

## How can I support lgbt youth in my congregation?

In a survey of 5800 youth, nearly every congregation had at least one teen who self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning—86% of them said their clergy-person was not aware of this, and 46% said their parents were not aware.<sup>1</sup>

A young person can experience coming out as a normal and happy part of adolescent development or as a time of fear, anxiety, and even self-hate.

### *Here's what you can do:*

- ✓ Reflect on the kind of experience an lgbtq youth would have in your congregation.
- ✓ Never assume you know the sexual orientation or gender identity of any person.
- ✓ Always allow people to come out in their own time and in their own way.
- ✓ Learn more about issues affecting the lgbt community and religious lgbt youth.
- ✓ Find ways to show that you are an informed, safe person whom youth can trust.
- ✓ Use the resources listed on the back, and share them with others in your congregation.

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## ***Suggested Resources:***

*Accompaniment: A Resource For Youth Leaders* <sup>1</sup>

*Building an Inclusive Church: A Welcoming Toolkit*<sup>2</sup>

*Coming Out Strong: Information and Resources  
for LGBTQA Brethren and Mennonite Youth* <sup>1</sup>

*Doing Process Well: Recommendations for  
Brethren Congregations* <sup>1</sup>

*Doing Process Well: Recommendations for  
Mennonite Congregations* <sup>1</sup>

*Safe Zone: A Workshop Guide For Leaders and  
Participants* <sup>1</sup>

*Taking a New Look: Why Congregations Need  
LGBT Members* <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Available from [www.bmclgbt.org](http://www.bmclgbt.org) or the BMC office

<sup>2</sup> Available from [www.welcomingresources.org/welcomingtoolkit](http://www.welcomingresources.org/welcomingtoolkit)

<sup>3</sup> Available from [www.churchstuff.com/glbthospitality](http://www.churchstuff.com/glbthospitality)

Feel free to contact BMC with questions or comments. BMC is also available for consultations, assessments and trainings with congregations, denominations and other groups.

Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests  
Box 6300, Minneapolis, MN 55406  
(612) 343-2060  
[bmc@bmclgbt.org](mailto:bmc@bmclgbt.org)  
[www.bmclgbt.org](http://www.bmclgbt.org)

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