Small Changes - Big Impact
A Short Guide for Public Librarians Working with LGBTQ+ Teens

While making big changes to “the system” can be tough, this guide will help you navigate some of the day-to-day concerns that LGBTQ+ teens are facing. It may seem simple, but these few small actions can mean a whole lot.

➊ Flags
Pride flags are an easy way to signal to your LGBTQ+ patrons that this is a safe space. It’s important to consider this year-round, and not just during Pride Month! Especially consider adding more than just the rainbow flag - there are plenty of other LGBTQ+ flags that aren’t as widely known or visible.

➋ Gender Neutral Facilities
Make sure there is a gender-neutral bathroom within your library - and make sure it is clearly labelled and accessible. Signage is important - if you’re struggling with deciding what to put on the door, just go with the obvious...

➌ Pronouns & Name Tags
Pronouns are an essential component of communication - make yours clear! Trans patrons shouldn’t be the people tasked with approaching the topic - ask teens directly which pronouns they use (and use them!).

➍ Language Use
Take care to use gender-neutral terms wherever possible, such as:
- Everyone / folks / friends
- Parent / guardian
- Server / firefighter / chairperson

➎ Legal Names
Make sure that LGBTQ+ teens can access your library under their current name - even if their legal name and identification doesn’t match up. This can be hard sometimes but is essential for teens to feel welcomed as their authentic selves.

References