

Tips for supporting LGBTQ Youth

- **Communicate enthusiasm** for their identity and gratitude that they shared it with you!
- **Express validation and compassion** for their experiences
- **Ask for and use** their preferred name and pronouns
- **Respect the various identities they affirm** regardless of what you think they 'are'
- **Ask them how their relationships are** with their family or friends- "is there anywhere you feel safe?" "is there anyone you feel really knows you?"
 - If the answers are no, express that you are sorry they are not receiving that at home, that they deserve to feel safe and be known and appreciated- offer your help and finding safe spaces for them.
 - Validate that although everyone deserves loving and supportive homes, we don't all get them, but that we all get a chance to find chosen family and that resources do exist to help those of us that don't have safe and supportive homes
- **Release your fears!** If you say something you fear was insulting—admit it! Apologize and express a sincere desire to be helpful but that you fear your own ignorance.
 - Showing kids that you care and are aware of your own fallible tends to foster connection, rather than distance!
 - Plus, this allows them to be the experts of their own experiences-- which is great for self-esteem!

Tips for Engaging Parents of LGBTQ Youth

- Express respect and compassion for their experiences
- Validate their emotions
- Appeal to their concern for their child's well-being
- Express concern that more often than not, when families try to keep their kids from being who they feel they are, the kid wind up hurting themselves and/or others in many ways
- Offer your help in getting the family through this rough spot
 - Connect families with additional resources they may find helpful such as websites, parent support networks and informational brochures
- Be firm about your concerns, but not aggressive or judgmental.
 - When people feel judged or attacked we tend to shut down and disconnect
- If they refuse to consider your position, calmly express your disappointment and if need be, the next steps you may have to take to ensure their child gets the help they need (calling DCHS to report neglect, etc)