



SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ YOUTH THROUGH AFFIRMATIVE CARE:

# FINDING AN AFFIRMATIVE THERAPIST



a checklist to support LGBTQ+ youth in finding affirmative mental health care

### How to use this tool:

This list is for you, as an LGBTQ+ youth, to help you find affirmative mental health care and aims to support your search by offering key questions and considerations. You can use this list as it is or as a jumping off point.

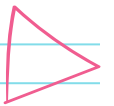
### At first assessment, does your therapist...

- Ask about your gender identity and sexual orientation?
  - Do the consent and confidentiality forms offer a range of identities?
- Ask for your **chosen name** and **pronouns** on their forms and during the interview?
  - Have they asked you about **where** and **when** it's **safe** to use your chosen name and pronouns?
  - Do they use your chosen names and pronouns?
- Ask you whether it's okay to involve your **parents**?
- Have awareness of LGBTQ+ organizations?
  - Are they able to make referrals to queer specific resources and organizations?



### Does your therapist...

- Have the right credentials (registered/licensed, education, and training)? Remember, you have the right to ask the therapist about their background and experience.
- Experience working with LGBTQ+ youth?
  - Do you have to teach them about LGBTQ+ issues?
  - Do their answers seem like they're **willing to learn**?
- Seem to **understand the history** and **impact of LGBTQ+ discrimination** and human rights issues?
- Understand the difference between **gender identity** and **sexual orientation**?
- Talk about either staying or coming out of "the closet"? You should not be pressured to come out to anyone.
- Understand all your identities (i.e., gender, sexuality, race, ability) and how they **fit together**?
- Feel comfortable asking about your safety? Do you feel heard and validated?
- Seem open to feedback?
- Help you...
  - Advocate** for your needs?
  - Have** difficult conversations?
  - Navigate** your various spaces (home, school, sports, etc.)?
- How committed is the therapist to you?
  - Do they **follow-up** if they haven't seen you in a while?
  - Do you feel like you're being well cared for or do you feel like just a number?
  - Do you feel like you have **control and agency**? Are your needs getting met?



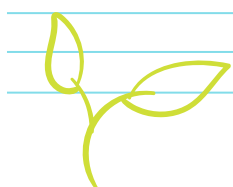
### Notice/check out...

- The **physical space**:
  - Do you see LGBTQ+ positive signs?
- Their **communications/on the website**:
  - Do they identify their **own pronouns**?



### Safety & Privacy

- Do you have a say in who will have **access** to your information?
- Sometimes therapists work in teams to get ideas about how to best serve you in therapy. Can you ask about this process and how your **confidentiality** will be kept?



*This list was compiled by AFFIRM group therapy facilitators who identify as members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and are informed by their extensive experience providing therapy to queer clients and facilitating AFFIRM groups. For more information, visit [projectyouthaffirm.org](http://projectyouthaffirm.org).*