

FURTHER INFO

- **The Lesbian & Gay Foundation**

Well-established services aimed at meeting the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. www.lgf.org.uk

- **Three Circles Fostering**

Works in partnership with local authorities to provide family based placements for children and young people from a variety of backgrounds & cultures. www.threecirclesfostering.com

- **Albert Kennedy Trust**

Support lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans homeless young people in crisis. www.akt.org.uk

- **FFLAG**

National voluntary organisation and registered charity dedicated to supporting parents, families and friends of lesbians and gays. www.fflag.org.uk

- **LGBT History Month**

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans History Month celebrates the lives and achievements of the LGBT community. www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk

- **LGBT Youth North West**

Services, peer mentoring, regional network and training LGBT youth groups. www.lgbtyouthnorthwest.org.uk

- **Manchester Trans Youth**

LGBT youth project based in the city centre for young people aged 12+. www.lgbtyouthnorthwest.org.uk

- **TransForum**

Mutual peer support forum for all transgender people and those in any way questioning their gender. www.transforum.org.uk

The above organisations will all be able to put you in touch with information, support and social groups wherever you live.

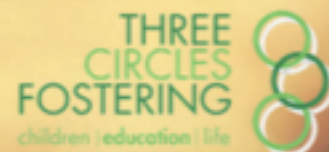
SUPPORTING

LESBIAN, GAY,

BISEXUAL & TRANS

YOUNG PEOPLE

INFORMATION FOR FOSTER CARERS





INTRODUCTION

Being a teenager can be hard

Being a teenager in care can be really hard

Being an LGBT teenager in care can be extremely hard

INFORMATION FOR FOSTER CARERS

As a Foster Carer it's important that you let young people know that they can trust you and that they know that you will be supportive with whatever issues they need help with.

It's important too that you know there is support for you and that you can contact someone who will be able to help you to support young people in your care.

Discussing matters such as these provoke a variety of emotions and reactions, both positive and negative. You may need to set aside plenty of time.

Remember the young person you are talking to is still the same person you have always known and loved so be proud of them and the fact that they have chosen to confide in you. Remember also that coming out as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans is a life-long process.

DON'T assume that every young person in your care is heterosexual or 'straight'

DO Challenge homophobia, biphobia & transphobic language if you hear it.

DON'T impose gender stereotypes on young people (e.g: dolls are for girls, soldiers are for boys)

DO encourage young people to follow their own interests.

DON'T push young people into discussing LGBT issues if they don't want to and **DON'T** pressure them into Coming Out.

DO make information easily available to young people. They may benefit from contacting support groups and organisations independently

DON'T feel that you are expected to have all the answers

DO make use of the services listed at the back of this resource.

DO be prepared to learn a new language when it comes to understanding and discussing issues of sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity.



GLOSSARY

CELEBRATE!

BIPHOBIA hatred or fear of people who are bisexual.

BISEXUAL someone attracted to people of the same and/or the opposite gender.

GAY a man or a woman who is attracted to people of the same gender.

HETEROSEXISM attitudes, bias and discrimination in favour of heterosexual orientation.

HETEROSEXUAL someone attracted to people of the opposite gender.

HOMOPHOBIA hatred/ fear of people who are gay or lesbian or are perceived to be.

LESBIAN a woman attracted to other women. May identify also as a gay woman.

LGB abbreviation of lesbian, gay and bisexual.

LGB&T abbreviation of lesbian, gay and bisexual and trans.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION a way of describing those you are emotionally and sexually attracted to.

TRANS umbrella term to describe people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from that which they were assigned at birth.

TRANSPHOBIA hatred or fear of trans people or people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from the identity they were assigned at birth.

There are many things you can do to help support young LGBT people and help them feel supported. Ensure that they don't feel isolated and help them enjoy the things that they are interested in.

- Advocate for the young people in your care and ensure that the professionals you work with are LGBT affirmative and display literature that is inclusive of LGBT people.
- Ensure that all activities that young people engage in are proactive in promoting equal opportunities and are safe places for LGBT staff and service users to be.
- Find out what LGBT groups are in your area, these may include social and support groups, sports and special interest groups, online groups, Pride events etc.
- Get educated about LGBT History, this will help you understand some of the issues people face and encourage young people to realize that they are part of a vibrant and diverse community.



- All LGBT people are individuals
- There are LGBT people in every walk of life, every culture and who follow all known religions, faiths and beliefs.
- Don't assume that all LGBT people will be affected by the same issues but understand that there may be certain things that they may need support with.
- Nothing you can do can stop young people feeling the way they do if they are attracted to someone of the same sex but everything you do to support them will be helpful.
- Transgender people should be able to express their gender identities and lead happy, fulfilled lives.
- Gender Identity disorder is a diagnosable condition and there is support available
- Homosexuality is not a mental illness. Nor can it be 'cured'. Indeed, so-called reparative or conversion therapies intended to change a same sex sexual orientation have been criticized by all major mental health organisations as ineffective and potentially harmful.

- There are groups for Parents, Families and Friends of LGBT people and many people say connecting with other parents of LGBT young people helps them progress their understanding of what it's like growing up as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans.
- Understand that being LGBT does not impact on a person's ability to be spiritual or religious any more than being heterosexual does. There are many LGBT faith groups of all denominations.
- Many LGBT people fear negative reactions from others because of their sexual orientation or gender identity issues and many young people face verbal and physical abuse from their peers, families and in adult life. Ensure that your foster child is safe at school and in the community.
- Being LGBT is no barrier to getting on in life and indeed there are many successful people in all areas of professional life who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans.