

# The Coffee Oasis Policy to Ensure Safe and Unconditional Care of LGBTQ+ Youth

## 1. Protecting the Rights of All Youth

**Identification.** All staff and volunteers will acknowledge, respect, and uphold the right of ALL youth to openly identify as LGBTQ+ or any other identity.

**Anti-Discrimination.** All staff and volunteers will acknowledge, respect, and uphold the right of ALL youth to live free from discrimination. TCO guarantees the right of LGBTQ+ youth to the same equitable services, care, placement, treatment, and benefits as non-LGBTQ+ youth.

## 2. Training Staff and Volunteers

**LGBTQ+ Liaison.** TCO will have a staff who is highly trained on LGBTQ+ issues. This person will serve as the LGBTQ+ liaison and serve as a resource for TCO organization.

**Mandatory Training.** All staff and volunteers will undergo mandatory initial and ongoing training on serving LGBTQ+ youth.

## 3. Creating A Safe and Unconditionally Caring Space for All Youth

**Proactive Care.** At the initial meeting with a youth and periodically thereafter, staff and volunteers will indicate, in language that is appropriate for the youth, that TCO is a safe place for ALL youth, including LGBTQ+ youth, and that:

- a. Youth will be unconditionally cared for and served regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other identity; and
- b. Any acts of bullying, intimidation, or harassment against them by peers or adults will not be tolerated.

**Visual Reminder.** "ALL Are Welcome" signs will be displayed prominently in reception areas, offices, and other areas frequented by youth as a reminder that ALL youth are welcomed and unconditionally cared for at TCO.

## 4. Talking About Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity with All Youth

**Talking about sexual orientation and gender identity.** Staff and volunteers will never single out youth who they perceive as LGBTQ+; they should approach all youth in a similar manner.

**Responding to disclosures.** If a youth discloses their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, staff and volunteers will talk about it with them in a safe and unconditionally caring manner.

### **Confidentiality.**

- a. With regard to communication within TCO, we will only share information about the sexual orientation or gender identity of a youth if disclosure is necessary to serve the youth or ensure safety, and never to the youth's detriment.
- b. With regard to communication outside TCO, we will not share information about the sexual orientation or gender identity of a youth without first obtaining the youth's consent. This applies to information shared with the youth's parent(s) or guardian(s)

## 5. Ensuring Safe and Unconditionally Caring Services for LGBTQ+ Youth

**Screening of service providers.** Prior to referring a youth to another service provider, we will confirm that the provider will uphold the same rights of LGBTQ+ youth as detailed here.

**Identification of LGBTQ+ specific providers.** We will maintain an updated list of LGBTQ+ specific providers to which we can refer youth who have identified themselves as LGBTQ. and desire specific services for LGBTQ+ youth.

## 6. Ensuring Safe and Unconditionally Caring Housing for LGBTQ+ Youth

**Safe searches.** When a search of a youth is necessary and legally permitted, staff and volunteers will allow transgender or intersex youth to choose the gender of the person who will search them.

**Isolation as a last resort.** We will not use isolation or segregation as a default means to protect LGBTQ+ youth from violence or harassment. In consultation with youth impacted, we will work to identify alternative means of protection. Isolation will be a last resort and minimized.

**Safe facilities.** We will ensure youth are able to use gender segregated facilities, such as restrooms, consistent with their gender identity. Transgender, intersex, and youth with privacy concerns will be permitted to shower separately from other youth.

## 7. Ensuring Safe and Unconditionally Caring Healthcare for LGBTQ+ Youth

**NO Conversion therapy.** We will not and have never participated in or contracted with any provider that does conversion therapy.

**LGBTQ+ healthcare.** We will refer LGBTQ+ youth to LGBTQ+ sensitive health care providers.

## 8. Responding to Families of LGBTQ+ Youth

### **Responding to Anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes and beliefs.**

We are committed the safety and unconditional care of LGBTQ+ youth.

a. If a youth has openly identified as LGBTQ+ to their parent(s)/guardian(s), then we will:

\*Make a determination as to whether any negative attitudes and beliefs—even those deeply rooted in religious beliefs and cultural values—impact the youth’s immediate health, safety, and well-being and/or put the youth at risk for future harm.

b. If a youth has not identified as LGBTQ+ to their parent(s)/guardian(s) but a parent or guardian espouses anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes or beliefs, then we will:

\*Refrain from divulging any known information about the youth’s sexual orientation or gender identity to the parent(s)/caregiver(s);

\*Make a determination as to whether any negative attitudes and beliefs—even those deeply rooted in religious beliefs and cultural values—impact the youth’s immediate health, safety, and well-being and/or put the youth at risk for future harm.

**Information for families.** When it does not threaten the privacy of youth, we will provide families of LGBTQ+ youth with information and support on how they can provide safe and unconditional care for their LGBTQ+ youth.

## 9. Establishing Expectations for Staff and Volunteers

**Standards of conduct.** Staff and volunteers will take accountability for their words and actions. If a staff or volunteer becomes aware that their words or actions have—even unintentionally—insulted, disparaged, or otherwise harmed any youth; that staff or volunteer will acknowledge and apologize.

**Individual evaluations.** Evaluation of adherence to this policy will be included in evaluations of staff and volunteers. Such evaluation should include a self-evaluation component.

**Confidential complaints.** There will be a mechanism by which youth can make confidential complaints of issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.