



# YOUTH


## LGBTQ+ASYLUM

**A guide for Newcomers Youth meeting places**





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# RFSL Ungdom

RFSL Ungdom's vision is a world full of love and respect where all LGBTQ youth live and express themselves as they wish.

RFSL Ungdom is the youth association for the gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people's rights.

RFSL Ungdom works for the rights of young LGBTQ persons and its target group are the persons between 0-30 years old. We have a wide range of activities ranging from social activities to political influence at local, national, and international level. RFSL Ungdom is one of Europe's largest and the most influential LGBTQ youth organizations with 1800 members located in seven districts in Sweden.

If you have any questions about the organization's structure and function, contact [info@rfslungdom.se](mailto:info@rfslungdom.se).

Become a member at [www.rfslungdom.se](http://www.rfslungdom.se). It is free to join RFSL Youth.

# Introduction

This guide has been created to inspire and make it easier to start the meeting places for Newcomers Youth around the country. Many asylum seekers and newly arrived young people live in a vulnerable situation and can carry with them trauma from the trip to Sweden. These conditions make it important to design the meeting places in a way that creates safety. This guide will not provide any answers to political or legal problems that young people may have or face. However, it shows step by step how you can create a safe meeting place where young people can have a recovery and a refuge from the outside world.

The material is based on our several years of experience working with young LGBTQ people within Newcomers Youth and RFSL Newcomers. The guide is also based on our testing of different methods for Newcomers Youth meeting places.

Glossary can be found on Newcomers Youth website with important concepts for relevant activities: [www.newcomersyouth.se](http://www.newcomersyouth.se)

# Background

Many LGBTQ youth in the world are forced to flee because of persecution they experience in the settings they are based, including persecution from the authorities or their families. With a political situation in Sweden where right-wing extremism is growing stronger and a widespread racism affects the entire Swedish society, it has obvious consequences for those who come here. It has become increasingly difficult to get asylum granted and many asylum claims by the LGBTQ refugees are rejected. Consequently, they are forced to avoid deportation by living as the undocumented persons in Sweden.

LGBTQ youth who flee to Sweden to escape oppression and persecution are often missing information related not just to the asylum process in Sweden, but related to their opportunities to access food, medicine, transportation, clothes, and accommodation. In addition to the difficulties of being a LGBTQ refugee in Sweden, there is also a vulnerability of being a LGBTQ youth. They face major, usually unreasonable, demands during the migration process. They are required to be able to explain about their personal feelings and emotions, as well as to be able to link their individual life events to a larger political or cultural context in their home countries.

Many LGBTQ youth do not tell about their sexual orientation or gender identity at the beginning of the asylum process and sometimes this leads to rejection. Usually there is a fear of telling, but sometimes it can also be a lack of information on why it is important to tell a case officer at the Migration Agency about their sexual orientation or gender identity during the asylum process. Another difficulty is that young LGBTQ persons are not seen as young people in Sweden. This creates problems not just in the asylum process, but also in their establishment and working life.

As an effort to meet this great need for support and guidance that many newly arrived and asylum-seeking LGBTQ people experience, “RFSL Newcomers” was started in 2010. Participants at RFSL Newcomers come from all parts of the world and all of them have escaped persecution in their countries of origin due to their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. RFSL Newcomers is now located in several cities around Sweden within the local departments of RFSL.

The number of members at RFSL Newcomers has increased greatly in recent years, thus the needs of different types of activities have intensified. In order to meet the needs of young people and create safe and meaningful meeting places, Newcomers Youth was started in 2016.

**2015**

Newcomers Youth is born as an idea and both projects application and preparations have started.

**Juni 2016**

Newcomers Youth has started.

**Oktober 2016**

The first Newcomers Youth meeting place in Stockholm opened with the first participants who still attend two or three years after.

**Januari 2017**

Newcomers Youths legal counseling has started.

**Augusti 2017**

Newcomers Youth celebrates their first year at Stockholm Pride with a grand event at Mälarpaviljongen.

**Juli 2017**

Newcomers Youth publishes a report "Engagemang för rättsäkerhet". This report deals with the issue of public assistance to the young LGBTQ persons during the asylum process.

**Augusti 2017**

The first Newcomers Youth's summer camp is conducted, and eternal memories are created.

**November 2017**

Newcomers Youth launches its new design brand named NCY Creates (NCYC)

**Januari 2018**

Newcomers Youth in Linköping prepares its first meeting place.

**Januari 2019**

Göteborg and Örebro started their first meetings place.

## Get to know Newcomers Youth

Newcomers Youth is a project that was started in 2016 and it is ongoing. The goal of Newcomers Youth is to create opportunities for change both in society and for individual participants at Newcomers Youth. Our main focus is to increase the mental and physical well-being of LGBTQ youth who have had refugee and migration experiences. In order to increase mental and physical well-being of our members, we create safe and continuous meeting places, as well as provide legal advice for them.

Newcomers Youth has its headquarters at the RFSL Ungdom's office in Stockholm. Among other employees and volunteers, the office has:

### *Executive Director*

They have an overall responsibility for Newcomers Youth's activities, in addition to their activities' development role and support within the national projects.

### *National Coordinator*

Their role is to coordinate the national work and the meeting places around the country.

### *Lawyer*

They provide the legal advice, both on the phone and during visits. The lawyer also creates and coordinates a legal network with lawyers throughout Sweden.

Here you will find contact information and information:

[www.newcomersyouth.se](http://www.newcomersyouth.se)

Email: [newcomers@rfslungdom.se](mailto:newcomers@rfslungdom.se)



## Meeting Place “Newcomers Youth”

The meeting place is for LGBTQ persons aged between 15 and 25 who are:

- Newly arrived in Sweden and granted asylum
- Currently seeking asylum in Sweden
- Have been denied asylum in Sweden

The legal status of participants who visit the meeting place can change over time. They can go from being an asylum seeker to having a residence permit.

The meeting place should be a LGBTQ-separatist activity. This means that both group leaders and participants identify themselves as LGBTQ. To the extent where that is possible, the leaders themselves must have a refugee background, a migration background, or be classified as non-white persons in Sweden.

**The meeting place should be a place where the target group:**

- Feels welcome and safe. The meeting place should be a drug-free, alcohol-free, and discrimination-free place.
- Creates and participates in the activities that strengthen their mental and physical well-being.
- Can meet and share knowledge and experience of living as the young Newcomers in Sweden.
- Gets the opportunity to express their feelings and needs through art such as: music, dance, writing, painting, or acting, are used to function as the creative tools to increase the participants’ self-esteem and self-confidence at our meeting place. Consequently, their queer identity and specific background are nothing less than the unique qualities which goes hand in hand with creative expression used in these activities.
- Can get information and increase knowledge of their rights regarding asylum.
- Obtains clear information about what support the meeting place can offer.
- In other words, the meeting place should be a social, creative, and collective place which strengthens the members, breaks the loneliness and possible isolation of the individuals. At the same time, it strengthens the solidarity with others in the group who share similar experiences!

## Important to consider!

*The meeting place should not provide legal advice for individual participants while the meeting activities are ongoing. If there is a need for this, contact the lawyer at your office or the lawyers within your legal network.*

## **Start the meeting place**

### **What resources are available and what support can we get?**

The Newcomers Youth's office can provide support and assistance on various issues to both local leaders and participants.

#### **The local leaders can get:**

- Support, consultation, and education.
- Development of skills and competence for local coordinators and leaders.
- Help in accessing flyers, posters, graphic profiles, templates, and other marketing tools.
- Support to find a long-term funding for the meeting place.
- If possible, get financial support for setting up a Newcomers Youth meeting place.

#### **The participants can get:**

- Legal advice via telephone or a visit.
- Contact with lawyers who have the expertise in working with LGBTQ-related issues through Newcomers Youth's legal network.

In addition to support from the office, there is a lot of information on the Newcomers Youth's website. There you will find information about young LGBTQ people who are seeking asylum, want to seek asylum, have obtained a residence permit, or have applied for asylum, but have been refused. The website also contains legal advice which gives the opportunity to all young LGBTQ persons in the asylum process to obtain legal advice regardless of where they live in Sweden.

Contact [newcomers@rfslungdom.se](mailto:newcomers@rfslungdom.se) for more information about the network.

## **Start the meeting place in your area**

Starting a meeting place for Newcomers Youth in your area can be done in different ways. It depends on whether there are already the activities for Newcomers within your local branch of RFSL, or if it is a responsibility of the district board of RFSL Ungdom to start it.

### **RFSL local branches with RFSL Newcomer's activities**

If you already have RFSL Newcomers' activities that are aimed at both young and adults, you can start a meeting place for Newcomers Youth. This means a collaboration between RFSL Ungdom's office and RFSL's local branch.

The coordinators and group leaders who have no experience working with the target group and who need to increase their competence about asylum and LGBTQ, will be trained by the Newcomers Youth's office.

### **RFSL Ungdom's district board**

A district can start the meeting place for Newcomers Youth by setting up a Newcomers Youth group locally. The district board is then responsible for leading the meeting place in collaboration with RFSL Ungdom's project Newcomers Youth.

If there is already the meeting place for Newcomers within a local branch in your area, you can initiate a collaboration to start a meeting place for Newcomers Youth.

The coordinators and group leaders who have no experience working with the target group and who need to expand their competence around asylum and LGBTQ, will be trained by the Newcomers Youth's office.

## **Roles and responsibilities at the meeting place**

It is the local coordinator and group leaders who run the meeting place together. What is included in the various roles can be designed and adjusted in consultation with the Newcomers Youth's office. Read below the examples related to division of responsibilities.

### **The coordinator's role**

Your local coordinator has overall responsibility for the meeting place. This means that it is the coordinator who is responsible for setting the goals for the activities and following them up. The coordinator can delegate tasks and responsibilities to the group leaders in order to accomplish both goals and planning.

#### **The coordinator should:**

- Have a contact with young LGBTQ people who have asylum and migration experience in Sweden in order to inform them about the meeting place.
- Reach out and share the information about the meeting place to the target group.
- Contact and recruit the leaders for the meeting place.
- Plan activities and make a schedule for the meeting place together with the group leaders.
- Contact and collaborate with the Newcomers Youth's national office.
- Ensure and be responsible that all leaders have the necessary skills and knowledge about asylum and LGBTQ.
- Sign the agreements with leaders and collaborators.
- Ensure that the financial procedures are followed and that the economy is reported.
- Ensure that RFSL Ungdom's policies and rules are followed.
- Be both a stable and secure person.
- Be able to be involved at the meeting place for an extended period of time.

There may be more than one coordinator at the meeting place. If this is the case, the responsibilities between the coordinators can be divided. The following example shows what that division can look like..

#### **Coordinator 1 is responsible for each month to:**

- Have financial responsibility and keep an eye on the budget.
- Communicate with participants and members prior to the meeting place. Among other things, it includes sending out text messages or emails about the meeting place.
- Purchase snacks, refreshments, and materials needed for the meeting place.

#### **Coordinator 2 is responsible for each month to:**

- Schedule and adjust the schedule based on the potential changes. It can also include contacting some guest workshop leaders.
- Keep in touch with those responsible for the venue / location at which you have the meeting place. It also means making sure the venue / location is ready to be used before the meeting place starts.
- Introduce new participants to the meeting place.

### **Mutual areas of responsibility:**

- Plan long term for each semester / year. This means planning activities, discussion topics, themes, workshops, etc.
- Plan ahead to get the long-term funding for the meeting place by writing project applications (here you can also divide the main responsibilities).

### **The leader's role**

The leaders' role is to arrange and hold the meeting place together with the coordinator. The leaders can also hold workshops or help with practical preparation for the specific events. The leaders can also help promote and share the information about the meeting place. For a meeting place, it is recommended to have at least two leaders.

### **The leaders should:**

- Be involved in scheduling and planning the meeting place.
- Practically prepare the meeting place before every meet-up.
- Inform the participants at the meeting place about where they can turn for support.
- Participate in the evaluations.
- Be stable and secure as the persons.
- Be able to be involved in the meeting place for an extended period of time.

### **The leader's responsibility before and during the meeting place is to:**

- Buy both snacks and refreshments for the meeting place in case the coordinator is not able to.
- Be at the venue an hour before the meeting starts in order to prepare everything before the participants arrive. During this hour, the leaders fix the venue, prepare the snacks and refreshments, and check that everything is in order. The coordinator and leaders are recommended to set aside time for both preparatory and evaluation meetings before and after the meeting place time. It should be between 15 and 30 minutes.
- Call the participants to gather once the most of them have arrived. During the meeting, the leaders go through the purpose of the meeting place and its rules. Everyone is also allowed to present themselves. The other issues that affect the meeting place can also be addressed or discussed. See the script for the gathering on page 20.
- Remove the snacks and refreshments' leftovers and clean the venue after the meeting place has ended.

The main difference between the leaders and the coordinator is that the group leaders are not responsible for the organization's vision, goals, everyday planning, or finances. The difference between the leaders and the coordinator does not mean that the leaders are unpaid, and the coordinator is paid. The coordinator can also work voluntarily, and the leaders can be paid. How you choose to do it at your meeting place is up to you.

## Step by step -> Preparation

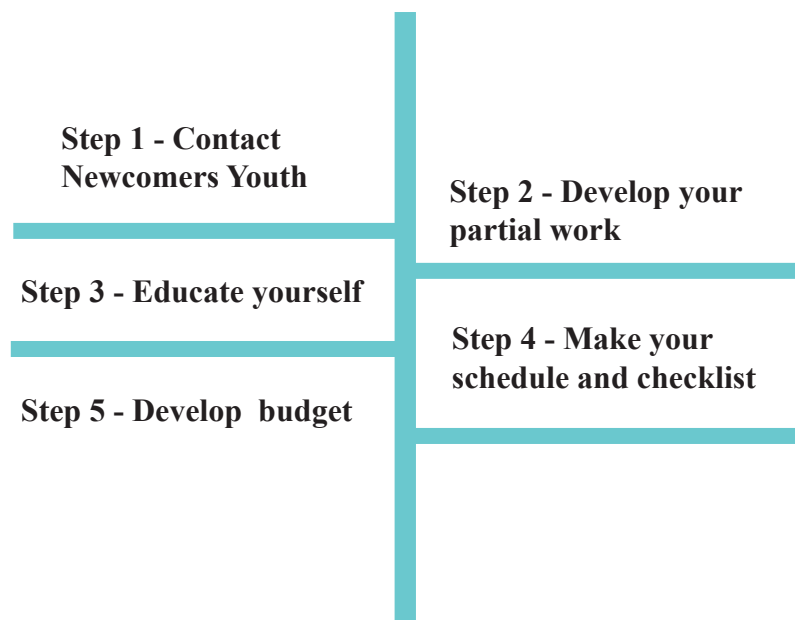
In this section you will get step by step tips on how to start the meeting place in your particular place. If you do not have any information on how to start, contact our office directly so you will have the support and help you need! Email [newcomers@rfslungdom.se](mailto:newcomers@rfslungdom.se) to get in touch!

### Step 1- Contact the executive / National Coordinator

Contact the executive or the national coordinator at Newcomers Youth. They will provide you with the information needed and help you set up the meeting place in your city.

For you to get started faster, it is good if you have considered the following questions first:

- Which needs do you have in order to get started? What is already there and what is missing? For example, is there knowledge, time, resources, and people who can work with the activities?
- Is there expertise in asylum, migration, and anti-racist organization? If not, consider whether you could acquire this knowledge through education.
- What actual resources are already available to run the meeting place? List what you already have today. It can be a venue / location, materials such as the games, crafts and more.
- What date / month do you want to start the meeting place?



## **Step 2 - Develop your partial goals**

### **Develop your partial goals for the meeting place in order to reach the main goal:**

Newcomers Youth's main goal is to increase the mental and physical well-being of LGBTQ youth who have refugee and migration experiences.

The partial or sub-goals will guide you in your work and help you answer if and how the main goal has been achieved.

### **List your partial goals. Here are some examples from the NCY national sub-goals:**

In order to increase mental and physical well-being, we want to:

- Create a safe and continuous meeting place where participants can find their community.
- Hold creative workshops as a method of strengthening members' identity.
- Have discussions about health, LGBTQ questions and identity to increase the knowledge of the young Newcomers.
- Provide information and knowledge about asylum rights, LGBTQ issues, safer sex and SRHR (sexual and reproductive health and rights).
- Offer legal advice with a lawyer to increase legal certainty for LGBTQ youth during their asylum process.

## **Step 3 - Educate yourself**

To start the meeting place for Newcomers Youth requires expertise in asylum and migration, as well as how they are interlinked to LGBTQ identities. Knowledge is also required on how power structures, such as racism and cisgender / heterosexual sexism, function at both theoretical and practical level. If you do not have this knowledge, you will receive training from the Newcomers Youth's office. Contact [newcomers@rfslungdom.se](mailto:newcomers@rfslungdom.se) to book your training/education.

## **Step 4 - Make your shedule and checklist**

Plan both schedule and checklist for the meeting place during your preparatory meeting which should be realized before the start of the semester. See "Planning the meeting place" on page 15.

**SCHEDULE** – it should describe time, place and what the leaders are responsible for in order to start the meeting place.

**CHECKLIST** – it should describe what is needed in order to start up the meeting place. For example, the checklist can show you what equipment or which routines in general you need at the meeting place.

You will get access from us to the digital templates for both schedules and checklists needed to start up a meeting place.

## **Step 5 - Develop budget**

Make a budget for the first financial year. Start from the template and then send it to [newcomers@rfslungdom.se](mailto:newcomers@rfslungdom.se) for feedback if you need it. The budget should reflect the activities you wish to implement. For example, if you buy coffee for each meeting place once a month, you must figure out how much this cost for a year.

### **Budget template for expenditure:**

**Venue / Location:** It is very possible to get things done for free or low costs if you cooperate with the local student associations or other organizations. For example, Newcomers Youth in Stockholm collaborates with a local youth office. The youth office shuts down its regular operations once a week so that Newcomers Youth can be there for 3-4 hours themselves. The venue should be accessible, and you should check the accessibility policy to get an overview of what an accessible venue means. You will have access to policy documents digitally when you start up the Newcomers Youth meeting place.

**Snacks/Refreshments:** Calculate to spend about 25 kr per participant for the snacks and refreshments per meeting. Then take the number of participants that will have their snack and refreshment at each meeting x the number of meetings in one year. For example: You have 10 participants who have the snack and refreshment every meeting. You have planned to have 10 meetings in one year. A meeting costs 25 kr x 10 participants = 250 kr. The total cost for the whole year will be: 250 kr/meeting x 10 meetings = 2500 kr.

**Cost of the materials:** For example, those materials used for crafts, workshops, and outdoor activities.

**Travel expenses:** If you want to pay for the participants' possible travel expenses, you count the number of meetings x the number of persons that you think should come from other places. For example, you will pay the travel costs for 3 participants and the costs for one person per meeting is 250 kr. You will have 10 meetings in one year. Consequently, the costs will be 250 kr x 10 = 2500 kr per person.

**Payment fees:** If you pay the leaders and / or the coordinator to run the meeting place, you calculate the monthly cost by taking the hourly fee x social security fees x the number of hours / months. For example, the group leader receives 200 kr per hour and works 12 hours / month (3 hours / week). The monthly cost will then be 200 kr x 1.3142 social security fees x 12 hours = 3154.08 kr / month.

**External services:** An introductory guidance may be needed for both local coordinators and leaders who meet Newcomers Youth members and participants. There might be an expense in the payments to the external consultant, therapist, or psychologist. This can be expensive and cost about 1500-3500 kr a month if you meet them once per month. The external services may also be the assignment of a designer or photographer to perform a specific task.

**Salary:** Salary is paid if someone is employed locally to coordinate the meeting place. In this scenario, the personal costs are added, and these should be covered by the workplace that employs the staff. For example, an employee receives 25,000 kr a month (before tax) and works 100%. The monthly cost will then be 25000 kr x 1.3142 kr social security fees x 1.25 staff costs = 41068.75 kr. Personnel costs are, for example, holidays and pensions. Personalkostnader är till exempel semester och pension.



## **Budget template for the incomes:**

Review what incomes you already have or that you can apply for. You can get a grant for the activist group from the RFSL Ungdom's activities' funds. Contact [newcomers@rfslungdom.se](mailto:newcomers@rfslungdom.se) to apply.

Study circle: You can start a study circle at the study associations such as ABF or Studieförbundet. To start the study circle means that you may receive free or cheaper costs for the location / venue.

Project funding: There are often local project grants and business development grants that you can apply for from your municipality, county, or region. To find out for which grants you can apply, google the municipality's name, for example Malmö city + project + grant.

Funds: Sometimes you can find the foundations that contribute to the projects and activities which meet certain requirements. Google your alternatives!

Donations and gifts: Those who consider our activities important can sometimes give donations or gifts. You can also start fundraising campaigns, for example on Facebook, so that people can donate to the meeting place or any special activity.

Collaborate: Many costs can be covered by cooperating with similar organizations such as the municipal or independent youth centers. In several places, Newcomers Youth has been allowed to have their venue for free.

## **The examples of funding grants and support:**

- Tidiga insatser för Asylsökande (TIA) is realized through the county administrative board in your region.
- The local grants from the local municipality. For example, many municipalities have cultural grants that Newcomers Youth can apply for, for example to do the workshops. In many cases, municipalities also have the grants and support that the organizations can seek for the target group of asylum seekers and newly arrived in Sweden.
- MUCF - Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällets frågor gives various grant opportunities. See [www.mucf.se](http://www.mucf.se).

There are many ways to fund the Newcomers Youth's meeting place. Contact Newcomers Youth's office to talk about the opportunities where RFSL Ungdom can also contribute.

## **Tips!**

*A precise budget is also required  
to apply for projects / grants from other foundations and project financiers.*

## Planning the meeting place

### Planning

Arrange a planning meeting before each semester and plan what you want to do in next six months. At the planning meeting, everyone who wants to join the group planning can participate. You decide how many meet ups you should have, when, what you will do during those meetings, and who will be responsible for what. Before the planning meeting you ask the Newcomers at the meeting place what they want to do, what are their wishes and needs.

#### Tips for planning the meeting place:

- Before planning and scheduling, dedicate the meeting place to ask what the participants want to do at the meeting place during the semester.
- Choose a specific day of the week. For example, Linköping has its meeting place every Monday to create clarity and continuous routines for participants.
- Place the meeting place so that it does not collide with the school, listen when the participants end for the day.
- In most cases, it is difficult to require from the participants to register for each meeting place. Instead, send out the information for each meeting place a few days before with the question "are you coming to the meeting place on Monday?". This can give you an approximate idea of who is coming.
- Always include the members who participate at the meeting place in planning.
- You can have themes for each month or for a period. For example, the month of love in February where the discussions and workshops are about exploring the theme of love. Ask the participants what themes they want to explore. Other tips on themes could be identity, comedy, work, school, friends, the asylum process, stress, laughter, sex, film, theater, family.

## **The meeting place**

### **What can you do during the meeting place:**

- Have a gathering: A round where the leaders tell about the meeting place and everyone introduces themselves during it. The script for the gathering is on page 20.
- Hang out and socialize: To hang out, listen to music, or talk about everything from heaven to earth in a safe place where you feel recognition is one of the strongest concepts at Newcomers Youth just because the purpose involves socializing without having to produce something specific.
- Playing games: For example, card games are very popular.
- Fika (snacks and refreshments): Everyone loves “fika”! Even though it is a “Swedish” word, fika is a universal practice.
- Creative workshops: Creating and shaping creative materials or writing and expressing oneself through art is not only healing but also a strengthening process that is important for one’s development, as well as a feeling of being seen and heard.
- Thematic discussions: To include topics such as LGBTQ issues, racism, sexism or sex and relationships is important in creating both learning and exchange of experience.
- Party: It is important to celebrate, dance and have fun. The examples of a party may be the year-end or summer holiday party.
- Excursions: In the summer it is easy and appreciated to have outdoor activities, such as playing with a ball or swimming. In winter, ice skating can be fun, just make sure you can rent equipment. Keep an eye on the art-related happenings in the area. If any movie / theater / dance performance shows up and it has a theme suited to the target group, it is worth asking for free tickets or a discount to the participants.
- Celebrations of the holidays: Attending and celebrating Eid, New Year, Valborg and other religious or non-religious festivals can be both fun and appreciated by the participants.
- Are there some things you should not do? If you are not sure about the specific activity, it is probably best to do something different!

## **Collaborations**

Collaborating is fun and gives you a chance to make contacts and broaden your network. We encourage you to collaborate with other projects, initiatives, or organizations as it can strengthen the solidarity and creativity at the meeting place.

Remember to not cooperate with those who are only looking to profit from it or where the collaboration only leads to one party winning it. There are many people who want to access the meeting place for research, articles, and other projects. Many of them have good intentions, but their projects do not necessarily benefit our meeting place or target group. We advise you to only accept those collaborations from which the participants at the meeting place can benefit in terms of fun, empowering activities, new experiences, opportunities, or resources.

The requests to talk to or interview the members about their LGBTQ or migration experience are common and should be reviewed very critically. Of course, it would be positive if society at large could gain deeper insights into Newcomer's experiences, but for several reasons this is not something we should moderate between the interviewers and our members. It is stressful to be interviewed and tell about their trauma, especially when many members have been forced to do so many times before. The meeting place should serve as a sanctuary where you can avoid talking about difficult topics. The interviewers will probably benefit from this collaboration, but neither the participants at the meeting place or the community at large will likely benefit from someone's article or essay. Only if the interviewer can guarantee a large and positive distribution of their material it could be worth considering.

If you start a collaboration, the participants at the meeting place must feel safe and secure about it, as well as they must be fairly represented. Always ask anyone who wants to collaborate and meet the participants what are their own LGBTQ and migration-related experiences. Assess how aware and what insights your potential partner has and consider it when you set the framework for how your collaboration will work. Try to always meet the collaborators outside the meeting place before they actually visit it. In this way you can feel more secure with the person, and consequently the participants at the meeting place will be able to do so.

If you enter a collaboration where the participants at the meeting place are to be interviewed or otherwise talk individually with the collaborators, a leader from Newcomers Youth or another adult participant should always be present. An exception is if the participant is of legal age and wants to be interviewed.

## **Important to consider!**

*Sign the agreements with those you will work with to avoid the misunderstandings. Remember that you can say no to collaborations if you feel timing is not right or if the meeting place does not benefit from the collaboration.*

### **Examples of collaborations that Newcomers Youth may have locally:**

- The youth centers / youth organizations where they provide a venue / location for the meeting place.
- The artistic and cultural organizations that can offer workshops for participants at the meeting place.
- The organizations and projects that want to support the meeting place by offering lectures or knowledge-enhancing activities.
- The sponsors who want to provide funding for the meeting place without demanding anything back.

### **The external parties who want to visit**

It can happen that you are contacted by the persons who want to visit and observe the meeting place, rather than to interview the participants. Often there are other youth organizations that want to visit in order to improve their own work. This is usually more positive for us as it requires less from the youth and has a much more direct effect for the target group.

During their visit they should not hold any individual conversations, but instead the observers can be on the side and participate in the discussions together with the leaders and participants. Unlike requests to interview young people about their difficulties within the migration process, it is generally not so stressful to talk about the meeting place during an open discussion. It is a comfortable and familiar environment for the participants to meet new adults and the members can participate on their own terms. Consequently, this type of observation visit requires less from the members since they are about the meeting place.

The visits from another youth organization lead to gaining more experience in working with the young asylum seekers and LGBTQ people and that benefits that youth organization. The meetings and discussions can give the visiting staff new methods and approaches to bring back to their organization. It will also benefit our target group by the fact that there will be more places that can receive them in a good way.

Just as with the collaborations, the visits should also be assessed case by case. Always first meet those who want to visit you or talk on the phone before you make a final decision. Explain to the visitors that they will be able to participate in the regular activities, but that they must not interrupt them or, for example, take someone aside to talk. As it is mentioned, they are on the site to observe and take part in an ordinary day at the meeting place.

## **Holding the meeting place**

In this section you will get tips on how you can start a meeting place in your particular place step by step. If you do not have information on how to start, you can contact us directly!

Email [newcomers@rfslungdom](mailto:newcomers@rfslungdom).

### **Before the meeting place starts**

In order to prepare, share or receive important information, the leaders and those responsible must meet 30 minutes before the meeting place starts. During this meeting you can discuss both your and participants' needs. You can also specify what you are expected to do at the meeting place so that you are all in agreement and that there will be no misunderstanding during the meeting place. Also discuss what responsibilities you have individually during the meeting. For example, who will make tea / coffee, who will open the door, who will welcome new participants.

### **When the meeting place starts**

When the meeting place starts, the leaders call all participants to gather. During the gathering, the leaders briefly talk about Newcomers Youth, who the leaders are and what function they have at the meeting place. The leaders also explain the rules and policies at the meeting place that all participants must respect. During the gathering, new participants are also introduced to the meeting place through a presentation round. During the round, everyone can say their name, pronoun, and other things that the participant wants to tell. Sometimes participants also tell us which country they are from or where they live. There should be openness around what everyone wants to tell but try to be brief during this round. Note that the leaders should tell what the pronouns are before the round starts.

When the meeting place is running, the main task of the leaders is to facilitate it so the participants have nice time together. Try to have some conversation with all participants during the meeting. Do not get stuck with one person or group even though it feels nice, but make sure to pay attention to all participants. Try not to take up too much space and encourage participants to get to know each other and have fun together.

#### **Examples of laws, rules, and policies for the meeting place:**

No discrimination, violence, threats, or harassment.

No sexism, No racism, No homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.

No violence or bullying of any kind.

No drugs or alcohol before or during the meeting place.

No sex during the meeting place.

Respect each other's similarities and differences.

Respect if someone says no or stop.

Respect the boundaries of others whether it is about something that is said or something that is physically done.

Talk to each other and the leaders with respect!

If someone breaks the law where they injure another or themselves, the police are called. If someone breaks the rules, they may be asked to leave the meeting place.

*These rules for the meeting places translated into several different languages are available to be taken from the office.*

# **Script for the gathering**

## **1. Introduction**

Welcome participants to the meeting place and tell them about its purpose. It is important to mention that the meeting place is for young, newly arrived LGBTQ people. Feel free to go through what is meant by young people (15-25 years), newly arrived (persons who are or had recently been in the asylum process, or who are undocumented) and LGBTQ people (tell what the abbreviation stands for and the meaning of the words). Tell them more about the venue / location you are at, as well as where the toilets and emergency exits are.

## **2. Rules**

Go through the rules of the meeting place with the participants. You probably do not have to go through all rules every time. Those who are usually good to mention continuously are: We respect each other at the meeting place, no violence or discrimination are tolerated. Have respect for the boundaries of others. Do not bring alcohol or drugs to the meeting place and do not come to the meeting place affected by them. Obviously, the exception is for those with the prescription drugs. If the participants want to smoke, they go out and away a bit, so they do not smoke directly outside the meeting room entrance. Anyone who wants to smoke goes by themselves and does not ask a lot of other people to follow.

## **3. Safety and anonymity**

Remind the participants that everyone has not come out and that you do not know if someone wants to keep their secret. That is why we never talk to the people outside the meeting place about who is visiting the meeting place. Also, tell that leaders will not greet participants outside the meeting place if they do not greet first because we do not know who they are with. Review the security and evacuation procedures you have for the venue.

## **4. Presentation and round**

The leaders present themselves by saying name, pronoun (and explain what the pronouns are), and possibly which languages they speak. If you have decided to recruit only leaders who share experiences with the participants, for example that only LGBTQ persons work at the meeting place, then you bring it up before the presentation round. The presentations continue with the participants who may introduce themselves with their names, pronouns, and other brief information about themselves.

## **5. Schedule**

Go through what the today's meeting place will contain. Do you have the snacks and refreshments, and when they will be served? Are you going to have some activity? What time do you gather for cleaning before closing?

# Meeting the new participants

## Before the first meeting:

- 1 Start by introducing yourself and what you are working with at RFSL or RFSL Ungdom. Ask about the person's name, pronoun, what they need or why they have reached to the Newcomers Youth. Also ask if they have heard about Newcomers Youth before or if they want you to explain about Newcomers Youth and activities that Newcomers Youth has.
- 2 Tell briefly about RFSL Ungdom and that it is an organization that works with the rights of LGBTQ youth in Sweden and that Newcomers Youth is a project at RFSL Ungdom. Describe Newcomers Youth and give them a flyer about Newcomers Youth at the same time.
- 3 Describe the target group: Tell who we are targeting: the young LGBTQ persons aged 15-25 who are newly arrived or who have / will seek asylum in Sweden.
- 4 Describe the meeting place: Tell what we do at the meeting place, why one can go there, who comes and what day and time it is open. Ask if the person wants to come to the meeting place.
- 5 Inform them about the legal advice. If the youth needs legal help about the migration or asylum process, they can book an appointment with a lawyer by emailing [newcomers@rfslungdom.se](mailto:newcomers@rfslungdom.se). Note to not give the legal advice yourself. However, you can provide information about asylum and LGBTQ issues such as referring to the information from the Migration Agency's website.
- 6 If the person has questions about LGBTQ or asylum, you can explain the concepts, definitions, and rights if you as a coordinator or a leader know our definitions. If you are not sure, please refer to our website [www.newcomersyouth.se](http://www.newcomersyouth.se) where there is a lot of information. Do not give advice if you are not sure to have the latest knowledge and information. Note to not give personal advice or information about your personal views on religion, culture, or politics. Do not ask for personal information such as whether the person has a partner. Instead, listen more than you actually talk. Ask questions. Rarely advise
- 7 Ask if the person has questions or wants to raise something.
- 8 Ask if the person wants to become a member of RFSL Ungdom and in the local RFSL branch. Inform them that membership means that they fill out the membership form and that it is free to be a member. Also tell that the information that the person fills in is confidential and that this information is kept secure. Help the youth if they need to. Membership is registered directly on [www.rfslungdom.se](http://www.rfslungdom.se)



## **Important to consider!**

*Do not ask if the person has a partner or how they identify themselves but try to speak generally at an initial meeting. The target group has often been forced to tell very intimate and private things during their asylum process and may need to do so again before the process is complete. We want to avoid making them feel that there is an expectation of doing so at the meeting place as well.*

*The meeting place should be a safe place and therefore we avoid questions or comments that lead the youth to believe that they should or must tell about their private life.*

*If the conversation leads to the private or intimate details without us planning to talk about it, you can say: “I want us to talk about the meeting place but you would maybe like to ask your lawyer before you have your asylum interview or our lawyer who can support you with the information in your asylum process ”.*

## **Other practical tips**

*Have both condoms and lubricants in a box at the meeting place but preferably have them in a toilet so that no one should have to take it when there are others around.*

*Try to create an activity box with card games, puzzles, and other types of activity material. If you use the signs to categorize material, it is a good idea to translate these into other languages. It is both fun and affirming for the participants. Make it an activity to translate these together with the participants so that the signs represent those who are coming. Also, be sure to have picture signs for those who cannot read. If you have the meeting place at a location other than RFSL or RFSL Ungdom, you are welcome to ask those who own the venue if they can start to signpost in a more accessible way. For example, that could be with Braille, pictures, and other languages.*

*Always bring the flyers about Newcomers Youth, membership forms, business cards and other materials at the meeting place. Ask to keep these at the venue so that you do not have to carry them every time.*

## Important perspectives

### Is language a challenge?

Everyday communication might be a challenge due to language differences, but it is the challenge that is not difficult to crack. An often concern in dealing with another language is possible anxiety about making mistakes and that can cause us to completely refrain from the meeting or to include people in the organization and activities.

#### A language barrier can be easily solved and here are some tips:

- Recruit the leaders who have the necessary language skills. One example is Stockholm where the leaders who speak Arabic and Farsi / Dari are recruited.
- If there is time, Google Translate is a good tool for an individual conversation, but not in a group. Avoid words like LGBTQ, gay, bi, trans and sex in Google Translate, but instead try to explain what is meant by for ex. "Being a guy and falling in love with a guy".
- Other participants at the meeting place who speak the same language can also help with the translation.
- Body language is a very useful addition in communication.
- Use the activities and games that do not require conversation. The non-verbal activities are an easy way to establish relationships without speaking a common language.

### What language should be used at the meeting place?

Choosing a language for the meeting place can be difficult and it may also change over time. It is usually either Swedish or English as these languages are used by the most. There may be advantages in both languages, but one recommendation is to try with Swedish at first. Many children and young people who have come to Sweden in recent years go or had gone to the schools and learned Swedish at a level where they can communicate. Many of them know Swedish at the same level as children and young people who have grown up in Sweden do. The meeting place is advantageous in a way that young people can talk about LGBTQ, asylum, and other important topics in Swedish. Additionally, this is also an opportunity to train speaking in Swedish in everyday life outside of both school and work.

#### Example

Newcomers Youth in Stockholm, unlike other similar organizations for adults, use Swedish as the main language for its pilot meeting place. When it is needed, translation is available to other languages. The meeting place in Stockholm has also chosen to recruit the leaders with specific language skills, such as Arabic and Persian / Dari.



## **Individual discussion**

The participants at the meeting places often ask for the individual conversations with leaders. It can be about everything, such as about the problems in school, questions about sex and love, or anxiety about the asylum process. Contact with leaders is very important for many participants since many of them have very few adult LGBTQ people in their lives with whom they feel safe. Newcomers Youth is often one of the few contexts where they can address the mentioned topics. Of course, it is a positive thing when trust is created, but it can also lead to the leaders processing and later carrying with them many different stories.

During individual discussions, the leader's task is to support and guide the Newcomers Youth's members to their own solutions. Their relationship with the participants is a mentoring one, where the leaders should aim to provide both security and support. Many of the participants have experiences that the entire leadership team will not be able to relate to, such as cultural differences, PTSD, or suicidal thoughts.

The leaders should not personally relate to the participants' stories, but instead be the first person with whom they genuinely share it and who can help them to get in touch with the qualified care and counseling if needed. Many members have needs that are too many and complex to cover at the meeting place, and it is important to be clear from the beginning what you can offer. The leaders should not give any legal advice, but instead refer the youth to the legal network.

The leaders should not give their own opinions on personal issues such as coming out, religion or relationships. Instead, ask the open questions and encourage the youth to decide for themselves. If they have questions or thoughts that are too difficult to deal with, for example depression or experience of sex work, the leader should contact a curator or a health center.

Setting boundaries and being clear about how you as a leader can assist is beneficial both to the leader and the participants.

In order to have trust in the leaders, they must be able to keep their promises made to the participants. Often one wants to help, but it is easy to make a problem even worse by accidentally giving the incorrect information or bad advice because one does not know the whole situation. Instead, help the participant by contacting the experts on the subject the participant has a problem with.

In addition, the long individual conversations put the leaders' focus on the individual and not on the group. If there are not so many leaders at the meeting place, it can be difficult to keep an overview of the rest of the participants, which in turn can negatively affect safety at the meeting place. Often having a lot of individual conversations and spending a lot of time with one person can send the signals to other members that this is a good tactic to get extra attention from the leaders.

These boundaries are also for the sake of the group leaders. Once the meeting place has started and a couple of participants have arrived, it is easy to have many individual conversations unless you set the boundaries. Many members have the experiences that are extremely heavy and difficult to process, and, as a leader, one should never have to do it alone. At the same time, the discussions and safety of sharing information with the leaders are one of the most important functions of the meeting place.

The leaders should try to support the youth to find their own solutions as much as that is possible. Ask the open questions, how they feel, and what they need. Listen more than you talk. Let the youth talk through their problems and try to lead the conversation away from going through the same trauma again and again. Try to hold the conversation for a maximum of about 20 minutes and end with planning what the participant should do until the next meeting.

## Examples of questions and answers!

### **Should I break up with my partner?**

Ask the open-ended questions such as “What made you think about breaking up?”, “What made you want to be with the person?”, “What would change if you stop being together?” to help the youth sort out their feelings. Do not give the personal opinions about relationships but try always to put a focus on the youth’s own feelings. The only exception is if you suspect that the youth is being physically or mentally abused by their partner.

### **I do not like my accommodation!**

Find out what it is that makes the person uncomfortable, whether it is their personal relations with other residents, lack of security, or something else. It is often difficult to change accommodation, but there may be other ways to handle the problem. The personal relations can be changed with conversations, and lack of security can be addressed with new safety routines. They may not be able to change their location, but new transport options or finding fun activities nearby can make it feel better. Identify what it is that makes the young person not happy and move on with suggestions and solutions for the improvements. Discuss what the youth can do and follow up during the next meeting.

Do not promise help with changing accommodation. As mentioned, it is often difficult to get a new place and it is not something that the project can offer. Of course, you can ask for help if you have your private contacts, but in that case be clear that you then work outside your role as a leader at Newcomers Youth.

Note that if a person is dissatisfied with their accommodation due to being exposed to hatred, threats or harassment for their sexuality or identity, we recommend that you report the police and those responsible for that specific accommodation. The participants can say no to this for various reasons, and we do not take the matter further without the participant’s permission, but we make it clear that they can get help and support from us afterwards in case they want to report it to the authorities.

### **I have not received a decision related to my asylum claim for more than 2 years!**

Waiting for a long time in an unsafe asylum situation can be devastating. The feelings of being powerless and invisible together with anxiety of getting rejected can lead to the severe forms of depression. It is difficult to feel in control of one's situation without having the proper information, so first check what the participant knows about their case. If they do not know so much about how the things are right now, tell them to first get a picture of how the case is going and then come back. Tell also about the Newcomers Youth asylum legal advice where one can book time through this [link](#)!

When you have a picture of how things are going, you can make plans for the participant based on various possible decisions. What does the member do if they are approved? What do they do if they get rejected? Can they appeal, and if so how? If they are deported, which individuals or organizations can help them in their home country? If they intend to live in Sweden without a permit, how will it go?

Make concrete plans for all the ways the participant can imagine. Try to keep the plans realistic. In this situation before an actual asylum decision comes, it is more about helping the member to regain a sense of control than making the plans. Let the member decide for themselves what steps they want to take and avoid expressing your own opinions. Also, avoid speculating on the likelihood of getting their asylum granted or denied, or comparing it to other people's cases. Each asylum case is unique and great emphasis is placed on one's own story, especially when applying as a LGBTQ person. Therefore, it is worthless to sit and guess and better to motivate the participant to plan for different scenarios. Remember that your role is not to provide legal advice, but to support the participant in planning and getting a realistic picture of their situation.

## **Conflicts inside and outside the meeting place**

At the meeting places, all kinds of conflicts happen and will happen. It can be about practical things such as someone not cleaning up after themselves or someone offending another person with what they say. The conflicts can also arise outside the meeting place which affect the participants at the meeting place. In order to deal with conflicts and prevent their escalation, it is important to have a conflict management strategy.

### **Direct conflict management**

If there is a direct conflict at the meeting place between the participants, a role of the leader and / or the coordinator is to mediate and try to manage the conflict. You take the role of keeping other participants away and calm down those involved. Keep track of the Crisis Management Plan.

#### **Examples of situations where direct conflict management should be used:**

- When the participants will argue with a leader or another participant and continue doing that even after they have expressed their stand.
- When there have been discussions about how to define racism and what is racist or not.
- When two participants who have been together start arguing.
- When someone has offended someone else by calling them something they do not identify with.
- When someone has used drugs or alcohol at the meeting place.

### **Preventing conflicts**

It is a role of the coordinator and the leaders to mediate and help with managing the conflicts. The conflicts are often not resolved at once or maybe never, but they should be handled in the best way possible.

To manage a conflict or prevent its escalation, it requires you to identify a conflict, even a small one, as quickly as possible. It also requires you to identify the conflicts that have not yet arisen and have a plan how you will deal with them.

Everyone at the venue (the coordinators, leaders, and participants) should be involved in discussing how conflicts can be handled. If everyone understands how a strategy or conflict management plan works and why it is used, there are better conditions for reducing the consequences / effects of the conflict.

### **Outside the meeting place**

Sometimes the conflicts can start or continue outside the meeting place. When participants interact privately, the coordinators and leaders have no insight into how they interact. However, what happens there often goes back to the meeting place. The coordinators and leaders cannot take responsibility for the participants' actions outside the meeting place and unfortunately the participants' actions can cause consequences at the meeting place.



When the conflict arises at the meeting place, leaders can hopefully have both an overview and idea of what has happened and who is involved. When the conflict arises and escalates outside the meeting place, then it becomes even more important to sit down and go through the events with everyone involved. It is important to go through the course of events with everyone who has been involved and hear how they experienced what happened. This should be done whether anyone involved thinks it is unnecessary or not. Conflict resolution is mandatory because not talking to or avoiding each other during the meeting place is not an option. An unresolved conflict affects the group dynamics and atmosphere at the meeting place, and it can cause unsafe and segregated atmosphere.

### **Conflict management**

- Talk individually with those involved in the conflict.
- Thank the participant for choosing and daring to address the conflict by talking with you. If it is you who initiated the conversation, thank them for sitting down to talk to you.
- Review the course of events. Who has been involved, where and when did an incident occur, what has been said and done?
- Hear how the participant is feeling about the conflict, how does it feel for the other participants involved, how does it feel for the meeting place? Do they feel angry, scared, invisible etc.?
- Come up with a plan together how to move forward. How does the participant want the conflict to be resolved?
- A good step after individual conversations is often to talk in a group with those involved in the conflict. This assumes that everyone feels safe enough to do that. If this is not the case, start by discussing what would be required for the person who hesitates to talk with the others involved. If it is not possible to come to some solution, tell them how you will proceed with the others involved before ending the discussion.
- In some cases, it may be advisable to contact people outside the meeting place for assistance in continuing to address the problem. For example, it may be a matter of contacting the group accommodation about several participants who are in trouble living at the same place. Another example could be contacting their guardians if the participants exhibited self-harm behaviors since that should be kept under surveillance. Under no circumstances should you contact anyone outside the meeting place to discuss the internal conflicts without the consent of the participants involved.
- Inform other leaders / coordinators so that everyone can help to keep track of the situation and continue the conflict management.

## Safety, anonymity, and routines

### Why do we have safety routines?

It is important for both leaders and coordinators to talk about safety and security because that everything goes well. Newcomers Youth has a responsibility for both participants and members who also have an assurance by RFSL Ungdom and RFSL as an organization to be able to ensure that safety routines are maintained and that everyone can feel safe. Everyone is responsible for following our routines and enabling a secure and safe working environment. Therefore, relevant safety procedures must also be mentioned at the meeting place for Newcomers Youth participants.

Some members of Newcomers Youth have come out and are relaxed about talking about their sexuality or identity. Some have come out to some people, but not to all. Many participants have only come out for a few in addition to those who are at the meeting place. Those who have not come out are sometimes worried about what can happen if the friends and family find out their secret. In order for the participants to feel safe and not forced to come out, we have some routines designed to ensure the safety and anonymity of the meeting place.

- The leaders should greet all participants as they enter. If young people that you do not recognize show up, first check that they have arrived at the right place by asking who they have contacted and received the address or ask them to show if they have received SMS / mail with the invitation. Avoid revealing a purpose of the meeting place for people you do not know by mentioning, for example, "RFSL" or "Newcomers Youth".

- Never write the address of the meeting place in social media or public mailings. Unfortunately, it can be unsafe for both asylum seekers and LGBTQ persons in general, or it can be unsafe for some specific participants. Therefore, only disclose the address to people you have contacted before and to those who belong to the target group.
- There must be at least two leaders / coordinators in place during the meeting place. Rather open late if only one person is present, and close early if anyone must go.
- When we email or text participants, we do not sign with "RFSL Youth". We do not know who can see their mail / SMS, so for the safety of the participants we sign "Meeting place", or with the names of the leaders.

- For the same reason, we also do not send the rainbow flags or similar symbols. Sometimes an alibi may be needed for the meeting place, for example if a participant's parent wants to know where they are and what they are doing. In that case, it is good to talk together with the participant about the alibi and agree on what you can say that the meeting place is if someone asks you. The reason for that is that some of the participants have not come and because of that they do not want to tell the truth. For example, one can say that the meeting place is some activity group, such as a book circle or a theater group.
- If the leaders at Newcomers Youth meet the members outside the meeting place, we do not greet them first. If the member greets and wants to talk, the leader can respond. This is done in order to avoid the uncomfortable situations for those who have not come out.

## **This is what you need to do at Newcomers Youth if something happens at the meeting place**

### **Prevention**

- Keep track of the Crisis Management Plan (see Appendix on page 67).
- Make sure the entrance door is properly closed.
- Never be alone at the meeting place.
- Observe where the fire extinguishers are located and how to evacuate from the venue.
- If someone is ringing on the door, be careful and do not open the door to people you do not know if you are alone.
- Do not invite anyone to the venue if they should not be there and do not give the address to someone you have not already talked to.
- Do not post the address on social media, websites or similar.
- Agree with the participants on a gathering place where you can meet if the venue must be vacated. The meeting point should be close to the venue, but sufficiently protected to prevent any harm.
- Review safety and evacuation routines as an information point with participants at the meeting place ("Gathering", page 20).

### **During incidence**

- First help people who are injured or in shock.
- Call 112 or activate an alarm (if you have one).
- Take shelter or evacuate via emergency exits to your gathering / meeting point.
- Contact Newcomer's Youth's office with information on what happened, where you are and how you feel or fill in the Incident Report (see Appendix on page 69).

### **Division of responsibilities during crisis**

- Plan and arrange before setting up the meeting place who is responsible for what during an evacuation situation. For example, one can be responsible for leading the participants out of the room and another for getting them to the gathering point.
- Agree who is calling 112 in a crisis situation so that not everyone calls at once.
- The coordinator is responsible for filling in an incident report after a crisis or conflict situation.
- The coordinator is responsible for following up the event, for example if the external support and supervision are needed. If you have questions or need support, contact Newcomers Youth's office.

## **Mental health challenges**

*"It would be very tiring if Newcomers Youth didn't exist because I wouldn't be able to cope with everything"* - Newcomers Youth's participant

Newcomers Youth's main goal is to reduce mental health challenges among the target group of asylum seekers, newly arrived and undocumented LGBTQ persons. Young LGBTQ people are more exposed to discrimination, threats, and violence than other young people and therefore feel psychologically worse. Many of the participants who come to Newcomers Youth feel very badly when they start at the meeting place, but gradually feel better as they continue to come. In most cases, Newcomers Youth's participants feel the effects of trauma from their home country, from their life in Sweden as asylum seekers, or from the challenges after the asylum process. Newcomers Youth's members may be in a very vulnerable situation that can get worse during the asylum process due to their long waiting for a decision from the Swedish Migration Agency, deportation threat, exclusion, and loneliness.

Trauma can manifest itself both mentally and physically and it can lead to various consequences that are both visible and invisible. Many who have experienced trauma will not tell you what they have been through and sometimes a person can carry their trauma for a very long time without getting support or help. Working with Newcomers Youth's participants who have had traumatic experiences means that one must be able to relate to them with both respect and patience.

### **Effects of trauma and mental health challenges:**

- Suicidality
- Self-harm
- Abuse
- Somatic pain
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Hyperactivity
- Disruptive behavior
- Bad self esteem
- Aggressive behavior
- Eating disorders
- School / learning disability
- Isolation
- Stress
- Phobias

Common to newly arrived LGBTQ people is that they are exposed to not just gay, bi and transphobia, but also racism and sexism. A stress resulting from discrimination affects mental health condition among LGBTQ people. It is more common for the LGBTQ asylum seekers to suffer from depression, psychoses, overconsumption of alcohol and drugs, and dependence on prescription drugs.

No one knows how many young asylum seekers have taken their lives or are at risk. Before having a Swedish social security number, a person is not included in the official statistics related to the causes of death. The Migration Agency does not have these statistics as well. However, several child and adolescent psychiatric clinics in Sweden confirm an increased mental health difficulty among unaccompanied children. Several media have also reflected on this problem and reported the cases where young adults and unaccompanied children have taken their lives.

### **A guide for you who meet the Newcomers Youth's participants with mental health challenges**

- Make sure that there is a contact list (emergency plan) that is filled with telephone numbers and contact details for different types of care, such as psychiatry and others. At the end of the book's appendix there is a template for the emergency plan.
- Make sure that there is information material for the person who has the mental health challenges and where they can seek support.
- Feel free to have group discussions about how there are more mental health challenges among LGBTQ persons and / or asylum seekers or the newly arrived. Discuss the topic in general without talking about the particular individuals. Be honest about how much knowledge you have about the mental illnesses. Never force anyone to talk but encourage discussion and use the participants' own knowledge of topics you raise. For example, you can ask "What do you think?", "Is this a topic that you talk about in school or elsewhere?", "How does it feel to talk about this? ".
- If you have a group discussion, tell them that the topic you are going to raise can be sensitive, feel awkward or shameful and that there may be private experiences that come up. However, tell them that one may need to talk about it during the individual conversations and not in the group. Tell them that you are available for that afterwards. Plan to do it after such a workshop or group discussion.
- During individual conversations where a topic of health comes up, the youth might say "I feel bad because of ...", "I have not slept in two days.", or "I feel hopeless.". In those scenarios it is important that you listen to them and make them feel safe and secure. If you do not have time to talk at that point, make sure to tell the youth when you are available and book that time.

## Examples of what is important to consider during an individual conversation about mental health challenges:

1 Your purpose is to listen, but not to provide any medical or health advice. If needed, refer them to the professionals who are qualified to help. If your conversation is related to, for example, bullying at their school, you can contact the school's curator and principal.

2 Listen actively to what the youth says, but also what the youth does not say. Sometimes it may be important to ask for clarity. For example, "Why can't you sleep, is there something special you are thinking about or feeling?". Get the youth to come to what they feel so you can begin to understand what their needs are. For example, you can ask "Do you need support in being able to sleep?", "Do you usually have trouble sleeping?". Tell them where they can seek help or support. Sit together and check out the information. Tell them that there are different ways to get support they need.

3 Focus always on the needs of the youth. Do not confuse your feelings and needs with theirs. You should be personal, but not private. This is a difficult balance but if you focus on your role of a listener and someone who is there for the youth you will not confuse your own private experiences and you will be able to generally speak on the subject. One way to be personal without being private is to confirm that you understand the youth's experience where you could say "I understand and recognize some of your feelings and needs". After that you do not go into the details about what your experiences have been. However, the youth will be able to understand that you have had the similar experiences that make you understand and feel what they say and need.

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Before ending the conversation, it is important to finish it with hope or at least a neutral mood. The youth should not leave the conversation and feel even worse. You can facilitate the end by just giving the youth some further opportunity, for example, by asking "Should we talk more next time?". Tell them when you are back at the meeting place so the youth knows when you are available to continue talking. You can also refer them to another leader if you think this might be helpful. Ask the youth if it would feel ok to talk to the other leader because you think they can give better advice or are more familiar with what the youth needs.

You can also read the section on "Individual conversations" on page 25.

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Lead the conversation somewhere else if it becomes too private. For example, the youth can share their private experiences that violate the youth's integrity, or they can be stuck in a "negative" and repetitive pattern of talking. Sometimes it may be necessary to interrupt the conversation in order to avoid these types of situations.

## Stress about the future, waiting, and decision

For many asylum seekers, the concept of future plans, dreams, and hopes is a difficult and sensitive area. The risk of deportation and uncertainty about issues that concern one's life or death make the future plans less safe and secure. But that does not mean that the Newcomers Youth's participants have no dreams or hopes for their future. Raising the issue of future plans and hopes is different for the young asylum seekers LGBTQ people than for the LGBTQ youth in general who are not under pressure from the asylum process or deportation.

*"To wait for the decision is difficult. That leads to stress, not being able to sleep, and not being able to think of anything else. Even being able to study."*  
- A Newcomers Youth's participant

### Some feelings that may come up due to waiting for the Migration Agency's decision:

- That time stands still, goes very slowly, and that the future is too far away.
- That one loses their hope.
- That one feels both stress and anxiety before they get their decision.
- That one feels different from other young people, excluded and isolated.
- That one feels excluded from the rest of society.
- That one feels "locked in", "caught in time" or lacks an opportunity to develop.
- Waiting, in some cases several years, for the decision also leads to a feeling of constantly losing time and missing life.

### What can be done and what is important to consider?

As a coordinator or a leader at Newcomers Youth, it is important to understand feelings that affect those you meet. It is also important to address how these feelings can lead to the mental health challenges. It is important to put those feelings in words and at the same time connect it with the question related to their future, waiting and decision. How can one who meets the Newcomers Youth participants find ways to respond to their worries:

- Talking about the future, waiting and decision in both groups and individual conversations can be a good starting point.
- In a form of the workshops that can be held at the meeting place. In addition, being able to lift the conversation about the future in a respectful way also provides tools for the Newcomers Youth's participants to create hope and daydream about what they want in their lives. Holding workshops does not combat the root of the problem, but it gives the Newcomers Youth's participants an opportunity to put their feelings into words. At the same time, solidarity in this context makes them feel less alone and isolated.
- The open-ended questions that give them an opportunity to talk about things that are not stressful. One can ask during group or individual discussions about the future, waiting and decisions in the following ways: "What do you know about the future and the decision you are waiting for?", "What is the most important need of yours while you wait?", "What is difficult for you in this period of waiting for the decision by the Migration Agency?", "What do you wish to be possible in the future?", "What gives you hope?", "How would you imagine a safe everyday life?".



The LGBTQ youth who are in the asylum process and who have not yet "come out" or simply felt safe to say that they are LGBTQ people are in many cases pressured to talk in details about their sexual orientation, gender expression, or gender identity. Being able to prove one's identity and who one is for their case workers, interpreters and lawyers creates a stress that can become a traumatic experience. There is a great demand that the LGBTQ asylum seekers should be able to tell about their feelings and emotions related to their identity, and then link this to the home country's laws and social context there. Consequently, to be able to prepare for an interview with the Swedish Migration Agency is particularly important. Unfortunately, LGBTQ people are often not well prepared during their asylum process. Newcomers Youth creates the opportunities for them to prepare through the social, creative and health promotion methods.

*"Sometimes they (the Migration Agency) do not trust what you say and sometimes that feels worse here than there from where I have moved from. Here they do not trust it, and there you cannot tell. But there you cannot tell because you risk being killed so you don't talk about your sexuality". – A Newcomers Youth's participant*

*"It is a difficult situation and I could not sleep before the interview. It was like a double-stress, so I did not do well on the interview. The lawyers here are sometimes not good, and many do not have much experience about my kind of problems". – A Newcomers Youth's participant*

Meeting the young LGBTQ asylum seekers as a leader can be a very special support to them. The leader also has their experience of being a LGBTQ person and perhaps also an asylum seeker. The youth will naturally be able to identify with some of your shared experiences and it is therefore important to listen and not give them advice based on your experiences. Instead, you provide them with the tools to identify and decide how they want to come out or tell their story to the Migration Agency. It is easy to project one's own experience of coming out or the feelings one had on another, but the consequences can be different for everyone. For many LGBTQ youth, the asylum process can lead to mental health challenges and difficulties due to, among other things, the pressure to live up to the Migration Board's demands put on the LGBTQ people.

One way to prepare the participants to “come out” to the Migration Agency is to talk about the feelings and experiences of being a LGBTQ person. This can be done during group discussion, workshop, or if “come out” questions arise in the individual conversations. Consider the following points:

- If you are going to raise the questions related to their feelings and experiences, it is important that everyone feels safe and knows that it is possible to leave the discussion at any time. Ask if a topic feels relevant to talk about so that everyone is aware of what is going to happen.
- Be responsive and humble because it can be difficult to talk about the feelings related to being or “coming out” as a LGBTQ youth. Do not put pressure on anyone and be patient as it may take some time for some persons to formulate their thoughts.
- Never interrupt someone even if they take up a lot of space. Let the person speak clearly and then ask if the others would like to talk.
- Before the discussion starts, think about how you can help the participants who have difficulty talking about emotions or expressing themselves. For example, you can ask “For those of you who are going to have an interview with the Migration Agency, how does it feel?”. You can help those who cannot answer by asking “Does it feel scary, for example?”, “Were you scared, or did you feel uncomfortable?”. Follow up with “why it felt like it did” question pattern.
- Other questions you can ask related to the feelings are “Does it feel difficult to talk about being a LGBTQ person, and what makes it difficult?”, “When is it difficult and when is it not difficult?”, “How does one talk about it when it is not difficult?”.
- Reflect on how you can create an open discussion without compromising security. Even if everyone at the meeting place is or they are wondering if they are LGBTQI, the experiences and conditions can differ very much between, for example, someone who is gay and someone who is transgender.
- Feel free to do the exercises that help the Newcomers Youth’s participants to put their emotions into words. If you would like help to find the proper materials, you can contact the Newcomers Youth’s office.
- Be humble and respect that everyone has different experiences and thoughts.

## **When someone is suicidal or says they want to take their life**

*“If you do not get a positive decision you feel very stressed, thinking of killing yourself and other stupid things. When you get a negative decision, you lose hope”.*

- A Newcomers Youth’s participant

At Newcomers Youth you sometimes meet young people who say they want to take their lives if they get rejected. A youth can also write an email or a text message where they say that they want to take their life if they do not get help. Whether the youth says so or if you who meet the youth get a feeling that something is wrong, it is important to take it seriously as it is a complex issue. It does not always entail an actual suicidal action, but it is your responsibility to meet the youth as a leader or a coordinator and find out if it is serious, or if the youth just feel scared but will not actually commit suicide. Consequently, this is important in order to make certain decisions about how to deal with such a potential immediate crisis situation. Also, read the conflict management information about whom to contact during a crisis (See the page).

## **What to do if you suspect there is suicide risk:**

- The most important thing is that you react when you notice that someone is not feeling well. Do not think that someone else will react.
- The only way to find out if anyone is thinking about suicide is to ask about it. It may feel difficult, but you show that you have noticed something and that you are ready to listen. Talking about suicide encourages them to talk about the emotions and often feels like a relief.
- Never make an agreement that someone’s suicidal thoughts should be a secret. You must be able to seek help for the person in a crisis situation. You do not have a duty of confidentiality in a life-threatening situation.
- Give it time and be patient when talking to the youth. Give them time to tell so you can get a comprehensive picture of the situation and together with the youth make a plan for the next step.
- Do not be judgmental, angry, or upset during your encounter with the youth.
- Contact help if there is a risk that the youth will injure themselves or express that they will. See the emergency plan for the contact details.
- Call 112 in case of a serious crisis. Do not wait to call 112 if the situation has escalated. It is important that you act if there is reason to believe that the youth will hurt themselves during the meeting or as soon as they leave the meeting place.

## **After the crisis – suicidal tendencies**

It is important to distinguish between your feelings and the youth's feelings or reactions. As a support person, you can also get angry, frustrated, and sad. It is okay. However, try to reflect on your feelings and separate them from the ones of the youth. It is important that you tell others in your Newcomers Youth team what you need and get necessary support in order to be able to handle the processing of all information and feelings. Contact Newcomers Youth's office for support if needed.

Having access to a curator or a supervisor is good and important. Do not walk around and keep the feelings to yourself.

Here is an in-depth guide from Suicidezero with more advice:

<https://www.suicidezero.se/fakta-rad/goda-rad-om-sjalvmord/att-hjalpa-nagon>

Here is a website of the organization Mind that works on the suicide prevention: <https://mind.se/>

## **To meet a Newcomers Youth's participants who misuse alcohol and drugs**

Mental health challenges can be expressed in many ways, forms, and levels. It is not a role of the Newcomer Youth's leader or coordinator to be a doctor or a psychiatrist, or to give the diagnoses and comment on the mental health of the youth. Our role is to act as a support and listen.

Provide advice on where the person can seek support and tips related to their problem during the meeting place, but not tell the youth what they should do or feel in general about everyday life.

The young asylum seekers and newly arrived can feel very lonely. As they are the LGBTQ persons, this feeling can become even stronger. In some cases, alcohol and drugs become the ways that help dealing with both pain and anxiety. This can lead to an addiction and even greater health problems. In some cases, the addictions can turn into self-injurious behavior in a form of an overdose.

Addiction is a taboo topic that is complex and it is absolutely impossible to make an assumption that abuse is a general phenomenon among the unaccompanied children and young asylum seekers.

- A fact that someone has drug or alcohol-related problems does not mean that this applies to everyone, although sometimes it is good to be cautious and act preventively. However, do not assume that this problem can be applied to the whole group.
- Also, do not assume that you can see on someone that they are under the influence of drugs and / or alcohol. The signs of mental illness may be similar to the signs that one is under the influence of drugs, alcohol or medication.
- This problem can also look different from place to place. In different cities and in different contexts, both intoxicants and access to them vary very much.
- Be clear about the rules at the meeting place and that it is against the rules to be affected by alcohol or drugs during the meeting. This also applies to the medication that one does not have a prescription for but is buying or receiving illegally.

## **Working with young LGBTQ asylum seekers**

All kinds of conflicts happen and will happen at the meeting place. Consider that the participants at the meeting place have different backgrounds, needs and life situations. Also, they live under great pressure and in difficult circumstances as they are both LGBTQI youth and asylum seekers or undocumented. They often suffer from the negative prejudices, discrimination and racism based on their appearance, skin color and language. They are more likely to be subjected to violence and discrimination, they have a higher risk for suicidal thoughts and attempts, and they are more at risk of alcohol and drug abuse. All this in combination means that the participants often have poor living conditions and health, and this is something that we need to consider and work on preventing it.

In order for the meeting place to become a strengthening, safe and developing place for all participants, it is important that there is both power-critical perspective and actions to make visible, challenge and prevent the restrictive norms. In this section you will learn more about power, how it can be expressed at the meeting place, and how you can help the participants to gain more power over their lives.

### **Power, intersectionality, and norm-critical perspective**

There is a pattern in our society related to who gets and has power. It is based on, for example, skin color, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. This pattern means that some people have the greater opportunities to influence their life, their surroundings and society than others, and that this possibility does not depend on the person's individual characteristics and will. A concept that explains this imbalance is called a power structure. An example of a power structure is racism that divides and subordinates and certain groups in relation to the others. Consequently, they have different access to power and often it is based on their skin color, ethnicity, culture, and language. In practice this means that people with light skin color have more power than people with dark skin color. This also can mean that people with the Swedish-sounding names can get their jobs easier than people with the Arabic-sounding names.

## **Important to consider!**

*Having power is about everything ranging from who decides, who has influence over society, to who gets an accommodation, who gets to be heard in different contexts, and what opportunities a person has to decide over their own life.*

## **Power at the meeting place**

The participants at the meeting place generally do not have much power. Many of them are in the asylum process where their lives lie in the hands of the Migration Agencies officers. They have limited financial resources, they cannot live how or where they want, and they have the experiences of not being listened to or getting their needs met in the contexts such as school and housing. Not having any or having very little power over their lives affects how the participants view themselves. An important part of the meeting place is therefore that it should be a place where the participants have the power to influence and where their voices are heard.

### **Strengthen the power of the participants at the meeting place by:**

- Set aside time and space to discuss what the participants want to do at the meeting place and what needs they have. The meeting place must be relevant to them and based on their needs, not based on an idea of what the leaders and coordinators see as needed.
- The participants should be involved in creating their own strengthening processes based on their own situations. For example, how to deal with racism, heteronormativity and discrimination should be developed together, not only by the leaders and / or coordinators.
- Distribute your attention equally to all participants. Avoid only socializing with those participants that you identify with or enjoy.

## **How the power structures work together**

If we say that there are the power structures that affect people's opportunities in life is not the same as saying that all people are affected in the same way by them. We have different conditions and a person is never affected by only one structure, but it is always simultaneously influenced by them, and thus a part of several different structures. Most of the participants at the meeting place are young LGBTQ people who seek asylum, but that does not mean that they have the same life experiences or living conditions. Some of them are cis persons, others are trans. Some are educated, others are not. Some come from the affluent families, others do not. Some live openly as the LGBTQ persons, others do not. All this together affects them in different ways in different situations.

In order for a participant to receive the right support and have their needs met, one needs to see how several power structures interact and sometimes reinforce each other. This perspective is called an intersectional perspective and it is an important tool to use for setting up a meeting place that is relevant for the participants. The intersectional perspective helps you to see how different power structures affect the participants and their conditions in life and enable you to adapt your working methods in order to better understand them.

### **Strengthen the intersectional perspective at the meeting place by:**

- Look at the power structures that are not just ethnicity or gender in order to understand how a participant is affected and what actions need to be taken.
- Use the participants' ideas in preparation and design of the activities, but make sure that the proposals do not exclude certain people from participating in the activity.
- Make sure that the venue is accessible regardless of the functional variation that people might have. Make sure there are no shoes or furniture on the way. If no one has the accessibility requirements, this is an excellent opportunity to practice accessibility.

## How we define norm criticism

A norm-critical perspective is about focusing on power. This means, among other things, to view, and question the norms that affect perceptions of what is “normal” and what is perceived as desirable.

What is portrayed as “normal” gives those who are perceived as “normal” an expanded scope of the possibilities, in other words, more power. The “normal” or “we” is created by contrasting it with something else, the “deviant” or “others” where those who belong to the norm can think about, evaluate, name and decide to what extent the deviant should be tolerated or not. People who follow the norms as a group have more power than people who violate the norms. However, those who follow the norm also have more power and space to contribute to changing it. When you see who has the power to change, the responsibility for change can be put in the right place.

### Strengthen the norm-critical perspective at the meeting place by:

- Allow the participants to have the “come out” processes at their own pace. For some it will go fast and for others it will take longer. It is important that nothing is forced regardless how much time it takes.
- Be clear that it is the participants themselves who decide their gender identity, sexuality, and pronouns. That can change throughout life and they have just as much right to choose not to define themselves.
- Try to see which attributes and social norms give a status and create the hierarchical group norms. Avoid establishing the group norms that give more status to some than to the others.
- Do not ask the participants about their bodies, genitals, or sex life if that is not relevant. If relevant, ask in a respectful and inclusive way and ask what words and phrases the person wants to use.
- Do not “out” any participants unless you have received their permission. If you need to talk to someone externally about a participant’s physical or mental state, leave out the person’s sexuality / gender identity if you have not been allowed to address it.
- Pay attention to not assume that everyone has the same class background, or the same types of cultural, economic, and social resources.
- Be aware that not everyone has the same learning opportunities in, or that everyone can write or read a text.
- Do not assume that everyone has the same physical abilities or interests. Do not force someone to do something they do not want but try to find a balance between suggesting and letting the participants decide for themselves what they want and can do.
- Consider religion: The participants’ religious affiliation may vary and this has an impact on how social norms and power structures influence the person’s vulnerability. Do not assume that everyone who has the same nationality or who has come from the same country also has the same religious affiliation or is religious at all. If you talk to a participant or a group about religion, you may want to be careful not to compare religions or to reinforce the common norms associated with that religion.

## Advice and guide to the leaders

- Be personal, but not private. The young people should be in focus. If you tell something about yourself, it is based on the idea that it benefits the youth.
- You are not a youth's friend, parent, or sibling. Be clear that your role is a leader. Create this awareness so that you do not unconsciously promise more than necessary in terms of availability, support, or intimacy. Work instead on strengthening the young people's relationship building with other young people.
- Tell immediately when someone goes over your boundaries or offends you in some way. Seek support from your supervisor and other leaders. If you missed to set a boundary, point it out at the leaders' meeting so you can talk about how to proceed in the future.
- You are there for the young people in the first place and for yourself in the second. Do you think any activity is dreary? If it benefits the participants, you do it with a smile anyway.
- Have an overview of the venue where you are. You should know who is there and what they are doing. This way you can quickly see a participant who goes outside, is sad or need your attention. It also means that you can notice the conflicts more quickly or if another leader needs support in some situation.
- Be active, move around the space and avoid sitting where another leader already is.
- Do you think someone can be affected by drugs or similar? Look for your supervisor and ask for their advice. Do not act alone!
- In conflicts / fights you take a role of keeping other participants away and calming them. Keep track of the Crisis Management Plan.



## **Including and activating**

- Welcome the new participants to the activities. Try to show that you are positive and happy that the youth is coming.
- Involve the participants in fixing and cleaning the space. Do not order them to do it but say that it would be nice if they can help you.
- Involve the participants in the activities and discussions. Make them get to know each other through both activities and conversations.

## **Support**

- If you feel that you do not possess enough knowledge about a topic of conversation, tell that, hand it over to someone else, or ask the youth for more information.
- Pay attention to both the physical and mental health of the participants. Dare to ask a participant about how they are doing. Remember not to give any advice or tips yourself! Instead, help the participant to find the right support and help them by giving the information about health centers, youth clinics, psychologists etc.
- Avoid talking about the youth's appearance / body unless this is done on the youth's terms. Instead, confirm their personality and what they say.
- Remember the discussions so you can keep talking about it later or ask how something went.
- Listen more than you talk. Ask questions. Rarely advise without supporting the youth to arrive at the solutions and answer themselves.

## Advice on stress and trauma management

If there are more people who work with Newcomers Youth (the coordinators and leaders), you can support each other during your work. Meeting young LGBTQ people who are in a difficult asylum process and can be threatened with deportation decisions, can be also difficult for you and it can lead to stress, trauma and mental health challenges if everyone in the organization does not take care of themselves and each other.

### What can you do in the group:

- Ask for support in the difficult situations by contacting Newcomers Youth's office at mail [newcomers@rflungdom.se](mailto:newcomers@rflungdom.se).
- Try to book the external supervisors with a professional supervisor a few times per semester or once a month with the colleagues.
- Report the happenings.
- Do debriefing and request debriefings with each other within the organization.
- Make "how do you feel" rounds during your internal meetings.
- Make the stress checks every week to keep track of your own and colleagues' stress and workload. Talk about how one can reduce stress. Ask for support if needed.
- Prevent loneliness at work by creating the structures and routines for working together.
- Do nice after work and activities together if you can.
- Hold the summer and winter ending events with the Newcomers Youth participants to strengthen your relationships and create social bonds by having fun.
- Celebrate success and successes within the organization. It can be individual or group successes, large and small.

### **What can you do individually:**

- Possibility of the individual supervisions in the difficult situations. This should be included as a point in the action plan.
- Take your breaks and leave your work at the specific time.
- Find a place at your workplace that is your free zone from work. The place that you do not connect to the tough stories and histories. You can have this in common with other colleagues as well.
- Activate your muscles and body to be able to relax. The stories of trauma settle in one's body. One way to release this tension is through physical activity.
- In many individual conversations with the participants you train to take physical physical distance between you and a person who tells you about trauma. You can do this by deliberately breaking the eye contact with the participant, writing notes, or placing your body aside so it is not positioned directly towards the participant's body.
- When you finish your work turn off your work phone.
- Be clear about your working hours with both colleagues and Newcomers Youth's participants from the beginning.

### **Ask for a consent before the conversations and discussions about trauma**

Working with Newcomers Youth can lead to the conversations about trauma. Check if the person you are talking to actually wants to hear and listen to that story before you tell anything.

An example of the conversation:

You: "Hello! One member told me a very traumatic story. Do you have time and want to hear?

I would need some guidance".

Second: "Yes, absolutely".

Note that you can share the traumatic stories with your colleague if you need that in order to know

## **Book tips and publications on colonialism, postcolonial perspectives, racism, and migration**

It is important that you as a coordinator or a leader can include all Newcomers Youth's participants in a respectful and understanding way. Therefore, you might like to take responsibility related to reading and updating yourself on the various themes. You can also recommend this list and give tips to those who want to join or get involved with Newcomers Youth. Note that most of the readings below are in Swedish, but you can find the versions in other languages as well.

*Border Crossing Bodies* by Poursan Djampour. Malmö University. 2018.

*Islamofobi*, by Mattias Gardell. Leopard. 2010.

*Svart kvinna*, by Fanna Ndow Norrby. Natur Kultur. 2017.

*Makthandboken för unga feminister som (be)möter rasism och sexism, 2:a upplaga*, by Interfem. 2016.

*Artikel 14*, by Flyktinggruppernas Riksråd. Sveriges enda flyktingpolitiska tidskrift.

*Om ras och vithet i det samtida Sverige*, by Tobias Hübinette, Helena Hörnfeldt, Fataneh Farahani, René León Rosales, Daphne Arbouz, Yasemin Salik, Ylva Habel, Daniel Cidrelius, Oscar Pripp, Magnus Öhlander, Augustin Erba, Ina Wood, Linda Berg, Danjel Nam, Carina Tigervall, Angelica Tibblin Chen, Patrik Lundberg, Yael Feiler, Madeleine Romero, Catrin Lundström, Veronica Orostica Roa, Manlin Sterner. Mångkulturellt Centrum. 2012

*Postkolonial feminism: En introduktion. Del I*, RED. Paulina de los Reyes. Tankeskraft förlag. 2011.

*Postkolonial feminism vol. 2*, by Aimee C. Rowe, Angela Davis, Avtar Brah, Chandra T. Mohanty, Gail Lewis, Gayatri C. Spivak, Ien Ang, Judith Butler, Margaret Denike, Maria Mies, Paulina de los Reyes & Vandana Shiva. Tankeskraft förlag. 2012.

*Feminism utan gränser*, by Chandra T. Mohanty. Tankeskraft förlag. 2006.

*Kartläggning av återkommande undersökningar av rasism i Sverige*, by Mångkulturellt centrum (MKC) på uppdrag av Forum för levande historia (FLH). 2017.

## Other sources related to racism, asylum, and LGBTQ

Many of these sources can be used and displayed during Newcomers Youth's meeting place. Watching the movies, listening to the podcasts, and checking out the videos is a great way to talk about the themes of racism, asylum and LGBTQ with the participants at the meeting place.

### Books

*Bryt!* by RFSL Ungdom.

*Youmo i praktiken*, by MUCF. 2018.

*Egaliamodellen metoder för inkludering av hbtq-ungdomar i skola och fritidsverksamheter*, by RFSL Stockholm. 2018.

### The websites with the relevant materials

[www.urskola.se](http://www.urskola.se) Use the search words to find the relevant materials.

[www.levandehistoria.se](http://www.levandehistoria.se) Use the search words to find the relevant materials.

[www.statensmedierad.se/nohate](http://www.statensmedierad.se/nohate)

[www.statensmedierad.se/nohate/jagvilllaramigmer/vadarrasism](http://www.statensmedierad.se/nohate/jagvilllaramigmer/vadarrasism)

You can also listen the podcasts.

### Film tips

*Förbjuden kärlek (Circumstance)*, by Maryam Keshavarz (Iran, 2011).

*Nånting måste gå sönder*, by Ester Martin Bergsmark (Sverige, 2014).

*Pride*, Matthew Warchus (Storbritannien, 2014).

*Silvana– Väck mig när ni vaknat*, by Mika Gustafson, Olivia Kastebring & Christina Tsiobanelis (Sverige, 2017).

*Kiki*, by Sara Jordanö & Lori Cheatle (USA, 2016)

*Saving Face*, by Alice Wu (USA, 2004)

Write more tips here:

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## Rights

*“Treat us in a good and fair way. Now I think the Migration Agency is a machine that does not care and sends the rejections directly. You can’t move on and that makes life difficult for us”. - A Newcomers Youth’s participant*

### To fights for your rights

Newcomers Youth is a place where both organizing and activism take place. A role of a leader at Newcomers Youth includes supporting participants by using the empowerment methods, knowledge sharing and communication. In that way, they can stand for their rights and jointly organize themselves to fight for their freedom and security. It can be about organizing at the meeting place, but also for asylum rights outside the meeting place. In this way, the Newcomers Youth’s participants are fighting for a common future and change of the migration laws. Newcomers Youth functions both as a social and supportive place, but also as a place where these organizing forces can be expressed in our fight for justice and for a world without borders.



## **How can you who work with Newcomers Youth support participants who want to organize and fight for their rights?**

- You can schedule workshops that raise issues about rights, political influence, holding political speeches, being an activist, how to plan a demonstration etc. Plan together with the participants what they want to do. Give the examples above if needed.
- You can ask the participants to tell you about the change they want to see through art produced at our workshops.
- You can have the discussions about how the participants would like the world or Sweden to treat asylum seekers, newly arrived and / or LGBTQ youth.
- You can give tips on what other organizations and initiatives are also organizing around asylum and LGBTQ rights, anti-racism and feminism.
- Contact the Newcomers Youth's office if you would like help with workshops, ideas, or simply accessing the relevant materials.

## **Important to consider as a leader:**

- Be open to what the participants want to do, even if that is not precisely how you are doing activism in your life.
- Please keep yourself updated on both rights and human rights situations in the world to better understand what is relevant right now.
- Often participants are aware of both rights and changes in the law that affect their lives. You as a leader should be a role model for the participants. Try to balance yourself as a person and as a "resource". It is important that you do not take all space with your knowledge or ideas, but instead try to make the meeting place as a space where the participants are "lifted". Therefore, be mindful of considering their knowledge rather than acting as someone who is wiser.
- Try to create a place that provides a constant exchange of knowledge between the participants. Do this by holding the conversations, including informal and spontaneous ones, related to the rights, activism and organizing at the meeting place.
- As a leader, be aware that everyone does not necessarily understand the terms and concepts that come up during the discussion. Even if you sit with a smaller group, a discussion can easily become exclusionary if there are the terms and concepts that are new to some.
- Remember that some Newcomers Youth's participants are already organizing themselves within different organizations and initiatives, and political parties. It can be good to highlight the important work they do outside the meeting place and ask them to share their knowledge and experience..

## Children's rights

### Convention on the Rights of the Child

All persons under 18 are children. Sweden has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child or the Children's Convention as it is also called. A convention is an international agreement. The fact that Sweden has ratified the Children's Convention means that it is legally binding and that we are bound to follow what the convention says. The Convention wants to ensure that the states that have ratified the Convention ensure that all children, regardless of their background, are treated with respect. The rights in the Convention are human rights that apply to all children who are within the borders of the state. This means that all children in Sweden have rights, whether they are citizens, asylum seekers or undocumented.

## Important to consider!

*Human rights are about the individuals' rights in relation to the state. The state is therefore obliged to ensure that human rights and thus children's rights are respected. The government of a country is ultimately responsible, but also the authorities, municipalities, county councils and courts. The Swedish Migration Agency is an example of a governmental agency. The Migration Agency must not violate the Convention on the Rights of the Child and must take this into account in all decisions concerning children.*

*If a state violates the Children's Convention, the state cannot be legally penalized. The other countries can criticize and try to change the actions of a state. In order to check that the states follow the convention, the UN has created a committee called the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Every five years, all states affiliated to the Convention submit a report on how the state complies with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. After the report, the Children's Rights Committee can submit its comments on how they think the state fulfills its obligations.*



## What Convention on the Rights of the Child says?

There are four main principles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. All other rights must be read and interpreted through them.

- Article 2 states that the Children's Convention applies to all children who are in a state that has ratified the Convention. All children have equal value and rights. No child may be discriminated against.
- Article 3 states that the best interest of the child should be in focus. What is best for the child must be decided in the individual case and the child's own opinion and experience must be considered.
- Article 6 states that every child has the right to life, survival, and development. This also includes psychological and social development.
- Article 12 states that children have a right to be happy and to express their opinions and be heard on the issues concerning the child. This should be done in consideration of the child's age and maturity.

Read the entire Convention at: <https://unicef.se/barnkonventionen/las-texten#full>



## **Children's rights in Sweden**

The Children's Convention became law in Sweden and came into force on 1 January 2020.

In December 2010, the Swedish Parliament approved a strategy to strengthen the children's rights in Sweden. The strategy exists so that the parliament, government, courts, authorities, county councils, and municipalities ensure a fulfillment of their obligations regarding the rights of the children, as well as to strengthen the rights of the child through these governmental bodies. Here you can read the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the strategy on the children's rights.

To read more about the strategy aimed to strengthen the rights of the children:

<https://www.barnombudsmannen.se/barnombudsmannen/publikationer/ovriga-publikationer/konvention-om-barnets-rattigheter---med-strategi-for-att-starka-barnets-rattigheter-i-sverige/>

### **Children's rights perspective within the asylum system**

The municipalities, county councils and other public authorities who meet the asylum-seeking children must comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and follow the strategy to strengthen children's rights in Sweden. This means, among other things, that all Swedish authorities should think about the best interest of the child when making their decisions.

In addition to these regulations, the children's rights perspective is incorporated into Swedish law. Among other things, Chapter 1., Section 10 of the Aliens Act (2005: 716) states that all cases involving a child must take into account the child's health and development, as well as the best interest of the child in general.

Asylum-seeking children in Sweden have the rights to:

- Be heard and express themselves
- Go to preschool and school
- Get both medical care and dental care on equal terms with all children living in Sweden
- Reunite with their families

## **What does it mean to have the right to be heard and express themselves?**

The right of the child to be heard is based on Article 12. of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The asylum cases have a general requirement for oral hearing, which is stated both in the Aliens Act and in the EU's asylum procedure directive. This requirement also covers children. The right does not mean a right to self-determination, but it gives the child an opportunity to participate in the decision that concerns them. In an asylum case this may mean that children must be offered the opportunity of their own asylum investigation. It is not enough to hear only one guardian regarding a child's asylum. This is a right and no obligation. If the child does not want to participate in the asylum investigation they have the right to refrain. Regardless of whether the child has had their own asylum investigation, the questions about the child's asylum and health will also be asked during the guardian's asylum investigation. If the child has applied for asylum with the guardian, they has the right to attend the child's asylum investigation if the child or the guardian requests so.

## **What does it mean to have the right to attend preschool and school?**

All children should have the right to education (Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child). This means that the right to attend school applies to all children who are in Sweden, whether they are citizens, asylum seekers or undocumented.

A municipality where a child is registered is responsible for the child being allowed to attend preschool, elementary school or high school. The high school studies must begin before the child reaches the age of 18.

## **What does it mean to have the right to health care and dental care on equal terms?**

No child may be discriminated against in respect of the right to health care (Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child). The asylum-seeking children are therefore entitled to the same free health care and dental care as those children with citizenship.

## **What does it mean to have the right to reunite with one's family?**

The right to be reunited with one's family is a right stated in the Children's Convention and in the European Convention on Human Rights. This means that when a child is separated from their family, the responsible state must act so that the child can be reunited with them. This can happen in their home country, in Sweden, or in another country. The temporary law on restrictions in Swedish asylum law has brought that the right to family reunification has been limited.

## **Asylum rights**

This part will not give an in-depth description of all asylum rights. Instead, it gives a brief description of where the responsibilities and roles are in relation to the authorities and municipalities, as well on what asylum grounds the LGBTQ persons can apply for asylum.

### **What is asylum?**

A right to seek asylum is a human right. Asylum means a refuge and it means that a person who is in risk of being killed or subjected to violence may be given protection and the right to settle in a country where the person is not a citizen. There can be several reasons why a person is seeking asylum. Within the Newcomers Youth's target group, it is common to move from one's home country due to threats or risks linked to one's sexuality, gender identity, or expression.

### **LGBTQI-related grounds to seek asylum**

It is possible to seek asylum if a person risks persecution because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. For example, it can be forbidden to be gay in the country where the person is a citizen, and there is a risk of being killed or imprisoned due to the person's sexual orientation. It can also be that a person has come out as trans for their family and now risks being killed by their family because of their gender identity. There are many LGBTQI-related reasons for seeking asylum. Whether it is the individuals or the state that poses the threat, the person can be granted asylum.

A person can also seek asylum if they risk persecution due to assumed sexual orientation or gender identity. For example, if a person is heterosexual but they are perceived to be gay by the persons who pose a threat.

LGBTQI people are a vulnerable group in all communities, cultures, and contexts. This means that even if a person has other reasons to seek asylum, such as coming from a war-affected country, it can have a major impact on the outcome of the case if information about belonging to this vulnerable group emerges in the asylum process.

### **Rights and obligations in the asylum process**

To apply for asylum in Sweden, the applicant must be in Sweden or at the border with Sweden.

## **Apply for asylum**

A person can submit an asylum application at the Migration Agency. The person fills out a form and submit their identity documents. The Migration Agency holds a brief conversation with the person and asks, among other things, about the reasons for the asylum. The Migration Agency has a duty of confidentiality. It is important to tell as soon as possible if the person has any LGBTQ-related asylum reasons. The asylum seeker is responsible for stating all relevant reasons why he is seeking asylum.

## **Accommodation**

If the asylum seeker has told the Swedish Migration Agency that they are a LGBTQI person, they can also apply to live in accommodation that is specially adapted for LGBTQI people. There are few places like that, and they may look different. Some are the apartments for one person, and others are the ones where the person must share accommodation with others. If a person is subjected to harassment, threats, or violence within their accommodation, it is important to report it to the police and inform the staff responsible for that accommodation.

## **The asylum investigation**

During the asylum investigation, the asylum seeker has an opportunity to explain why they need protection and cannot return or settle in their country of citizenship. The asylum investigation usually lasts around 2.5-3 hours. Sometimes the asylum seeker can be called for an additional oral interview if the Swedish Migration Agency has not been able to ask all relevant questions during the last time.

The asylum investigation often begins with an open question such as why the applicant is seeking asylum in Sweden. What an asylum seeker tells during their asylum investigation is the evidence that can be supplemented with other types of evidence before, during and after the asylum investigation. The other evidence may include, for example, documents, video recordings, photos, or letters. Since the asylum seeker's oral interview is the evidence, this means that it is also evaluated. Read about the evaluation of evidence under the section Decision on the next page. This is the reason why it is important that the asylum seeker is detailed and accurate when telling their story. For LGBTQI people, a part of the asylum investigation is when a case worker asks about the person's sexual orientation or gender identity in general. For example, when the person has realized that they are gay or transgender, or if they have had the same-sex relationships. The Swedish Migration Agency asks this because they also investigate whether the person is really a LGBTQI person. Newcomers Youth offers the interview training to all members who have to go through the asylum interview. During this time, the Newcomers Youth's asylum lawyers prepare the members for the Migration Agency's questions.

## **Decision**

In a decision concerning a LGBTQ-related asylum case, the Migration Agency shall assess whether it is likely that a person is at risk of persecution due to their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression if the person returns to their country of citizenship. The Migration Agency must also say their decision on whether they think that the person is likely to be a LGBTQI. As a basis for the assessment, the Migration Agency evaluates the evidence received. The most important and decisive evidence is usually the oral story. If the story in its entirety or in essential parts is coherent, detailed, does not contain any contradictions and is in accordance with available land information, the Migration Agency shall use the story as the basis for the assessment. This means that the Swedish Migration Agency believes in the applicant's story.

## **Appeal**

If a person has been denied their asylum application, they can appeal the decision to the Migration Court. If this appeal is rejected by the Migration Court, it is possible to apply for a "certiorari" (a process to seek judicial review of a decision of a lower court) at the Migration Court of Appeal. However, this is rarely granted if it is not of value for the legal application to create new or clarified practices – so-called precedent.

The appeal period is normally four weeks from the time the person received their decision. This is often done by calling the Migration Agency.

## **Impediment to expulsion**

If a person has been denied their asylum, but they have not told the Swedish Migration Agency that they are, for example, a LGBTQI person and this is a reason for asylum, the person can report that there is an impediment to expulsion.

An impediment to expulsion can only be reported if the rejection decision has gained legal force. This means that it is no longer possible to appeal and that the person can now be deported. An impediment to expulsion can be made if there are additional grounds for asylum that have not been assessed by the Migration Agency, and if the person has a valid excuse for not having told about these asylum reasons before. It may also be that the situation in the person's home country has changed negatively. For example, that an "anti-gay law" has been introduced.

## **Detention**

A person can be detained on various grounds, for example if the Migration Agency believes that it is likely that the person will not cooperate with the authorities when it comes to their deportation after the final decision, or if one's identity is unclear. Consequently, the person is detained in accommodation that they share with other persons who are also in detention. Being in detention is being deprived of liberty, but it is not a prison. It is not for people who have committed crimes. For those who are subjected to harassment, threats, or violence, it is important to know that the person is always entitled to report that to the police. The staff at the detention center should be informed if a person has been subjected to something that is offensive and / or illegal..

## **Tips!**

*Newcomers Youth, with the support of Demokratimotorn, is running a new project aimed at young LGBTQ people who are detained by the Migration Agency. The project is called Attention Detention and will, for at least one and a half years, map the needs of young LGBTQ people at the detention centers, start visiting activities, and produce material on asylum rights for young people at the Migration Agency's detention centers. If you get in touch with young LGBTQ people who are at the Migration Agency's detention centers you can contact Newcomers Youth's office by emailing [newcomers@rfslungdom.se](mailto:newcomers@rfslungdom.se).*

# **LGBTQ rights**

## **Transgender rights**

Not all transgender people want to change their body, name, or their legal gender marker, but some want it and they are entitled to do it. One needs to be registered in Sweden in order to start an evaluation of their gender identity, gender affirmative treatment, and to change legal gender. This also means that one must have a Swedish social security number to undergo the mentioned processes. The asylum-seeking and undocumented persons in Sweden have the right to care that “cannot wait”. Transgender healthcare is not included in this right unless the person has already started a treatment such as hormone therapy before coming to Sweden and therefore must continue with their treatment.

## **Evaluation of one’s gender identity**

To be able to change your body and / or legal gender marker, an investigation is required for gender dysphoria diagnosis. Changing one’s body to better match one’s gender identity can be called to undergo gender-affirming treatment or transition. Sometimes the word gender reassignment is also used. An evaluation or an investigation related to one’s gender identity is a part of public healthcare in Sweden. The evaluation is conducted by the teams of specialists that are a part of specialist psychiatry. This investigation is covered by “högkostnadsskydd” which is a public benefit that gives you a right to be protected from excessively high healthcare expenses. In most cases, a referral needs to be sent to a gender investigation in order for them to start the evaluation. The referral can be written by a doctor or a psychiatrist, for example a doctor at the healthcare center or a psychiatrist which works with children and adolescents.

## **New legal gender marker**

It is the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare that decides whether you can change your legal gender marker and undergo genital reconstruction surgery. When you can apply to change your legal gender marker varies a lot. Talk to a person responsible for your investigation about what is right for you. There is no requirement that you must undergo genital reconstruction surgery or get sterilized in order to change your legal gender marker. However, today you are not allowed to undergo genital reconstruction surgery if you have not changed your legal gender marker.

## **Change of name**

You do not need to have a gender dysphoria diagnosis or define yourself as a trans person to change your name. There is no age limit for changing names, but a guardian needs to sign the application for anyone under 18. At the Swedish Tax Agency, one can apply to add, replace, change spelling, and completely change their first name. There are some rules related to which names one can choose and the Swedish Tax Agency must therefore approve the name change.

Read more at [www.skatteverket.se](http://www.skatteverket.se).

Read more about trans healthcare and trans-related issues at [www.transformering.se](http://www.transformering.se)



## **Gender-neutral marriage code**

Since 2009, all couples have the right to marry on the same grounds regardless of the genders of the spouses..

## **To start a family**

For the same-sex couples, there are different options for having children together. Since 2005, the same-sex couples have been able to adopt.

It is also possible to have children through insemination. This can be done at home or at the clinic. Since 2005, the same-sex couples have the right to the state's assistance when it comes to insemination. Since the sterilization requirement for transgender people was removed in 2013, the transgender person also has the right to this assistance. The parents of the child must However, live in a relationship as a couple. Since 2016, the single persons have also been entitled to assisted insemination. In Sweden, there is no gender-neutral parental presumption which means that a parent who has not carried the child must register as a parent at the Social Service Office after the child is born in order to become a guardian. This is true even if the couple is married, but not for the married couples who are different sexes, regardless what type of pregnancy they had.

A surrogate pregnancy means that a person bears a child so that someone can then become the legal parents of the child. Since the surrogate pregnancies are unregulated in Sweden, it is not possible to get assistance at a clinic or at some governmental authority. Read more at [www.rfsi.se/familj](http://www.rfsi.se/familj)

## **Healthcare rights related to the Newcomers Youth's target group**

The asylum seekers and undocumented in Sweden are entitled to "care that cannot wait" which also includes sexual and reproductive health rights such as:

- Prenatal care
- Abortion
- Access to contraception methods
- Infectious diseases prevention and control
- Right to an interpreter.

"Care that cannot wait" is defined as urgent care. What is considered as urgent care is determined in individual cases, which makes the law interpretable by the healthcare professionals.

Care such as gender-affirming care for transgender people is not included in the definition of "care that cannot wait". Although it can be argued that in many individual cases the immediate intervention is needed.

# **Discrimination, incitement to hatred against minorities, and hate crime**

A right to not to be discriminated on the grounds of one's sexual orientation, gender identity or expression is regulated in the Discrimination Act (2005: 567).

## **Hate crime**

Hate crime refers to a crime committed against minorities and it includes unlawful discrimination. There may be other types of crime where a motive for the crime is to offend a person or a group because of any of the following: race, skin color, national origin, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation. Since July 2018, this also applies to hate crimes where a motive is one's gender identity or expression. The law states this as "könsöverskridande identitet eller uttryck" that can be translated as "gender-transgressive identity or expression". We at RFSL Ungdom do not agree with this formulation because it reinforces the image of transgender people as deviating from the norm. A person does not have to fit in any of these descriptions to become a victim of a hate crime. It is sufficient that a perpetrator has a motive linked to one of the grounds.

A person convicted of a crime with a hate crime motive can receive a penalty if they are found guilty. Thus, a person who has abused someone could receive a stricter penalty if the offense is considered a hate crime.

Unlawful discrimination and hatred against a group of people is a hate crime per se, but any crime can be considered a hate crime if it is based on the perpetrator's negative attitude to any of the listed groups. Read more at [www.polisen.se/lagar-och-regler/lagar-och-fakta-om-brott/hatbrott/](http://www.polisen.se/lagar-och-regler/lagar-och-fakta-om-brott/hatbrott/)

## **Unlawful discrimination**

In Chapter 16 Section 8 of the Criminal Code, it is illegal to discriminate against anyone because of one of the grounds listed in the paragraph on the next page. This means that a person at a company, a governmental office or a festival organizer can be convicted of unlawful discrimination and be fined or imprisoned for a maximum of one year.

## **Hatred against minorities**

According to Chapter 16, section 8 of the Criminal Code, incitement to hatred against minorities includes to publicly or with a motive threaten or insult a certain group of persons because of their race, color, national origin, ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation. A person can be sentenced to a maximum of two years' imprisonment for incitement to hatred against minorities. The law has been expanded with legal protection for transgender persons under the mentioned term "gender-transgressive identity and expression".

## **Discrimination Act**

In Sweden, it is forbidden to discriminate against anyone on seven discrimination grounds:

- Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Gender
- Gender identity or expression
- Religion or other beliefs
- Disabilities or variations
- Age

The regulation can be found in the Discrimination Act (2005: 567). Discrimination is a legal concept and it means that someone is disadvantaged because of one of the grounds of discrimination in the law. The Discrimination Act does not regulate what happens between private individuals or what is said in the media. The areas covered by the law include work life, school, purchase of goods and services, as well as healthcare and authorities such as the Migration Agency, the Swedish Tax Agency, and the Swedish Public Employment Service. Read more at [www.do.se](http://www.do.se)

## **To report discrimination, abusive treatment, and harassment**

If one wants to report discrimination, there are different ways of proceeding depending on where and in what context the discrimination has occurred.

- The Equality Ombudsman (abbreviated DO in Swedish) is responsible for compliance with the Discrimination Act (2008: 567) and discrimination can be reported to this authority. The Equality Ombudsman handles cases and decides with what they want to proceed and, for example, take to the court.
- The anti-discrimination agencies in Sweden are the independent organizations that can help individuals, groups, and places to report discrimination based on one or more of the seven grounds of discrimination in the Discrimination Act. It is good to contact them in the first place before submitting a report to the Equality Ombudsman. In this way you can get support with your case. The anti-discrimination agencies can also give you their views on whether a case is discrimination or not, and they can take the case to the court as well.
- The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (also known as the School Inspectorate) is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with the School Act (2010: 800). You can also contact the School Inspectorate if you need to report a school or pre-school for abusive treatment or discrimination.
- The Child and School Student Representative (abbreviated BEO in Swedish) works together with the Equality Ombudsman via the National Agency for Education. BEO is a part of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate and there you can report abusive treatment and harassment, also called bullying..

## **To mistreat someone**

As the young LGBTQ asylum seekers or newly arrived in Sweden, the school, the Migration Agency, work, and everyday life can put one in a vulnerable situation due to racism, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. At the meetings with young LGBTQ people who are also exposed to racism, the issues of bullying, hate crime and discrimination often arise. Therefore, it is important to be able to distinguish what is what.

The concept of "bullying" is something that is more and more being replaced with the concepts of discrimination, harassment, abuse, and abusive treatment, especially in the school and the schools' governing documents.

Both school and workplace have a responsibility to follow the equal treatment plan that exists. A school has more binding responsibility than, for example, a private workplace. Discrimination, harassment, as well as abuse or abusive treatment, can be a matter of life and death for LGBTQ people and therefore it is important that the responsible adults act. Repeated discrimination, abusive treatment, and violence are called harassment.

Discrimination is about both exercise of power and transfer of power between teacher and student, employer and employee, or doctor and patient as the examples. Discrimination between equals cannot be reported to the Equality Ombudsman, for example between pupil and pupil. However, the school is responsible for abusive treatment and discrimination between pupils. The school can also be reported if the school does not take responsibility.

At the workplace, discrimination, harassment, abuse, or abusive treatment can also occur. An employer is responsible for the work environment at their workplace and therefore also has a responsibility to address the situation where a person is bullied or discriminated against. If the employer discriminates by treating an individual differently based on seven grounds of discrimination, it can be considered discrimination. A concrete example is if the employer dismisses a person solely because they are pregnant or is on parental leave. The employer may also be reported for treating an employee differently because of the reasons other than the grounds of discrimination.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to all fantastic asylum-seeking and newly arrived LGBTQ youth who have contributed to this method book. You have the greatest strength within you!

Thanks to all the leaders at Newcomers Youth who through their dedication and work have been an inspiration for this book.

Thanks to all those who have supported Newcomers Youth over the years and have engaged in every way possible. Thanks to Jon Ely and Yolanda Bohm for their dedication.

Thanks to all the local RFSL branches that have started Newcomers Youth. You are fantastic!

Thanks to all of you who are not mentioned but who continue to fight for a world where everyone has the right to protection and safety.

## The Crisis Management Plan

**A venue for the event, meeting place, camp, etc:** \_\_\_\_\_

### You who read this!

This crisis navigation plan should be accessible and read by anyone who has any form of leadership function at Newcomers Youth - RFSL Ungdom. By managerial function is meant, for example, the project managers, coordinators, youth leaders, employees, and resource persons.

### What is a crisis?

This crisis navigation plan should be accessible and read by anyone who has any form of leadership function at Newcomers Youth - RFSL Ungdom.

By managerial function is meant, for example, the project managers, coordinators, youth leaders, employees, and resource persons.

### Preparations

You as a leader should have information on:

- The responsible persons for the venue to inform them about the situation.
- Evacuation routes.
- Meeting / gathering point.
- Where is a fire extinguisher?
- Where the first aid box is located.
- Persons with life-saving skills that are at the venue.

### National contacts

Telephone	Instance
112	SOS Alarm
1177	Sjukvårdsupplyssning
90101	Självordslinjen
_____	_____
_____	_____

### Responsible at the venue

Telephone	Name
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

### Local contacts

Telephone	Instance	Address
_____	Social services	_____
_____	Emergency clinic	_____
_____	Emergency children unit	_____
_____	Psychiatric emergency unit (18 +)	_____
_____	Child and adolescent psychiatry	_____
_____	Contact person at the local police	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

### Here you find:

Gathering point: \_\_\_\_\_

The first aid kit: \_\_\_\_\_

A list of persons with life-saving skills: \_\_\_\_\_

## In the event of an accident, fire, violence, and threat call 112

When you call 112, remember to inform them about following:

- Your name
- Where you call from
- Type of accident / situation
- Number of injured persons
- Type of injury or trouble
- Any codes to enter the venue

Make sure someone meets and shows the way for the rescue personnel / police.

### Accident and fire

- Assess the damage. Is there something around you that can be dangerous?
- Conduct the evacuation to the meeting point, ask them to not run and be calm.

### Violence and threat

- Your safety first. If the attackers remain at the venue, go to a locked room, or leave the venue.
- Never attempt to hold someone who has committed an assault / threat.

### Personal injury

If you are at the place when someone is injured:

- Stay with the injured person until help arrives.
- Assess the injury, call 112 if it is serious
- Speak calmly to the injured person
- Ask someone to pick up the first aid kit and call a person with life-saving skills
- Ensure that information about the incidence reaches to those responsible for the venue.

### Shock

In times of crisis it is common for people to be in shock. If a person is in shock:

- Create security and ensure that people in a crisis situation are in a calm environment.
- Keep the person warm with a blanket or similar.
- Try to make sure the person has company for the next 24 hours
- Don't push a person in shock to talk about what happened.

### Psychiatric emergency unit

If a person injures themselves or expresses that they want to harm themselves, we should call the external help. Most often it means going with the person to the nearest psychiatric emergency unit.

If you have contact with participants who have hurt themselves or wish to hurt themselves:

- Do not leave the person alone.
- Talk calmly to the person and use words that are not judgmental.
- Inform those responsible for the venue.

Keep in mind to:

- Take your suspicion seriously.
- You can listen, but you should not treat the person.
- You do not diagnose if a person is suicidal. The psychiatric care personnel do that.

### Routines and procedures for those who are responsible

Those responsible are responsible for the following in the event of a crisis:

- Write the notes with information about the situation
- Decision on how to handle the situation. For example, whether a person should be taken to psychiatric care.
- Information to the guardians (if the person concerned is under 18).
- Information to the leaders.
- Information to the participants.
- Follow-up with the person after the event.

# Incident report for Newcomers Youth

Used to document the risk events, accidents, threats, violence, injury and other situations that threaten or damage safety and security. When saving the report digitally use the file name IncidentX.docx where X stands for the date (incident 160403.docx).

Send both to [newcomers@rfslungdom.se](mailto:newcomers@rfslungdom.se)

Date when the report was written:

Location of the incident:

Date when the incident happened:

Affected person(s):

Person(s) filling out the report:

## Mark a type of the event:

Risk event    Accident    Threat    Violence    Damage    Other

## Mark those who are affected:

Employees    Activists    Visitors    Collaborators    Other

## Has this happened before (mark)?

Yes    If yes, when?    No    Not sure

Describe what happened (When? Where? How? Who?):

Describe actions taken to handle the event or what was needed:

## Mark who was informed about the event:

Head of Operations    Family    Police    Social services/other authority

The person responsible should complete this report before saving it in a security folder and ensure the action, feedback or other form of document confirming follow-up is present:

Responsible at Newcomers Youth:

Date:

Chairperson:

Date:



## **Example: Contract / Written agreement with volunteers and leaders**

A written agreement with volunteers and leaders at RFSL Ungdom and RFSL within Newcomers Youth

As a volunteer / leader at Newcomers Youth, a project at RFSL Ungdom, I will work according to the organization's statutes, principles, and policy documents. I am aware that I need to follow the rules and regulations of this organization.

As long as I am active at RFSL Ungdom I will not talk derogatory about the organization, methods or employees externally. Nor will I use the Newcomers Youth's methods in other external activities.

I understand that during volunteer assignments I represent RFSL Ungdom and Newcomers Youth.

As a volunteer / leader at RFSL Ungdom, I must be a member of the organization if I am under 30 and therefore, I can have influence at the organization through the annual meetings.

After working as a volunteer / leader at RFSL Ungdom, I have a right to get a certificate concerning the activities I worked with.

As a volunteer / leader, I follow the alcohol and drug policy, as well as the anti-discrimination policy that RFSL Ungdom and Newcomers Youth stand for.

An extract from one's criminal record is required for all volunteers, leaders and coordinators within Newcomers Youth due to specific contact and work with children and young people.

This is the assignment of a leader NAME who starts DATE until DATE. They are paid XX kr per hour. The number of hours is reported every month and it is predetermined with the local coordinator.

The agreement is valid as long as the assignment exists. This agreement has its duplicate.

Volunteer/leader:

Date and place:

Responsible person at Newcomers Youth:

Date and place:

## Example: Confidentiality policy

Confidentiality policy for the Newcomers Youth's responsible persons, leaders, volunteers.

Giving responsibility or volunteer assignment within RFSL Ungdom and Newcomers Youth is based on mutual loyalty and mutual trust between the coordinator and the responsible person or the volunteer.

During their work, those responsible or volunteers can access information of a confidential nature that concerns the organization's activities, as well as personal information from the members and participants. It is of the utmost importance that the Newcomers Youth's past, present and future clients have full confidence that those responsible and volunteers show confidentiality regarding their tasks.

The Agreement assumes responsibility or voluntary confidentiality for all confidential information and not to disclose any confidential information to third parties.

Confidential information may be in written, oral, and electronic form. It may include the information about communication plans, counselling, members, participants, as well as emergency plans and technical solutions.

The confidentiality obligation under the Agreement is binding both during the term of the assignment and after the termination of the assignment, unless the responsible person or the volunteer has obtained the written consent of the organization and the client.

When the assignment ends, or when the organization or coordinator requests so, all confidential information shall be returned to those responsible currently at Newcomers Youth.

\_\_\_\_\_ Project coordinator at Newcomers Youth / RFSL Ungdom

\_\_\_\_\_ Responsible person / Volunteer / Leader

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Place

## Environmental-friendly and sustainable tips

It is a fact that today's way of living has a major impact on the environment. With an increased environmental impact, there are also real consequences, such as a changed climate and greater risk of natural disasters. Everyone has a responsibility to reduce this environmental impact, including RFSL Ungdom. This document is a list of tips for positive environmental work.

In all activities that take place, we must keep the environmental aspects in mind. Thus, we should consider:

- To primarily choose the trains and public transport as the means of transportation in relation to the cars and flights.
- When choosing, for example, a car or a minibus as a means of transport, fill the car / bus so that just a few vehicle(s) are required. Environment-friendly cars are preferred.
- That coffee and tea purchased at the workplace and for events have organic and / or fair markings.
- For other purchases, mainly select the organic products, fair-labeled and / or eco-labelled products, and also try to choose locally produced goods.
- To think about the choice of food when it comes to, for example, coffee, chocolate, dairy products, fruits (ex. bananas), potatoes and tea. These are the products that have a significant impact on the environment and whose production can be done in inhumane working conditions.
- Reduce meat consumption by choosing vegetarian and vegan food.
- When purchasing the office furniture, we choose the products with low energy consumption and with a possibility of recycling.
- To buy second hand.
- Waste is sorted as much as possible.
- To the extent possible, use the used equipment instead of throwing it away.
- At the meetings, conferences, courses, or other national events, place the activities on a site that is eco-labelled and / or has an environmental mindset.
- Using electronic mailing to members and others is preferred in order to reduce paper consumption and printing.
- Printing documents with text on both sides (double-sided) and using recycled paper.

# Alcohol and drug policy

RFSL Ungdom follows Swedish drug and alcohol legislation, even abroad. All illegal activities are reported to the police.

## Why do we have alcohol and drug policy?

The LGBTQ youth more often have a risk behavior regarding the use of alcohol and drugs. It is dangerous when the usage of alcohol and drugs is associated with mental health problems within the target group. Therefore, there is a need to clarify our approach to alcohol and drugs within the organization. RFSL Ungdom is a youth organization working to promote the health of LGBTQ youth. Therefore, we strive to create a safe space and we never encourage the use of alcohol and drugs.

## Representatives of the organization

- arrange the meetings, camps, and conferences in an alcohol-free environment as much as that is possible.
- always be aware that one is expected to act as a role model to others.
- must not consume alcohol or drugs in a way that may cause the organization to be discredited or harmed.

## Participants in the organization's coordination

- shall not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the time of their coordination within the organization, except for prescription drugs.
- must comply with the rules of coordination regarding alcohol and drugs and the rules of the venue / location where the event is held.
- Participants at the external events and external representation
- should not be influenced by alcohol when representing the organization.
- must not be affected by alcohol during their scheduled time.
- must comply with the rules of coordination regarding alcohol and drugs at the venue.

## Responsible at the location

- shall not be under the influence of alcohol during the time of being responsible, as they are expected to be available throughout the event.
- work preventively and without moral judgment regarding the alcohol standards.
- initiate the non-alcoholic activities outside of scheduled time,
- must ensure that the policy is followed and sanction those who break the policy, in accordance with the paragraph below.

## Those who violates the policy

- must be offered support or referred to it, see appendix below.
- are not allowed to attend the continuation of the activity. If the person is a minor, their contact should be contacted.
- are personally charged the entire effective cost of its participation in the event.
- are given a written warning which may be the basis for their exclusion from the confidential assignments in case of breaching the policy.
- at the external and international events where the above sanctions are not considered feasible, those responsible on site have a mandate to issue the warnings.
- if the violations of the policy are repeated at the external and international events, the person can be deprived of the opportunity to participate in further events until the person is again considered suitable as a representative of the organization.

## **Clarification of concepts and responsibilities**

Being under the influence of alcohol means consuming alcohol, not being sober, or being hung over. By scheduled time is meant the time where a person communicates as the responsible person.

The representatives of the organization are everyone who are given trust or employed by RFSL Ungdom. All representatives of the organization are always expected to take responsibility for their behavior in relation to alcohol and drugs, and to act as a role model for the target group of young LGBTQ people. It is important that the representatives of the organization work preventively and not morally question the risk behaviors. They are encouraged to use the motivational speeches (MI in Swedish) as a method for change of one's behavior. At least one representative with experience of motivational speaking is wanted to be present at RFSL Ungdom's national events. These motivational speeches could be about the usage of alcohol and drugs. The representatives of the organization are not a less vulnerable group than others within the organization. Therefore, they may need both support and motivation to prevent and change the risk behaviors.

By arrangement is meant the members' meetings, camps, conferences, congresses, annual meetings, board meetings, educational events, and similar occasions when one represents the organization. An organizer refers to those persons in the occasions when RFSL Ungdom is mentioned as responsible for the event.

The person responsible at the location is a person who oversees the arrangement from the start until the end. In cases where a group is responsible on the spot, the person(s) who are appointed are responsible for that group. In cases of both external or international representation where several persons participate, at least one person responsible from RFSL Ungdom must be selected. Risk behavior refers to those people who drink more than 9-14 standard glasses per week, or 3-4 standard glasses at the same occasion, which is in accordance with the national guidelines for alcohol consumption

## **Support for people with risk behavior and more information**

Here we will have a list of support and tips on how to hold a motivational speech, as well as more references with information (the links) - coming!

If you have questions about your alcohol usage or someone you care about, you can contact the Youth Guidance Centre (Ungdomsmottagning) that has varying age limits. More information on where to find your youth centre can be found at <http://www.umo.se>.

Drugsmart answers the questions for those who are between 13-19 years, and you can be anonymous via mail. <http://www.drugsmart.com/fa-hjalp/>

You can also call Alkohol Linjen which is for you who is thinking about yours or someone else's alcohol habits. The counseling is by telephone and it is free of charge. You can call from all over the country and can be anonymous. Call [020-84 44 48](tel:020-844448).

Your health center and your county council also offer support and advice if one is concerned about their alcohol intake. You can find more information on their websites.



Newcomers Youth is a project that supports the LGBTQ youth in Sweden with asylum experience.

LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.  
Our target group is between 15-25 years.

On our website you can find more information about our activities and our organization.

There we also collected information about asylum and LGBTQ, such as what rights you have and how the asylum process goes.

On our website you will also find our calendar and more.  
Check out [www.newcomersyouth.se](http://www.newcomersyouth.se)

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