

## Here for you conversation starters

*It can be challenging to find a starting point when talking to LGBTQ+ teens about their identity, especially if you don't identify in the same way. You can use the following conversation starters with LGBTQ+ youth in your life to help create space for learning and support. Remember to be mindful of the pronouns and other gendered words they use to describe themselves (ex. Female/woman/girl).*

- What are the most important things for me to know about being LGBTQ+?
- Who do you think understands you? Why?
- What is stressful about being LGBTQ+?
- What spaces make you feel accepted and safe? What spaces make you feel lonely or stressed? What things make a space feel safe for you?
- What does it mean to you for someone to be “inclusive”?
- What are the top 5 ways someone can support you?
- What does community mean to you? How would you describe what community feels like? What does being a part of the LGBTQ+ community mean to you?
- How can family members contribute to feeling stressed or anxious? Are there ways I can help reduce your feelings of stress or anxiety?
- When have you felt your family or friends didn't understand you? How did it feel?
- Talk about a time you felt confident about who you are. What contributed to feeling that way?
- What has the most significant impact on feelings of stress and anxiety? What has the biggest impact on your wellbeing?
- What fears do you have about being LGBTQ+?

## Communication Tips

*When you engage LGBTQ+ youth in conversations about identity, it may be helpful to keep the following communication tips in mind. Remember to be patient with yourself, especially if concepts about gender identity and sexual orientation are new to you. Lastly, keep in mind that there may need to be more than one conversation for the LGBTQ+ youth in your life to feel comfortable sharing parts of their identity and having these conversations with you.*

Set aside time to have these important conversations. These conversations do not have to be lengthy – short and sweet works too!

Validate the person's feelings. Let them know that you hear what they are going through even if you do not fully understand or have never experienced it yourself.

Let go of perfection and focus on being open and supportive. You may accidentally say or do the wrong thing. Making mistakes is part of the learning process.

It's okay to be emotional when having this courageous conversation. Nonverbal communication is also important – be mindful of what your body language communicates, even if it is not said out loud.