

# The YWCA Out & Affirmation Center

A program of the YWCA of Berrien County  
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*Serving the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,  
Transgender, and Allied Community in Berrien County*



OUT &  
AFFIRMATION  
CENTER

## **Foundational Principles Concerning Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons**

1. Being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender is perfectly normal, and such identities are simply part of the natural variation found in human sexual and gender orientation.
2. Sexual and gender orientation are inherent aspects of an individual, inseparable from one's sense of self and essential being.
3. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people are fully capable human beings. Any special challenges they face originate with a society that does not accept them for who they are, marginalizes and punishes them when it does recognize their existence, and resists affirming their lives in the same ways it does for those with the orientations of the majority.
4. While sexual and gender orientation are but single aspects of the life of an individual, they are fundamental qualities and have powerful effects throughout the entirety of a person's experience. Therefore the significance of sexual and gender orientations must be respected even as we strive to know and understand each individual person as a whole.
5. People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender represent the same diversity as the population of the world at large; the common element they share is a struggle against prejudice and discrimination based upon their orientation.
6. Some individuals question their sexual and gender orientation; others need to explore different possibilities in order to understand themselves fully. Affirming such persons means supporting their search for honest and true self-knowledge.
7. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals are the best authorities on the meaning and experience of their own lives and orientations. Affirming them means accepting and respecting the truth of what they say.
8. Knowledge, education, and honest dialogue are appropriate and effective responses to ignorance—even militant ignorance—concerning the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons.