

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services
(CCDCFS)
Policy Statement**

Policy Chapter: Case Requirements
Policy Number: 5.01.07
Policy Name: Safe Identification of LGBTQ2S + Youth

Original Effective Date: 07/01/2019
Revision Date(s):
Current Revision Date:
Approved By: Cynthia G. Weiskittel

PURPOSE: To ensure that youth with diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender, Identity and Gender Expression (SOGIE) have SOGIE specific services available to them when needed.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) staff.

POLICY

- A. Research tells us that youth with diverse SOGIE are at a greater risk of self-injurious behaviors, suicide, homelessness, substance abuse, human trafficking and runaway. Because of this, CCDCFS believes that we should provide youth with diverse SOGIE with child-specific and tailored services to aid in reducing these risks.
- B. CCDCFS believes that all youth involved with the agency have the right to live in an environment that is both physically and emotionally safe. This includes in their own homes or in substitute care in an affirming and supportive placement. We can help ensure this by safely identifying LGBTQ2S + youth and understanding their individual needs. We believe that SOGIE data belongs to the youth and that we have a responsibility to protect that information as much as possible.
- C. CCDCFS provides staff with skills and education on how to competently ask questions about SOGIE; the WOR appropriately documents the response to these questions and refers youth to specific services based on their needs. We value diversity in all forms and the inclusion of all voices at the table. We know that with diversity comes new ideas and perspectives that lead to more effective solutions to the challenges faced by children and families

PROCEDURES

I. Collecting SOGIE Data

- A. The SOGIE Disclosure Form is completed for all youth ages 13-21 years old with an open case to ensure that SOGIE specific services are being offered when appropriate. The SOGIE Disclosure Form is completed again, if or when a youth's SOGIE status changes, or when they change their mind as to who they want their information shared with.

SOGIE must be part of the ongoing discussion between the Worker of Record (WOR) and youth. If a child younger than 13 years old expresses or shares diverse SOGIE information (that may include gender expansive language or expression) with their WOR, the WOR must consult with their supervisor and an AFFIRM.ME. team lead to determine if services are appropriate.

1. **SOGIE Disclosure Form Process**

- a. WOR completes the SOGIE Disclosure Form after engaging the youth in the SOGIE conversation and reviews the Information Flow Chart with the youth.
- b. WOR documents in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) case activity log that the SOGIE Disclosure Form was completed **but does not enter the contents of the form without the permission of the youth (not outing the youth)**.
- c. With the youth's permission, the WOR enters the youth's sexual orientation in SACWIS located within the person profile screen.
- d. If the youth identifies as transgender, WOR will update the information in SACWIS (with the youth's permission) by adding the youth's preferred name into the AKA section of the Basic screen.
- e. The SOGIE Disclosure Form is then filed in the case record (under the confidential section of the reading file).
- f. WOR shares any diverse SOGIE (anything other than heterosexual orientation or biological gender) information and their wishes regarding with whom to share the SOGIE information with the AFFIRM.ME. team lead via a Safe Identification Referral Form and shares the information with their immediate supervisor and at the time of any Joint Transfer Conference (JTC). The WOR will not disclose the youth's diverse SOGIE information with anyone else without the youth's permission **UNLESS** the confidentiality impacts safety. If the WOR believes there is a safety concern that requires sharing a youth's SOGIE, the WOR **MUST FIRST** consult with their chain of command.

B. Referrals for SOGIE Specific Services

1. **Safe Identification Referral Process**

- a. WOR completes the Safe Identification Referral Form for all youth with diverse SOGIE and submits it to the AFFIRM.ME. team lead along with a completed copy of the SOGIE Disclosure.

- b. The AFFIRM.ME. team lead reviews the Safe Identification Referral and consults with the WOR (as needed) to determine what the appropriate pathway of services would be for the youth in question.
 - i. Resources can be given to the WOR to provide to the youth and/or family.
 - ii. The Safe Identification Referral Form may be submitted to a service provider for LGBTQ2S + services

SEE ALSO:

Relevant Code(s): Ohio Executive Order 2019-05D
Related Policies

FORMS:

SOGIE Disclosure Form
Safe Identification Referral Form
Flow Charts
Glossary of Terms
Gender Conversation Guide
Practice Guide