

LGBTQ Inclusivity

Event planners and hosts strive to create a welcoming environment for all who may attend. Regardless of an event's focus, the setting, planning, and team should be inclusive of diverse communities and present the least amount of barriers for individuals to participate. This culture of inclusion also applies when working with young lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ)* people. How might you begin this process?

Be Proactive

- Incorporate representatives from diverse communities in the planning process so as to represent those in attendance - including youth. Input from different communities and personal experiences, in addition to post-event evaluations, can enhance all aspects of an event and assist in preemptively addressing barriers to participation or inclusion.
- Make it known that discrimination will not be tolerated by attendees or staff, and explain the values behind this. Create opportunities for attendees and staff to provide anonymous feedback and reports of discrimination to event hosts to ensure the space is safe(r), accessible, and more inclusive for participants. This process can assist in retaining attendees for future events by promoting transparency, as well as highlighting potential areas for growth as an event team.¹

Market Intentionally

- Create materials that reflect young people from diverse spectrums of gender identities, racial and ethnic communities, sexualities and (dis)abilities, to name a few. Young people look for small indicators of support in marketing materials.
- Spread the word about your event in person *and* online. Young people use technology to communicate, and online media is essential. Although LGBTQ youth experience almost three times as much bullying and harassment online as non-LGBTQ youth, they² also find greater peer support, access to health information and opportunities to engage online.

¹ Gay-Straight Alliance Network. (2009). *Planning Events*. Retrieved from <https://www.gsanetwork.org/resources/gsa-actions-events/planning-events>.

² Palmer, N., Kosciw, J., Greytak, E., Ybarra, M., Korchmaros, J., & Mitchell, K. (2013). *Out Online The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth on the Internet*. Retrieved September 15, 2015, from <http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Out Online FINAL.pdf>.

*As a measure of inclusivity, the authors use the acronym LGBTQ to include all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions. We understand that identities are not limited to the terms represented by the letters in this acronym and aim to be representative of the entirety of identities across the queer spectrum. Select studies utilize the acronyms LGBT or LGB to denote the specific populations represented in those studies and are marked as such throughout this tip sheet.

Consider Accessibility

- Pay attention to the location and overall environment of the event space. Consider the willingness of the staff to support attendees, be open to learning best practices for interaction, and address any problems that may occur onsite. Designate point people or liaisons to do daily checks and problem solve during the event.
- Transportation safety is important. Consider young people's age, access to transportation (private or public) and comfort arriving at a location that may make them uneasy or potentially out them. Speak in advance with front desk security about appropriate behaviors. Budget for transportation, if necessary, and make sure all youth feel as safe as possible when attending and leaving the event.
- Transportation limitations? If public transportation is an option, search for an event space near a bus or train station, and include that information on marketing and invitation materials.³
- No public transportation nearby? Arrange for inclusive and welcoming ride shares, shuttle buses, or central meeting places for young LGBTQ people planning to attend the event.⁴ Events need to be as accessible as possible for the young people attending. Help create this opportunity.

Value Identit(ies)

- Respect self-determination and honoring everyone's identity. Always use a person's [self-identified gender pronouns](#)⁵ (they, ze, she, he, Mx., etc.). Not sure about someone's pronoun(s)? Ask. Consider providing name tags at trainings with a space for writing gender pronoun(s): "I use ____" or "Please use ____." Another option is to have premade "He/His," "She/Hers," "They/Theirs," and blank stickers for people to add to their own nametags.
- Lead by example. People with a speaking role at the event can include their own pronouns in their introductions. Explaining the inclusion for pronouns on nametags can also be an easy way to open the door for questions.
- Acknowledge the potential for safety concerns by providing non-gendered restroom access. Young LGBTQ people surveyed in all communities in the United States - rural, suburban and urban - listed restrooms and locker rooms as the spaces they felt least safe based on their sexual orientation.⁶
- How do you designate these restrooms? Before planning an event, ask the host site if they provide non-gendered restrooms. If not, discuss options with them for allowing attendees to use the restroom of their choosing. Be aware of the [public accommodations laws](#) in your area and advocate for attendees to be able to use the restroom of their choosing without harassment. If there are multiple event spaces available, make access to non-gendered restrooms a priority and explain their importance to all event hosts in advance. If another guest or staff member presents with a concern over this inclusion, offer to speak with the concerned party alongside the location's staff member.

³ Gay-Straight Alliance Network, 2009.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *The Safe Space Kit: Guide to Being an Ally to LGBT Students.* (2013). New York, New York: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. Retrieved from <http://www.glsen.org/safespace>.

⁶ Palmer, N. A., Kosciw, J. G., & Bartkiewicz, M. J. (2012). *Strengths and Silences: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students in rural and small town schools.* New York, NY: Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network. Retrieved from <http://www.glsen.org/ruralreport>.

Be Responsive

- Do not take or post photos, or share online posts, without a young person's consent. You never know whom you may be outing, or who may currently be experiencing unwanted online monitoring.
- Confidentiality and support for LGBTQ young people can be vital and is imperative in creating a space where LGBTQ people feel welcome among all others. If you are providing sign-in sheets, make them optional and inform all young people of any permission slips or forms that need to be signed by an adult. Be transparent.



National LGBTQ DV Capacity
Building Learning Center

breakthecycle.org
nwnetwork.org
ncavp.org

Break the Cycle

Because Everyone Deserves a
Healthy Relationship