

# The John Howard Society of North Island's LGBTQ Charter of Rights

## You have the right to form relationships and have a family

- We will celebrate and support LGBTQ people's relationships, providing they are free from abuse
- We will support LGBTQ young people to decide their own friendships and spend time around people they feel comfortable with, in an environment they feel comfortable in
- We will celebrate and support LGBTQ parents and ensure that their right to be a parent is upheld



## You have the right to be yourself

- We believe that LGBTQ young people and adults have the right to express themselves in their own way and forge their own identity
- We will support LGBTQ young people and adults coming out, and their individuality will be respected
- We recognize that sexual orientation/gender identity is an important part of LGBTQ people's lives; however, it is only one part of an LGBTQ person's life, and we will challenge negative stereotypes and strive to promote a positive image of LGBTQ people within our organization
- We will value LGBTQ people as equal citizens, putting policies in place where appropriate in order to promote their dignity and rights

## You have the right to be heard

- We will find ways to ensure that both LGBTQ young people and adults' voices can be heard within our organization and represented at any level
- LGBTQ people's views are important to us and will be respected and valued
- We will listen to the needs of LGBTQ people and will create opportunities which are relevant to them and safe to use

## You have the right to education

- We believe that places of learning should recognize and value diversity and support both staff and students to come out should they choose to do so
- LGBTQ people should be able to easily access accurate and relevant information, and an education that furthers their knowledge and develops their abilities
- We will strive to be an organization which supports LGBTQ young people and adults to learn in a safe and supportive environment

## You have the right to government support on all levels

- We believe that local, BC and Canadian governments have a duty to ensure that LGBTQ young people and the wider LGBTQ community can access and enjoy all of their rights
- The law should protect LGBTQ people and ensure that they are treated equally and with dignity
- We will stand up for the rights of LGBTQ people and will speak out when appropriate against any law or practice which unfairly discriminates against LGBTQ people



## You have the right to housing

- We will take all reasonable steps to protect LGBTQ young people in our programs from harassment in their homes, from neighbours, or in their neighbourhoods
- We will reach out to LGBTQ young people and ensure that they are aware of support services available for them to remain in their homes
- We will reach out to LGBTQ young people and ensure that they are aware of their rights and support services available if they become homeless
- We will listen to LGBTQ people and respect their housing needs
- We will make sure that staff who are involved in assisting to meet young people's housing needs are aware and sensitive to the issues facing LGBTQ young people and adults

## You have the right to be looked after

- We believe that LGBTQ people are entitled to the best possible care and good standard of living
- We will support LGBTQ young people to live with their parents where this is beneficial to their health and wellbeing, and we will support them to have their say in the care that is given to them
- We will ensure that LGBTQ young people get the best possible care in care homes, and to have their say in the care that is given to them

## You have the right to be healthy

- We believe that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) youth and adults should be given the best health care possible and we will train our staff to be aware of their needs
- We believe that transgender people have the right to appropriate health care, including transsexual people's right to be supported through transitioning, should they choose to do so
- We will empower LGBTQ people to look after their own physical, sexual and mental health
- We recognize that homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism can seriously damage the health of LGBTQ people

## You have the right to privacy

- We understand that a person's sexual orientation is often private and we will not share this information with third parties without prior consent
- We understand that a person's gender identity should not be shared unless required by law to do so, and will ensure our organization upholds this law at all times

Issues, concerns or questions related to sexual orientation or gender issues?  
Contact the John Howard Society of North Island LGBTQ Champion:  
(250) 286-0611  
[lgbtqchampion@jhsni.bc.ca](mailto:lgbtqchampion@jhsni.bc.ca)

