

During this global crisis, child welfare organizations across the country continue to provide essential services to children, youth and families. Social distancing requires new strategies for client engagement and creates new opportunities to ensure clients access services without encountering challenges related to their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. This tip sheet offers key areas to consider when working to mitigate these challenges through thoughtful action.

For more on how COVID-19 impacts LGBTQ communities: hrc.org/resources/covid-19.

COVID-19 & LGBTQ Clients: Key Considerations

1. Understand how COVID-19 impacts LGBTQ communities.

In addition to the greater risk of health complications as a result of COVID-19, LGBTQ Americans are more likely than the general population to live in poverty and lack access to adequate medical care, paid medical leave, and basic necessities during the pandemic. Read more in [HRC's issue brief](#).

2. Anticipate unique challenges to serving LGBTQ clients remotely.

Many professionals are conducting client visits over the phone or on video for the first time. These virtual visits may pose some risk for LGBTQ clients. For example, if a young trans girl is open with you about her trans status but not with her caregiver, think through how you can best protect her safety and confidentiality if a virtual visit requires interaction with the caregiver. Do you know what name and pronouns your client would have you use for her with the caregiver? Read more on [serving LGBTQ youth](#).

3. Educate and advocate for affirming and culturally-responsive services within partner organizations and referral networks.

We are in a crisis right now and every organization and professional plays a vital role in meeting essential community needs. Be mindful of partner organizations' and referral network's level of LGBTQ competency and proactively educate and advocate for LGBTQ clients to prevent bias and discrimination. [Read more](#).

4. Connect LGBTQ clients with virtual community supports.

Social distancing is isolating for everyone. LGBTQ people quarantined at home – especially children and youth and young adults returning home from colleges – may be navigating rejection from families and severe loneliness. Connect them with virtual supports for [LGBTQ youth](#) and [LGBTQ families](#).

5. Remember SOGIE when assessing safety.

Your agency's safety assessments should include considerations of the unique risk factors for youth with diverse SOGIE; especially for young people whose caretakers are not affirming of their SOGIE. Read more on [safety planning](#).



**all children
all families**

Achieving Safety, Permanency and
Well-Being by Improving Practice
with LGBTQ Youth and Families

Child Welfare COVID-19 Resources

These resources from leading child welfare organizations offer further insights into the work we can all be doing to ensure safety, permanency and well-being for all children and youth during this uncertain time.

[Coronavirus, Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice: A Running Thread](#)

From the Chronicle for Social Change | Updated Regularly

[Coronavirus: What Child Welfare Systems Need to Think About](#)

From the Chronical for Social Change | 3.11.20

[Child Welfare Safety Assessment and Planning During COVID-19 and Social Distancing](#)

From National Council on Crime & Delinquency | 3.25.20

[Successful Video Visits with Young Children](#)

From National Council on Crime & Delinquency | 3.25.20