

# Module 7:

## Supporting Young People's Healthy Relationships

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### Objectives

1. To support emerging adults as they develop and maintain healthy personal relationships in different life domains.
2. To work with young people engaged in romantic relationships.
3. To address issues of stigmatization and its effects on relationships, including ensuring personal safety.
4. To meet the specific needs of young people who identify as Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex or two-spirit.

### Scenario for Team Discussion 1



#### Safety Planning ~ Kayla and Sue

Following an argument, Kayla, a 17-year old young African American woman was kicked out of her aunt's home where she had been staying. Having no place to go, she called her social worker, Sue, at 8 p.m. and asked if she could pick Kayla and her boyfriend up, help get them something to eat, and drive them to another family member's home. As Sue had just started her job two months ago, she called her supervisor for advice. Sue was given approval to pick them up and take them to eat as long as she felt comfortable and safe, and Sue said she would check in with the supervisor later in the evening. Everything went well. A few days later, Kayla confided to Sue that her boyfriend had been increasingly abusive towards her, and had pulled a gun on her in anger, threatening her if she tried to leave him. Upon learning about this situation, Sue was overwhelmed with fear about what might have happened that night when they were together. Sue also felt guilty and ashamed that she felt more concerned about her own safety than Kayla's safety.

## Questions for Team Discussion 1

After reading and thinking about the scenario above, engage in a staff discussion of the following questions:

1. What safety protocols does your team have to avoid the type of situation Sue encountered?
  2. How do staff decide what is physically safe? Emotionally safe?
  3. How would you support Sue after discovering the risky situation she had been in?
  4. How has your team supported staff who have experienced challenges in their work related to safety?
  5. What would you do in this situation to assure that Kayla is safe?
  6. What resources would you consider for both staff and young adults?
  7. How do you process your own anxiety or guilt about situations with young people that did not go well? How do you support your team colleagues to do this?
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## Debriefing

After discussing the scenario, it may be useful to reflect on what staff members learned from each other, using the following questions to guide the conversation:

1. What approaches seems to be most effective in assuring the safety of the young people you work with and members of your team?
2. Where are the areas of agreement and disagreement?
3. How has this discussion helped you to be able to better support colleagues who are engaged in work where there are risks?
4. What else could you all do to support each other?

## Scenario for Team Discussion 2



### Supporting a Youth Seeking Support Regarding Gender Identity ~ Cory

As an infant girl, Cory and a sister had been adopted from Russia by a U.S. citizen but had a difficult relationship with the adoptive parent. At the age of 16, Cory was experiencing depression and was referred to a peer support project focused on enhancing self-determination. Cory engaged positively with a peer support provider, set many goals, narrowed down the goals to achievable ones, and made a list of steps to achieve these goals. As their relationship developed, Cory began to open up to the peer supporter about feelings around gender and issues of gender identity and desire to identify as a male. Cory's fears were related to how peers would react, what the parent would think, and if the sister would be angry. Cory spoke about how everyone always wanted Cory to wear a dress, do more "girly" things, and stop talking about being "confused."

## Questions for Team Discussion 2

After reading and thinking about the scenario above, engage in a staff discussion of the following questions:

1. How would you respond to Cory's disclosure?
2. How might you talk with Cory about the issues Cory discussed?
3. Cory has asked you to use gender-neutral pronouns when talking to and about Cory. What is your response to this request?
4. What assumptions or biases do you notice in your responses?
5. What do you think would be helpful to Cory at this time?
6. What resources or supports might you explore?
7. Who might you consult with?

## Debriefing

After discussing the scenario, it may be useful to reflect on what staff members learned from each other, using the following questions to guide the conversation:

1. What approaches or strategies seem to be most useful to your team?
  2. Where are the areas of agreement and disagreement?
  3. In what ways have team members' responses contributed to changes in your own perceptions of Cory and ideas about how to support Cory?
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## Module 7 Discussion Questions

Here we offer questions to guide discussion of how module 7 content could be applied in your team's work in the local area and with the young people you serve:

1. What have you done to assist a young person to develop skills in forming healthy relationships in a particular setting (school, job, family, peers)?
2. Describe how you have worked to increase safety for a young person engaged in a romantic relationship with someone you considered unsafe?
3. In what situations have you seen stigmatization of youth with mental health needs and their families? What did you find was the most effective way to address stigmatization?
4. What have you done to prepare yourself to work effectively with Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex or two-spirit young people?
5. What has been the most effective way you have found to support a young person who identifies as Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, or queer?
6. What have you learned about what is ineffective?
7. What resources have been helpful to support you in your work with Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, or queer young people?