from their own experiences.
3. Everyone in the training space will value confidentiality, and personal sharing will stay within the group.
4. We will all avoid side conversations and share comments with the general group.
5. Lastly, we will all be open to each other's thoughts and feelings, even when they differ from our own.

### *Trainer guidelines:*

The ORB trainers developed seven standard principles to guide them in training spaces. These guidelines were not briefed to participants, but each trainer had to agree to implement the following guidelines in the training space.

1. Keep in mind that you must create a safe space for everyone in the room.
2. When you hear bias, call it out, and make sure to use that as an opportunity for participants to grow and learn.
3. When you get an off-topic question or comment, try and tie it back to the learning content to keep the training on track.
4. Use a combination of breaks, small group work, and large group work to break up training monotony and keep participants engaged.
5. When handling hard questions, make sure to always relate back to best practice guidelines, professional associations, or research. Remind participants that we have the youth's safety and well-being in mind.
6. Rely on your co-trainer when you need to. Before a training, develop a plan for switching during the presentation of material.
7. Remember that participants can also be negatively affected by anti-gay bias, anti-transgender bias, and heterosexism.

### *Question guidelines:*

The team used question guidelines to facilitate the training and off-topic or tangential discussions back toward the curricula's learning objectives.

*"If the question is related to the content I am discussing, I will answer it right away. If the question is related to content coming up, I will ask you to hold onto it, and I will tell you when your question will be addressed. If your question is about something unrelated to the topic, I will ask you to come speak with me at lunch or after the training."*

*Pivot line guidelines:*

Trainers often reported hearing comments or questions that were out of the ordinary or difficult to facilitate. As a result, the ORB team developed the following 10 pivot lines to keep conversations on track with the curriculum's learning objectives.

1. What do you think about that (throw it out to the group, and buy yourself some time)?
  - a. If you had to take a stab at it, what would you say?
  - b. Have any of you (trainees) had experience in this?
2. That's interesting. Can you tell me more about that?
3. That's interesting. What about that concerns you? (Use "what" questions instead of "why.")
4. It seems like there are several layers to that story, and they might take a while to peel back. Let's meet after the training to discuss it.
5. We want to stay away from "why" questions and just focus on how we can support LGBTQ+ youth in our care.
6. In the interest of time, let's hold our questions until the end.
7. We will go over that topic in a few slides, so I will wait to answer your questions until then.
8. That's an interesting point. How do you think you could apply that same concept to youth in the child welfare system?
9. Let's tie that comment back into the training.
10. What would you do in that situation?

## Frequently Encountered Biased Questions and Statements

The statements and questions participants posed in RISE LGBTQ-competency trainings often revealed layers of implicit and explicit bias. This document is a compilation of the most frequently encountered biased questions and statements. The intervention statements provided are responses that trainers can use. The supporting research sections provide additional background and contextual information for trainers. Linkages back to the curriculum are also provided to assist in streamlining the flow of information and to help trainers and participants make connections between the material and their questions. When possible, the specific bias is named (e.g., anti-gay bias, anti-transgender bias, and, heterosexism).

I don't want to promote this lifestyle.

*Intervention Statement:*

Supporting a youth's self-definition promotes healthy adolescent development. The major medical, psychological, and health associations agree that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender identities are as normative and healthy as heterosexual and cisgender identities. Regardless of our religious or cultural conflicts, our professional obligations require us to use affirming behaviors and actions when working with LGBTQ+ youth. Failure to support LGBTQ+ youth can result in devastating health outcomes for this population.

*Identifying the Bias:*

This comment involves a complicated blend of anti-gay bias, anti-transgender bias, and heterosexism. Essentially, the statement conveys that the speaker will only support youth who are willing to follow societal expectations that all youth will grow up to be heterosexual and fit into heteronormative gender roles and expressions.

*Supporting Research:*

In the 1970s, major health organizations including the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, and the World Health organizations removed same-gender attraction from their catalogues of mental health disorders. The National Association of Social Workers, American Medical Association, and American Counseling Association each include language in their policies and/or codes of ethics that prohibit discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The National Association of Social Workers, American Medical Association, and American Counseling Association each include language in their policies and codes of ethics that prohibit discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Using best practices and affirming behaviors will significantly increase the likelihood that LGBTQ+ youth will grow into happy and healthy adults.<sup>1</sup> The Child Welfare League of America's Best Practice Guidelines

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<sup>1</sup> Ryan, C. (2009). *Supportive families, healthy children: Helping families with lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender children*. San Francisco, CA: Marian Wright Edelman Institute, San Francisco State University.

for Serving LGBTQ+ Youth in Out-of-Home Care require that agencies adopt policies that permit youth to do the following:

- Discuss their sexual orientation and gender identity with other youth, adults, and staff
- Talk about their feelings of attraction without fear of punishment, harassment, or ridicule
- Join extracurricular activities for LGBTQ+ youth and receive LGBTQ-specific services and resources
- Display symbols of LGBTQ+ pride in their personal space.<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. Constitution guarantees the rights of LGBTQ+ youth to freely express their sexual orientation and gender identity (1<sup>st</sup> amendment ) and to receive equal access to services and benefits without fear of punishment and unnecessary isolation or restriction (14<sup>th</sup> amendment). Thus, current social services best practices are also legal obligations, making agencies and employees who violate these rights and laws legally liable.

*Link Back to Curriculum:*

There are several potential links back to the training material for this statement. Unit 2's discussion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual information informs participants that sexual orientation and gender identity are not lifestyles. Reminding participants about the Unit 3 discussion of acceptance and rejection can help participants see that silence or hesitation is not acceptance. Failing to affirm a youth is actually rejection and can have serious consequences for young people. It is also possible to link to Unit 5's legal discussion. Young people have a constitutional right to be open about their gender identity and sexual orientation and to access necessary supports and services.

Why are we focusing so much on the gay movement when we are still dealing with race issues that no one wants to talk about?

*Intervention Statement:*

I agree that conversations about race should be happening within child welfare systems and agencies, especially considering the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the child welfare system. For today, I want you to know that our discussion of LGBTQ+ youth is also predominately about youth of color. The vast majority of foster youth who self-identified as LGBTQ+ in a Williams Institute survey also identified as youth of color.

*Identifying the Bias:*

Although this statement points out a need to address racial bias in the child welfare system, it is also an example of anti-gay bias. The statement subtly asserts that discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression should be secondary to responses to other forms of bias and discrimination. The statement also creates a false dichotomy or either/or proposition. As the research shows, the majority of the children affected by anti-gay and anti-transgender biases identify as youth of color. Child welfare workers need to recognize and respond to biases against all facets of a youth's identity.

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<sup>2</sup> Out of Home Youth Advocacy Council. (2007). *Creating Inclusive Services for LGBT Youth in Out of Home Care*. Retrieved from [http://www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Preface\\_OHYAC\\_training\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Preface_OHYAC_training_FINAL.pdf).

*Supporting Research:*

The LA Foster Youth Survey released by UCLA's Williams Institute in 2014 found that 19 percent of youth in DCFS custody in LA identify as LGBTQ+. Of this self-identified population, almost 94 percent identified as youth of color (54 percent Latino, 28 percent Black, 3 percent American Indian, 3 percent Asian Pacific Islander, and 4 percent multi-racial). A large number of youth of color in the child welfare system are dealing with racism, as well as anti-gay bias, anti-transgender bias, and heterosexism.

Consider the different ways that a gay-identified, gender-variant Latino boy will experience bias in foster care as opposed to his straight-identified, gender-conforming Latino counterparts. The LA Foster Youth Survey found that LGBTQ+ youth in care were more than twice as likely to spend time in group homes when compared with their straight counterparts. LGBTQ+ survey respondents were also more likely to report mistreatment while in the child welfare system.<sup>3</sup> Young people living within and navigating multiple oppressed identities can experience various and simultaneous forms of discrimination that can affect their permanency outcomes and result in significant risk factors like drug use and sexual exploitation.<sup>4</sup>

Service providers must respond to the whole child and understand how the intersections of multiple identities can affect a youth's own well-being, family dynamics, and pathways to permanency.

*Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Tie this discussion back to permanency. Child welfare professionals are likely attuned the obstacles that youth of color face in the child welfare systems and once they age out. Explain that for LGBTQ+ youth anti-gay bias, anti-transgender bias, and heterosexism do not replace these obstacles; they only compound them and increase the difficulty LGBTQ+ youth of color have finding permanent, healthy adult connections.

My youth was sexually abused and now they think they are gay, but they really are not.

*Intervention Statement:*

This is a common myth. Studies have shown that sexual abuse does not determine sexual orientation. As the National Child Traumatic Stress Network explains, sexual orientation is about attraction and takes years to develop. It's also important to note that most LGBTQ+ youth have NOT experienced sexual abuse.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Wilson, Bianca D.M., Khusk Cooper, Angeliki Kastanis, and Sheila Nezhad. (2014) Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Foster Care: Assessing Disproportionality and Disparities in Los Angeles. Retrieved from: [http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS\\_report\\_final-aug-2014.pdf](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS_report_final-aug-2014.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Ragg, D. Mark, Dennis Patrick, and Marjorie Ziefert. 2006. Slamming the closet door: Working with gay and lesbian youth in care. *Child Welfare* 85(2): 243-266.

<sup>5</sup> National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Child Sexual Abuse Collaborative Group. (2014). *LGBTQ youth and sexual abuse: Information for mental health professionals*. Retrieved from [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/lgbtq\\_tipsheet\\_for\\_professionals.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/lgbtq_tipsheet_for_professionals.pdf).

### *Identifying the Bias:*

This statement is an example of anti-gay bias. The bias evoked here can have roots in many stereotypes and myths. The speaker may believe that gay youth are likely to engage in cycles of abuse in which they are the victim and will ultimately become the perpetrator. It may be helpful to point out that while traumatized youth may re-enact their abuse, this again says nothing about the youth's sexual orientation. Youth who re-enact the abuse they experienced need support and resources regardless of their sexual orientation.

### *Supporting Research:*

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network offers guidelines to practitioners working with LGBTQ+ youth who have been sexually abused. Practitioners should recognize that young people may experience confusion after their abuse. For those youth who identified as LGBTQ+ before the abuse, they may fear that their orientation or identity caused the abuse. Other youth may not begin to question their sexual orientation until after the abuse. Practitioners should also recognize that youth may be struggling simultaneously with stigma from both identifying as LGBTQ+ and having experienced abuse. Navigating these stigmas could lead to negative associations with their sexual orientation and gender identity.

In certain situations, (e.g., when working with a thoughtful participant), it may be helpful to draw out the speaker's "logic." Why would a male child who is abused and traumatized by a man then want to be with men? As professionals, we should be careful not to link the positive feelings of attraction that youth experience with their previous sexual abuse. Doing so could lead youth to years of questioning their true feelings of attraction. With our support and openness, youth can process their own emotions and feelings and come to an understanding of who they are. It is inappropriate for an adult to tell them who they are or why they have a certain identity.

### *Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Revisit the Unit 2 discussion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Remind participants about the emergence of attraction and the lack of control people have over attraction. Also, clarify the difference between sexual orientation and sexual behavior.

I am fine with youth being gay, but why do they have to be SO gay? They would have an easier life if they would be less flamboyant.

*Intervention Statement:* What do you mean by "so gay"? Sometimes our perceptions of "flamboyancy" come from societal norms about what is appropriate gender expression based on a youth's sex assigned at birth. Youth in care have a constitutional right to self-expression. It is important to focus our energies on preventing bullying rather than denying a youth's right to express themselves.

### *Identifying the Bias:*

This statement could blend between anti-gay bias and anti-transgender bias depending on whether the speaker is uncomfortable with the youth's overt displays of their LGBTQ+ identity (e.g., public displays of affection or wearing symbols of LGBTQ+ pride) or if the youth's gender expression does not conform to society's gender norms. This answer could also apply to a statement like, "We told the youth to tone down the gay because it was a safety issue. He was being beat up, and we have to think about safety first."

### *Supporting Research:*

It is inappropriate to condition a youth's safe passage through a program on the youth's own behavior modification. A 2006 study of youth in out-of-home care in San Diego found that youth and program staff had differing definitions of safety. Staff were most concerned with community-level safety threats like violence and harassment occurring outside of the agency and program location. However, youth definitions of safety focused on circumstances internal to the agency and program. Youth wanted protection from harassment and verbal and physical violence while they were in the agency location and program. Youth also wanted equitable treatment regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.<sup>6</sup>

Youth who are gender variant are aware of the dangers they must navigate on the streets. Program and agency staff can do little to mitigate these dangers. However, child welfare professionals can ensure that their own agencies and programs are safe and affirming places for LGBTQ+ youth. Creating this safe environment requires intervening immediately in instances of anti-LGBTQ+ harassment and violence.

Youth in care should be expected to follow program rules and to interact positively with the environment. It is important, however, that service professionals have a keen awareness of what is a true behavioral infraction and not conflate inappropriate behavior with gender expression that may make them uncomfortable.

For additional resources on stopping bullying against LGBTQ+ youth, please see the following links.

StopBullying.gov—*Bullying and LGBTQ+ Youth*  
<http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/lgbt/>

Violence Prevention Works—*Bullying and Sexual Orientation*  
[http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/bullying\\_sexual\\_orientation.page](http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/bullying_sexual_orientation.page)

American Psychological Association—*Bullying: A Module for Teachers*  
<https://www.apa.org/education/k12/bullying.aspx>

### *Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Link back to the Unit 2 discussion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. It would also be appropriate to link to the Family Acceptance Project<sup>7</sup> (FAP) research on risk factors for youth who experience rejection.

My youth is experimenting because they are around all boys.

### *Intervention Statement:*

All youth explore their sexuality. Exploration is a part of healthy development and begins during the earliest years of our lives. Studies have shown that same-gender attraction is common before and

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<sup>6</sup> Berberet, H. M. (2006, March/April). Putting the pieces together for queer youth: A model of integrated assessment of need and program planning. *Child Welfare, 85*(2). Retrieved from <http://web.ntpu.edu.tw/~renn/program%20design/96--need%20assessment.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Ryan, C. (2009). *Supportive families, healthy children: Helping families with lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender children*. San Francisco, CA: Marian Wright Edelman Institute, San Francisco State University.

during adolescence. This attraction is not necessarily a predictor of sexual orientation. Some youth with adolescent, same-gender attraction will grow up and identify as straight; others will identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or somewhere else on the spectrum of sexual orientation.<sup>8</sup> We do not need to know why youth identify in certain ways. It is only important that we allow youth to self-define and that we support them in their own definition. This support includes equipping them with the information and resources they need to make healthy decisions regarding their bodies and relationships.

#### *Identifying the Bias:*

Treating a youth's self-defined sexual orientation as "experimental" is an example of anti-gay bias. Stating or believing that a youth who identifies as gay is only experimenting dismisses the youth's feelings and minimalizes what the youth knows to be true for themselves. This statement is also an example of heterosexism. The statement essentially asserts that all boys should be straight and will eventually grow up to be straight.

#### *Supporting Research:*

For an intensive review of sexual development of children from birth to age 12, see Maureen Kenny and Sandy Wurtele's "Normative Sexuality Development in Childhood: Implications for Developmental Guidance and Prevention of Childhood Sexual Abuse" in *Counseling and Human Development* ([http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA274873794&v=2.1&u=nysl\\_me\\_tci&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=8ecc4a314f506907e1a68b7819fa495c](http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA274873794&v=2.1&u=nysl_me_tci&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=8ecc4a314f506907e1a68b7819fa495c)).

Remind participants that there is no clear answer to why someone develops one sexual orientation or another. It is not our job as service professionals to determine why some has a certain identity or to tell them that what they are feeling is not real. Downplaying a youth's experiences or feeling could damage rapport building and hinder our ability to provide appropriate services and resource

#### *Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Revisit the Unit 2 discussion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. It would also be appropriate to link to the FAP<sup>9</sup> research on risk factor for rejected youth.

#### Bisexuality is just a phase.

#### *Intervention Statement:*

Many people believe that a person can only be attracted to either males or females, not both. In the last 30 years, bisexuality has gained recognition as a separate category of sexual orientation. For example, in 2008, researchers released the results of a 10-year study of 79 women who identified as bisexual. The study found that bisexuality was not a transitional or experimental phase for the majority of these

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<sup>8</sup> Kenny, M. C., & Wurtele, S. K. (2011, May). Normative sexuality development in childhood: Implications for developmental guidance and prevention of childhood sexual abuse. *Counseling and Human Development*, 43(9), Retrieved from [http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA274873794&v=2.1&u=nysl\\_me\\_tci&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=8ecc4a314f506907e1a68b7819fa495c](http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA274873794&v=2.1&u=nysl_me_tci&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=8ecc4a314f506907e1a68b7819fa495c).

<sup>9</sup> Ryan, C. (2009). *Supportive families, healthy children: Helping families with lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender children*. San Francisco, CA: Marian Wright Edelman Institute, San Francisco State University.

women. Youth who self-identify as bisexual are telling you what they know to be true for themselves. We should support them in their self-definition and not discount it.

#### *Identifying the Bias:*

Treating youths' self-defined sexual orientation as "experimental" or a "phase" is an example of anti-gay bias, and a youth could interpret it as rejection. Stating or believing that a youth who identifies as bisexual is only experimenting dismisses the youth's feelings and minimalizes what the youth knows to be true for themselves

#### *Supporting Research*

Historically, bias against bisexuality has stemmed from stereotypes of people asserting that bisexuality are transitioning to homosexuality, greedy, or confused. There has been little research on this population despite an abundance of research on sexual orientation and human sexual development. However, in the last decade, reputable studies on bisexuality have provided some landmark perspectives on the issue.

The 2008 study referenced above found that more of the participants retained or adopted a bisexual identity than those who opted to identify themselves as heterosexual or lesbian.<sup>10</sup>

In 2011, Northwestern University released a study on bisexuality in men. Studying arousal responses, the study found that participants who identified as bisexual responded to both men and women.<sup>11</sup> While, the research did elicit some praise, some critics objected to the way it limited sexual orientation to just physical arousal, negating the emotional and mental components of sexual orientation and attraction.

#### *Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Revisit the Unit 2 discussion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. It would also be appropriate to link to the FAP<sup>12</sup> research on risk factors for LGBTQ+ youth who experience rejection.

#### Are people's orientations or identities genetic?

##### *Intervention Statement:*

Best practices direct us to shift our focus from "why youth are LGBTQ" to instead focusing on how we can support them. There is currently no scientific consensus for the causes of sexual orientation and gender identity.

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<sup>10</sup> Diamond, L. M. (2008) Female bisexuality from adolescence to adulthood: Results from a 10-year longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(1), 5-14.

<sup>11</sup> Rosenthal, A. M, Sylva, D., Safron, A. &, Bailey, J. M. (2011, September). Sexual arousal patterns of bisexual men revisited. *Biological Psychology*, 88(1),112-115.

<sup>12</sup> Ryan, C. (2009). *Supportive families, healthy children: Helping families with lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender children*. San Francisco, CA: Marian Wright Edelman Institute, San Francisco State University.

### *Identifying the Bias:*

Anti-gay bias, anti-transgender bias, and heterosexism are potential subtexts for this question. People do not typically question why a child identifies as straight. Questioning why a youth is LGBTQ+ suggests that there is something wrong or abnormal with the youth's sexual orientation or gender identity.

### *Supporting Research:*

While researchers do not agree on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, there are several studies that have clarified what does NOT cause LGBTQ+ identities. For example, children who engage in gender-nonconforming behaviors (e.g., playing with toys or engaging in tasks typically associated with a different gender) do not necessarily identify as LGBTQ+ later in life.<sup>13</sup>

### *Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Return to the Unit 2 discussion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. It is important that trainees focus on supporting youth, not determining why they identify with a certain sexual orientation or gender identity.

### People are going to be insulted if I ask for their gender pronouns.

#### *Intervention Statement:*

We do not know who a youth is until they tell us. By asking for gender pronouns, we create space for youth to feel safe disclosing this information. There is actually more danger in not asking this question. If we only ask youth who we perceive to be gender variant based on their gender expression, we may miss those youth who are transgender or gender variant and, for whatever reason, initially present as gender conforming.

Best practice asserts that we ask all youth as a standard. Youth in care are used to answering all kinds of question about themselves; some questions apply directly to their experience and others do not. Typically, adults bring more anxiety to these conversations than do youth.

#### *Identifying the Bias:*

This statement possibly stems from anti-transgender bias. It subtly asserts that there is something wrong with asking about and discussing gender and particularly so with people who present as cisgender.

#### *Supporting Research:*

The LA Foster Youth Survey<sup>14</sup> cited earlier found that over 5 percent of youth in foster care in LA County

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<sup>13</sup> For more information, see the following articles. G. Philips, G., & Over, R. (1995) Differences between heterosexual, bisexual, and lesbian women in recalled childhood experiences." *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 24(1), 1-20; Bullough, V., & Bollough, B. (1993) The causes of homosexuality: A scientific update. *Free Inquiry*, 13(4), 40-42, 44-47.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson, Bianca D.M., Khusk Cooper, Angeliki Kastanis, and Sheila Nezhad. (2014) Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Foster Care: Assessing Disproportionality and Disparities in Los Angeles. Retrieved from: [http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS\\_report\\_final-aug-2014.pdf](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS_report_final-aug-2014.pdf).

identify as transgender. This number represents more than double number of transgender youth in the general population.

Asking for gender pronouns also creates discussion and learning opportunities with cisgender youth. Explaining that we ask all youth for asserted names and pronouns allows staff to convey the norms and values of the organization—that people of all identities are respected and valued.

*Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Revisit the Unit 2 discussion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Remind participants that gender expression and gender identity are not related. There are many reasons why a transgender or gender-variant child may wear clothing more in line with societal expectations of dressing (e.g., their home or placement refused to buy clothes in line with their gender identity or fear of harassment or violence if they wear clothing in alignment with their gender identity).

What if supporting LGBTQ+ youth is against the family's beliefs?

*Intervention Statement:*

Youth who are in non-supportive environments are at higher risk for attempted suicide, depression, HIV/STDs/STIs and illegal drug use. It is okay for families to feel conflicted. However, it is important that they understand that it is possible and important to support their youth while maintaining their religious and cultural beliefs. Rejecting behaviors have real-life consequences for their youth.

*Identifying the Bias:*

Look for the core issue. Ask probing questions to determine which aspects of the youth's LGBTQ+ identity goes against the family's belief? Respond directly to that bias.

*Supporting Research:*

According to the Family Acceptance Project (FAP) out of San Francisco State University, youth in extremely rejecting environments are 8 times as likely to attempt suicide, 6 times as likely to experience depression, 3 times as likely to use illegal drugs, and 3 times as likely to engage in behaviors that increase their risk for HIV, STDs, and STIs.<sup>15</sup>

*Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Revisit the Unit 3 discussion of the FAP research on rejection and acceptance. Inform participants that the FAP has materials specifically addressing family rejection based on conflicts of faith. Providing this information and films like *Prayers for Bobby* may provide convincing additional anecdotal support.

This statement can also be linked to the Unit 8 discussion about assessing rejection in an environment and ways to support caregivers. Recommend that conflicted families speak with affirming clergy members from their faith to discuss ways they can maintain their faith and support for the child.

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<sup>15</sup> Ryan, C. (2009). *Supportive families, healthy children: Helping families with lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender children*. San Francisco, CA: Marian Wright Edelman Institute, San Francisco State University.

These LGBTQ+ youth are just doing it because it's popular.

*Intervention Statement:*

Being LGBTQ+ is not popular. American society is currently seeing increased media exposure to LGBTQ+ people and concepts. As societal responses to variations in sexual orientation and gender identity shift toward increased openness, more people are coming out and at younger ages. However, youth who come out are still having to navigate bias, discrimination, rejection, violence, and harassment.

*Identifying the Bias:*

This statement is an example of heterosexism. The statement asserts that all LGBTQ+ youth are really straight and/or cisgender and only identify as LGBTQ+ for purposes of popularity. It effectively minimalizes and dismisses the youth's ability to self-define.

*Supporting Research:*

A national survey has shown that 85 percent of gay youth (or youth perceived to be gay) reported being bullied and harassed in school.<sup>16</sup> In another survey, students identified LGBTQ+ youth (or those perceived to be LGBTQ) as the student population most likely to be targeted for bullying.<sup>17</sup> It is clear to teenagers in our society that LGBTQ+ youth remain a vulnerable population even in an age of increased media exposure. As adults, we should avoid conflating this media exposure with wide-spread acceptance and popularity. Conflating these two things could result in appearing dismissive and rejecting of a young person's sexual orientation or gender identity at a time when they most likely need support and protection.

Considering youth in foster care, responses to the LA Foster Youth Survey found that LGBTQ+ youth were two times as likely to spend time living in a group home as when compared to their straight counterparts. Almost 13 percent of LGBTQ+ youth surveyed reported receiving poor treatment by the foster care system, as compared to 5.8 percent of non-LGBTQ+ youth. LGBTQ+ youth in foster care were also three times as likely to have been hospitalized for emotional reasons.<sup>18</sup> Rejection is real and affects the daily lives and interactions of LGBTQ+ youth. For a youth who has experienced repeated rejection by those charged with their care, their identity does not feel popular.

*Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Return to the Unit 2 discussion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. It is important that trainees focus on supporting youth, not determining why they identify with a certain sexual orientation or gender identity.

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<sup>16</sup> Gay Lesbian Straight Educational Network. (2013). The 2013 National School Climate Survey. Retrieved from <http://www.glsen.org/article/share-national-school-climate-survey>.

<sup>17</sup> Riese, J. (2016). Youth who are bullied based upon perceptions about their sexual orientation. *Violence Prevention Works! Safe Schools, Safer Communities*. Retrieved from [http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/bullying\\_sexual\\_orientation.page](http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/bullying_sexual_orientation.page).

<sup>18</sup> Wilson, Bianca D.M., Khusk Cooper, Angeliki Kastanis, and Sheila Nezhad. (2014) Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Foster Care: Assessing Disproportionality and Disparities in Los Angeles. Retrieved from [http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS\\_report\\_final-aug-2014.pdf](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS_report_final-aug-2014.pdf).

### What about the safety of youth that have to use the bathroom with transgender youth?

#### *Intervention Statement:*

We need to separate what is uncomfortable versus what is unsafe. We should not assume that transgender youth are predatory or have boundary issues and would not respect the privacy of others around them. Transgender youth who wish to use facilities in alignment with their gender identity are just looking for a safe space. It could be potentially very dangerous for a transgender youth in the process of transitioning or who has transitioned to use a restroom not in alignment with their gender identity. Small discomforts are worth it considering we have the chance to create safety for ALL people.

#### *Identifying the Bias:*

This statement is an example of anti-transgender bias. It conflates transgender identity with asocial and/or inappropriate behavior. This conflation is likely built upon myths and stereotypes of transgender people as dangerous or predatory.

#### *Supporting Research:*

A study released in 2014 by the UCLA Williams Institute and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention found that 46 percent of transgender men and 42 percent of transgender women have attempted suicide at least once in their lifetime. Of the youngest people surveyed, those between the ages of 18 and 24, 45 percent have attempted suicide. The study also posed questions about different stressors that respondents experienced stemming from anti-transgender bias. Respondents reported instances of physical and sexual assaults at all stages of schooling and even in the work place.<sup>19</sup>

People commonly give the example of a boy pretending to be transgender to use the girls' restroom or locker room. Inform participants that the laws and policies that create opportunities for youth to use restroom in alignment with their gender identity essentially create an opportunity for youth, their families, and administrators to develop a plan by which the youth can use facilities in a safe way that respects their own privacy and the privacy of those around them.

#### *Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Link back to the Unit 2. Refresh the distinctions between gender identity, sexual orientation, and sexual behavior.

### We are showing LGBTQ+ youth special treatment.

#### *Intervention Statement:*

LGBTQ+ youth have unique developmental experiences, such as the coming-out process, which require unique supports. We commonly make accommodations to ensure that youth from a range of backgrounds meet their religious, cultural, health, and educational needs. Providing these opportunities is key to providing non-discriminatory care in a way that meets the needs of each child. Why should meeting the unique needs of LGBTQ+ youth be considered special treatment?

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<sup>19</sup> Haas, A. P., Roger, P. L., & Herman, J. L. (2014, January). *Suicide attempts among transgender and gender nonconforming adults: Findings of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*. Retrieved from <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/AFSP-Williams-Suicide-Report-Final.pdf>.

### *Identifying the Bias:*

Ask probing questions to identify the core issue here. With what type of treatment is the speaker taking issue? For example, reluctance to connecting LGB youth with supportive and affirming resources would be anti-gay bias. Or refusal to call a transgender youth by their asserted name would be anti-transgender bias.

### *Supporting Research:*

Participants often conflate using affirming behaviors to support a group for which they have explicit or implicit bias as special treatment. “What about the straight kids?” is another often-heard variation of this question. Remind participants that LGBTQ+ youth have long been considered foster care’s invisible youth. Historically, this population has received little recognition, support, or services. Changing this paradigm is forcing child welfare professionals to learn skills and provide resources with which they may be unfamiliar. Again, doing these things is not special treatment; it is finally using best practices and providing appropriate services and support.

### *Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Link back to the accepting behaviors as described by the FAP<sup>20</sup>. Showing support for LGBTQ+ youth includes actions like connecting them with LGBTQ+ resources, supporting their gender expression, and talking with them about their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Doing these things can go a long way to improving short- and long-term health and mental health outcomes for this population.

### Do you know of any youth who have regretted the transition?

#### *Intervention Statement:*

When a child first asserts a gender identity that does not align with their sex assigned at birth, no irreversible transition steps are taken. Parents may work with schools and their social circle to create a social transition, which could include the child going by a different name and different pronoun and by dressing in alignment with their asserted gender identity. Eventually, prior to the start of puberty, a child may receive hormone blockers to delay the onset of biological puberty. These steps are taken to provide the child and family with as much time as possible to decide what level of physical transition the youth desires, if any at all.

As child welfare professionals, it is not our role to determine whether a child is transgender or to direct them in what they should or should not do with their bodies. Our energies are best focused on creating a safe environment in which children questioning their gender identity can give ample time and attention to the process of understanding who they are—not having to defend their experience and decisions to us.

#### *Supporting Research:*

Once hormone blockers are removed, the child will go through their genetically determined puberty (masculinization or feminization of their bodies) unless other hormones are given. While all this is

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<sup>20</sup> Ryan, C. (2009). *Supportive families, healthy children: Helping families with lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender children*. San Francisco, CA: Marian Wright Edelman Institute, San Francisco State University.

occurring, the youth should be working with transgender medical care specialists and mental health professionals. The World Health Organization’s transgender healthcare specialists issue standards of care<sup>21</sup> to try to prevent inappropriate use of hormones and surgical processes. The surgical regret rate is generally considered to be under 5 percent<sup>22</sup>. Studies reflecting the experiences of those who do regret their surgical transition assert that risk factors include disappointment in physical appearance, transitions occurring later life, and continued lack of support from families and social networks.

Some children who identify as transgender may not have a linear progression from their assigned gender to their asserted gender. Given family and societal pressures and the enormity of the decisions they must make, children may fluctuate between feminine, masculine, and androgynous gender expressions. We should not impose rigid expectations on them (e.g., “You said you were a boy, so act like one consistently.”) Support the youth where they are on any given day. Ask the youth for specific ways you can support them (e.g., an ear to listen, names, pronouns, restroom usage) as they experience and try to understand their journey.

*Link Back to the Curriculum:*

Revisit the Unit 2 discussion about the development of gender identity. Remind participants that children become aware of their gender identity at very young ages. Instead of invalidating a child’s gender assertion based on their young age, this assertion should actually be regarded as a sign of an innate understanding of themselves.

My youth just uses the gay/transgender card to get what they want; they are always acting out and have behavioral problems.

*Intervention Statement:* A youth may act out as a result of rejection in their environment and the biases they have experienced. They may assume, correctly or incorrectly, that they will receive the same poor treatment in every placement and behave in the same ways as a result of these expectations. Clarify for the youth that you support their identity, but rules are rules and apply to everyone in the space. Allow the youth to explain their point of view and why they think the issue is related to their LGBTQ+ identity.

*Identifying the bias:* This statement is an example of anti-gay and anti-transgender bias. It equates identity with behavior and makes global statements about how members of a group act. The statement also shows a refusal to look into the roots of behaviors. Instead of taking time to understand how rejection and mistreatment have affected a youth, the speaker simply assumes there is something inherently wrong with the young person based on one or more facets of their identity.

*Supporting Research:*

The LA Foster Youth<sup>23</sup> survey found that 12.9 percent of the LGBTQ+ youth surveyed reported being treated poorly by the foster care system compared to only 5.9 percent of non-LGBTQ+ youth. This

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<sup>21</sup> World Health Organization (2016). Information can be found at <http://www.who.int/hiv/topics/transgender/en/>.

<sup>22</sup> Peggy, T et al. (2003) *Transgenderism and Intersexuality in Childhood and Adolescence*. SAGE Publications Inc.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, Bianca D.M., Khusk Cooper, Angeliki Kastanis, and Sheila Nezhad. (2014) *Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Foster Care: Assessing Disproportionality and Disparities in Los Angeles*. Retrieved from: [http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS\\_report\\_final-aug-2014.pdf](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS_report_final-aug-2014.pdf).

research also showed that LGBTQ+ youth are twice as likely to be in group homes instead of being placed with foster families. Both research and anecdotal reports make clear that LGBTQ+ youth are often mistreated in the child welfare system. It is unrealistic to think that this mistreatment will not affect the youth's behavior and ability to build trust with and in an environment. It is important that we as professionals be the first to instigate the development of trust. It is inappropriate to expect this first gesture from a youth who may walk into space with historical trauma and stigmatization.

*Linking Back to the Curriculum:*

Revisit the Unit 3 discussion of the FAP research on rejection and acceptance. Rejection in an environment can affect the youth's health, well-being, and behavior. This impact lasts beyond a youth's departure from a rejecting environment and can surface as they transition into new places and encounter new people.