

Responding to Youth

- E** Empathy and vulnerability is key
 - M** Match their energy with the “just right” approach
 - B** Be present in the moment
 - R** Remember to listen actively and avoid premature problem solving
 - A** Ask questions to get information and permission to help
 - C** Communicate support through your face, tone, and body language
 - E** Execute “The Pause” if you don’t know what to say
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Responding to Parents/Guardians

- L** Lead with validation, warmth, and empathy
 - I** Inquire (gently) to get clarity
 - S** Share information about safety, screening, and LGBTQ community
 - T** Talk to the fear (all behavior has meaning)
 - E** Earn their trust and permission to help
 - N** Never forget who the parent is
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Responding to Volunteers and Stakeholders

- I** Immediately suspend judgment and thank them
- M** Make sure to validate personal values (and their right to have them)
- P** Provide information about the broad and diverse range of youth, parents, guardians, and volunteers with whom you work
- A** Acknowledge shared priorities for youth (safety and well-being)
- C** Communicate your mission to serve ALL youth and their families
- T** Take an intentional and bold approach. Offer resources; educate them.

SOGIE + Best Practices

Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE) are distinct concepts and everyone has them.

Speak up against homo-, bi-, transphobia. Examine language for heteronormative or strict binary concepts.

Use the words your clients use. Be mindful of your pronoun use. If you don't know – ask!

Terms vary throughout the LGBTQ community. Not all words are okay for non-LGBTQ people to use.

Use gender affirming language: "assigned male at birth" instead of "born a boy."

Avoid outdated terms: "homosexual," "preference," and "lifestyle"

Tone and body language matters.

Do your best to keep up, but most importantly... keep open!

Fostering a Welcoming Environment

Your first response is extremely important.

Awareness is something that must be practiced if you want to get better at it.

Active listening is key to helping youth identify and express emotions; it's how we as adults communicate that we care and understand.

Everyone has values, but mentorship should focus on helping young people develop their own internal values.

All behavior has meaning and often represents a young person's needs/wants.

Acceptance and support are your most important tools when working with trans or gender-expansive youth.