

January 2017 post: Care of LGBTQ Youth

## LGBTQ Youth

It is a busy day in the office and you have one last well check-up of the afternoon. It is an adolescent female that you have cared for since birth.

You go through the [HEEADSSS](#) assessment with this patient as you do with all your adolescent patients. Before you are finished though, she asks to speak to you in private. As a physician in KY, you are aware of the state's [confidentiality laws](#) that affect your care of adolescents and tell her that your conversation is private unless there is concern for her safety or the safety of someone else.

She begins to share feelings of “thinking I am gay.” She wants to know if she is normal. You explain hormonal and physical changes of puberty usually mean people start noticing an increase in sexual feelings. It's [common](#) for teens to be attracted to or have sexual thoughts about people of the same sex *and* the opposite sex. It's one way of sorting through emerging sexual feelings.

In addition, you may ask how long has she been feeling this way - You may want to know who she has spoken to about this - friends? parents? other family members? Does she feel comfortable sharing this personal information with anyone?

Because [LGBTQ](#) youth are at an increased risk of bullying, substance abuse, violence, high risk sexual behaviors, depression and suicide, it is important to do a more intense screening for these risk factors. While your patient currently does not feel suicidal, you provide her with the number to [The Trevor Project](#), an organization that maintains a 24/7 number for LGBTQ youth considering suicide in case she should ever need it.

A [supportive family](#), school, and community can mitigate many of these risk factors for LGBTQ youth. The patient shares that she plans to tell her parents about her feelings because they have always been open, honest and supportive of her. You offer to help her with this discussion as needed.

The CDC maintains a great page dedicated to lots of resources for LGBTQ Youth, Educators/School Administrators, and Parent/Family Resources in addition to the links provided above in vignette.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm#friends>

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