



Parents/Guardians Resource Sheet:

Top tips creating LGBT supportive environments

Your child's school is taking part in The Rainbow Flag Award – a government funded initiative that aims to reduce homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, by positively educating about lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) identities.

Some common questions:

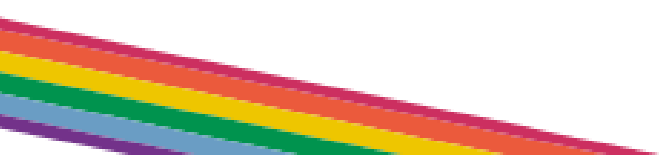
Why are you doing this work? It is still the case, even today, that LGBT young people are more likely to self-harm and suffer mental health issues, than non-LGBT young people. This is not due to being LGBT per se, rather because of the existence of (or perceived existence of) homophobia, biphobia and/or transphobia. LGBT people exist, but homophobia, biphobia and transphobia don't need to.

Aren't they too young to need to know about this? Some people suggest that educating children about LGBT identities could be confusing for them. We would argue that not educating children about LGBT identities, is confusing. Education is about getting children ready for the world they live in, a world where LGBT people exist, a world where your child one day might realise that they are LGBT.

What are the chances that my child will say they're LGBT? A significant proportion of the population do identify as LGBT and there are no external factors which will impact this. Being LGBT is certainly not a "choice". However, there are factors, such as openly supportive families, which will impact the likelihood of your child choosing to be open with you about their feelings and identity.

My child isn't LGBT, so why does it matter? Gender identity and sexual orientation are not fixed and can fluctuate over a person's life. Knowing that they have a welcoming and supportive home environment will always ensure they feel much more comfortable and able to be themselves. It may also impact how they feel about bringing home friends who do identify as LGBT, as well as other people they meet through the course of their lives.

How can I make it easier for my child to tell me if they are LGBT? The coming out process can be frightening, not many parents say how they would react if their child came out as



LGBT, this leaves children guessing, not sure how you would respond if they did come out. Not using positive language, or pretending that types of people don't exist can make it seem like taboo. Does your child know that you would still love them if they told you they were LGBT?

I'm worried about them being bullied at school. People don't get bullied because they are LGBT, they get bullied because of the existence of discriminatory attitudes. High levels of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying are being reported in our schools, this really emphasises the need for supportive families and proactive education programmes. We can't change – and don't want to change – the fact that people are LGBT, but we can make the world a safer place for them to live. We believe that this can be achieved through good, strong, positive education around LGBT identities.

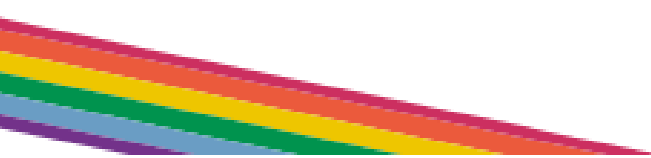
What can I do to help?

DO's

- ✓ Make your child aware that how they feel is perfectly ok, and that you love them, no matter what.
- ✓ Use words such as “lesbian”, “gay”, “bisexual” and “trans”, openly and positively when there is opportunity, perhaps in relation to a family member, an LGBT soap character, or celebrity.
- ✓ Regularly reinforce that there is nothing wrong with being LGBT.
- ✓ Think about the books you buy for your child, do they reflect all types of people in a way that recognises and celebrates diversity?
- ✓ Allow them to express themselves i.e. clothing, hair, toys, etc.
- ✓ Find local support for LGBT young people and children if you need to (see below)

DON'T's

- ✗ Refuse to acknowledge their feelings and/or identity.
- ✗ Use negative and/or derogatory language about LGBT people and/or identities, as this will stick with your child.
- ✗ (If your child “comes out”), suggest it is ‘a phase’, as this is dangerous and dismissive. It might be a phase, if it is, it will go away. If it is not, your child will have felt *heard*.



GLOSSARY

Lesbian – a woman who experiences attraction towards another women.

Gay – A person who experiences attraction towards people of their own gender.

Bisexual – A person of any gender who is attracted to people of their own gender, and other genders.

Trans – a person who's gender identity does not align or "match" with the sex and gender role they were assigned at birth.

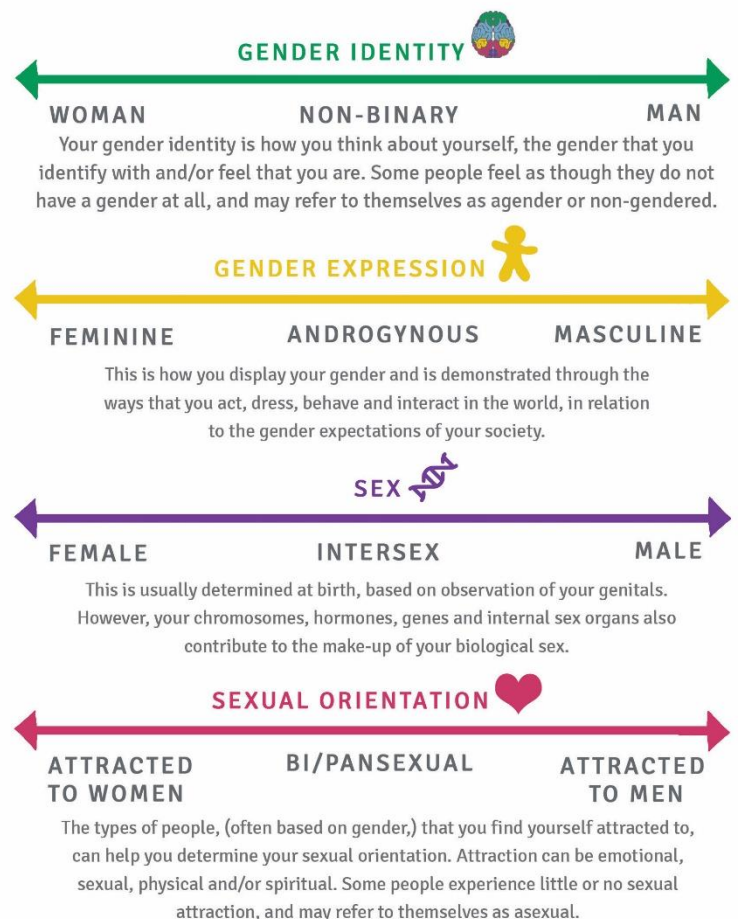
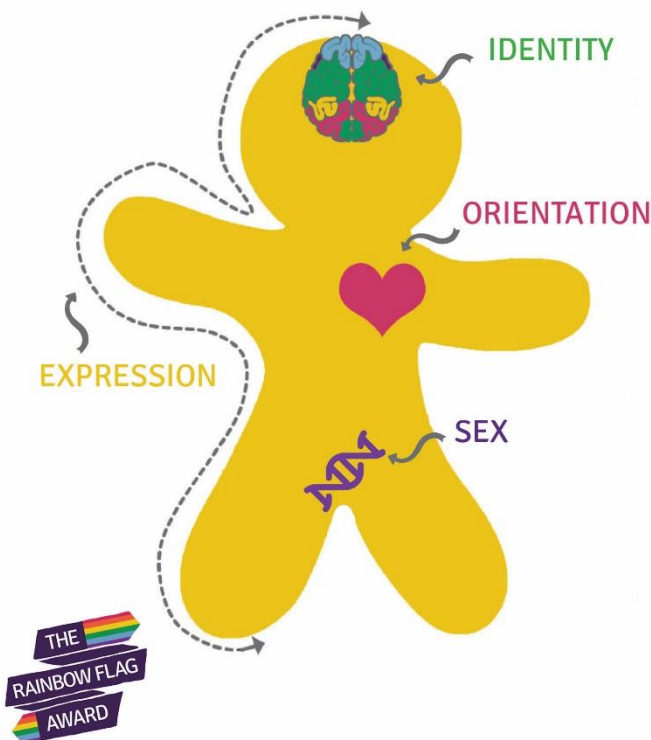
Homophobia – Fear or dislike of, or discrimination towards, people that are lesbian or gay.

Biphobia - Fear or dislike of, or discrimination towards, people that are bisexual.

Transphobia - Fear or dislike of, or discrimination towards, people that are trans.

THE GENDERBREAD PERSON

Original concept by
itspronouncedmetrosexual.com



The Rainbow Flag Award is a joint initiative between:



The Proud Trust is a North West based, lifesaving and life enhancing organisation, that helps LGBT+ young people empower themselves, to make a positive change for themselves, and their communities.

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The Kite Trust is proud to promote the health, well-being, and inclusion of LGBT+ young people across Cambridgeshire; raising awareness, supporting, and educating our local communities.

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Allsorts is a project based in Brighton that supports and empowers young people under 26 who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or unsure (LGBTU) of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

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DISC North East supports LGBT young people aged 11-25, and their families. We offer tailored support to encourage and enable young people to empower themselves, build confidence and reach their full potential.

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Other recommended useful orgs:



www.mermaiduk.org.uk

Family and individual support for gender diverse and transgender children and young people.

