

RESPONDING TO YOUTH

E

Empathy and vulnerability are 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



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 their fear (all behavior has meaning)

E

Earn their trust and permission to help

N

Never forget who the parent is



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- Avoid outdated terms: “homosexual,” “preference,” and “lifestyle.”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 & 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.

