LGBTQ2S

Youth Housing and Shelter Guidelines

Helping individuals and organizations transform the way they connect with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and two-spirited (LGBTQ2S) youth across the housing and homelessness system.

Alberta Government

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning and Two-Spirited (LGBTQ2S) Youth Housing and Shelter Guidelines (the Guidelines) are for individuals and organizations involved in the housing and homelessness system[1].

Developed by the LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness Working Group, the Guidelines incorporate informed research and best practices to transform the way individuals and organizations connect with LGBTQ2S youth. The Guidelines can help:

- Staff build a relationship of openness and trust with individual LGBTQ2S clients.
- Organizations develop policies and physical spaces that are safe, affirming and inclusive of LGBTQ2S youth.
- Provide practical tools (i.e. sample gender-inclusive intake forms) and research for creating LGBTQ2S inclusive spaces.

The Guidelines also include a glossary of common LGBTQ2S terms, a resource list and examples of how organizations are succeeding in supporting LGBTQ2S youth who are at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.

It is important to focus support and resources on LGBTQ2S youth as they experience higher incidents of homelessness, mental health issues and suicide rates than their non-LGBTQ2S counterparts. Research indicates:
- Nearly one in three homeless youth in Canada identify as LGBTQ2S[2].
- LGBTQ2S youth identify the primary reason for homelessness as family rejection due to gender identity or sexual orientation[3].
- LGBTQ2S homeless youth face higher rates of discrimination, violence and abuse in the shelter system than their non-LGBTQ2S counterparts.
- LGBTQ2S youth are at a higher risk of mental health concerns and self-harm and exhibit higher rates of suicidality than the general population.
- Lack of acknowledgement or awareness of LGBTQ2S youth has led to inappropriate responses by front-line workers, adding to the marginalization of this group.

Individuals and organizations who use the Guidelines will be better equipped to support this at-risk, but resilient population.

Thank you for being a leader, ally and supporter of this important work.

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[1] The youth housing and homeless system includes drop-in centres, shelters, housing programs and child and youth services care settings that support youth who are at risk of or are currently experiencing homelessness.
[2] Gaetz, O'Grady, Kidd & Schwan (2016).
[3] Choi, Wilson, Shelton and Gates (2015).

Making housing and shelter spaces safer for LGBTQ2S youth is a priority. Government and community partners in the youth homeless serving sector are pleased to work together to provide this important resource to support Albertans working with LGBTQ2S homeless youth.

Since October 2014, the LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness Working Group has been convening to develop and support the implementation of strategies that support LGBTQ2S homeless youth in Alberta. Additionally, the Working Group supported Dr. Alex Abramovich (a LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness researcher and expert) in developing A Focused Response to Prevent and End LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness. Recommendation three from this report is to "Create provincial housing/shelter standards that focus on working with and meeting the needs of LGBTQ2S young people." While the Guidelines are not standards or regulations, and will not be applied as such, they do support this recommendation by providing information that will help individuals and organizations best meet the needs of LGBTQ2S homeless youth.

Membership on the LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness Working Group includes:

- Alberta Ministry of Community and Social Services
- Alberta Ministry of Children's Services
- Youth Empowerment and Support Services (YESS)
- Calgary Sexual Health Centre
- Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Alberta
- Edmonton John Howard Society

- Calgary Homeless Foundation
- Homeward Trust Edmonton
- Alberta Ministry of Status of Women
- The Pride Centre Edmonton
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary
- Wood's Homes
- City of St. Albert
- Calgary Outlink
- The Calgary Board of Education

Additional contributors to the Guidelines includes Dr. Alex Abramovich, Sagesse Peer Support Services and Eva's Initiatives for Homeless Youth.

The report is guided by Alberta's provincial Supporting Healthy and Successful Transitions to Adulthood: A Plan to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness.
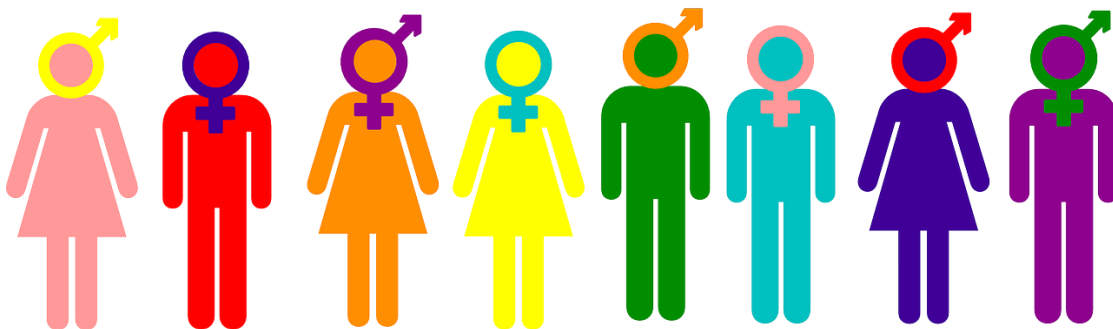
The Guidelines are founded upon a set of 12 values that frame how supports, organizational policy and program policies for youth-serving agencies[4] can be LGBTQ2S inclusive. Individuals and organizations are encouraged to embrace these values as they work to support LGBTQ2S youth.

> We recognize LGBTQ2S persons face a high risk of discrimination and abuse due to sexual orientation[5], gender identity[6] and/or gender expression[7].

> We recognize transgender[8] or gender variant[9] individuals face the highest risk of experiencing discrimination and abuse among LGBTQ2S communities.

> We respect and accept the self-defined sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression of an individual, including their name and pronoun.

> We use LGBTQ2S inclusive language when addressing clients, staff, board members, external stakeholders or volunteers.

> We support each client from an intersectional[10] lens to ensure unique needs are understood and met.

> We foster an inclusive culture of support by ensuring clients, staff, volunteers, external stakeholders and board members are informed of the needs of LGBTQ2S persons.

> We value being an ally[11] as part of a work and service environment that is affirming and inclusive of LGBTQ2S persons.

> We prioritize continuous learning as part of our approach to supporting LGBTQ2S persons.

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[4] Homeless youth serving agencies encompass drop-ins, shelters, housing programs and child and youth services care settings that support youth who are at risk of being or currently homeless.
[5] Sexual Orientation: A term to describe sexual and/or romantic attractions to others (these may include but are not limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, asexual, and pansexual).
[6] Gender Identity: A person's internal sense of being male or female or anything in between.
[7] Gender Expression: The way people communicate their gender identity to others by the way they dress, act, and/or refer to themselves.
[8] Transgender: A term for people whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour does not conform to that typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.
[9] Gender variant: A self-identifying term for someone who defines their gender identity outside of the gender binary.
[10] Intersectionality is defined as "… [The understanding that] inequities are never the result of single, distinct factors. Rather, they are the outcome of intersections of different social locations, power relations and experiences. Hankivsky, Olena (Eds.) (2014). *An Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis Framework.*
[11] Ally: An individual who is supportive of LGBTQ2S people and their rights, and works to end oppression and discrimination.

We employ data collection practices that inform the continuous learning about LGBTQ2S clients and inform ongoing program improvements.

We support policies that align with the prohibited grounds for discrimination within the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, which prohibit clients being refused service on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation[12].
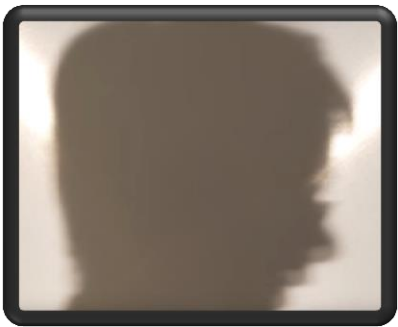
We recognize the existence of heterosexism[13] and cissexism[14] prevents the inclusion of LGBTQ2S persons.

We desire to seek out, provide information on and refer clients to LGBTQ2S-affirming and inclusive supports.

For Want of A Home is a documentary about LGBTQ2S youth homelessness in Alberta, created by the Society for Safe Accommodations for Queer Edmonton Youth (SAFQEY).

The following content provides direction on how to apply these values and make spaces more inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ2S persons in your organization through one-on-one interactions with a client, organizational policies and physical housing and shelter spaces.

We invite each individual reader, team and organization to use these best practices to help guide further exploration into what it means to be more inclusive and affirming. We recognize there are real-time limits (i.e. space, funding and staff resources) to implementing all of these best practices. We also acknowledge that in learning about these best practices your organization has a strong desire for inviting and helping LGBTQ2S persons feel as safe, included and affirmed as possible. Let us begin!

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[12] The Alberta Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, age, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status and sexual orientation.

[13] Heterosexism: Attitudes, biases, and discrimination in favour of those who are straight.

[14] Cissexism: A system of bias in favour of cisgender people, in which people whose gender identities do not match their assigned genders are considered inferior (also see: Cisnormativity).

Establishing a relationship of openness and trust is critical to any client-support relationship. The following set of guidelines provides steps on how to create a welcoming, inclusive and affirming relationship with LGBTQ2S youth.

1) Complete a self-assessment to reflect on personal biases and prejudice towards LGBTQ2S communities. The National Centre for Cultural Competence developed a tool to assess for personal biases when serving LGBTQ2S youth.

2) Use the intake process to establish a relationship of trust and openness with the client. During the intake meeting, staff should offer all clients the option to discuss specific LGBTQ2S resources that are available, the complaints process and other supports that may be beneficial for the client.

3) Use an inclusive intake form to intake all clients. Appendix B provides a sample intake form and discussion guide for you to reference. The form and guide helps staff who would like guidance on how to approach questions on gender pronouns at intake. Using an inclusive intake form signals to a new client that the organization is supportive and respectful of a client's gender identity. Intake forms should provide a list of gender identities and pronouns to choose from, with the option to not disclose this information. Intake forms should also record both a client's legal and preferred name. It is not necessary to collect information about sexual orientation during the intake process, and if it is being collected, ensure that there is a clear explanation of why this piece of information impacts the services delivered.

   For organizations that complete their intake forms via a computer database that does not permit the use of multiple gender identities, attempt to provide other opportunities for clients to disclose their pronoun and preferred name during the intake process.

   In *all* intake scenarios, clients should be provided with information on why gender, legal/preferred name and sexual orientation information is being recorded and how that information will be used.

4) Respect the confidentiality of a client's name, gender identity and sexual orientation and ensure that this information is only shared with their consent. A recommended best practice is to ask which internal and external stakeholders this information can be shared with.

5) Be prepared to provide referrals for clients to appropriate LGBTQ2S resources and services that are external to your organization. Build strong working relationships with staff of external organizations to ensure any referrals made provide the quality of supports that meet the client's needs. Supports that meet the needs of LGBTQ2S clients may include:
   - medical professionals for transgender youth who are transitioning;
   - mental health and addictions counsellors that are LGBTQ2S inclusive;
   - social groups with other LGBTQ2S youth;
   - support groups for the families of LGBTQ2S youth;

- specific culture or religious supports, such as faith-based organizations or support groups for two-spirit and/or youth of colour;
- supports for youth who are questioning, transitioning or coming out; and
- supports for the parents and families of youth who are questioning, transitioning or coming out.

The *LGBTQ2S Resource List* can be found in <u>Appendix C</u>, and provides you with a starting point for resources that could be helpful to your organization and clients.

6) Facilitate discussions about relationships (partners, friends or family) in a way that affirm each client's identity, whether or not they identify as LGBTQ2S. Affirm a client's right to choose the type of relationships they would like to have, and with whom. Recognize that an LGBTQ2S person's relationships may not align with the norms modelled by cisgender and heterosexual relationship standards. Employ inclusive gender-neutral language that is meaningful to the client when discussing those relationships, if their partner's, friend's or family's gender is not known to you.

Examples of how to use gender-neutral language:

Avoid using:	Instead use:
"That boy over there"	"That person over there"
"Hey ladies!"	"Hey people!" or "Hey friends!"
"Do you have a boyfriend?"	"Are you dating someone?"

7) Frame discussions about sexuality within a sex-positive[15] approach. Using a sex-positive approach helps assure LGBTQ2S youth that they are not judged or discredited for the sexual choices they choose to make. It recognizes and respects their sexual rights; that their experiences with sexuality may have been positive or negative; and the diverse nature of sexuality.

8) Help enhance youths' connections and relationships to natural supports such as family, friends and the LGBTQ2S community. This helps youth build strong, long-lasting relationships that will support them beyond their interaction with your organization. The United Way of Calgary developed a [tool kit](#) on integrating natural supports into youth work.

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[15] Sex Positive: Adopting a sex-positive approach means respecting the diversity of human sexuality and talking with clients openly and without judgment about their sexuality. A sex-positive approach respects and celebrates the sexual rights of all persons, yet also acknowledges that not all persons have learned about or experienced sexuality in a positive and affirming way**.**

9) Take an intersectional approach when supporting a client. This means acknowledging that both your own and your client's identity is formed by privilege, oppression, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, history and social environment[16]. Understanding the histories of oppression and privilege that have impacted you and your client can help inform the process of designing and delivering supports that recognize their experiences more holistically.

10) Recognize that two-spirit[17] Indigenous youth are part of a unique cultural and historical heritage. Since two-spirit is an umbrella term for LGBTQ2S identities within Indigenous communities, seek to understand the culturally specific role and terms that the youth identifies with. As well, acknowledge that a two-spirit identity intersects with race, gender, sexuality, spirituality and colonization. Inform yourself of the best practices for supporting and empowering two-spirit youth; a good place to start to do this is the Native Youth Sexual Health Network.

More tips and strategies can be found at LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness Toolkit for Youth Experiencing Homelessness developed by Eva's Initiatives.

Transforming Organizational Policy

Organizational policies help increase the skill level of staff and the capacity of your organization to be LGBTQ2S inclusive. Below is a list of best practices to help guide the development of inclusive policies.

Onboarding and Staff Development

1) Provide LGBTQ2S cultural competency training as part of the onboarding process for staff (management and front-line), volunteers, foster parents/families, contracted service providers and board members. LGBTQ2S cultural competency training should be a component of an organization's continuous learning.
2) Ensure staff and volunteers are made aware of the LGBTQ2S resources available at an organization or in the community.
3) Employ both LGBTQ2S and non-LGBTQ2S employees, volunteers, board members, contracted service providers and foster parents, so youth have a variety of adult role models to learn from and feel safe with.
4) Employ a peer support worker[18] who is tasked with supporting LGBTQ2S clients.
5) Include a competency within job descriptions stating incumbents have knowledge of and/or lived experience with LGBTQ2S communities.

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[16] Hankivsky (2014).
[17] Two-spirit: A self-identifying term used by some Indigenous people in place of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or transsexual. Historically, in many Indigenous cultures two-spirit people held positions of special status such as community leaders and medicine people.
[18] Peer Support Worker: Peer Support Workers are people who identify as being LGBTQ2S, have been homeless, and have experienced mental health/addictions issues who are employed (either paid or volunteer) to use their experience to support the recovery of others in their peer group.

6) Assess the sensitivity of an applicant to LGBTQ2S persons when conducting job interviews and clearly articulate that the values of the organization for supporting LGBTQ2S persons.

7) Foster allyship to ensure staff and volunteers listen, learn and act in a way that supports LGBTQ2S colleagues and clients. The <u>LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness Tool Kit</u> provides resources on how to be a good ally.

General Organizational Policies

8) Develop clear policies that prioritize LGBTQ2S inclusiveness as a key component of organizational policies and programming.

9) Employ gender-neutral language in all policies and practices.

10) Establish mechanisms that ensure policies and programming include an LGBTQ2S inclusive lens on an ongoing basis.

11) Post signage that clearly identifies that the organization does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of someone's gender, sex or sexual identity.

12) Provide opportunities for LGBTQ2S oriented events (i.e. a trans-clothing swap) to take place or be promoted at your organization. By acknowledging and including LGBTQ2S communities' events, your organization is helping to foster healthy relationships with LGBTQ2S communities and increase the awareness of available resources and the issues facing LGBTQ2S communities.

The LGBTQ2S+ Swap and Shop that was hosted in Calgary, Alberta offered LGBTQ2+ youth an opportunity to get new clothes and shop. The artwork for this poster was designed by RJ Brown.

Housing and Shelter Specific Best Practices

A physical environment can impact how safe, affirming and inclusive housing and shelter spaces are for LGBTQ2S youth accessing services.

There are some are limitations in the implementation of these best practices. For example, organizations with gender-segregated bathrooms may not be able to immediately provide a gender-inclusive bathroom. However, many of the following policies can help you navigate some of the key pieces around ensuring housing and shelter spaces remain safe, affirming and inclusive for LGBTQ2S individuals.

1) Review the best practices of existing programs. <u>Appendix D</u>: The Introduction to LGBTQ2S Homeless Youth Housing Programs and Research, can help initiate this research.

2) Create and implement an LGBTQ2S inclusion policy that ensures LGBTQ2S youth will not be discharged from a program or shelter because of perceived fears, discomfort or lack of understanding of LGBQT2S youth by staff, volunteers and/or other residents. An example of an inclusion policy can be found in Appendix E: Sagesse's Shelter Policy for Transgender Clients. As well, the Toronto Shelter Standards includes a section dedicated to LGBTQ2S inclusive policies for shelter spaces.

3) Actively work as an ally to maintain safer spaces. Intervene in all cases of discrimination on the basis of gender identity, sex or sexuality between clients, staff or volunteers.

The Aura program provides specialized housing for LGBTQ2S, and other sexual and gender minority youth between the ages of 14 and 24. The program is delivered by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary, and has been in place since 2015.

4) Use a rigorous assessment and training process to ensure foster parents, host homes, group care supports, contracted service providers and landlords are respectful of LGBTQ2S clients. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary's Aura program uses a rigorous assessment and training process to their prospective host parents. A copy of this can be found in Appendix F[19].

5) Support clients and staff to gain a strong understanding of the *Residential Tenancy Act*, the Rental Agreement[20] and the *Alberta Human Rights Act*. Ensure they are clear on the intent and scope of these pieces of legislation as they relate to non-discrimination on the basis of someone's gender identity or sexual orientation.

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[19] Appendix F: Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary Sample Interview Aura Host Homes
[20] Rental Agreement: The contract, sometimes called a lease, between the tenant and the landlord to rent residential premises.

Appendix A

What do you mean by that anyway? A Glossary of Terms

To best serve LGBTQ2S persons, it is necessary to understand commonly used terms. The definitions below may change as LGBTQ2S communities continue to re-define them.

Agender: A self-identifying term for an individual who does not identify with or conform to any gender.

Ally: An individual who is supportive of LGBTQ2S people and their rights, and works to end oppression and discrimination.

Aromantic: A self-identifying term for someone who experiences little or no romantic attraction.

Asexual: A self-identifying term for someone who does not experience sexual attraction (also see: Orientation).

Bisexual: A self-identifying term for someone who is attracted to men and women.

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity, gender expression and sex assigned at birth align with conventional expectations of male or female.

Cisnormativity: The assumption that all people are cisgender or that those assigned male at birth grow up to be men and those assigned female at birth grow up to be women. It may also refer to the oppression experienced by transgender people in a society that represents cisgender people as dominant, normal and superior.

Cissexism: A system of bias in favour of cisgender people, in which people whose gender identities do not match their assigned genders are considered inferior (also see: Cisnormativity).

Demisexual: A self-identifying term for someone who does not experience sexual attraction until they form a strong emotional connection with someone.

Feminine: A term that describes behaviour, dress, qualities or attitudes that are associated with women. What is considered feminine differs based on one's culture, race, ethnicity and environment.

Gay: A self-identifying term for a man attracted to men. Some women who are attracted to women also use this term while others might prefer lesbian (also see: Lesbian).

Gender Binary: The classification of gender into two distinct, opposite and disconnected categories of masculine and feminine.

Gender Expression: The way people communicate their gender identity to others by the way they dress, act and/or refer to themselves.

Gender Fluid/Variant: A person who embodies characteristics of multiple genders, or whose gender identity shifts from day-to-day.

Gender Identity: A person's internal sense of being male, female or anything in between (also see: Gender Spectrum).

Gender Identity Disorder (GID): A medical term formerly used by psychologists and physicians to diagnose people who experience significant gender identity dysphoria (also see: Gender Identity Dysphoria).

Gender Identity Dysphoria (GID): The medical term used to replace Gender Identity Disorder. Gender Identity Dysphoria is the emotional discomfort an individual experiences due to internalized conflicts arising from the incongruity between one's sex assigned at birth and one's sense of gender identity.

Gender Neutral: Something or someone that is not gendered. Can refer to language (such as pronouns or names), spaces (like bathrooms) or identities (being gender queer).

Gender Non-binary: A self-identifying term for someone whose gender identity is neither male nor female. The term can also be used in the same way as gender neutral to describe language and spaces.

Gender Queer: A self-identifying term for someone who defines their gender identity outside of the gender binary.

Gender Spectrum: An alternative system to the gender binary that explains gender as existing within a range between masculine and feminine.

Heteronormativity: The assumption that everyone is straight. It may also refer to the oppression experienced by people who are not straight in a society that represents being straight as dominant, normal and superior.

Heterosexism: Attitudes, biases and discrimination in favour of those who are straight (also see: Heteronormativity).

Heterosexual: A self-identifying term for someone who is attracted to people of the opposite sex or gender.

Homosexual: A self-identifying term for someone who is attracted to people of the same sex or gender. As this was once used as a medical term, some people may find it disrespectful.

Intersex: A general term used to describe people who are born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not fit the typical definitions of female or male anatomy.

Lesbian: A self-identifying term for a woman attracted to women.

LGBTQ: A commonly used acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, queer and/or questioning. The acronym sometimes appears with other letters such as "I" for intersex, "A" for asexual, "2S" for two-spirit, "P" for pansexual and/or an asterisk (*) to recognize that not all identities are mentioned as part of the acronym.

Masculine: A term that describes behaviour, dress, qualities or attitudes that are associated with men. What is considered masculine differs based on one's culture, race, ethnicity and environment.

Pansexual: A self-identifying term for someone who is attracted to people regardless of that person's gender identity. This refers to being attracted to personality more than any other factor.

Peer Support Worker: Peer Support Workers are people who identify as being LGBTQ2S, have been homeless, and have experienced mental health/addictions issues who are employed (either paid or volunteer) to use their experience to support the recovery of others in their peer group.

Perceived Gender: How a person is read/viewed by others in regards to their gender.

Queer: A term used by people who are not heterosexual or cisgender. Although historically used as a put-down for people who were perceived to be outside the norm in regards to orientation/attraction or gender identity, for some, it has been reclaimed as a self-identifying term and symbol of pride.

Questioning: A self-identifying term for people who are in the process of exploring or discovering their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sex: The labels male, female, or intersex given to someone at birth based on their body parts.

Sexism: Discrimination or unfair treatment based on a person's sex.

Sexually and Gender Diverse: A term used to refer to people whose sexual or gender identities are not heterosexual or cisgender (also see: LGBTQ, Queer).

Sex Positive: Adopting a sex-positive approach means respecting the diversity of human sexuality and talking with clients openly and without judgment about their sexuality. A sex-positive approach respects and celebrates the sexual rights of all persons, yet also acknowledges that not all persons have learned about or experienced sexuality in a positive and affirming way**.**

Sexual Orientation: A term to describe sexual and/or romantic attractions to others (these may include but are not limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, asexual and pansexual).

Straight: A self-identifying term for someone who is attracted to people of the opposite sex or gender to their own.

Trans/Transgender: A term for people whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour does not conform to that typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transphobia: Feelings of rage, hatred and disapproval towards transgender people or people who are gender non-conforming. This may include verbal, emotional or physical attacks.

Two-spirit: A self-identifying term used by some Indigenous people in place of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or transsexual. Historically, two-spirit people in many Indigenous cultures held positions of special status, such as community leaders and medicine people.

Appendix B

Sample Intake Form and Discussion Guide

How do you describe your **gender identity**? *Check all that apply*:

[ ] Prefer not to disclose

[ ] Woman

[ ] Man

[ ] Transgender

[ ] Transwoman

[ ] Transman

[ ] Two-Spirit

[ ] Genderqueer

[ ] Genderfluid

[ ] Androgynous

[ ] Non-binary

[ ] Intersex

[ ] Cisgender

[ ] Questioning

[ ] Identity not listed (please specify)

_____

What are the gender pronouns you use?

_____

What is your legal name?

_____

What is the name you prefer to be called by?

_____

Information on your gender identity, pronouns, legal name and preferred name are being collected to ensure our organization can provide the best supports to you. We use this information in our internal data collection and program evaluation processes to ensure we are meeting the needs of LGBTQ2S youth in our community. Sharing this information with our organization will not prevent you from receiving services or be cause for discharge.

Discussion Guide for Staff: Sample Intake Form with Gender Identity Options[21]

How should I present this to children, youth, and families?

Gender Question

Ask them *"What is your gender? You can select any that apply and are able to change this at any point in the future"* in a way that feels natural for you and then show them the list of options.

If you have any reason to think they might be confused, you can tell them some variation of: *"You may notice that there are more options than on a lot of other forms. Before we only listed 'male' and 'female' on our forms and it did not capture everyone's gender, so we have added options for people to be able to select genders that fit better for them."*

Pronoun Question

Ask them *"What pronouns do you use?"* or *"How do you like people to refer to you when you are not there?"* Affirm that, like the answer for the gender question, they can change their answer at any time.

In a scenario where a client needs further clarification, or an example of how to address the use of pronouns, you could follow the outline below to explain:

"*Often people use he or she, or they or ze as more gender neutral options.*

For myself, I use ze pronouns, so if you are talking about me later you could say 'Alex helped me with my intake today, and ze were super helpful!'

So how would you like me to refer to you in a situation where you were not around?"

This can also be an opportunity for you to ask them if they would like you to use those same pronouns in all situations that you are referring to them. This ensures that you are mindful of any safety or privacy concerns they may have (i.e. when talking to parents or case workers). This may be particularly important for transgender people who are not out in all spaces.

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[21] Note, this Discussion Guide has been adapted from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary's *Intake Info Sheet on Gender Pronouns.*

Some Important Notes on Gender Options

All options are self-identified

Their answer is whatever they say it is. Additionally, sometimes someone may fit within a definition, but still not feel affinity with a term or vice versa. This is okay! If it seems like they are giving an answer as a joke, it is best to not participate in laughing and take them seriously and write it down. If they were making a joke they will likely correct it quickly afterwards and your response will gently indicate that there is nothing funny about diverse genders.

People can change or add to their answers at different points

This could be because they feel more comfortable disclosing after building a relationship, they did not feel comfortable disclosing when with family, or they discovered new parts of their identity.

People can check as many boxes as they would like

In fact, most people would fit into more than one of these categories. For example, Ellen DeGeneres would likely fit into both 'woman' and 'cisgender'. However, people are not required to check all boxes they may fit into.

Appendix C

LGBTQ2S Alberta-Specific Resources List

Welcome to the LGBTQ2S Alberta-Specific Resource List. These resources are up-to-date as of December 2016. We acknowledge the diversity in levels of access, and capacity for using the diversity of resources across Alberta. We hope the mix of in-person, and web-based resources can help a diversity of organizations access the supports necessary for themselves and the folks they serve.

LGBTQ2S Institutes, Centres, and Groups

Alberta-Wide
- Acts of Greatness – A project to empower the next generation of LGBTQ leaders in Alberta
- Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (ISMSS)
- Camp FYrefly (An LGBT leadership retreat for youth 14 to 24)
- TransEquality Society of Alberta
- Alberta Trans
- PFLAG Alberta
- Youth Safe

Canada-Wide
- Egale Canada Human Rights Trust
- Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives
- Amnesty International Canada
- Pride at Work Canada
- Gay Canada (Canada wide support groups)
- My GSA

Regional
Airdrie
- Airdrie Pride Society

Banff, Canmore, Lake Louise and Kananaskis
- OUT-here (Banff, Canmore, Lake Louise and Kananaskis)
  Social group that plans events for LGBTQ2S community in the region.

Calgary
- Calgary Sexual Health Centre
  Provides counselling and community outreach and supports regarding any sexual health related topic including an outreach program for vulnerable LGBTQ2S+ youth.
- Calgary GSA Network: contact gsanetwork@calgarysexualhealth.ca
- Calgary Outlink

- Mount Royal University Pride Centre
  Queer positive space that plans events for the Mount Royal University student body.
- University of Calgary Q Centre
  Provides a safe space for students on University of Calgary campus while also offering resources, peer support, and volunteer opportunities.
- Queeriosity
  A group that aims to provide a safe and interactive space for all LGBT*QIA2S+ students at the Alberta College of Art and Design. They are a grassroots, inclusive and progressive collective that strives to produce dialogue, investigation and community.
- Sagesse Peer Support Services
- The Alex Youth Health Centre
  LGBTQ-friendly Youth Health Clinic that hosts LGBTQ2S+ inclusive Queermunity nights.
- YYC Voices
  A coalition of people of colour who are both Trans and Cis, Queer and Straight.
- Calgary Queer Church

Edmonton
- Pride Centre of Edmonton
  Provides programming, educational seminars and social events for LGBTQ2 community in Edmonton.
- OUTreach (University of Alberta)
  This group coordinates social events for University of Alberta's LGBTQ2 community.
- The Landing (University of Alberta)
  Safe space for gender and sexual diversity at the University of Alberta campus that offers a variety of support services to students.
- UAPS Sexual and Gender Minority Community Liaison Officer
- SAF*QEY Project (Safe Accommodations for Queer Edmonton Youth)
- HIV Edmonton (HIV Network of Edmonton Society)
- Team Edmonton
  Sport social group for the LGBT community in Edmonton.
- iPFLAG is a new organization that exists to support and empower the friends and families of Indigenous Two-Spirit people in Edmonton and surrounding communities.
- Edmonton Trans-Masculine Collective
  Promote networking and community building for trans-masculine identified individuals.
- Edmonton Rainbow Alliance

Fort McMurray
- Fort McMurray LGBTQ Social Group

Grande Prairie
- Gay and Lesbian Association of the Peace (GALAP)
  Provides peer support and education for the LGBTQ2 community in Grande Prairie.

Jasper

- HIV West Yellowhead
  Provides health resources and safe sex supplies for the LGBTQ community in Jasper.
- Jasper Pride

Lethbridge

- University of Lethbridge Pride Centre
  Offers a safe space for persons of all orientations to convene, and participate in awareness, education and social activities on campus.

Medicine Hat

- Medicine Hat Pride

Strathcona County

- AltView
  Provides education, advocacy and support resources to the LGBTQ2 community in Strathcona Country.

St. Albert

- OutLoud St. Albert
  A meeting place for LGBTQ St. Albert youth.

Educational Resources

Website

- LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness Toolkit
  Toolkit for best practices on responding to LGBTQ2S homeless youth.

Articles

- Healthy Relationships for LGBTQ People
- National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence – Policies and Procedures Guidelines for Shelters
- Opinion: Homeless LGBT youth face discrimination, violence in shelter system (St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, ON)
- No Safe Place to Go – Comprehensive Canadian Literature Review on LGBTQ Youth Homelessness
- No Fixed Address
- Homeless Hub collection of LGBTQ youth homelessness articles
- Beyond 4 Walls and a Roof: Addressing Homelessness Among Transgender Youth
- Ending Youth Homelessness in Alberta
- LGBTQ Task Force *American advocacy organization
- LGBTQ2 Youth Homelessness by Legal Aid Ontario
- Guidelines and Protocols for Comprehensive Primary Care for Trans Clients
- Harlan Pruden finds healing for LGBT First Nations in Tradition

Videos
- LGBT Youthline - Homophobia & Transphobia Hurts Everyone
- A Day in Our Shoes – Homeless LGBT Youth
- Kicked Out: LGBT Youth Experience Homelessness
- Stand Up for Homeless LGBT Youth
- Teal's Story
- Walking Through Wonderland
- The Kids are Listening
- Supporting Mental Health in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Children and Adolescents, Presentation by Kris Wells University of Alberta
- Healthy Relationship Webcast

Posters
- LGBT Support Infographic and Fact Sheets
- Bully Free Alberta
- LGBT Youthline
- Check It Out Guys (Pap awareness for trans men)
- Healthy Relationships for LGBTQ People
- GLSEN

Research
- Rainbow Health Network
- Re:Searching for LGBTQ Health
- Homeless Hub (York University)
- Wellesley Institute
- Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre: LGBT Resources

Tips for Allies
- University of Alberta's Pride Week's Tips for Allies
- Tips for Allies of Transgender People - GLAAD
- Trans @ MIT Allies Toolkit

For Youth

Smartphone Apps and Social Networking
- SAY APP: Supporting and Assisting Youth (SAY) is a free mobile app that connects homeless and street-involved youth with services and supports across Canada. Available for download in Apple iTunes Store.
- TranSquat APP: TranSquat is a gender neutral bathroom finder for iPhone users to find bathrooms that are gender free and close by. It uses the phone's current GPS location to search, add and share nearby safe locations with other users. Available for download in Apple iTunes Store.

Helplines
- Youth Line (Text Only): Sunday to Friday 2pm to 730pm 647-694-4275
- Alberta Bullying Helpline: 1-888-456-2323 24/7, 170+ languages
- Trans Lifeline: Canada-wide: 1-877-330-6366

Art Projects
- Trans Youth Toronto's Zine
- Sketch (Toronto)

For Families
- Families in Transition: A Resource Guide for Parents of Trans Youth
- PFLAG
- ISMSS Family Supports
- Family Acceptance Project (San Francisco State University)
- Gay Family Support
- Advocates for Youth

Two-Spirit Identity and Health
- Native Youth Sexual Health Network
- Suicide Prevention and 2-Spirited People
- 2-Spirits
- 2-Spirited People of Manitoba

Health Resources

Alberta
- Supporting trans youth with identity documents
- Vital Statistics
- Gender Reassignment Surgery Funding in Alberta

Guidelines and protocols for healthcare professionals for trans clients
- Guidelines and Protocols for Comprehensive Primary Care for Trans Clients
- Understanding the T in LGBT: A Role for Clinicians
- Trans Health
- Trans Health Matters

Trans Education
- Breaking Through the Binary
- Why you should always use "transgender" instead of "transgendered"
- Check It Out Guys (Pap awareness for trans men)
- Family Service Toronto Trans Resources

Groups and Forums for Trans people
- Trans Roadmap
- Queer Trans Men Working Group
- Gender Mosaic (Transmen)

U.S. LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness Organizations
- 40 to NONE
- Give a Damn Campaign
- Ali Forney Center
- Ruth Ellis Center
- LGBTQ Task Force

Appendix D

Introduction to LGBTQ2S Homeless Youth Housing Programs and Research

Housing Program Profiles

YMCA Sprott House

Located in Toronto, Ontario, the YMCA's Sprott House is the first LGBTQ2S transitional housing program for youth in Canada.

- Sprott House provides one year of supported residential living for up to 25 young people between the ages of 16 and 24.
- Eligibility is determined by a combination of interviews and applications.
- Participants in the program are expected to take part in house activities, in addition to working with a Case Manager to achieve their self-determined goals.
- Experienced staff that understand the personal and social barriers faced by LGBTQ2SA community facilitate the program.
- This program opened in January 2016.

Aura Host Homes, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary

The Aura Host Homes program provides LGBTQ2S+ youth with an alternative to accessing the shelter system, by offering youth a safe space to live in the community, where their sexual orientation and gender identity is respected and celebrated.

- Youth can live with a trained host parent or supportive roommate, or live independently.
- Aura facilitates relationships with a youth's family, friends or other members of their support, in order to connect them to the community and end their experience of homelessness.
- A case manager and coordinator collaborate with the youth and their supports in order to deliver the program.
- The Aura program was launched in June 2015, and since then has provided homes for 10 LGBTQ2S+ youth experiencing homelessness in Calgary, Alberta.

Avenues for Homeless Youth: GLBT Host Home Program

In this program, queer-identified homeless youth are hosted by an adult in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

- While staying with their host, youth are exposed to a stable home environment by residing with and being supported by adults, learning living skills and experiencing a home environment that empowers their identity.
- The program is community-based and not regulated by a government agency.
- The program is directed by an advisory board of leaders who represent a cross-section of the community who ensure adherence to Host Home's philosophy and vision.

- Maximum 10 youth are in the program at any given time.
- In the spirit of social justice and social change, the program endeavours to build community and resiliency to end homelessness for this population.

Los Angeles LGBT Center – Youth Services

Youth Center on Highland: open during the week and on weekends providing an array of drop-in services, referrals and supports (Youth Centre, 2015). This includes referrals to their on-site transitional housing program. Transitional Housing Program Details:

- Support youth in finding a job, enrolling in school and managing savings for success after their stay.
- Dorm-style rooms that are co-ed, that include some private space and the ability to decorate your space.
- As youth improve in the program, they may move to a room with more space in it and a TV.
- This facility includes six emergency beds for youth who need a short-term overnight stay.
- Case management provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Meals are provided three times per day.
- Weekly support groups on topics that range from financial planning to assistance with finding affordable housing.
- Day-trips and evening excursions.

Ruth Ellis Center – Ruth's House

Structured living unit, classified as an Intensive Treatment Unit for youth ages 12-17 in Detroit, Michigan (Ruth's House, 2015). The program includes services related to:

- Housing;
- Individual assessment and intake;
- Like skills;
- Developing interpersonal skills;
- Educational advancement;
- Job preparation;
- Mental health and physical care;
- A youth development approach; and
- After-care planning and follow-up.

The San Diego LGBT Community Center – Sunburst Youth Housing Project

The Sunburst Youth Housing Project provides 23 units of affordable, supportive housing for youth between the ages of 18-24 focusing on LGBTQ+ youth (Sunburst Youth Housing Project, 2015). The program serves San Diego's homeless youth, including those who are HIV-positive. The project was developed with a wide array of community leaders and supports, and took a little more than three years to come to fruition. The facility is located in downtown San Diego with close access to public transportation, City College, community health facilities and other resources. Two of the units in the building are wheelchair accessible, in addition to access to the building being wheelchair accessible. Their major goal is to ensure that youth have easy access to needed services that will support them in maintaining stable housing.

Common Program Components

- Programs are oriented toward LGBTQ2S youth but do not exclude cis gender or straight youth;
- Connections to community include opportunities to engage with the broader local community and the LGBTQ2S community;
- Ensuring that there are positive role models for youth who are in transition is key, and building healthy relationships is a part of each program;
- Leadership from the LGBTQ2S community to start, evaluate and continue to advise on the development of a program, is common.

Program and Policy Considerations

- In the Agency's philosophy and programmatic development ensure that there is a clear mission for serving the LGBTQ2S population (Gates & Durso, 2012).
- Ensure that staff are trained on how to create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ2S youth.
  - This includes teaching staff how to intervene with violence or harassment against LGBTQ2S youth (Hunter, 2008).
- Provide opportunities for LGBTQ2S oriented events to take place at the housing facility, as well as opportunities to attend LGBTQ2S events in the community (i.e. Trans Clothing Swap or a Pride Festival) (Nolan, 2006).
- Policy on using the right pronoun: provide a clear policy that permits LGBTQ2S youth to identify with whichever pronoun they choose and that staff utilize that pronoun (Hunter, 2008).
- Employ LGBTQ2S staff, as well as non-LGBTQ2S staff in order for youth to have a variety of adult role models that youth can learn to feel safe with.
- Develop a community that is constructed to affirm a young person's identity and help them blend in.
- Anticipate that youth will stay from zero days to two years. Integrate into your initial intake and case planning a focus on their ultimate goal of independence.
- Discipline: process around discipline that is gradual in its application, and is developed so that it is applied as equally as possible. The primary goal of discipline should be to avoid discharge from the program as an outcome.
- The complaints process must be easily available to youth to access in a non-judgmental and fair way. Ensure that staff build trust with youth so they feel comfortable coming forward to address safety concerns or incidents of harassment (Hunter, 2008).
- After Discharge: Allow youth to continue to access services like counselling and mail pick-up until they are fully stabilized outside of the community (Nolan, 2006).

Youth in Care[22]

- Research on youth who are accessing child welfare care shows that only 10 per cent of them identify as LGBTQ2S; however, a youth ending up in the child welfare system is typically a result of their LGBTQ2S identity (Toner, 2013).
- There is typically little stability when the youth is placed in a group home or foster home, high rates of verbal harassment and physical violence are experienced by the youth in congregate care, and fewer placements with foster parents or adoptive parents.
- 70 per cent of LGBTQ2S youth in New York City group homes have been physically assaulted, whereas only 2 per cent of non-LGBTQ2S youth in all group homes have experienced violence (Hunter, 2008).
- Rural youth in care already experience a scarcity in fostering resources, which adds additional challenges for LGBTQ2S youth who need to be paired with fostering resources that are understanding and sensitive to the youth's needs (Toner, 2013).
- Often, due to past histories of abuse or lack of trust with caregivers, LGBTQ2S youth do not identify so service providers are unable to respond appropriately to the youth's needs and support their identity.
- Denial and lack of awareness of LGBTQ2S youth and their identities often causes front-line workers to not respond appropriately to the needs of these youth.
- When rural social workers were interviewed on their ability to serve LGBTQ2S youth, they identified three major challenges to their work: prejudice and lack of knowledge; institutional denial that there are LGBTQ2S identified youth in schools, communities and service delivery agencies; and instances of bullying towards LGBTQ2S youth.
- Three recommendations for parents and staff working in the child welfare system: mandated LGBTQ2S issues training for foster parents and group home workers; emphasis on the self-assessment of case workers so they are cognizant of their prejudices towards the LGBTQ2S population; and clearly identified resources to access further information.

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[22] This research reflects data analysis from the United States of America. It does not reflect the experiences or data of youth in care in Alberta or Canada.

Appendix E

Sagesse Shelter Policy for Transgender Clients in Domestic Violence Shelters

Contact Information

Sagesse Peer Support Services
301, 501-18 Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T2S 0C7
Telephone: 403-234-7337
Fax: 403-228-0438
www.sagesse.org

This policy was created to support domestic violence shelters in the creation of a policy for transgender individuals accessing services. Elements of this policy should not supersede other agency policies regarding client confidentiality, requirements for accessing services, etc. [23]

I. Philosophy of Trans-Inclusion

(SHELTER NAME) is committed to anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory philosophy and practices, including practices in relation to gender identity. A person's gender is the gender with which that person self-identifies. All individuals identifying as women, who meet the criteria for (SHELTER NAME) services, will be provided with the same ranges of services as every other client. Being transgender does not negatively impact one's eligibility for services, volunteering, or employment with (SHELTER NAME)

II. Definitions

Gender Identity: an individual's internal view of their gender. It is one's innermost sense of themselves as a gendered being and/or as masculine, feminine, androgynous, etc. This will often influence name and pronoun preference for an individual.

Transgender: refers to any person whose gender identity is different than the gender identity typically associated with the person's assigned birth sex.

Transgender man: a person whose gender identity is male, but who was assigned female at birth.

Transgender woman: a person whose gender identity is female, but who was assigned male at birth.

---

[23] Note that non-binary identities are not referenced in this policy when discussing transgender identities. Ensure that any program, housing or shelter related policies include reference to all LGBTQ2S identities.

III. Confidentiality

- The transgender status of a client, volunteer or staff member is confidential. If a client discloses information regarding gender identity, this information will not be shared with any outside agency, another client or staff member without permission of the individual.

- Private information, such as medical information about a shelter client's transgender status and/or transition, is also confidential.

IV. Training

- (SHELTER NAME) will co-ordinate and provide training opportunities as needed or requested for staff and volunteers on the needs, issues and realities of transgender service users. (SHELTER NAME) will also coordinate workshops and programs for clients and residents as needed.

V. Guidelines for Intake and Service Provision

In order to ensure (SHELTER NAME) policy of trans-inclusion is upheld, the following guidelines and procedures are to be followed during admission and service provision at (SHELTER NAME) facilities:

1) An individual who self-identifies as a woman and presents for intake at any of (SHELTER NAME) facilities or programs is to be admitted if the individual meets the standard criteria for admittance. Admittance is not to be based on appearance or genital designation.

2) If an individual identifying as a trans-man presents for intake and cites safety concerns with the men's facilities, admission will be assessed on a case by case basis. Staff will also provide support, referrals and advocate for safe shelter and housing options for individuals identifying as trans-men.

3) The few circumstances under which a trans-woman will be turned away at any of (SHELTER NAME) facilities or programs will be the same as for any woman.

4) Staff will not ask for medical or physical specifics of trans service users outside of what is asked of all residents (i.e. medications, physical and mental health needs). Similarly, staff will not ask residents questions regarding stage or extent of the transition nor will staff provide advice or counselling in these areas. If residents seek staff assistance in these areas, staff will support clients in connecting with appropriate services and resources.

5) Residents identifying as transgender will not have any additional clothing requirements imposed upon them that are different from other residents (e.g. walking from bathroom to bedroom in a towel, sitting around with other residents in pajamas, wearing make-up, particular clothing, accessories and wigs). Transgender clients will be provided with gender appropriate apparel, cosmetics, and personal items that is consistent to their self-identified gender identity.

6) Trans residents will be able to identify using the pronoun and name they indicate, regardless of legal name. Staff will ask the resident their name and pronoun at time of intake and will refer to the client solely by that name and pronoun when speaking to, and about the client.

7) On funding and legal paperwork (i.e. Family and Community Support Services, Government of Alberta, etc.):

   a) Name: The name residents identify with will be recorded alongside the resident's legal name as it appears on their identification (ID). Staff will respectfully explain this procedure and reassure clients that the name on ID is collected purely for funding and statistical purposes and will not be used nor shared within the shelter community

   b) Gender: when having to check a box for gender, the gender box that aligns with the self-identified gender of the client will be checked.

8) Transgender residents are to be housed in the same way as other clients. Private rooms may be used if available and if the resident requests a private room or if they report feeling vulnerable or unsafe in the larger rooms. Private rooms are not to be used to isolate transgender individuals.

9) Consistent with (SHELTER NAME) policy regarding harassment and anti-discrimination, discriminatory comments, gossiping, bullying, threats, and harassment, including comments directed at a resident's gender identity, will not be tolerated. Individuals who exhibit these behaviours may be asked to leave and will need to meet with staff prior to re-admission.

   a) Some shelter clients may express discomfort regarding a transgender person sleeping in or using the facility. Shelter staff shall work with shelter clients to address the discomfort and to foster understanding of gender identity for the purpose of creating a shelter environment that respects and values all shelter clients.

   b) Verbal or physical harassment of any client will not be tolerated at the shelter. If a transgender client experiences harassment, the incident of harassment shall be reported to a staff member as soon as possible, and the shelter staff shall take immediate action to ensure the safety of the transgender client. If harassment is committed by staff member(s), the incident of harassment shall be reported to the appropriate supervisor(s) as soon as possible and the shelter supervisor(s) shall take immediate action to ensure the safety of the transgender client. All incidents of harassment must be documented in writing.

10) As with all residents, involuntary discharges of transgender residents are based on issues such as eligibility for services, behaviour and funding. A resident cannot be discharged based on the perceived fears, discomfort or lack of understanding of staff, volunteers and/or other residents.

Appendix F

AURA – Host Homes Provider Screening Questions

Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary

Name and pronouns of Applicant:

_____

> ***NOTE:** All answers to these questions will be kept **confidential** to the Aura Host Homes team and will not be shared outside of that, unless in the case of legally required reporting on plans to seriously harm others, suicide, or current abuse to a child. In the case that you are chosen as a host home provider, we will discuss with you in advance what to share with potential youth living in your home and how.*

Pre-screening questions

What prompted your interest in becoming a Host Home provider? Why are you interested in becoming a Host Home provider?

_____
_____
_____

Tell us a little about your interest, involvement, and past experience with LGBTQ2S+ communities, youth, and/or people experiencing homelessness.

_____
_____
_____

What type of space do you have in your home for a youth to live in?

_____
_____
_____

Motivation

What do you think the role of a Host Home provider is?

_____

_____

_____

What do you hope to gain from this experience?

_____

_____

_____

What reservations do you have about becoming a Host Home provider or what do you think would be the hardest part of being a Host Home provider? What supports do you envision yourself needing to make this living situation a positive experience for you, and for the youth living with you?

_____

_____

_____

What strengths can you bring to a supportive relationship with a youth?

_____

_____

_____

What do you hope for this supportive living situation to look like? In particular, describe for us your expectations or baselines around communication, cleanliness, noise, etc.? What do those all mean to you?

_____

_____

_____

Home Life

Tell us a little bit about your lifestyle. What do you like to do and how do you like to spend your time? In particular, how often are you home and what do you do while there?

_____

_____

_____

What are the rules in your house? What would the rules be for a youth living in your house? What are your expectations of hosting a youth? Are these flexible and can they be adapted to meet the needs and challenges facing a youth? Which of these are non-negotiable?

_____

_____

_____

Describe the state of cleanliness your home is usually in. How do you feel about messes (dirty dishes, piles of clothes, garbage on the floor, etc.) in your home in general? What about in the youth's space?

_____

_____

_____

Tell us about who currently lives in your home. Do you have a partner, chosen family, roommates, or children? Who are the significant people in your life? Have you talked to these people about your interest in becoming an Aura Host Homes provider? What is your impression of their feelings about that possibility?

_____

_____

_____

What do you think some of the challenges LGBTQ2S+ youth experiencing homelessness are facing? How might these challenges manifest in the youths' daily life?

_____

_____

_____

Aura will pay for rent, slightly below market rate, and a set amount for food costs for youth living in Host Homes. This means that being a host home provider cannot compensate for all the lost income if that space would have otherwise been rented out on the market, particularly at times that no youth is placed in your home. Is this something you can do based on your current and projected financial situation? (As a guideline, it is generally indicated that no more than 30-40% of one's income be spent on housing.)

_____

_____

_____

A little bit about you…

Do you have any current or past jobs or volunteer involvement that have prepared you to be a Host Home provider?

_____

_____

_____

Are you anticipating any changes in your life in the next year that might impact your ability to be a Host Home provider (e.g. Marital status, living arrangements, employment, illness, children, etc.)?

_____

_____

_____

How do you plan to fit this new commitment into your weekly schedule? What do you hope this might look like for you?

_____

_____

_____

We want to ensure best fit for both youth and Host Home provider in terms of safety and sustainability. Has drug use or alcohol ever interfered with your life, either personally or professionally?

_____

_____

_____

We want to ensure the best fits for both the youth and Host Home providers in terms of safety and sustainability. Sometimes when working with youth, their experiences, such as trauma, addictions, legal involvement, rejection, mental health, etc., may trigger or align with a support's personal experiences. In some cases some common experience can be beneficial in a support relationship, as it can bring an additional layer of understanding and compassion. In other cases this could be unhealthy for a supporter to have in their home. Is there a life experience that you can think of that, if matched with a youth experiencing or on another side of something similar, would trigger you or impact your relationship? How would you navigate this or what things would you have a barrier around? This is important for us to know in terms of matching, as well as supporting youth and host homes as best possible.

_____

_____

_____

Relationship Style

How would you describe your personality?

_____

_____

_____

What are the important relationships in your life today?

_____

_____

_____

What have you learned from the significant relationships in your life and how would you bring that to your role as Host Home provider?

_____

_____

_____

Can you tell us about an ending to an important relationship you had in the past? How did you manage this?

_____

_____

_____

What types of people do you have the most difficulty getting along with? Why do you think that is?

_____

_____

_____

Situational questions

Host Home providers will get training in a variety of areas to support them in dealing with the following situations. We'd like to get a sense of your values, instincts, and current knowledge levels as well. What would be your response if:

A youth is frequently leaving a mess after themselves?

_____

_____

_____

A youth comes home drunk or high from a party? What if they have someone else, potentially a sexual partner, with them?

_____

_____

_____

You have a two-week vacation planned prior to signing up as a host home and you now have a youth placed in your home?

_____

_____

_____

A youth tells you they are questioning their gender and think they may be a non-binary trans person?

_____

_____

_____

A youth is trying to re-build a relationship with a family member who kicked them out due to their sexual/gender identity?

_____
_____
_____

A youth is frequently talking about how they "just can't deal with life" anymore?

_____
_____
_____

A youth who is part of Aura because of their LGBTQ2S+ identity is a cisgender man; this person has several partners and as far as you can tell, all of them are cisgender women and identify as straight?

_____
_____
_____

A youth has fresh cutting wounds?

_____
_____
_____

A youth who is Muslim is looking for supports to talk about their LGBTQ2S+ identity within their Muslim community?

_____
_____
_____

A youth who is Indigenous wants to explore more about their sexual and gender identity in a culturally relevant context?

_____
_____
_____

A youth is frequently bringing a partner home and you feel like it is not a "healthy" relationship?

_____

_____

_____

The youth sometimes seem really interested in engaging with you and other times they are withdrawn, agitated, or even angry when you try and touch base?

_____

_____

_____

You notice a youth who said they are a cisgender man starts wearing dresses and make-up, something they have never done before?

_____

_____

_____

You find out a youth had been having sex for money in your basement and that they think the person they had sex with may be HIV+?

_____

_____

_____

Additional questions

We want to make the best matches possible. Is there more that we should know about you in terms of identity, experience, preferences, or where you are at in life that would make you a better fit with some youth than others?

_____

_____

_____

Are you available the week of _____ for a home study where all members of your household are home?

Are you available on _____ for training?

_____
_____
_____

Your role as a Host Home provider

Many youth we work with have experienced trauma, loss and/or unhealthy or unsupportive primary relationships. This may result in young people maintaining a distance, not communicating their feelings or need, or pushing boundaries particularly in the early stages of the relationship. While this is a natural coping mechanism, sometimes it can take quite a while to build relationships with youth and even longer to see any sort of change.

Do you have any additional questions for us?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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