

# COALITION D'AIDE À LA DIVERSITÉ SEXUELLE

DE L'ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE

**Intervention tool on sexual,  
homophobic and transphobic  
bullying, as well as « coming  
out » support**

**I AM SOMEONE**

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**POINT  
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# COALITION D'AIDE À LA DIVERSITÉ SEXUELLE

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## Mission

CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PERSON (LGBT).

## Objectives

- Promote the customization of psychosocial, educational and health services to improve their quality and access ;
- Take actions to reduce regional homophobia and heteronormativity ;
- Break the isolation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender person (LGBT).

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**How to intervene with  
youth victims of bullying**

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# Foreword

Homophobic bullying involves threatening behavior motivated by prejudice against a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. It is thus possible to become a target even when we are not part of a sexual minority. For example, although expressions like "*That's so gay!*" may not seem like much, they still contribute to the development of a negative or hostile environment towards sexual minorities. They also serve to confine people in a "sexual category" by reinforcing the stereotypes associated with being a man or a woman. All too often homophobia becomes the language of bullying. Its vocabulary is used to target anyone perceived as being different or not "standard."

## Critical Questions to Identify Bullying, Aggression and Teasing

It is important to be able to distinguish between bullying, aggression and teasing. The following questions are critical when trying to assess the interactions among children and youth.

### How to identify Bullying, Aggression and Teasing

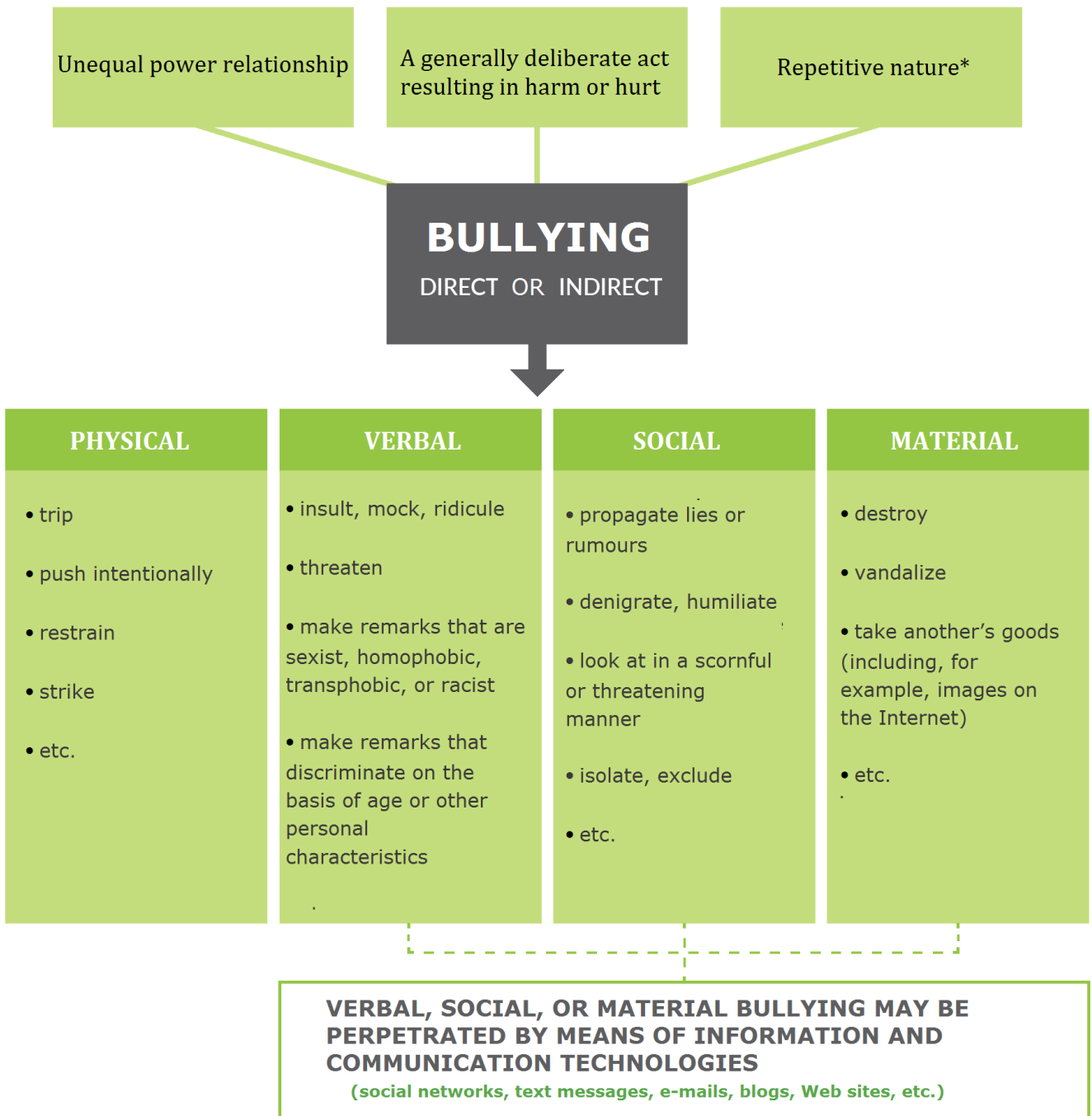
CRITICAL QUESTION	TEASING	AGGRESSION	BULLYING
Is this behaviour reciprocated?	<b>Usually</b> The teasing is shared equally.	<b>Usually not</b> There is usually only one aggressor.	<b>No</b> There is a person who bullies and a person who is victimized.
Do both people look like they are having a good time?	<b>Usually</b> It takes place within a strong, positive, relationship.	<b>No</b> One person is the aggressor.	<b>No</b> One person is in distress or being harmed
Is the behaviour fun?	<b>Usually</b> Both people enjoy the banter.	<b>Usually not</b> It can alienate and be embarrassing.	<b>No</b> The person bullying intends to cause fear.
Has this happened before with these individuals?	<b>Usually</b> It occurs when there is a familiarity.	<b>Possibly</b> It may be a one time event.	<b>Yes</b> Bullying is typically repeated behaviour.
Is there a power differential?	<b>No</b> It illustrates closeness and affection.	<b>Possibly</b> It can happen within a weak relationship.	<b>Yes</b> There is always a power imbalance.

## **Bullying is:**

- Words, actions, gestures or behaviors that are offensive ;
- Intentional and repeated over time ;
- A power imbalance ;
- A situation where the victim does not perceive issues.



## Characteristics and manifestations of bullying



**Bullying has harmful effects for the person targeted, which could also affect other people involved and have a negative impact on their environment.**

\* Depending on the context, a single—objectively serious—gesture could also be associated with acts of bullying without being repetitive in nature (i.e. assault causing injury, armed assault, or death threat).

# Sexual bullying is...

When using people's sexuality or gender as a weapon against them.



## Behaviors that :

Humiliate and put down a person ;	Use sexual language or gesture to make a person uncomfortable ;	Victimize a person based on his appearance ;	Pressure people to act in ways that make them uncomfortable.
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Sexual intimidation is when we use sexuality, sexual identity or gender expression to have power over another person: either by remarks or gestures.

We use someone's sexuality to scare or make that person uncomfortable. This may include sexual assault.

For example, a young boy or girl who is afraid to go to the bathroom for fear of being shouting sexual insults or to be touched.



# Bullying in Canada : Everyone's business

- CANADA HAS THE 9TH HIGHEST RATE OF BULLYING AMONG 13-YEARS-OLDS.
- IN CANADA, AT LEAST 1 IN 3 TEENS REPORT HAVING BEEN BULLIED AT SCHOOL.
- IN CANADA, 47 % OF PARENTS SAY THAT ONE OF THEIR CHILDREN HAS BEEN BULLIED
- 62.9% OF STUDENTS HEAR COMMENTS LIKE " IT'S FAG" OR" IT'S PUSSY" EVERY DAY AT SCHOOL.
- 69% OF GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND TRANS (LGBT) STUDENTS EXPERIENCED HOMOPHOBIA OR GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT .
- 35,4% OF HETEROSEXUAL STUDENTS ARE VICTIMS OF HOMOPHOBIA BECAUSE THEY DO NOT CORRESPOND GENDER STEREOTYPES.

# Strategies for youth

- Talk to a person of trust or a close person ;
- Use the app + strong intimidation ;
- Modify the circle of friends ;
- Change appearance ;
- Adopt a confident attitude ;
- Use the school and neighborhood resources ;
- Find ways to relax and be entertained ;
- Ask the bully to stop acting that way by seriously asserting himself ;
- Set limits : the bully does not want his actions to be known by adults, including his parents. However, by putting your limits you have to be ready.

# Strategies for youth

- Ignore the bully. When the youth reacts, he gives him attention and that's what he looks for;
- Surround yourself and avoid moments alone ;
- Create scenarios to practice to assert himself such as role plays ;
- Avoid any act of retaliation or revenge that could turn against him;
- Choose the right moments : You have to choose your battles! Perhaps it is better to leave or ignore a situation if the youth does not feel the strength to react or if the bully threatens to physically attack him ;
- Use humor to defuse certain situations.

<https://www.prevnet.ca/bullying/signs>

# Basic social skills to work with the youth victim of bullying

- **Stay calm**, even when there is bullying. This is important because if the victim gets angry, the bully will be encouraged to continue;
- **Use an assertive\* body language**. Teach youth to appear confident by standing straight (not bent) and to look at the bully in the eyes (instead of looking down);
- **Say positive thoughts**. Teach youth to tell themselves positive things when they face a problem of bullying. For example : « Who do you think you are to intimidate me ? I know my worth ! I can get away, I won't let you make me feel bad. »
- **Understand body language**. Teach youth to pay attention to body language will help them to be integrated which will reduce intimidation;
- **Do not feed the bully by showing disagreement**. The most important is not to get angry or indicate disagreement with the bully. They often have more fun when their victims get angry or argue with them, which only encourages them.

\*Assertiveness: Someone who is assertive behaves confidently and is not frightened to say what they want or believe while respecting sensitivity and rights of others.

# Different ways to deal with teasing

**TEASER:**

"You're fat! "



**CHANGE THE SUBJECT**

**YOUR CHILD:**

"This is a new shirt that you have? "

**THANK THE TEASER**

**YOUR CHILD:**

"Ah, thank you! I'm glad you noticed! I was getting worried that no one would notice it."

**AGREE WITH TEASING  
AND TURN CRITISIM  
INTO COMPLIMENT**

**YOUR CHILD:**

"You'r right. I wish I were thin. How are you doing to stay in good shape? What's your secret?"

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**How to intervene with  
bullies**

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# Time out

BULLYING IS AN INTENTIONAL BEHAVIOR DESIGNED TO CAUSE FEAR OF BEING HURT IN AN INDIVIDUAL. BULLYING CAN BE EXPRESSED AS PSYCHOLOGICAL OR PHYSICAL ABUSE. IT CAN HAVE TRAUMATIC REPERCUSSIONS, SO THE ACTIONS MUST STOP, AND QUICKLY!



# How to accompany the young bully

- Stay calm and listen to what he has to say;
- Make him understand that you take the situation very seriously;
- Explain him the gravity and the consequences of his acts or words: suspension, expulsion from school, police complaints, legal recourse;
- Institute consequences that you consider appropriate for the situation;
- Discuss and collaborate with school staff to take the appropriate measures to resolve the situation quickly;
- Offer him the help he needs. See with him how he can express his anger without hurting others;
- Discuss with him examples of bullying or violence he saw on television, movies, video games or in the street;
- Remind him that it is important to respect people despite their differences, for example: their sexual orientation, nationality, physical strength, etc. ;
- Try to spend more time with him and supervise his activities;
- Find out who are his friends and how they spend their free time together.



# What to work with the young bully

- Deconstruct its defense mechanisms;
- Stimulate his empathy ;
- See if he misunderstands social information;
- Give him opportunities to help others;
- Teach him what a quality relationships is;
- Instill him emotional and relational intelligence;
- Teach the negative leader to become a positive leader with, for example, role play or reinforcement. Prove him that people around him will show him so much importance, but positively.

# **Make sure that the young bully change his way of exercising his power**

The student who bully others needs help. He must be taught how to resolve his conflicts without violence. Give the young bully a chance to put his natural leadership skills to serve others.

For example, he can teach a new sport or any other skills to the younger ones. Help him to resist the pressure from others by telling him that you trust him and his ability to change his behavior.

## **Opt for educational rather than punitive consequences**

The student who bully others need to be helped to understand the impact of his behavior on people they bully. The educational consequences are designed to spread this message. In addition, they provide the bully the necessary support to acquire the social skills and the empathy he or she lacks.

# The application of the supervision of the young bully

- Invite the bully to make a poster, collage or drawing illustrating the emotions others may feel when they are intimidated. Openly discuss with him about these emotions: shame, embarrassment, anger, fear or sadness;
- Entrust the young bully a research project to learn about the prevalence, nature and consequences of bullying. Ask him to write about the subject or to present his finding to the class;
- Invite the bully to interview an adult or an older student about his experience of bullying and the consequences of that violence on his life;
- Entrust the young bully a research project on a historical figure or a celebrity who was bullied;
- Ask him to read a novel about bullying. Then, have him analyze the characters (ex. *Blubber*, by Judy Blume);
- Invite the student to watch a film about bullying. Then, ask him to describe the characters and the consequences of their actions (ex. : *Back to the future*, *Mean girls*). Ask him to focus on the emotions of the bullied person. Help him perceive these emotions by reading facial expressions, the posture and the voice of the person.

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**Accompagnement in the  
milestones of the « Coming  
out »**

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# Foreword

MANY PEOPLE DO NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE INTERACTING WITH THE LGBT COMMUNITY. THE INTERVENTION ITSELF REMAINS YET THE SAME AS WITH THE HETEROSEXUAL CLIENTELE. ON THE OTHER HAND, INTERVENTIONS WILL REQUIRE ADAPTATION AT SEVERAL LEVELS.

# Accompagnement in the « coming out » : from discovery to affirmation

The "coming out" steps are flexible and not necessarily experienced in a specific order. There is no universal way of coming out. Each individual is different and evolves in his own environment.

## **Possible steps :**

1. Asking questions about our sexual orientation;
2. Recognize our attractions;
3. Study thoroughly our attractions;
4. Recognize our sexual orientation;
5. Value our sexual orientation;
6. Integrate our sexual orientation.

# 1 –Asking questions about our sexual orientation

At this point, the person will notice that he or she has feelings, attraction or interests for a someone of the same sex as them or for people of both sexes. He or she can react different ways:

- Feel guilty;
- Feel anger;
- Reject his attractions;
- Express homophobic comments;
- Be in denial;
- Etc.

# Anticipated needs

—

## Possible approaches

- Explore the youth's positive and negative thoughts about homosexuality or bisexuality;
- Mention that sexual orientation is spread over a continuum (This is correct. Vagueness and ambiguity are acceptable and expected.);
- Encourage him to explore his sexual orientation as a "normal" experience - as in the case of career or other aspects of life;
- Help the youth find information on the subject (see Resources);
- Pay attention to behaviors tending to prove heterosexuality (ex: teenage pregnancy among lesbians);
- Attention: the youth remains the expert of his situation. It is up to him or her to name his feelings;
- Considering homosexuality or bisexuality for him or her may cause a loss of trust;
- The "coming out" to oneself can take time and it is important to respect the rhythm of each one.



# 2 – Recognize our attractions (Oh! It's possible!)

At this stage :

- Feelings, attractions and signs are emerging;
- People will often anticipate the losses related to this marked observation;
- Mourning of heteronormativity\* associated with increased risk of suicidal ideation.

## Anticipated needs – Possible approaches

- When ready, the youth may need LGBT information or resources;
- Encourage him to talk about what he is living related to the loss of heterosexual life expectations;
- Allow him to keep a part of his heterosexual identity (this is not always a clear conception);
- Do not assume that same-sex attraction represents only homosexual orientation: the youth can also be bisexual.

\*Heteronormativity: is an adjective qualifying a person who think that heterosexuality is the only sexual orientation possible.

# 3 – Study thoroughly our attractions(It's probable!)

At this syage, it's the beginning of the implementation of adaptative strategies;

- The person explores the social world and may be afraid of rejection;
- May experiences loneliness;
- Is afraid of being marginalized;
- Test with whom and where it feels safe;
- Is experiencing an emotional, sexual, etc. exploration period;
- It's « gay teens ».



# Anticipated needs – Possible approaches

- Accompany the youth in their own feelings of shame arising from the heterosexist, homophobic and biphobic societal context;
- Be attentive : the highest risks are at this point when the youth is about to do his « coming out »;
- Make sure that the first « coming out » experience is positive, it's essential;
- Help the youth to find the right person to reveal himself (not necessarily the parents), as well as the right time to do it;
- Support the youth in his efforts to find positive relationships in the LGBT community;
- Pay attention to feelings of isolation, suicidal tendencies, self-destructive behaviors and the vocabulary used;
- Just support. Do not make a diagnosis. Give information and clarify the feelings.

# Gay teens

For example, a man doing his « coming out » at age 38 may, at this point in his life, behave in ways that are inconsistent with his chronological age. Indeed, his behaviors can then be closer to a stage of development of adolescence. Experimentation is an important step, even fundamental. LGBT people who have not done their « coming out » aged between 10-18 will feel the need to live this phase of experimentation when they do so.

# 4 – Recognize our sexual orientation (Well, it's my case!)

\*Stage associated with a lower suicidal risk!\*

- The person lives the experimentation ;
- Seeks a community to find a sense of belonging (Maslow);
- Comes out the closet (coming out the closet refers to the carapace and isolation that the person in the process of « coming out » is digging to not give the impression that he or she is gay or bisexual);
- Will want to socialize with people like him or her (example : gay dentist, gay lawyer, gay peer).

# Anticipated needs – Possible approaches

- The youth may feel the need to continue to explore the mourning and "loss" of expectations of a heterosexual life, such as the feeling of shame arising from the heterosexist societal framework;
- He or she may need support to make the "coming out" decisions: where, when, from whom will they divulge their sexual orientation ?;
- Help the youth to manage the reactions of others (he or she may lose friends or go through difficult reactions from family members or other relatives);
- Pay attention to the signs of socialization, family rejection and the beginning of a process of integration into the vocabulary.

# 5 – Value our sexual orientation



Stage of « I'm proud to be! »

- The person completely abandons his hiding;
- Is committed to gay and lesbian identity;
- Begins to speak as « We and They », which illustrate the deep identification with the gay and lesbian community.

At this step, the person sees his sexual orientation in a positive way. Sometimes, the person (usually young people, especially young men) overvalues gay and lesbian identities and communities and even denigrate heterosexual orientation or identity. We see then the adoption of a defensive attitude, the « Us against Them ». Sexual activities may still be at risk. For men, recreative sexuality, sometimes compulsive, serves to affirm their gay orientation or identity. Sexuality is the preferred way to socialize. There may be a significant drug and alcohol use because bars are often the main places for socialization. This extreme valorization of homosexuality can cause problems of ostracism or discrimination.

# Anticipated needs – Possible approaches

- Support the youth through his possible feelings of anger;
- Encourage the youth to explore issues related to heterosexism;
- Help the youth to develop skills to deal with the reactions facing his sexual orientation (ex: answering questions during his « coming out »).



# 6 – Integrate our sexual orientation

Stage of the "I feel comfortable with myself and with others, whether they are homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual! "

- The person reinforces his gay, lesbian or bisexual identity;
- Increases its capacity to establish more authentic social relationship;
- Tell ourselves : « My sexual orientation is only one of the components of my personality ».

Finally, the person feels comfortable with his sexual orientation while being comfortable with that of others. The self-image is consolidated and the attitude of « Us against Them » is abandoned. The person pursues his personal development on another aspect than his sexual orientation and his possibly looking for a stable relationship. If so, a « reconciliation » with the family or relative could happen. Sexual practices are possibly safer because there is a recognition of risky practices. In addition, the person feels more comfortable with his sexual behaviors. However, there may still be a lack of awareness of the risks involved in the couple, especially if partners are non-exclusive. Finally, it's still possible that the gay or lesbian person experiences discrimination in his social and working life.

# Anticipated needs – Possible approaches

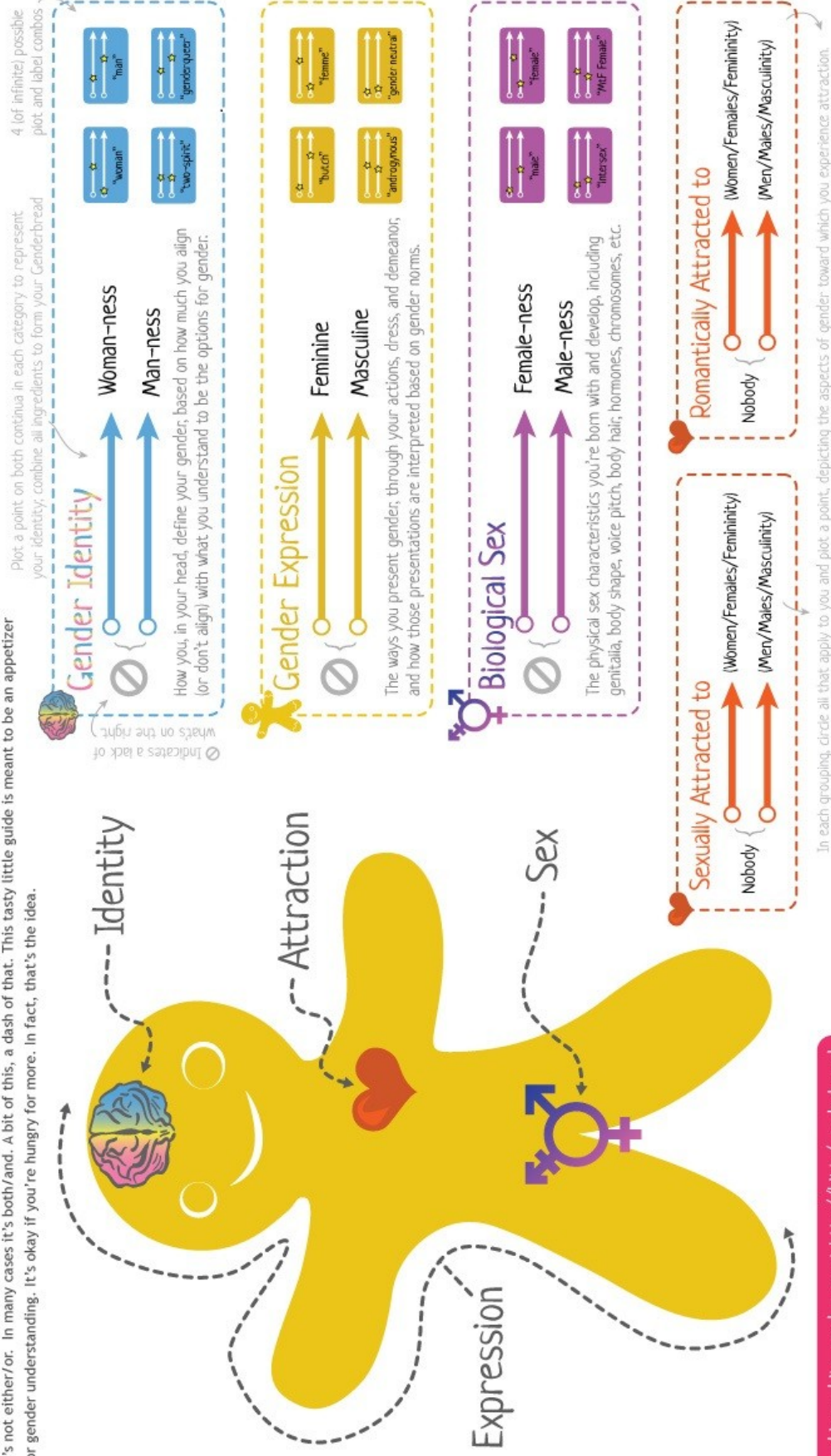
- Pay attention to indications of affirmation of identity;
- Be alert to systemic discrimination (environmental);
- Continue to inform the youth about safer sex practices and balanced and respectful relationships;
- Be constantly aware that the youth's psychosocial problems or needs are not always directly or even indirectly related to his sexual orientation.

# Genderbread Person!!!

## The Genderbread Person v3.3

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more. In fact, that's the idea.

by it's pronounced **METRQsexual**.com



# The component of a non-heterosexist approach

- Do not underestimate homophobia. Recognize the impact of social stigmatization on the fulfillment and well-being of the individual, the couple or the family;
- Remember that sexual experience does not determine a person sexual orientation;
- Remember that only the person can define his sexual orientation. Your role is to accompany;
- Do not hesitate to ask for help if necessary and refer the person to resources adapted to his age and his own experience: THE COALITION IS THERE FOR THAT!;

# The components of a non-heterosexist approach

- Explore what the meaning of homosexuality, bisexuality or transexuality is for the person;
- Validate the self-perception of the person without expressing a comment on his sexual orientation. Do not put words in his mouth, be more attentive to the vocabulary used;
- Talk about health, including safe sex;
- Help the person to mourn the privileged situation that is associated with those who live heterosexuality;
- Introduce positive role models of same-sex relationships;
- Guide the person to affirm their sexual orientation as one of the components of his personality.

# Avenues to follow

- Deconstruct a lifetime of expectations and perceptions;
- Manage marginalization and handle minority status;
- Have an inclusive speech. For example, do not assume a person's heterosexuality. Ask him if he has a lover and name him his name without adding a lady or a gentleman in the waiting room;
- Valuing all types of relationships;
- Illustrate the fact that sexual orientation does not determine the degree of well-being of an individual;
- Explore possible strategies to divulge his orientation. This may involve a dissociation from the heterosexual community or the fact of moving away from one's family;

# Avenues to follow

- Do not hesitate to advise the person in his first sexual and romantic relationships because alcohol or drugs, used to disinhibit, can lead to bad choices. Help the person develop their sexual communication and negotiation skills;
- Support self-assertion and respect for others;
- Demystifying the gay, lesbian and bisexual environment. Sometimes, the person can be disillusioned and feed the desire to go to Montreal with the thought that it will be easier there, in the village. Remind him that although there is a community in Montreal, no one is waiting with open arms to take another one under his wing;
- Etc.

## Little reminder

SEXUAL ORIENTATION IS NOT NECESSARY THE CAUSE OF THE PERSON'S PROBLEMS OR TOXICS BEHAVIOURS.. THEN, IT IS ESSENTIAL, AS WORKERS, TO FIND THE TRUE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM.

# sources

- Formation: adapter nos interventions aux réalités des personnes de la diversité sexuelle, de leur couple et de leur famille présenté par l'institut national de santé publique du Québec.
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