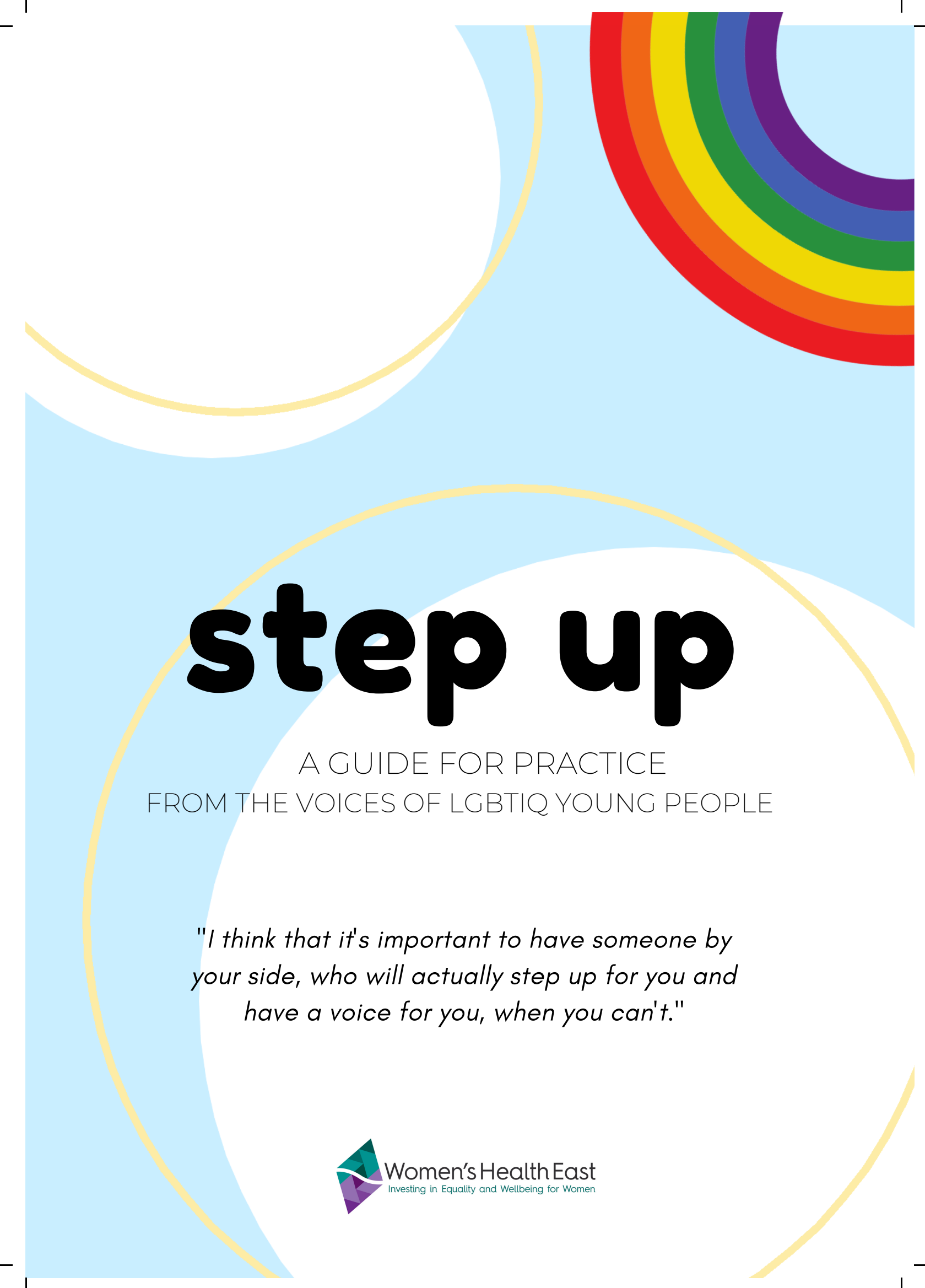




step up

A GUIDE FOR PRACTICE
FROM THE VOICES OF LGBTIQ YOUNG PEOPLE

"I think that it's important to have someone by your side, who will actually step up for you and have a voice for you, when you can't."



Women's Health East
Investing in Equality and Wellbeing for Women

acknowledgements

This resource was produced by Women's Health East as a part of the Voices for Equality and Respect project.

This resource would not have been possible without the LGBTIQ young people who shared their valuable experiences and insights in the workshops.

Women's Health East acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work - the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation - and pay our respects to elders past, present, and emerging.

The research report upon which this resource is based, *(Re)shaping Respect; LGBTIQ young people talk healthy, equal relationships* can be found at www.whe.org.au

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about the project



Family violence is part of the lives of many LGBTIQ people, either currently or in their past. It is known that intimate partner violence is as prevalent in the LGBTIQ community as it is in the rest of the population.

There are significant research gaps, including the understanding of what drives violence against LGBTIQ people in relationships and within families.

The Voices for Equality and Respect project aims to contribute to the evidence base by expanding our understanding of family violence within the lives of LGBTIQ young people, and contribute to the evidence-based prevention strategies.

Through the provision of four workshops in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne, the Voices for Equality and Respect project engaged LGBTIQ young people to speak about their experiences and challenges of building equal and respectful relationships.

This resource is designed to share a snapshot of project findings, as well as provide practical solutions for change. Please note that this resource aims to provide suggestions for practice, but does not attempt to provide definitive guidance for all situations.

terminology

terminology is more about respect than getting it right. while its important to be aware of differing language and identities also be aware that language is constantly evolving, and each person may respond to terms differently

LGBTIQ

This acronym stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer (or Questioning). This is the acronym used in the research report from which this guide has been developed.

Heterosexism

Refers to the larger, institutionalised system of oppression and discrimination based on a belief that heterosexual relationships and family forms are the norm, 'natural' and/or superior to all others.. Heterosexism highlights the systemic discrimination that LGBTIQ people encounter, which includes 'homophobia', 'biphobia', and 'transphobia'.

Heteronormativity

Refers to a general perspective that sees heterosexual experiences as the only, or central, view of the world, and assumes a linear relationship between sex, gender and sexuality.

Gender Non Conforming/GNC

A person whose expression does not conform to gendered standards of expression.

AMAB/AFAB

These acronyms stand for 'assigned male at birth' and 'assigned female at birth', which is most appropriate way to refer to a persons sex at birth.

Misgendering

Is when someone refers to an individual by the wrong gender. For instance, using the wrong pronouns – accidentally or on purpose – or expressing other social behaviours which imply a person's gender incorrectly.

Transitioning

This refers to the process of altering a person's expression to match their gender identity, specifically people who identify differently to the gender they were assigned at birth.

if someone uses a term you are unfamiliar with, it is better to ask than assume!

everyone has a gender identity, these are some examples of the most commonly used definitions

Sex and Sexuality

Sex

The biological characteristics related to sexual reproduction (including anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes) that are used to define humans as male or female.

Sexuality

Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practice, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed.

Gay/lesbian

A person who is primarily attracted to the same sex or gender as their own.

Bisexual/pansexual/polysexual

These are three distinct and individual identities but they contain a lot of overlap.

Bisexual

A person who is attracted to two or more genders

Pansexual

A person who experiences attraction regardless of gender

Polysexual

A person who is attracted to multiple genders

Asexual

A person who does not experience sexual attraction

Gender and Gender Identity

Gender

Gender is defined as the socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender defines masculinity and femininity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and change over time.

Gender Identity

Refers to a person's innate, deeply felt psychological identification of their gender, which may or may not correspond to the person's designated sex at birth.

Cisgender

A person whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth

Non-binary

An umbrella term referring to someone who identifies as outside the gender binary of woman to man, but can also be used as its own term of identification.

Transgender

An umbrella term for people who identify differently to the sex they were assigned at birth.

Agender

This refers to an individual who does not identify as possessing/experiencing gender.

our young people told us that the

top 4 essential qualities of a healthy relationship

are...

boundaries

the capacity to recognise and accept boundaries – both one's own and those of others – is a key factor in a continuum that connects safety with respectful relationships

"I don't like [being] touchy feely with family members, [but] growing up you you have to hug them to greet them because it's a loving thing. And me having to put up a wall being like, 'I'm not comfortable with that', you know?"

communication

central to voices of young people was the importance of respectful communication based on honesty and trust

tips for allyship #1

Whether you're asking the internet or an LGBTIQ identifying person, asking is the best way to learn. Remember that the community is big and diverse, and not everyone feels the same about certain labels or word usage. If you're unsure, the best thing to do is ask.

when in doubt - ask!

"I was in a relationship where we didn't really communicate anything and I didn't actually know they were asexual, the whole time, because it was just never something that was brought up. So, that's one of the reasons that the relationship ended up failing, because we didn't communicate enough"

autonomy and equality

the need for autonomy in relation to family was prominent. The concept of autonomy was sometimes connected to equality and a sense of independence and freedom in intimate relationships.

"I'm disabled, I can't physically do as much stuff as an able-bodied person can. But that doesn't mean my position in any kind of relationship is lesser. Everyone should be on the same level."

"Two people have two different experiences and people have autonomy in the situation despite the [parent-child] power dynamic. ... They have the autonomy to say what they want and ... respect is taking that on board"

safety

an LGBTIQ young person's sense of safety within their family of origin will play an essential role in their development, and in their existing and future formation of healthy and respectful relationships. Young people also indicated that they experienced a concerning, heightened sense of vigilance with respect to their safety in other contexts, such as schools, public spaces and even in LGBTIQ community settings

"I missed a lot of school and just ended up dropping out, ... I would come back for a day and get stuff thrown at me. People would yell at me ... and nothing. [Teacher's would say] 'we want to help you, but we can't'."

"[Safety is] being able to talk to your partner or whoever you're in a relationship with. Just like being able to express yourself without having to feel like, something negatives gonna happen to you"

barriers to experiencing respectful relationships

fewer positive role-models of queer relationships

hetero-normative and exclusionary delivery of sexual health education and Respectful Relationships in secondary schools

invisibility of gender and sexually diverse people in all media forms, as well as the negative or highly sexualised portrayals of LGBTIQ people in media

an underlying social context of homophobia limits self-expression and the ability to move freely in public with romantic partners

a smaller dating pool limits access to a range of suitable partners

minimal opportunities to meet other young queer people in safe social environments



am i confident in asking for someone's pronouns?

this is a surprisingly common question. the best way to ask, is just to ask.

"what are your pronouns?" or "what pronouns do you prefer i use for you?"

if this feels too forward or assuming --

introduce yourself with your own pronouns!

"my name is rhiannon, i prefer she/her pronouns, nice to meet you!"

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tips for allyship #2

the best parts of being queer...

more equality or fluidity when it comes to roles and power dynamics in relationships

"i think one of the positive things about LGBT relationships is that we're not always boxed in with the standard male/female roles - ... it's not, in most cases, as binary. It can be fun, people take on different roles"

freedom to resist some of the sexist expectations of femininity, masculinity, and beauty

"when we look at one another and we look at ourselves, we wouldn't hate an imperfection, a societal imperfection in the other person. why should we hate it in ourselves? It's the most wonderful and beautiful freedom that we've discovered"

experiencing a strong sense of acceptance from their LGBTIQ community

"i feel like we all have a lot of the same experiences, so we're all able to bond on that and form stronger friendships, stronger relationships with other people"



suggestions for practice

for practitioners working in primary prevention of violence...

1 Address the drivers of LGBTIQ violence

The drivers include heteronormativity and rigid binary concepts of gender and sex, and the condoning of violence against LGBTIQ people. Undertake action to transform the norms, practices and structures that result in discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ people across our society

- Challenge expectations about relationships being heterosexual and between cisgender people
- Challenge the rigid adherence to binary gender stereotypes and roles which underpin patriarchy and heterosexism
- Recognise, value and celebrate LGBTIQ people, relationships and queer culture
- Promote equality and respect for people of all genders in relationships and in public life
- Build an equitable representation of LGBTIQ people in positions of responsibility and authority across all levels of society
- Challenge the condoning of violence against LGBTIQ people



- 2** **Ensure the inclusion of LGBTIQ women as a focus in prevention of violence against women initiatives**
- 3** **Embed intersectionality and the analysis of sex, gender and sexuality into family violence and violence against women prevention planning and action**
- 4** **Address gender inequality because patriarchal systems disadvantage everyone, including LGBTIQ people**
- 5** **Develop relevant LQBTIQ partnerships and engage LGBTIQ young people and communities in the planning, design and implementation of prevention initiatives of relevance to them**
- 6** **Focus on schools as an important setting for prevention action for LGBTIQ young people, due to high prevalence of reported abuse including transphobia, biphobia and homophobia**
- 7** **Continue to build evidence through well documented and evaluated programs and initiatives**

suggestions for practice

for everyone working with LGBTQ young people...

Use appropriate pronouns. (eg. ask the person what pronouns they use, use their pronouns, have your own pronouns on your name tag)

Keep up to date with evolving language and identities in relation to gender and sexuality

Be aware of the young person's need for personal space and possibly other social and physical boundaries particularly for trans and gender diverse individuals

Be conscious that young people may not have an awareness of what constitutes violence in LGBTQ relationships, which may involve different dynamics to cisgender, heterosexual relationships

Know and have a service list of LGBTQ specific services or LGBTQ friendly services to which you can refer young people



suggestions for practice

for service providers...

Promote services to young people so they can find you when they need you

Provide resources and support for young people on for topics such as healthy queer relationships, safe sex and coming out, as well as provide resources and support for parents and family members to encourage support of young LGBTQ people

for teachers...

Role model use of inclusive language and class content outside of specific LGBTQ-focused topics

Be aware of and use Safe Schools resources

Use LGBTQ specific case studies and examples provided in the Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials



questions for practitioners to consider

does my service let people safely identify themselves?

take into consideration if your consumers are able to provide their pronouns, preferred name or gender identity without prying eyes or ears.

do i know this person's physical boundaries?

be aware of the young person's need for personal space and possibly other social and physical boundaries particularly for trans and gender diverse individuals

do i know where to refer someone for LGBTIQ specific help?

we don't always have the answers, and that's okay. at the back of this resource is a list of services and resources for young people, parents, and practitioners or teachers.

is my service inclusive enough?

training for services and professional developments are available through many organisations such as Rainbow Equality . you can also educate yourself through resources such as the LGBTI Health Hub, Ygender, and Trans101.

do i have the up-to-date knowledge?

we acknowledge that terminology is consistently evolving. Keep up to date with evolving language and identities in relation to gender and sexuality.



tips for allyship #3

are you visible?

do you or your organisation publicly support LGBTIQ awareness dates and events? Show your support by celebrating events such as IDAHOBIT, Wear it Purple day and Trans Awareness week. Does your service have a rainbow sticker or flag in the waiting room? Show your support by identifying yourself as LGBTIQ friendly

recommendations

The following recommendations have emerged from the Voices for Equality and Respect report. Some of these are focused on inclusive and intersectional practice which may require reorientation of existing practice and services. Others will require adequate resourcing or funding.

Knowledge and Practice:

1. Further research into LGBTIQ peoples experiences of violence to develop further understanding of the drivers of violence against LGBTIQ people
2. Sustained funding of LGBTIQ family violence prevention initiatives
3. Prevention of violence against women partnerships, led by Women's Health Services across Victoria, to strengthen the focus on LGBTIQ women in regional action plans
4. Prevention initiatives undertaken to include robust evaluation frameworks to contribute to this burgeoning area of knowledge and practice

Local governments, support services and other organisations:

Recommendations for mainstream / generalist services

5. Undertake a whole of organisation program to build LGBTIQ inclusive practice
6. Develop and /or maintain a foundational level of knowledge re. LGBTIQ young people's experience of violence, and family violence in particular.

7. Increase formal opportunities for young LGBTIQ people to socialise and support one another through development and/or expansion of LGBTIQ specific support groups, events and activities

8. Publicly support diversity and inclusion through recognition of relevant dates and events such as Midsumma festival, Wear it Purple day, IDAHOBIT day, Trans Awareness week

Recommendations for all organisations that provide services to young people and families

9. Undertake an audit of services and resources to ensure that they are inclusive and to identify any gaps in specific information relevant to LGBTIQ young people

10. Increase access to educational resources, and support for parents and family members to develop and maintain healthy and positive relationships with LGBTIQ family members

Schools:

11. Continue focus on the Respectful Relationships Program's role in upskilling and supporting teachers to confidently deliver LGBTIQ inclusive content

12. Encourage and support religious schools to participate in the Respectful Relationships Program

**over the page is some info for
LGBTIQ young people which can be
photocopied to handout!**

for young people

things to consider in your relationships...

do you communicate effectively?

Can you talk about your feelings and concerns openly? Being LGBTIQ can come with particular challenges in communicating in all kinds of relationships. Whether this being able to safely communicate your identity with your family or friends, or communicating expectations in romantic or intimate partner relationships. Talking openly and honestly is key to a healthy relationship.

queer
peer
support!

QLife
1800 184 527
qlife.org.au

List of diverse resources for LGBTIQ people

[www.lgbtihomeless.org.au/
resources/for-lgbti-people/](http://www.lgbtihomeless.org.au/resources/for-lgbti-people/)

YGender often hold clothes swaps
for trans and gender non-
conforming youth, and provide
Trans Youth Support Kits.

Contact Ygender via Facebook or
info@ygender.org.au

Thorne Harbour Health
1800 134 840
thorneharbour.org

LGBTIQ
health and
counselling

national
violence
service

1800RESPECT
1800 737 732
1800respect.org.au

do you feel safe in your relationship?

It is important to feel safe to be yourself in all relationships and settings. Whether this is feeling safe at home, at school and with partners. Having a sense of safety is fundamental to an individual's ability to feel positive about self and personal identity. It is vital that if you are facing such threats to your safety, you access support services.

do you feel your boundaries are respected?

Can you say no to a situation and trust that your partner will listen to you? This is an important quality for any relationship, and for anyone, but particularly for non-heterosexual people who may need to set up boundaries around coming out or how to act in public, or trans/non-binary people who may feel a lot of dysphoria with physical touch, or asexual/aromantic people who have boundaries around how far the relationship goes. respecting these boundaries is important, and if you feel they are not being respected, consider talking to a professional or trusted friend about this.

National LGBTI Health Alliance has issued a Genders, Bodies and Relationships Passport which holds all of the critical information about a person's gender/s, body, and relationships in a single location.

You can order a free copy for yourself or a bulk order for services on their website:

<https://lgbtihealth.org.au/passport/>

Switchboard

1800 184 527

switchboard.org.au

more queer
peer support!

network for  **Minus18**
LGBTIQ youth! minus18.org.au

Violence Response Services which are safe for LGBTIQ

safesteps
1800 015 188
www.safesteps.org.au/

Relationships Australia
1300 364 277
www.relationships.org.au/

InTouch Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence
1800 755 988
intouch.org.au/

drummond street
(03) 9663 6733
ds.org.au/

Housing services which are safe for LGBTIQ

Kara House
(emergency accommodation and
outreach service)
1800 900 520
karahouse.org.au/index.php

Queer Housing Melbourne +
Trans Housing Melbourne
(Facebook groups)

Family Access Network
(03) 9890 2673
www.fan.org.au/

VincentCare
1800 825 955
vincentcare.org.au

GLLO's

For enquiries: (03) 9247 6944
In an emergency please call 000
or your local police station

specialty trained
police officers
for LGBT+

**photocopy
me to hand
out when
needed!**

**Thank you for taking the time to read
this document and further your
understanding.**



Women's Health East
1/125 George Street, Doncaster East
VIC 3109
(03) 9851 3700
health@whe.org.au



Women's Health East
acknowledges the support of the
Victorian Government.