

Creating Welcoming Environments

- **By posting LGBTQ positive posters, books, articles, and pamphlets in your office, you invite disclosure. Put up “safe place” stickers and “welcome” posters.**
- **Use non-gender specific language (Are you dating instead of do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?)**
- **Use words the youth uses to describe his/her self. If a youth does feel comfortable with the words “homosexual” “gay” etc, try using “same sex feelings”**
- **Don’t assume everyone is straight**
- **Don’t assume someone is LGBTQ because of their mannerisms**
- **Challenge homophobic language and name-calling**
- **Challenge phrases like “that’s so gay”**
- **Be a role model of acceptance**
- **Put up posters showing a diversity of families and relationships**
- **Listen for “clues” that the student might want to talk about his/her sexual orientation**
- **Use the term “sexual orientation” instead of “sexual preference”. It is not a choice**
- **Don’t assume that all the problems that an LGBTQ youth experiences has to do with their sexual orientation.**
- **Always respect and maintain an LGBTQ youth’s personal privacy and never disclose confidential information about sexual orientation or gender identity without the client’s permission.**
- **Seek out safe, affirming placements for LGBTQ youth**