

# MATCH SUPPORT LGBTQ+ RESOURCE MANUAL



**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
OF ORANGE COUNTY & THE INLAND EMPIRE

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## OVERVIEW

If you're reading this manual, it's because you have a Little who identifies with the LGBTQ+ community. Whether you've been matched to a LGBTQ+ Little or your Little's just recently come out to you, thank you for taking the time to educate yourself on this important topic.

LGBTQ+ youth are at a much higher risk of homelessness, violence, and overall dissatisfaction in their life. As their Big, you're not required to have all the answers or to understand everything that goes on in the LGBTQ+ community; your sole job is to be understanding, compassionate, and supportive of your Little. This manual includes information and resources to will help you be the best mentor you can be to your LGBTQ+ Little!

# DEFINITIONS

## COMING OUT

Having your Little come out to you is a big deal! It means that your Little really trusts and confides in you. But the coming out process can be a very difficult time for a LGBTQ+ person. It's a big life-moment that can also be the start of a lot of emotional ups and downs.

After they come out to you, ask your Little about confidentiality and how you can be there for them during this time. Depending on their answer, you can work with your Match Support Specialist (MSS) to come up with a game plan for support.

## LESBIAN, GAY & BISEXUAL

If your Little identifies with being gay, lesbian, or bisexual, it means they're attracted to the same sex or both sexes. Even if you think that your Little's "going through a phase," please refrain from saying these kinds of comments to your Little; it invalidates their feelings and damages the trust you've built.

## TRANSGENDER

If your Little identifies with being transgender, it means that your Little feels that their biological sex does not align with their mind and their heart. Keep in mind that this has nothing to do with sexual orientation. Being transgender is who you are, not who you like.

If your Little comes out as transgender, it's important that you ask about pronouns. If your Little has come out to you, they're probably ready to be addressed by their correct pronouns, and maybe even a new name.



**BE THERE TO LISTEN**

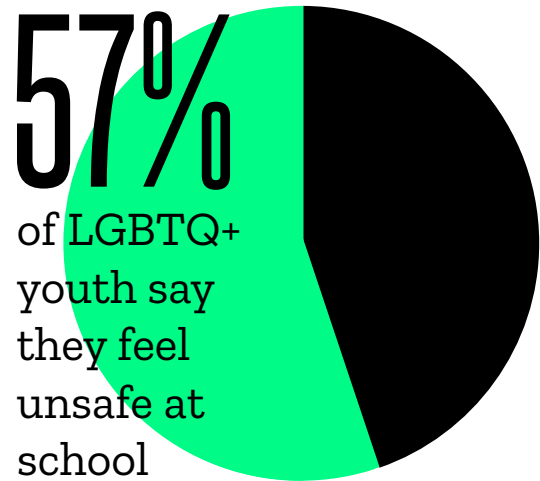
# WHY YOUR LITTLE NEEDS YOU: THE STATS

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- 3.2 million LGBTQ+ youth
- LGBTQ+ make up 6% of young people (8-18)
- 52% of LGBTQ+ youth are youth of color
- Half of all LGBTQ+ youth are "at-risk"

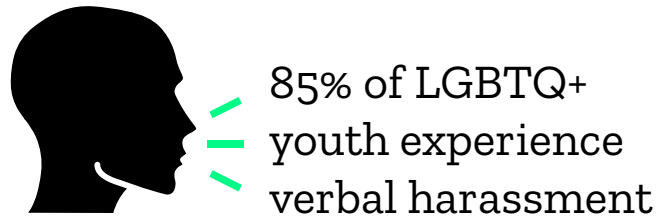
## LGBTQ+ YOUTH SCHOOL CLIMATE

- 57% feel unsafe at school
- 85% experienced verbal harassment
- 56% reported hearing homophobic remarks from staff/teachers



## PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

- More than 40% of LGBTQ+ students have considered suicide
- 60% of LGBTQ+ students have reported feelings of hopelessness
- LGBTQ+ students are 5x more likely to report using illegal drugs



## JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS

- LGBTQ+ youth comprise 13-15% of youth in the juvenile justice system
- Nearly 300,000 gay and transgender youth are arrested each year
- School discipline policies are creating a pipeline to prison



gay and transgender youth are arrested each year

# HOW TO BE A BIG ALLY

Through your mentorship and support, you can help navigate a path to a bigger future for your Little, a child who has the potential to change the world.

## LISTEN

One of the simplest yet most important ways to be an effective ally is to listen. If your Little opens up about being harassed, feeling excluded, or just about their life in general, keep in mind that you may be the only person they feel safe speaking to about these topics. Be there to listen.

## RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY

Effective allies will respect their Little's confidentiality and privacy. Someone who's just come out may not want everyone to know. While it's important to share this information with your MSS so we can support you, sharing with anyone else—even a parent—can create an unsafe environment for your Little. Ask your Little about confidentiality.

## BE CONSCIOUS OF YOUR BIASES

While challenging, it's crucial that you acknowledge how systemic homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism may be impacting your best efforts to be a LGBTQ+ ally. An empathetic, effective ally continuously works to recognize and challenge their own biases.

## SEEK OUT KNOWLEDGE

Effective allies periodically brush up on LGBTQ+-related language and current issues facing the LGBTQ+ community. Never stop learning, never stop growing!

## BE A RESOURCE

An effective ally knows when and how to refer their Little to outside help. You'll find several local resources on the next page. Your MSS can also work with you to find specific workshops that apply to specific needs and issues for your Little.

Sources: The Williams Institute; GLSEN; and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention

# LEHIGH VALLEY COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## Bradbury Sullivan

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center creates a vibrant LGBTQ+ community in the Lehigh Valley through arts, health, youth, training, and Pride programs.



[bradburysullivancenter.org/](http://bradburysullivancenter.org/)



(610) 347-9988

## The Trevor Project

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning youth.



[thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org)



1.866.488.7386

## Project Silk

Project Silk is an LGBTQ inclusive drop-in program that is youth-led, adult-supported and offers free health services like HIV/STI testing, healthy food and snacks, active recreation, peer supports, and discussions on a variety of health and social topics.



[valleyouthouse.org/programs/lgbtq-services/project-silk-lehigh-valley/](http://valleyouthouse.org/programs/lgbtq-services/project-silk-lehigh-valley/)



610-347-9988 x. 301

