Inclusive & Affirming Programs for LGBTQIA+ Youth

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Kaleidoscope Youth Center is the largest and longest serving organization in Ohio solely dedicated to serving and supporting LGBTQIA+ youth.
Context

- Historical inequality of sexual rights
- History of mental health treatment
- Effects on young people
- "isms" in systems and institutions
- Adultism
- and institutions
Today’s Agenda

- LGBTQ+ Quick Terms
- Bias
- Safer Spaces
- Inclusive Programs
Shared Language

- **Gender Identity:** a person’s deep-seated internal sense of their own gender

- **Sex Assigned at Birth:** the sex that someone is labeled at birth, usually based on the appearance of their external reproductive anatomy

- **Gender Expression:** the way in which a person uses clothing, hairstyle, or other facets of their appearance to reflect their idea of gender

- **Sexual Orientation:** a person’s sexual, emotional, physical, and psychological attraction to other people
Shared Language

- **LGBTQIA+**: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and others who are not cisgender and heterosexual

- **Transgender**: describes a person whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth

- **Queer**: an umbrella term used to describe someone who is not cisgender and heterosexual

- **Intersex**: a combination of anatomy, chromosomes, and hormones that makes it difficult/impossible to categorize someone as male or female.

- **Asexual**: a term used to describe someone who does not experience sexual attraction toward others, regardless of gender

- **Gender Non-Conforming**: when someone’s behavior or expression doesn’t match societal expectations of masculinity/femininity, often tied to their sex assigned at birth

- **Cisgender**: describes a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth
Implicit Bias

Subconscious ideas and associations that cause us to have feelings and attitudes about others based on characteristics like race, ethnicity, age, and appearance.

Those ideas and associations develop over the course of a lifetime beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages.

*Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity*
Key Characteristics

Pervasive – everyone possesses them
Related to (but distinct from) explicit bias
Not necessarily aligned with our declared beliefs
Favor our own in group
Can be unlearned
Levels of Bias

Individual: prejudice, bias, microaggressions, bigotry (extreme)
A patron says it’s “just too hard” to accommodate “everyone,” signaling that LGBTQIA+ folks should be left out.
A community member says the library shouldn’t include materials that are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ people.

Organizational: discrimination
A library doesn’t provide an all-genders restroom, and doesn’t have a policy that allows patrons to use the restroom they feel safest in.

System: -ism
Libraries across the country are being targeted by anti-LGBTQ+ groups and forced to change their programming.
Be a Disruptor!

Pause
Engage
Be an ally in the moment (reactive)
Create safe(r) spaces (proactive)
The Starting Point

Diversity Within Community
- Assumptions
- Gender Neutral Language

Support the Coming Out Process
- Call Out Negative Behavior
- This is Not a Taboo Topic!
Normalize Pronoun Use

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Comprehensive anti-bullying & anti-discrimination policies

Visibly affirming staff

Inclusive materials

Logistics
Comprehensive LGBTQ resource lists

Inclusive marketing & images

Gender neutral restrooms

Comprehensive LGBTQ resource lists
Resources for Finding Materials

Rainbow Book List
Lists from large publishers for children’s books focused on family and community
Search indie publishers/bookstores for less well-known literature
Crowdsource using rec sites like Goodreads
Weed out old stuff!
Creating LGBTQIA+ Specific Programs

- Community Training Opportunities
- GSA / Gender & Sexuality Alliance / Pride Club
- Book Clubs
- Movie Screenings
- Read Alouds Featuring LGBTQ-Inclusive Books

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Reminder:
All programs can and should be LGBTQIA+ inclusive
Action Steps

What are some individual changes you can resolve to make moving forward?

What are some organizational changes your school/org/agency might want to consider making moving forward?
Thank you!

Please let us know how you’re feeling now that this training is complete. Your response will help us evaluate and improve upon future programs!

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