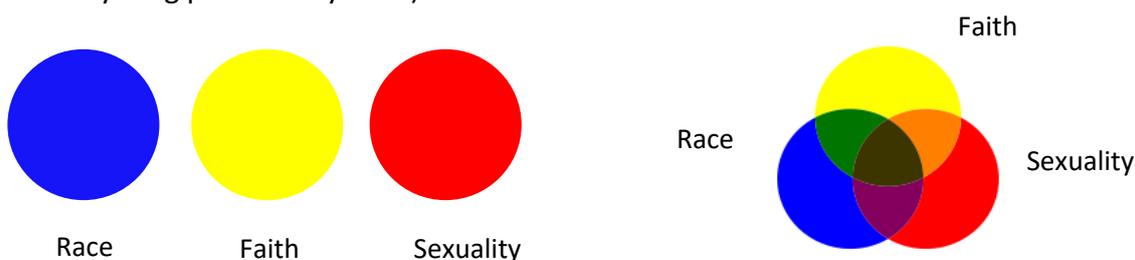


Supporting BAME young people: HBT bullying

Intersectional Practice

Understanding that people's identities intersect all the time and do not exist on their own is vital. It's important to understand the significance of intersecting identities: for example a young person's race and sexuality will always be interconnected and therefore must be seen as whole and not compartmentalised. What is it like to be a black, gay young man (...and other significant identities the young person may have)?



Intersectional thinking is not only important in understanding and valuing individual experience but also in understanding how a person might experience multiple and overlapping oppressions. For example understanding what it's like to navigate transphobia, racism and misogyny. Often people /organisations approach understanding LGBT experiences and providing support from a white, cis perspective. Not all identities will be seen and respected in all communities. What is it like, for example to experience both racism within LGBT+ communities and LGBT+ phobia within your cultural and/or faith community? Support needs to be tailored to individual experiences and actively work to challenge non-inclusive practice.

Community and family

There is often an emphasis on being 'out' as something that validates LGBT people's identities and can allow people to live their lives more openly. Whilst this is true for some people, the notion of being 'out' is not accessible for everyone. It is not necessarily an option for someone whose family, local community and/or faith community condemns being LGBT and for whom these spaces are integral parts of their and their family's lives. If someone is concerned about losing their place within these communities when coming out, then the notion of coming out is complicated. Not wanting to bring negative attention or 'shame' to a person's family can be a big factor in deciding whether to come out or not and can mean the person has to think about repercussions for others around them as well as themselves. This can leave young people feeling a sense of guilt or being a burden on their families.

- Cultural communities are often central to BAME people's lives and can be tight knit, meaning information is assumed to/can get passed on quickly. Equally, when a community is silent on an issue or something is thought of as taboo, it can feel overwhelming to exist in a space where you don't know who you can go to for help or support – and for this to remain confidential. Fear of losing or being ostracised from a community can be prevalent and so often LGBT people and their

The Anti- Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying Alliance

families face difficult decisions about telling which people, what information or who to seek help and advice from. Parents and families can feel as though they must choose between being a part of their community and supporting their child(ren).

- Marriage and having children in a heterosexual relationship, for some BAME communities is especially important – seen as tradition and intrinsically linked to upholding, celebrating and respecting culture. Being LGBT does not necessarily fit within this expectation and this expectation can add additional pressure to BAME LGBT young people – encouraging feelings of disappointing or letting families down and a pressure to live a life that is not what they want.

Representation and role models

- Often the LGBT celebrities or well-known people that get the most attention are white, cis people. All young people need to see diverse LGBT+ representation, especially those who are minoritised/marginalised e.g. BAME LGBT+ people, disabled LGBT+ people, older LGBT+ people.
- Racism within society/the media coupled with complexities around being ‘out’ as BAME people in the public eye, it can be harder to find representation of BAME LGBT+ people – young people may not know of any/many examples of people with similar backgrounds to them. It’s important to reassure young people that LGBT+ people exist in all cultures, countries and of all faiths and explore why it is more difficult to find examples of this – critique limited, and white bias (racist) media representation and depictions of history. For example, it has been proclaimed by some African leaders that ‘homosexuality is un-African’ or is a ‘Western’ or ‘white’ phenomenon, whilst actively not acknowledging or knowing that White European’s who colonised many African countries were responsible for enforcing anti-LGBT ‘buggery laws’ into their societies.
- BAME non-LGBT+ role models are also very important. There is a mis/understanding that BAME and faith communities are more LGBT+ phobic than white and non-faith communities and so young people’s perceptions of BAME and religious staff may be that they are LGBT+ phobic. All staff, but especially BAME and religious staff can actively fight against this idea and be visible in their support for LGBT people and equality. This might be in championing LGBT rights at school, LGBT ally stickers or posters in classrooms, openly challenging all LGBT+ phobic comments etc.

Support

- Get to know your local LGBT+ provision and what specific services they offer. E.g. do they have a BAME worker? Do they provide 121 support in schools? Not all young people will be able to get to LGBT+ youth groups or will feel comfortable or ready to go to a LGBT+ organisation or space
- Get to know your LGBT+ allies – are there any BAME organisations/community or youth workers who you know are LGBT+ supportive? Can these organisations also provide support for families as well as the young people?
- How are you addressing barriers to accessing support at school? Do young people know they can confidentially access support and that their parents don’t need to know? Do you have diverse staff who can offer support? *See fact sheet on [Rainbow Alliances](#) in schools.*