

GLBTQ Rainbow Brick Road: Steps Toward Cultural Competency

These recommendations are a way to incorporate GLBTQ cultural competencies into your daily life. We hope that these tips will help you create safer and more respectful interactions with all people.

- Identify appropriate **language**.
 - ❖ *We have found that "queer" is not an appropriate term for general use. It is more a term to be used within the **GLBTQ** community, and may cause offense to some if used by those who do not identify as **GLBTQ**.*
- Counteract common **myths** and **stereotypes**. Replace myths with accurate information.
- Understand the meaning of **sexual orientation** and **gender identity**.
- Challenge **homophobic** remarks and jokes. Don't be afraid to stand up even in small ways.
- **Don't** try to guess who is **GLBTQ**.
- Be informed and **examine your own biases**.
- Don't be surprised when a youth **"comes out"** to you.
- It's not **"just a phase"** – young people may still be learning who they are, but that doesn't mean this is an **experiment** or a plea for attention.
- Recognize their same-sex attractions or true gender identity, without expecting a resolution or **label** for their identity.
- Be aware that young people may have never heard anything **positive** about being **GLBTQ**; you may be the first person to tell them they are normal and healthy. You can help them connect with other **GLBTQ** youth or with adult role models.
- A young person who identifies as **GLBTQ** may be sexually active with the same sex or other sex, or may not be sexually active at all. Offer them information relevant to their needs.
- Don't be afraid to **ask questions**. Be aware that each person is only speaking from his/her own experiences and does not represent an entire group.

Information compiled by the
Maine Youth Action Network



MYAN is an initiative of [PROP's Youth Resiliency Project](#) and its partner, the [Muskie School of Public Service](#), funded by the [Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Maine Department of Health and Human Services](#), in part with money from the tobacco settlement, the [Healthy Maine Partnerships](#), the [Teen and Young Adult Health Program](#), and the [Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program](#). www.MYAN.org.