



NEED TO KNOW SERIES

LGBTQ+: The Breakdown

What is LGBTQ+?

Many youth in foster care identify as LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning) or are trying to figure out what gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality fits them. Trying to understand your SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression) may leave you with some unanswered questions. Here's a guide to help you understand the acronym and what it stands for, to navigate your SOGIE, and to answer any questions you may have in the process.



Section 1

[What is LGBTQ+? What do the letters mean?](#)

The letters in the acronym LGBTQ+ stand for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning. Click the link to take a further look at what those words mean.

Section 2

[What is the difference between sexuality, gender identity, and gender expression? Aren't they all one in the same?](#)

Nope! It's easy to lump all three together, but they are not all one in the same and in fact are very different parts of how you can identify. They are all individual pieces of a larger puzzle that make us the masterpieces we are. Click the link to take a look at the differences.



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Section 3

[What are pronouns? Can I use more than one set of pronouns? Does everyone use pronouns? How do I ask someone what their pronouns are without being offensive?](#)

We use pronouns a lot when we speak. Pronouns are used when we're referring to either the people talking, so "I" or "you", or when someone/something's being talked about, using "she", "him", "they", "them", etc. Pronouns are a part of someone's gender identity and should be used as a form of respect when it comes to communication. Pronouns shouldn't be considered "preferred," because they are how the individual identifies and you want to respect the person you're speaking with. However, that doesn't mean you won't make mistakes. Click the link for more information about how to navigate the ins and outs of pronouns.

Section 4

[What resources are available to me? How can I get connected to my local community?](#)

There are many resources available to you if you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. One of the best ways to check out resources in your area is by connecting with your local PRIDE center. Click here for a list of online resources to get you started!

Section 5

[How can I find LGBTQ+ friendly healthcare services? How do I find safe spaces in my area?](#)

Finding safe spaces in your area may be challenging, but looking for subtle cues like PRIDE flags, rainbows, or stickers can make the process a bit easier. A lot of organizations will use these as an indicator that they are a safe space. Click here for information on how to find safe spaces and LGBTQ+ friendly providers.





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Section 6

What are my rights as an LGBTQ+ person in foster care and outside of it?

All youth in care have a right to a safe, respectful, and discrimination-free environment. The New York State Office of Children and Family Services is committed to respecting the dignity of all youth, and keeping them safe and secure, regardless of individual differences. NYS does have laws and procedures in place that protect LGBTQ+ citizens.

Section 7

How can I be an ally? What does allyship look like?

There are many ways to be an ally! As an ally, you can partner to promote change. Here's some information on how you can show your allyship to the LGBTQ+ community.

Section 8

PRIDE Month: Why do we celebrate and how can I celebrate? What about historical figures and activists?

PRIDE Month is currently celebrated each year in the month of June to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan. The Stonewall Uprising was a major turning point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the U.S. There are plenty of ways to celebrate PRIDE! Here's some ideas to think about for June.

