

# Tips on how to become an Affirming Adult

Within a whole school community, every affirming adult can be a vital resource when supporting LGBTQI2S youth. Taking on the active role of an affirming adult can be vitally important compared to other lukewarm tolerances an LGBTQI2S youth may encounter. Healthy and affirming conditions must be fostered **actively** in the classroom and beyond, and all youth, regardless of identity, will benefit.

LGBTQI2S youth with supportive adults both inside and outside their family are **4 times** more likely to report good or excellent mental health.

(Being Safe, Being Me, results of the Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey, 2015)

## Key principles:



**Foster** optimal conditions for self-development



**Recognize** your influence, both direct and indirect



**Receive** feedback with humility and accountability



**Reinforce** rights and denormalize violence and harm



**Be explicit** about your support



**Commit** to continuous learning

## Example concrete actions:

- Correct others when you hear them misgender or misname a member of your school community (when you have that person's consent to do so)
- Assure youth that they can come to you for open, non-judgemental conversations and support about their identity, or on any related matter (bullying, relationships, questioning, development etc.); listen actively and find out what support looks and feels like to the person you are supporting
- Using gender neutral language (e.g. they/them pronouns) to refer to someone whose gender you don't know (until you do know)
- Respect self-identified names and pronouns (ask for these and share your own)
- Take note of questions you still have about LGBTQI2S identities and experiences so you can identify and pursue further knowledge and skills
- Learn so you can teach – spread your new knowledge, skills and attitudes far and wide; access and share educational materials

## Additional resources

[A Guide to Virtual GSAs](#)

[Tackling Anti-LGBTQI2S Cyberbullying in Schools](#)

[Draw The Line Against Transphobic Violence in Schools](#)

[Tips on how to practice and LGBTQI2S Allyship](#)

[The Genderbread Person](#)

[Sex, Sin & 69' Documentary and Learning Resources](#)

[Glossary of Terms](#)

[Supporting Your Gender Diverse Child](#)

[Inclusive and Affirming Language](#)

[Supporting Your Intersex Child](#)

[Pronoun Usage Guide](#)

[What to do when your child comes out to you](#)