

TOP TIPS

For working with LGBT children and young people
Information provided by CAFCASS

1

If asking a young person about their relationship status, do not assume the gender of their partner. It is always best to use gender neutral language when asking the question. "Do you have a partner?" is better than "do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?"

2

If a young person tells you that they have an opposite gendered partner, this does not mean they are heterosexual, just as having a same gendered partner does not make them gay. Don't assume a young person's sexual orientation, don't be afraid to ask.

3

Be conscious of not perpetuating stereotypes about LGBT people e.g. assuming all gay men are camp/effeminate; lesbian women are butch/masculine; bisexual people are 'confused' and so on.

4

Do not encourage the young person to 'come out' about being LGBT to our parents/carers unless WE have told you that we want to. Pushing a young person to disclose that they are LGBT before they are ready could be detrimental to their wellbeing and/or safety. There is never any obligation for a young person to 'come out'.

5

Consider that a child/young person living with a parent or carer who doesn't respect their identity can be at emotional risk and there may be a potential safeguarding concern.

6

Ask the young person whether they need any LGBT specific support (but don't assume that we do). Inform yourself of available resources and local support options for both young people and parents/carers.

7

Rainbow flags, badges or LGBT specific posters can help young people to feel that they are in a safe and inclusive space and identify you as a LGBT supporter.

8

Consider carefully whether sharing information about a young person being LGBT with other professionals is relevant to the issue you are supporting them with.

9

Never ask, suggest or dismiss a young person's LGBT identity as a phase. This is invalidating their identity and could inhibit trust between you.

10

If you are unsure whether asking a young LGBT person about their relationships and identity is appropriate (unless it relates to their safety), consider whether you would ask a heterosexual young person the same thing. If not, reflect on whether it is a necessary question.