

**LGBTQ Youth Interviewing Tool**  
**Oakland Unite Cityspan Training**  
**December 18, 2013**

**Guidelines for Effectively Engaging Youth**

- Remind youth that you ask *everyone* the same questions and that you don't make assumptions about people. (Mention this before every interview generally, not just before you ask questions on SOGIE).
- Your goal is to create a safe space for youth to disclose their SOGIE at their own pace and on their own terms; hesitancy to disclose a SOGIE identity in the beginning is common given the harassment and discrimination many LGBTQ youth have encountered.
- Be mindful of your own beliefs, cultural norms, and gaps in knowledge surrounding sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
- Remember "silent" communication—ensure that your physical space is welcoming to LGBTQ youth by including posters, signs, books and materials that are affirming of LGBTQ youth.
- Remember that everyone has a sexual orientation, a gender identity and an expression of that gender. Your advocacy should encompass **all** youth.
- Interviewing techniques should include open and inclusive questions, and should be asked of **all** youth, not just youth you think are LGBTQ.
- Children are generally aware of their gender identity between ages 2 and 4.
- Children are generally aware of their sexual orientation around age 10.
- Keep in mind that many youth do not use labels to define themselves, but that you must be aware of behaviors and appearances that place them at risk of discrimination and harassment, as well as other people's perceptions of youth.
- Remember to ask youth how they want information about their SOGIE recorded and with whom you can discuss their SOGIE; remind youth of the situations where you must disclose the youth's SOGIE (e.g., in accordance with laws or obtaining appropriate services for the youth).
- Remember that some transgender people will refer to their gender as the one they transitioned to and will not use the term "transgender" (i.e., someone

assigned “male” at birth who transitioned to female may she is a “girl” and not a “transgender girl”).

**Recommended interview questions, after having established initial rapport:**

- 1) What is your preferred name and gender pronoun?
- 2) Are there any after school or community activities that you like? For example, sports programs, programs for LGBT kids, programs for youth of color, artistic programs, etc.?
- 3) Are you dating anyone special? Tell me about this person? What is their name? (Avoid pronouns until you have more information).

**Oakland Unite Cityspan Data Collection Questions**

**Gender (socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes considered appropriate for boys/men and girls/women):** girl/woman, boy/man, transgender (appearing as, wishing to be considered as, or having undergone surgery to become a member of the opposite sex from one’s assigned sex), or other.

*Examples of other:*

- Genderqueer (A catch-all category for gender identities other than man and woman)
- Two-Spirit (A gender identity among Indigenous American cultures; a person recognized as two-spirit identifies with both male and female gender roles, and so two-spirit is essentially a third gender)

**Sex at Birth (classification assigned at birth based on a combination of bodily characteristics) (not required):** male, female, intersex (a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male).

**Sexual Orientation (who someone is romantically, emotionally, and sexually attracted to) (not required):** bisexual, gay, heterosexual/ straight, lesbian, queer (an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities that are not heterosexual, heteronormative, or gender-binary), questioning (a person who is exploring their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression), or other.

*Examples of other:*

- Asexual (a lack of sexual attraction to anyone or having a low or absent interest in sexual activity)
- Two-Spirit (LGBT and gender-variant people in the Native American/Indigenous communities. *Note: not all Native American/Indigenous people will refer to themselves as Two-Spirit*)