

## ***SOGIE Documentation Expectations Policy (ADM-039)***

### ***Highlights / Excerpts:***

- ◆ *In accordance with the agency SOGIE policy (ADM-038), St. Mary's requires staff to respect the dignity and rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning or intersex (hereafter LGBTQQ+) individuals and youth.*
- ◆ *In that spirit, St. Mary's further requires that staff make every effort possible to use a client's preferred name and pronouns in both verbal and written communications when it is determined to be safe for the client to do so by the Clinician, Clinician/Case Manager Team, Residential or School Treatment Team. Support departments will defer to the clinical decision made by the individual or team above regarding preferred name and pronouns communications.*
- ◆ *Clinicians and teams must be mindful of all written documentation in the moment, and also give careful consideration/anticipate future impact issues including a legal guardians' rights (and limits of those rights), as well as valid releases of information to schools and other professionals. Brainstorm as many potential impact issues that can be anticipated. Consider the safety of the client and their stated preferences about who might be safe to know about their SOGIE identities.*
- ◆ *To honor the wishes of our clients, we refer to clients using their preferred name regardless of their legal name in our record keeping practices whenever possible. We are sometimes required to use legal name in the record and when doing related work. Examples are often program specific, and can include but are not limited to billing, required federal or state, court or educational documents.*
- ◆ *Any challenges with supporting the use of preferred name and pronouns in written documentation from ANY department or program must be brought by the staff member to the client's Clinician or Team for brainstorming and to determine an agreed upon resolution.*
- ◆ *When external controls cause challenges that can be advocated, the burden is on the Clinician or Team to advocate for the client's rights and document their efforts.*
- ◆ *When external controls (e.g. federal funder, insurance company, LEA, other provider, etc.) do not allow for use of preferred name or pronouns, the staff member presenting the challenge to the Clinician or Team, and the Clinician or Team, are all responsible to take the approach of "how can we make this work for the client" vs. "the external control said we can't" when problem solving.*



# ST. MARY'S HOME FOR CHILDREN

## AGENCY CHAT

*CHANGE HAPPENS WITH AWARENESS OF TRAUMA*

JUNE/JULY, 2019  
REFLECTING ON OUR  
PRIDE MONTH

We encourage you to take a few minutes to CHAT with your colleagues, friends (and children if appropriate) about important issues we all face in our world, and here at our trauma-informed agency.

Our CHATs are designed to introduce topics and start conversations, not to be a substitute for training or consultation with a professional. Please talk to a professional at St. Mary's if you're concerned or have questions about any topics introduced in our CHATs.

If you have ideas for a CHAT, please contact any Program Director or the Executive Director. We strive to make CHATs meaningful and relevant to the issues facing children and families, as well as reflecting trauma-informed best practices.

## We had a VERY successful PRIDE Month!



- ◆ The week started with a guest speaker and their family. We're very appreciative they were willing to share a personal journey with great sensitivity, kindness and humor!
- ◆ That was followed by an Office/Community Based family event, which had six different hands-on activities appealing to all different age groups.
- ◆ Residents showed their PRIDE by hanging flags, making bracelets and more, followed by School events including social-emotional learning and classroom lessons focused on LGBTQQ+, diversity and acceptance.
- ◆ The week ended with a booth at PROVIDENCE PRIDE, which while windy was reported as a great success!

### ADDITIONALLY:

- ◆ The LGBTQQ+ Committee facilitated work at the agency needed to become Blue Cross Blue Shield Safe Zone Certified (Awarded Certification on March 26, 2019).
- ◆ We're very proud to be in full compliance with practices and policies needed to achieve this certification, including annual training for all staff
- ◆ We finalized & implemented an agency-wide SOGIE Documentation Expectations Policy. Highlights / excerpts are on the flip side of this brochure.

On May 15, 2018, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation and the University of Connecticut released the largest-of-its-kind survey ever of more than 12,000 LGBTQ teenagers across the nation, revealing in distressing detail the persistent challenges so many of them face going about their daily lives at home, at school and in their communities.

LGBTQ teenagers are not only experiencing heartbreaking levels of stress, anxiety and rejection, but they also overwhelmingly feel unsafe in their own school classrooms. LGBTQ young people who participated in the survey also made crystal clear that supportive families and inclusive schools are key to their success and well-being.



Key findings include:

- ◆ Seventy-seven percent of LGBTQ teenagers surveyed report feeling depressed or down over the past week;
- ◆ Ninety-five percent of LGBTQ youth report trouble sleeping at night;
- ◆ LGBTQ youth of color and transgender teenagers experience unique challenges and elevated stress -- only 11 percent of youth of color surveyed believe their racial or ethnic group is regarded positively in the U.S., and over 50 percent of trans and gender expansive youth said they can never use school restrooms that align with their gender identity;
- ◆ More than 70 percent report feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness in the past week;
- ◆ Only 26 percent say they always feel safe in their school classrooms -- and just five percent say all of their teachers and school staff are supportive of LGBTQ people;
- ◆ Sixty-seven percent report that they've heard family members make negative comments about LGBTQ people.

**The research also points to some *positive trends* illuminating the resilience of LGBTQ young people -- even in the face of an often difficult reality:**

- ◆ **91 percent of youth report feeling pride in being an LGBTQ person, and 93 percent are proud to be a part of the community.**
- ◆ **Three out of five LGBTQ students have access to a LGBTQ student club -- which has been shown to have a positive impact on the perceptions LGBTQ youth have of their school experiences and can provide support to those who may face hostile environments at home or in their communities.**