

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.

① **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.



② **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...

③ **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!).



④ **Language Use**

Take care to use gender-neutral terms wherever possible, such as:

- Everyone / folks / friends
- Parent / guardian
- Server / firefighter / chairperson

⑤ **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

Sonka, J. (2016, December 30). *The new library name badges belonging to Pfister and Sims* [photo]. Insider Louisville. <https://bit.ly/2UbQoHe>