

Creating Inclusive and Affirming Intake, Screening, and Assessment Tools

| Do | Do Not |
|---|--|
| Keep forms brief | Expect youth to complete long forms in one sitting |
| Use gender-neutral language | Include mutually exclusive options, such as male/female or conflate gender identity with sexual orientation |
| Use welcoming language | Define a “normal” identity as heterosexual or cisgender |
| Include simple language | Assume youth know how to define or describe their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE) |
| Use inclusive SOGIE language | Include SOGIE information among risk-taking behaviors |
| Offer an “other” category, in addition to predetermined options, with space for the youth to write in | Focus on sex at birth |
| Allow space to enter a preferred name and pronouns | Assume that a youth’s current SOGIE is set in stone |
| Ask broadly about parents, caregivers, or who is important to the youth | Focus on biological parents |
| Let youth know they do not have to answer questions that make them uncomfortable | Ask questions that are not necessary |

After becoming homeless, LGBTQ youth are more likely to live on the streets than utilize housing services due to discrimination.¹



Reference

1. Berger, C. (2006). What becomes of at-risk gay youths? *Gay & Lesbian Review*, 12, 24-25.

From *3/40 Blueprint: Creating the Blueprint to Reduce LGBTQ Youth Homelessness* | www.340blueprintproject.com



Intake, Screening, and Assessment Form³

The best intake, screening, and assessment forms use inclusive, easy-to-understand language to describe sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE), as well as race and ethnicity. In addition, the ability to select and write in an “other” option is key for identities due to fluidity.

Preferred Name:

Gender Pronouns:

Primary Race/Ethnicity

- African American/Black
- American Indian/Alaskan Native/
Native American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Latina/Latino/Latinx
- Multiracial/Multiethnic
- White
- Other _____

Sexual Orientation

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Biattractional/Bisexual
- Asexual
- Questioning
- Heterosexual
- Pansexual
- Other _____

Gender Identity

- Girl/Woman
- Boy/Man
- Transgender Man
- Transgender Woman
- Genderqueer
- Other _____

Gender Expression

- Feminine
- Masculine
- Androgynous
- Fluid
- Other _____

References

1. Minter, S., & Daley, C. (2003). *Trans realities: A legal needs assessment of San Francisco's transgender communities*. San Francisco, CA: National Center for Lesbian Rights.
2. Yu, V. (2010). Shelter and transitional housing for transgender youth. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 14, 340-345.
3. This example has been taken from an existing agency's intake form.



From 3/40 Blueprint: Creating the Blueprint to Reduce LGBTQ Youth Homelessness | www.340blueprintproject.com







Does your form...

- **Use gender-neutral pronouns and language?** (Examples: Them/they, head of household, caregiver, parent 1 and 2. Avoid assuming gender roles when discussing youth parenting.)
- **Treat gender identity with respect?** (Examples: What was your sex assigned at birth? What sex did your doctor put on the birth certificate? What is your current gender identity?)
- **Recognize sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as spectrums, rather than binary categories?** (For example, avoid mutually exclusive options such as male/female.)
- **Include “other” options that allow the youth to write in their own answers?**
- **Opt for positive language?** (For example, avoid phrases such as “disabling condition” or “illegal alien,” or rules written in a negative, accusatory tone.)
- **Allow youth to enter a preferred name, in addition to their legal name?**
- **Distinguish between sexual orientation and gender identity?** (Example: Not including transgender as an option with lesbian, gay, and bisexual.)
- **Place sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE) questions among demographic details?** (For example, avoid placing near questions about risk-taking behavior, health concerns, or criminal justice involvement.)
- **Use simple language?** (Example: Consider “I identify as a girl” in lieu of phrases such as “gender identity” and “non-binary.”)
- **Acknowledge the diversity of families?** (For example, inquire about parents or caregivers rather than “biological father and mother.” Ask about important people in a youth’s life, such as intimate partners, extended family, and informal family.)
- **Require mandatory documentation youth may not have?** (Examples: Driver’s license, Social Security card, birth certificate, etc.)
- **Use language that emphasizes their SOGIE is respected.**
- **Explain why questions are being asked?**
- **Make it clear that youth can decide not to answer questions?**



The first person I came out to was the person that was taking care of me in the (program).



They helped me understand that being bi is—there’s nothing wrong with it.

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Inclusive, Positive Language for Use in Intake, Screening, and Assessment Tools



What parts of your identity are most important to you?

What are some of the most important things on your mind right now?

What is your current gender identity?

What is your greatest strength?

What is something you would like to improve or work on?

Who are the important people in your life?

What sex did your doctor put on the birth certificate?

What are your gender pronouns?

What name do you prefer to be called?

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