

IMPROVING INTAKE PROCESSES FOR LGBTQ2S YOUTH

INTAKE PROCEDURES consist of collecting demographic information, assessing an individual's compatibility with a program, and assigning each resident a room. In the case of co-ed shelters, youth are either assigned to the male or female floor, and in the case of men's and women's shelters, staff often determine whether or not an individual belongs based on how they perceive the client's gender identity.



INTAKE PROCESSES NEED TO ENSURE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES REFLECTED IN THE FORMS AND QUESTIONS THAT ARE ASKED.

Allow young people to self-identify their gender and sexual identities, rather than asking them to fit themselves into predetermined categories on surveys and intake forms. This provides an opportunity to collect additional information about gender and sexual identities that may otherwise be missed. It also allows young people to see themselves reflected in the programs from the point of entry, which will help make them feel like they belong.

TORONTO SHELTER STANDARDS REQUIRE PROVIDERS TO:



- Complete a SMIS intake for each shelter resident



- Ask all clients about their gender identity rather than assume



- Support the choices of trans clients to gain access to sleeping areas in the gender that the client identifies with and that will best preserve their safety and dignity



- If trans clients express concern about the preservation of their safety or dignity, shelter providers will accommodate the client's request for a bed in a gender-neutral/private room, if possible, or in a male or female sleeping area regardless of their gender identity

HELP MAKE YOUR INTAKE PROCESS LGBTQ2S POSITIVE AND AFFIRMING:



- Start off by telling the young person your name and your pronoun



- Allow youth to complete the intake forms whenever possible



- It is not necessary for youth to provide legal ID, allow them to self-identify their pronoun and name



- The intake interview should be completed in a private space for safety and confidentiality; staff should not disclose any information about client's gender or sexual identities to others



- Ensure that every new client is asked about gender identity, and not only the clients that are perceived to be trans or gender non-conforming

Written by Dr. Alex Abramovich (2016) SOURCES: Abramovich, A. (2015). A Focused Response to Prevent and End LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness. Prepared for the Government of Alberta.; City of Toronto (2015). Toronto Shelter Standards.