



Being an Ally: Working with and Advocating for LGBTQ+ Unaccompanied Youth

Webinar Handout – Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth with Housing Concerns

Unfortunately, there have been many situations where LGBTQ+ youth have found themselves without a home. We wanted to provide you, the advocate, with some tips for consideration on how to help:

- **Immediate Safety and Basic Needs:** Ensure the youth's immediate safety by connecting them with emergency housing options, such as shelters, or transitional housing programs specifically designed for LGBTQ+ individuals. Help them access essential resources like food, clothing, and healthcare.
- **Emotional Support and Validation:** Create a safe and non-judgmental space for the youth to express their feelings, fears, and frustrations. Validate their experiences and emotions and provide empathetic listening to help them process their situation.
- **Individualized Case Management:** Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the youth's needs and develop a personalized care plan. Address their immediate and long-term needs, including housing, education, employment, healthcare, legal issues, and mental health support.
- **Referrals to LGBTQ+-Affirming Services:** Connect the youth with LGBTQ+-affirming resources and support networks in the community. This includes referrals to LGBTQ+ organizations, counseling services, support groups, legal aid services, and healthcare providers who specialize in LGBTQ+ issues.
- **Family Reconciliation and Mediation (if desired):** If the youth expresses an interest in reconnecting with their family, explore the possibility of family reconciliation through mediation services. Provide guidance and support during the process while prioritizing the youth's safety and well-being.
- **Education and Life Skills Development:** Assist the youth in pursuing their educational goals, whether it be finishing high school, pursuing higher education, or accessing vocational training programs. Provide guidance in developing essential life skills, such as financial management, employment readiness, and independent living skills.
- **Advocacy and Legal Assistance:** Advocate for the youth's rights and ensure they have access to legal representation if needed. Help them navigate legal processes related to housing, immigration, or any other legal concerns they may have.

- **Mental Health Support:** Recognize the potential impact of the youth's experiences on their mental health and well-being. Provide or facilitate access to LGBTQ+-affirming counseling or therapy services to address any trauma, depression, anxiety, or other mental health concerns they may be experiencing.
- **Empowerment and Community Engagement:** Support the youth in building a supportive network within the LGBTQ+ community. Encourage their involvement in LGBTQ+ organizations, events, and support groups to foster a sense of belonging and empowerment.
- **Ongoing Support and Follow-up:** Maintain regular contact with the youth to monitor their progress, provide ongoing support, and adjust their care plan as needed. Be available to them for any additional assistance, guidance, or advocacy throughout their journey.

You as an advocate and supportive adult can be a protective factor for them by providing an approach that includes cultural sensitivity, empathy, and respect for the youth's identity and experiences. Collaborate with them in decision-making and prioritize their autonomy and well-being throughout the supportive process.

