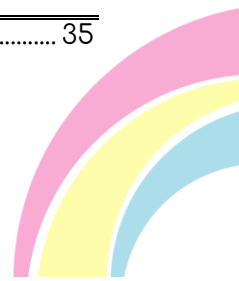




Youth Training Handbook for SOGIESC- responsive Career Guidance

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
Module 1: Introduction to LGBTQIA+ Terminology and Lived Experiences.....	6
1.1 Introduction to the Module	6
1.2 Introduction to SOGIESC terminology	6
1.3 Intersectionality Theory and its importance	11
1.4 Practical Tools.....	12
1.5 Training Exercises.....	14
1.6 Trainer Notes	16
1.7 Assessment and Feedback Methods.....	16
2. Legal Rights and Anti-Discrimination Protections for LGBTQIA+ Youth.....	18
2.1 Introduction to the Module	18
2.2 Theoretical Content	18
2.2.1 The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: Anti-Discrimination Principles.....	18
2.2.2 National Legal Framework: Greece	19
2.2.3 National Framework: Belgium	21
2.2.4 Key Concepts, Theoretical Models & Recent Findings	23
2.2.5 Resources and Practical Guidance	24
2.3 Practical Tools.....	24
2.3.1 Practical Tool 1: Rights Awareness Reference for SOGIESC-Inclusive Career Counselling	24
2.3.2 Practical Tool 2: How to handle the sharing of an incident	25
2.4 Training Exercises.....	26
2.5 Trainer Notes	29
2.6 Assessment and Feedback Methods.....	30
3. Coming Out in the Workplace: Decision-Making & Employer Assessment.....	31
3.1 Introduction to the Module	31
3.2 Theoretical Content	31
3.2.1 Understanding Coming-Out as a Process.....	31
3.2.2 Minority Stress Theory	32
3.2.3 Intersectionality in Workplace Disclosure.....	32
3.2.4 Legal & Policy Context.....	32
3.2.5 Authentic Allyship & Inclusive Workplaces	34
3.3 Detailed Practical Tools	34
3.3.1 Practical Tool 1: Coming-Out Decision Matrix.....	34
3.3.2 Practical Tool 2: Employer Inclusivity Checklist	35



3.4 Training Exercises.....	36
3.4.1 Exercise 1: "Coming-Out Reflection & Safety Scan" (Individual + Group Guided Discussion).....	36
3.4.2 Exercise 2: "Persona-Based Workplace Culture Case Analysis" (Group Activity + Peer Teaching).....	37
3.5 Trainer Notes.....	39
3.6 Assessment and Feedback Methods.....	39
4. Addressing Discrimination & Micro-aggressions in Career Guidance Settings.....	40
4.1 Introduction to the Module.....	40
4.2 Theoretical Content.....	40
4.2.1 Discrimination in Guidance Contexts	40
4.2.2 Micro-aggressions as Career Barriers.....	41
4.2.3 Minority Stress	41
4.2.4 Intersectionality and Risk Amplification	41
4.2.5 Ethical Role of Youth Workers	42
4.3 Detailed Practical Tools.....	42
4.3.1 Tool 1: Sample Discrimination Recognition & Response Framework.....	42
4.3.2 Tool 2: Mock Employer / Institution Inclusivity Assessment Checkbox.....	42
4.4 Training Exercises.....	43
4.4.1 Exercise 1: Scenario-Based Role Play (30 min)	44
4.4.2 Exercise 2: Employer / Institution Evaluation Groups (40 min).....	44
4.5 Trainer Notes.....	46
4.6 Assessment and Feedback Methods.....	46
5. Conclusions.....	47
6. References.....	48
Annex 1: Module 1 Exercises.....	53
1.1 Module 1: Exercise 1.....	53
Annex 2: Module 2 Exercises.....	56
2.1 Module 2: Exercise 1.....	56
Annex 3: Module 3 Exercises	60
3.1 Module 3: Exercise 1.....	60
Exercise 1: "Coming-Out Reflection & Safety Scan" (Individual + Group Guided Discussion)...	60
3.2 Module 3: Exercise 2.....	61
Exercise 2: "Persona-Based Workplace Culture Case Analysis" (Group Activity + Peer Teaching).....	61
Annex 4: Module 4 Exercises.....	63
4.1 Module 4: Exercise 1.....	63
Exercise 1: Scenario-Based Role Play (30 min).....	63
4.2 Module 4: Exercise 2	64



Exercise 2: Employer / Institution Evaluation Groups (40 min).....	64
--	----

“Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed and however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation- I.NE.ΔI.BI.M. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.”



1. Introduction

The **RAINBOW BRIDGES – Bridging the Gaps: Innovating SOGIESC-Responsive Career Guidance for LGBTQIA+ Youth** project was developed to address persistent inequalities experienced by LGBTQIA+ young people in education, training, and employment pathways. Despite progress in legal protections and social awareness in many European contexts, LGBTQIA+ youth continue to encounter structural barriers, discrimination, and exclusion that affect their access to career opportunities, their sense of belonging in professional environments, and their overall well-being.

Youth workers, educators, and career counsellors play a crucial role in supporting young people as they navigate transitions from education to employment. However, many professionals lack structured training, practical tools, and SOGIESC-responsive frameworks that enable them to provide inclusive, trauma-informed, and rights-based career guidance. This training handbook was developed to fill this gap by equipping youth professionals with the knowledge, skills, and methodologies needed to support LGBTQIA+ youth effectively and ethically.

The handbook combines theoretical foundations with practical tools and training activities designed for both formal and non-formal learning environments. It introduces key terminology related to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC), while also highlighting the importance of intersectionality in understanding how multiple social identities -such as race, migration background, disability, and socioeconomic status- shape the lived experiences and career trajectories of LGBTQIA+ youth.

In addition, the handbook explores legal frameworks that protect LGBTQIA+ individuals from discrimination, helping youth workers and career counsellors understand how rights-based approaches can empower young people to recognize and respond to unfair treatment in education and employment contexts. The material also examines complex processes such as coming out in the workplace, workplace inclusivity, and the impact of discrimination and microaggressions on professional development.

Beyond theory, the handbook provides practical tools designed to support real-world guidance practices. These include methods for documenting lived experiences through case studies, frameworks for assessing workplace inclusivity, strategies for responding to discrimination, and structured exercises that encourage reflection, empathy, and professional competence among practitioners.

Ultimately, the goal of this handbook is to strengthen the capacity of youth workers and career counsellors to create inclusive guidance environments where LGBTQIA+ youth feel respected, supported, and empowered to pursue their career aspirations. By bridging knowledge gaps and promoting SOGIESC-responsive approaches to career guidance, the RAINBOW BRIDGES project contributes to building more equitable educational and professional pathways for all young people.



Module 1: Introduction to LGBTQIA+ Terminology and Lived Experiences

1.1 Introduction to the Module

This module provides youth workers, career counsellors, educators, and LGBTQIA+ advocates with a comprehensive introduction to the foundational terminology shaping inclusive career guidance and youth work practice. Drawing on internationally recognized frameworks, such as the UNHCR Glossary of SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics), it will be possible to learn the precise definitions and nuances of key acronyms and umbrella terms such as LGBTQIA+, SOGIESC, and others, ensuring respectful and accurate communication in diverse professional and youth contexts (UNHCR, 2024). The module emphasizes correct use of terminology, not only as a matter of language, but as an essential practice for equity and validation of individual identities.

A critical lens on intersectionality is applied throughout, encouraging participants to analyse how factors such as race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, and migration status compound the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ youth and adults and Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989).

Research shows that multiple marginalized identities often result in increased psychosocial stress, limited access to career opportunities, and greater barriers to leadership and advancement (Adeyeba et al., 2025; Bowleg et al., 2023; European Disability Forum, 2024). By addressing intersectionality, the module prompts youth workers and counsellors to interrogate their support strategies and ensure meaningful inclusion and equity for all.

Practical application is prioritized through the LGBTQIA+ Lived Experience to Career Guidance Case Study Tool, a key resource guiding participants in collecting, documenting, and translating personal narratives into actionable, tailored support plans. This participatory approach supports reflective practice and the co-design of career guidance strategies, reinforcing empathy, accuracy, and strategic inclusivity.

On completion, participants will be able to: identify and accurately use SOGIESC-related terminology; analyse how intersectionality shapes career experiences for LGBTQIA+ individuals; recognize the impacts of stigma, discrimination, and microaggressions in career contexts; apply a structured approach to collecting and documenting lived experiences; and design inclusive career guidance strategies based on real-world case studies.

1.2 Introduction to SOGIESC terminology

UMBRELLA TERMS

LGBTIQ+: An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other diverse identities. The plus sign represents individuals with diverse



SOGIESC who identify using other terms. In some contexts, LGB, LGBT or LGBTI are used to refer to particular populations. Additional characters may be added, such as “A” for asexual, agender or ally, “2S” for two-spirit or “P” for pansexual. In many locations, the letter order varies, for example LGBTQI+ or GBLTQI+ (UNHCR, 2024).

SOGIESC: An acronym for sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. All people have SOGIESC (UNHCR, 2024).

Sexual orientation: Refers to each person’s capacity for emotional, affective and sexual attraction to, and intimate relations with, individuals of a particular gender or more than one gender. It encompasses hetero, homo-, bi-, pan- and asexuality and a wide range of other expressions of sexual orientation. This term is preferred over “sexual preference”, “sexual behaviour”, “lifestyle” and “way of life” when describing an individual’s feelings of attraction to other people (UNHCR, 2024).

Gender Identity: Refers to each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth or the gender attributed to them by society. Gender identity includes the personal sense of the body, which may or may not involve a desire for modification of appearance or function of the body by medical, surgical or other means. A person’s gender identity is distinct from their sexual orientation (UNHCR, 2024).

Gender expression: Refers to each person’s external manifestation of gender, which may or may not correspond to culturally normative expectations of masculine or feminine appearance and behaviour. Individuals use a range of cues – such as names, pronouns, behaviour, clothing, voice, mannerisms and/or bodily characteristics – to interpret other individuals’ genders. Gender expression is not necessarily an accurate reflection of gender identity. A person’s gender expression is distinct from their sexual orientation and sometimes also from their gender identity (UNHCR, 2024).

Sex characteristics: Each person’s physical features relating to sex, including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, genitals and secondary physical features emerging from puberty (UNHCR, 2024).

Queer: Historically a negative term in English-speaking contexts, “queer” has since been reclaimed by LGBTIQ+ persons to describe a wide range of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions in a positive way. While “queer” is used by some individuals who feel that they do not conform to a given society’s economic, social and political norms based on their SOGIESC, it is not always acceptable to persons of diverse SOGIESC and should therefore be used with caution (UNHCR, 2024).

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Asexual: Refers to a person who may experience romantic or emotional attraction, but who generally does not experience sexual attraction to anyone. May describe themselves in English as “ace” (UNHCR, 2024).

Bisexual: Describes people who have the capacity for romantic, emotional and/or physical attraction to people of more than one gender (UNHCR, 2024).



Gay: Refers to a man whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to men, although the term can be used to describe both gay men and women who are attracted to other women. Note that in some languages, the word “gay” can have a more negative connotation than the word “homosexual”. Always consult forcibly displaced and stateless persons on how they would like to be understood, as some people may prefer not to be identified by either of these terms (UNHCR, 2024).

Heterosexual: Refers to a person whose romantic, emotional and/or physical attraction is to people of a different gender (sometimes referred to as “straight”) (UNHCR, 2024).

Homosexual: Refers to people of any gender who are attracted primarily to people of the same gender as their own. In English-speaking contexts, “homosexual” may be considered an outdated clinical term that should be avoided and is considered by many to be derogatory, although it is still used in some non-English speaking contexts. It may be more appropriate to use “gay” or “lesbian” instead (UNHCR, 2024).

Lesbian: Refers to a woman of any gender identity whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women (UNHCR, 2024).

Pansexual: Describes individuals who have the capacity for romantic, emotional and/or physical attraction to people of any gender (UNHCR, 2024).

GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION

Cis/cisgender: A person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. A cis person may have any sexual orientation (UNHCR, 2024).

Gender: Whereas sex characteristics refer to physiological characteristics, gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a society considers appropriate for individuals based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender roles are learned, changeable over time and variable within and between cultures. They are also often central to the way in which people define themselves and are defined by others (UNHCR, 2024).

Gender confirmation treatment/ gender-affirming treatment: Refers to various medical interventions that may be one part of transition. Not all transgender people choose or can afford medical interventions such as hormone therapy or surgery. The terms “pre-operative” (or pre-op), “post-operative” (or post-op), “sex reassignment surgery” and “sex change operation” should be avoided because they can imply that transgender people who do not undergo medical transition are less valid. In many parts of the world, gender confirmation/affirming treatment is a requirement for legal gender recognition. The terms “sex reassignment surgery” and “sex change operation” are outdated and should be avoided (UNHCR, 2024).

Gender dysphoria: A diagnosis contained in the American Psychiatric Association’s “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V)”, which refers to a feeling of disconnect between one’s sex characteristics and one’s gender identity. However, as of 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) no longer considers diverse gender identity as a mental illness and uses



gender incongruence in its “International classification of diseases (ICD-11)”, whereby gender incongruence is characterized by a marked and persistent incongruence between an individual’s experienced gender and assigned sex (UNHCR, 2024).

Non-binary: A person whose gender identity falls outside the male-female gender binary. This term can encompass a wide variety of gender experiences, including people with a specific gender identity other than man or woman, people who identify as two or more genders (bigender or pan/ polygender), and people who do not identify with any gender (agender). Non-binary people may also describe themselves as “gender queer or gender fluid, (someone whose gender is not fixed over time) (UNHCR, 2024).

Third gender/third sex: Refers to people who do not identify as men or women or whose gender is not perceived to be male or female, and/or to individuals whose gender identity does not match their assigned sex at birth. It is more often used to refer to a person or group with a specific gender identity that may or may not be legally recognized. Third-gender groups include the muxhe of Mexico, the khawaja sera of Pakistan, the hijra of Bangladesh and the fa’afafine of Samoa. Some of these groups have legal third-gender recognition as well as specific social, cultural and economic roles that they play in their respective societies (UNHCR, 2024).

Trans/transgender: These terms are used by some people whose gender identity, and, in some cases, gender expression differ from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. A transgender person may have any sexual orientation (UNHCR, 2024).

Trans, transgender, non-binary, gender fluid and gender non-conforming: Used as umbrella terms representing a variety of words that describe an internal sense of gender that differs from the sex assigned at birth and the gender attributed to the individual by society, whether one feels male, female, more than one gender, or no gender. Trans/transgender is a preferred term to transsexual. The term was often used to communicate that one’s experience of gender involved medical changes, such as hormone therapy or surgery. which is used by some people to self-identify. It should however be avoided in our communication (UNHCR, 2024).

Transition: The process of changing one’s gender presentation to be more in line with one’s gender identity. Transition typically occurs over a long period of time and includes some or all of the following personal, medical and legal steps: telling one’s family, friends and co-workers; using a different name, pronoun and/ or title; dressing differently; changing one’s name and/or sex on legal documents; and possibly undergoing surgical or hormone therapy or another type of treatment. The steps involved in transition vary from person to person (UNHCR, 2024).

SEX CHARACTERISTICS

Assigned sex at birth: The sex assigned to a person at birth, typically based on the infant’s external anatomy. Also referred to as “birth sex” or “natal sex”. The phrases “assigned female at birth” (AFAB) and “assigned male at birth” (AMAB)



refer to people with typical male or typical female sex characteristics, regardless of their gender identity or expression (UNHCR, 2024).

Endosex: Describes a person who was born with sex characteristics that fit typical gender-binary notions of male or female bodies (e.g., non-intersex). An endosex person may identify with any gender identity and any sexual orientation (UNHCR, 2024).

Intersex: An umbrella term to describe people who are born with natural biological sex characteristics that do not conform to culturally established standards of maleness and femaleness. These sex characteristics include variations at the level of chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, genitals and secondary physical features emerging from puberty. There are more than 40 intersex variations and experts estimate that between 0.5 and 1.7 per cent of the world's population is born with intersex traits. An intersex person may identify with any gender identity and any sexual orientation (UNHCR, 2024).

PROCESS

Coming out: A process of self-acceptance. People may acknowledge their identity first to themselves and then share it with others. Publicly self-identifying one's identity may or may not be part of coming out, coming out can be a lifelong process (UNHCR, 2024).

Questioning: People who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity (UNHCR, 2024).

SOCIETY

Cisnormativity: The organisation of social structures, relationships, and societal institutions based on the assumption that all people's gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth (UNHCR, 2024).

Civil Union: Formal recognition of a relationship between two individuals. In some countries, civil unions confer some, though not all, of the same rights, benefits and privileges as marriages, including in relation to tax, social security benefits, estate planning and medical decisions. In some places, civil unions are established as an alternative for couples not legally allowed to marry due to their gender identity. Countries have different ways of describing civil unions, including, though not limited to, domestic partnerships, registered partnerships and civil solidarity pacts (UNHCR, 2024).

Gender-Based Violence: An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private (UNHCR, 2024).

Homophobia - Biphobia or Transphobia: Fear or hatred of gay or lesbian people, of homosexuality, of bisexuality or of transgender individuals. May manifest in exclusion, discrimination or violence (UNHCR, 2024).

Heteronormativity: The organisation of social structures, relationships, and



societal institutions based on the assumption that all people are heterosexual. Promoting heterosexuality as normative, superior or assuming that all people are heterosexual (UNHCR, 2024).

Outed/Public Outing: Describes an individual's sex, sexual orientation or gender identity being made public against their will or without their knowledge, often for malicious purposes (UNHCR, 2024).

Passing: Being perceived as cisgender or heterosexual by others. People who "pass" as cisgender and/ or heterosexual are less exposed to violence and discrimination, but typically must conceal their gender identity or expression in order to maintain a level of safety. "Passing" is not a goal for all people with diverse sexual orientation or gender identity and is not attainable for many, due to circumstantial, familial, medical, physiological and financial barriers (UNHCR, 2024).

Perception: In this context, refers to the act of viewing others in relation to their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Perceptions are subjective and may often be based on stereotypes and may be unconscious, creating implicit bias (UNHCR, 2024).

1.3 Intersectionality Theory and its importance

Intersectionality is a vital framework for understanding how various aspects of identity, including race, ethnicity, disability, economic status, and migration status, interact with SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics) and shape the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals. Rather than experiencing discrimination or resilience in single, separate domains, many LGBTQIA+ people navigate multiple systems of oppression simultaneously.

Originating in the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality theory draws attention to "the multidimensionality of marginalized subjects' lived experiences" by illuminating how legal, institutional, and social forces interact and compound disadvantage for those at the crossroads of multiple identities (Crenshaw, 1989). Research shows, for example, that a migrant LGBTQIA+ youth of colour or an LGBTQIA+ person with a disability is likely to encounter barriers that are qualitatively different from, and often more severe than, those experienced by people who hold only one marginalized identity (Adeyeba et al., 2025; Bowleg et al., 2023; Crenshaw, 1989).

These overlapping aspects can lead to greater vulnerability to psychosocial stress, exclusion from critical social and professional opportunities, and difficulties in accessing affirming services and career guidance (European Disability Forum, 2024; Hulko & Hovanes, 2017). Addressing intersectionality is therefore crucial in youth work and career counselling, as it calls for tailored and holistic support strategies that account for this complexity, ultimately helping to ensure equity and meaningful inclusion across the LGBTQIA+ community (Adeyeba et al., 2025; Bowleg et al., 2023; Crenshaw, 1989; European Disability Forum, 2024; Hulko & Hovanes, 2017).



1.4 Practical Tools

LGBTQIA+ Lived Experience to Career Guidance Case Study Tool

The purpose of this tool is to guide the youth workers and/or career counsellors in collecting, documenting, and transforming LGBTQIA+ young people's lived experiences into actionable, tailored career guidance plans. It will help them ensure a respectful, trauma-informed, and privacy-conscious process while creating structured case studies that can inform individual and organizational practice.

The first thing to be done when it comes to asking people that are part of the LGBTQIA+ community to share their experiences, is to have previously set up the proper environment. That means that the purpose of the collection must be fully explained beforehand. It is important that the young people know that any information they provide will be fully anonymized and that they can withdraw at any time. For the participant to feel comfortable sharing their story, the room must guarantee their privacy. Lastly, a certain level of psychological safety must be ensured. That means that the youth worker or counsellor must be able to "read between the lines" and recognize when to avoid pressing the young person for more details and be cognizant of the language they use.

After having completed the above comes the time for the youth worker or career counsellor to prompt the young person to describe what they have experienced. Some good questions to start with are "How are you feeling about your current education/career path?", "Do you feel that your identity has affected that at all?". Then those can be followed up with "How has your identity shaped your career choices or opportunities?" or "What challenges have you faced in education or employment linked to your identity?"¹. No matter the particular phrasing of the questions, they should stem from this version of an empathy map and these four points: feelings, aspirations, barriers, supports.

Once the "interview" is finished, all the information given by the young person must be edited to a case study format. This is the end step of the tool and is done independently from the previous two. The first sub-step for that is the removal of any identifying demographic and background details that might compromise the anonymization that was guaranteed. Then the youth worker or career counsellor can arrange the rest of the information any way they like in order to create the case study example. A proposed structure is to start with the main challenges expressed (i.e. issues that might have held back their advancement), then to describe any coping strategies to address these challenges, next to mention any support systems or resources in place (such as community connections or training programs), then to list the short and long term career goals and at the end your professional recommendation for the approach to be used in these specific circumstances.

¹ A more comprehensive list of questions is available at the end of this sub-chapter and at sub-chapter 1.4

Checklist

For convenience, this is a bullet-point list of everything needed in order to record the experience of an LGBTQIA+ young person and then turn it into a case study example.

Step 1: Preparation & Safeguarding

- Informed consent: Explain the purpose, confidentiality measures, and the youth's right to withdraw at any time.
- Safe environment: Ensure privacy and psychological safety (online or in person).
- Trauma-informed approach: Avoid pressing for details that may cause distress. Use sensitive, non-judgmental language.

Step 2: Lived Experience Collection

Confidential Interview Prompts (these are indicative, you may change them as needed):

"How are you feeling about your current education/career path?"

"Do you feel that your identity has affected that at all?"

"How has your identity shaped your career choices or opportunities?"

"What challenges have you faced in education or employment linked to your identity?"

"What supports have been most helpful to you in navigating these challenges?"

"What are your short-term and long-term career aspirations?"

Empathy Mapping:

- Feelings: How the young person feels in education/training/job-seeking contexts.
- Barriers: Systemic, institutional, or personal challenges they face.
- Aspirations: Career goals and personal growth ambitions.
- Supports: Positive influences, networks, and resources currently available.

Step 3: Case Study Structuring

In this step you transform the collected information into a structured, anonymized case study that can be used for tailored guidance and, where appropriate, internal team learning.

Case Study Template:

- Profile Summary: Anonymized demographic and background details relevant to the career path
- Key Challenges: Issues affecting career progression (e.g., discrimination, lack of role models)
- Coping Strategies & Strengths: How the individual navigates obstacles; unique skills developed
- Supports & Resources: Community connections, mentorships, training programs (how other people in similar situations have done it)
- Career Goals: Short-term and long-term objectives
- Guidance Approach: Recommended career counselling strategies based on their needs and context



1.5 Training Exercises

The table below provides step-by-step instructions / script on how to teach both the theory in 1.2 and the tool described in 1.3 to youth workers and/or career counsellors. It covers both online and in person training scenarios. The duration for most steps will be in brackets as a suggestion, to be adjusted based on the available time.

The scenarios mentioned at the training exercise can be found in the Annex.

Step	Duration	Materials	Description
Brief introduction to the Rainbow Bridges project	5'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	The presentation slides should be brief and outline the general goal of the project and what has happened that lead to the handbook and training seminar.
Introduction to the theoretical part	15'-20'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	First assess how familiar the participants are with the terminology. Show them 3-4 different terms, at least one of them less common, like intersex or asexual, and ask them to define them. Use that as a starting point to properly give the definition of the terms found in 1.2. Then start to lead to the practical tool. Talk about how important these identities are in the professional path of young people and how sometimes they come up within the guidance framework.
Describe the main use of the practical tool	3'-5'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	Using the information from this handbook you can outline all the reason why such a tool will or can be beneficial for the professionals. Explain that you'll walk them through all the steps.



Tool Step 1: Preparation & Safeguarding	3'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	Explain that this is so the person is feeling safe, knows why and how everything is happens and is aware of things that might be triggering.
Tool Step 2: Lived Experience Collection	5'-10'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	For the explanation of this tool step, you can remind the participants that the people in front of them might not know where to start or how to describe what they want. In this step the counsellor/youth worker will have to guide the person while they tell them their experience. Emphasise the four key pillars of this step and that any guiding or clarifying questions should have them in mind.
Tool Step 3: Case Study Structuring	10'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	You can transition from the previous step by reminding the participants that information such as that provided by the person can be useful to other professionals and therefore the time has come to create a case study to help them. Show them the structure from 1.3 and describe what each part is for.
Practical exercise: role playing	30'-35'	For online: digital copies of the role sheets and tool steps. Some function like break-out rooms for separate work For in person: printed: role sheets, the tool steps twice;	Split the participants in groups of 3 (if the numbers don't work, prefer 4-member teams rather than pairs). One person will be given the profile of a young person sharing an experience, one person will act as a youth worker/ career guidance counsellor, and one person will



		pens; pencils; markers Room for the teams to work separately.	be the observer. (If there are 4 people, have two observers) The teams will have 25' to act out the scenario of a young LGBTQIA+ person sharing an experience with a youth worker/ career counsellor, and 5' for the observer to make comments. At the end you will ask the participants to share how they felt during this exercise.
Closing of the module	10'	For online: Presentation with the reflection questions; a code for the evaluation questionnaire, if this module is taught independently. For in person: Presentation with the reflection questions; a code for the evaluation questionnaire, if this module is taught independently.	You ask the participants the reflection questions that can be found in sub-chapter 1.6 (you can add if you want). This is the end of the module and you can invite participants to share a brief comment or a brief answer to one of the evaluation questions, if they want. If this is the end of the training as a whole, you can give them the evaluation form as well.

1.6 Trainer Notes

These are some tips that might be helpful during the training session(s):

- When asking the participants to answer something, encourage them to answer even if they're not 100% sure.
- During the explanation of the terms, stress that it's okay if it takes them some time to get used to them and to be confused for a while.
- For the training exercise, first ask if any of the participants would like to play the role of the young person sharing their experience. Some might be uncomfortable, so look for volunteers, first and then assign the roles.

1.7 Assessment and Feedback Methods

Below are the suggested evaluation and reflection questions that the trainer(s) can give to the participants at the end of the training session. Neither list is



absolute and the trainer(s) can modify them if they feel it necessary.

Note: The evaluation questions can be either given to the participants at the end of this part of the training or at the end of the entire training, in a form that combines the questions for all modules.

The trainers can have the participants answer these questions in order to evaluate the training. They can distribute the evaluation questionnaires printed or in an online form.

- How familiar were you with the LGBTQIA+ terminology? [On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (Very familiar)]
- Did you find the terms explained useful? (Yes or No)
- Do you now feel comfortable using these terms? [On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (Very comfortable)]
- Did you find the practical tool useful? (Yes or No)
- Do you believe you are better equipped to deal with LGBTQIA+ youth professionally? (Yes or No)
- Do you believe this tool is helpful for more inclusive career guidance? (Yes or No)
- After the completion of the training and the evaluation form, the trainer(s) can use the questions below to help the trainees reflect on everything they've gained from this first module.
- Do you believe that you've learned something new when it comes both to LGBTQIA+ terminology and how to deal with LGBTQIA+ youth?
- Do you think the case study tool can be useful not only for LGBTQIA+ youth but potentially other minority groups?



2. Legal Rights and Anti-Discrimination Protections for LGBTQIA+ Youth

2.1 Introduction to the Module

Understanding legal rights and anti-discrimination protections is essential for LGBTQIA+ youth as they navigate challenges in education, employment, and training environments. For many, legal frameworks provide not only formal protection but also the practical means to address discrimination, harassment and exclusion, experiences that research shows can undermine well-being, self-confidence, educational achievement, and career progression (OHCHR, 2019). When youth workers and career counsellors are knowledgeable about these rights, they can empower young people to recognize, respond to and assert their claims in the face of adversity, fostering resilient self-advocacy and renewed hope for inclusion.

Without such protection, LGBTQIA+ youth face heightened risks of bullying, isolation, and economic disadvantage, often leading to early school leaving or withdrawal from promising employment pathways (Russell et al., 2021; Saggu, 2022).

In contrast, environments where legal protections are visible, supported by inclusive education policies and workplace laws, see higher rates of life satisfaction, improved employment experiences, and better mental health outcomes for LGBTQIA+ individuals (Ioverno, 2023; Mahowald, 2022). These outcomes demonstrate that legal rights are not abstract, but pivotal to everyday safety and opportunity.

Participants will learn not just the legal principles, but how to translate complex frameworks into practical, plain-language strategies that address real incidents and needs. Through hands-on use of the Rights Awareness Reference tool, counsellors are supported in guiding youth through practical next steps, locating trustworthy support and referral pathways, and promoting trauma-informed, empowerment-oriented responses. This approach ensures youth workers and counsellors can help LGBTQIA+ youth access their rights and feel supported as their authentic selves, no matter the context.

2.2 Theoretical Content

2.2.1 The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: Anti-Discrimination Principles

Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union serves as a cornerstone for anti-discrimination protections across the EU. The Article clearly states: *“Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited”* (European Union, 2000; FRA, 2025). This provision, which builds on both EU law and international human rights conventions, establishes sexual orientation explicitly alongside other protected grounds, and leaves the list open-ended,



thereby covering evolving forms of discrimination.

This prohibition is not just symbolic; it provides a direct legal basis for action and informs the development of comprehensive anti-discrimination policies at national and EU levels. To operationalize these rights, the EU adopted Directive 2000/78/EC (the Employment Equality Directive), which lays down a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (Council of the European Union, 2000).

This directive bans discrimination based on religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation in all aspects of employment, including hiring, working conditions, promotions, and dismissals (Council of the European Union, 2000). It has been transposed into national law in every EU Member State and is enforceable through national courts and equality bodies.

Together, Article 21 of the Charter and Directive 2000/78/EC ensure that LGBTQIA+ individuals are legally protected against discrimination not only in employment, but, by the Charter's overarching principles, also in education, training, and a wide array of public and private services, reinforcing the principle of equal treatment throughout the European Union (European Union, 2000; Council of the European Union, 2000; FRA, 2025).

2.2.2 National Legal Framework: Greece

Greece's commitment to equal treatment and non-discrimination in employment is rooted in both its Constitution and a comprehensive set of statutory laws, ensuring strong protection for LGBTQIA+ employees and all vulnerable groups. The foundation lies in Article 4 of the Greek Constitution, which proclaims that "All Greeks are equal before the law" and guarantees that "Greek men and women have equal rights and obligations" (Hellenic Parliament, 2019). Additionally, Article 22(1)(b) enshrines the principle of "equal pay for work of equal value," directly supporting pay equity in employment (Hellenic Parliament, 2019). Moreover Article 25 confirms the obligation of the State to guarantee the effective enjoyment of individual and social rights, regardless of race, nationality, religion, or other status (Hellenic Parliament, 2019).

Key national laws

The legal framework guaranteeing equality and non-discrimination for LGBTQIA individuals in the workplace in Greece is fundamentally established by the Equal Treatment Law 4443/2016. Specifically, the law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender characteristics (European Commission et al., 2024). For clarity, "gender identity" refers to transgender individuals, while "gender characteristics" refers to intersex individuals, those born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not fit typical binary notions of male or female. Notably, the Greek word for gender ("φύλο") corresponds to the word "sex" (European Commission et al., 2024). Furthermore, national caselaw considers the right to non-discrimination based on gender identity to derive from the constitutional right of the free development of an individual's personality (Article 5 of the Constitution), while the respect for human dignity (Article 2 of the Constitution) and the right to the free development of personality are cited as the foundation for protecting



sexual orientation (Hellenic Parliament, 2019).

The principle of equal treatment enshrined in Law 4443/2016 applies comprehensively to all persons in both the public and private sectors across several critical areas of employment and vocation (European Commission et al., 2024). This coverage includes the conditions for access to employment, to self-employment or to occupation, spanning selection criteria, recruitment, and promotion at all levels of the professional hierarchy. It also covers all facets of employment and working conditions, including pay and dismissals, as well as access to all types and levels of vocational guidance and training. Finally, it guarantees equal treatment regarding the membership of, and involvement in, workers' or employers' organizations (such as trade unions), along with the benefits provided by such groups.

Law 4443/2016 explicitly defines and prohibits multiple forms of harmful conduct based on these protected characteristics (European Commission et al., 2024). These include direct discrimination (less favourable treatment in a comparable situation), indirect discrimination (a seemingly neutral provision placing a protected person at a disadvantage), and instructions to discriminate (any order to carry out discriminatory treatment). Crucially for LGBTQIA individuals, the law prohibits discrimination by association, defined as less favourable treatment due to a close association with someone possessing protected characteristics (European Commission et al., 2024). The explanatory memorandum confirms that same-sex partners are specifically included in this definition of "close association". The law also prohibits harassment, classifying it as discrimination when it involves unacceptable behaviour connected to protected grounds that aims to or results in offending a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, derogatory, degrading or aggressive environment (European Commission et al., 2024).

Specific protections against workplace violence and harassment are detailed in Law 4808/2021, which forbids harassment, whether based on gender or "any other ground of discrimination" (European Labour Authority, 2024). Employers are obligated to adopt measures and regulations to combat such violence and harassment. A person suffering from violence or harassment also holds the right to leave the workplace for a reasonable period of time without loss of salary or adverse consequences if there is a perceived serious danger to their safety, particularly if the employer is the perpetrator or fails to take the necessary measures (European Labour Authority, 2024).

Law 3896/2010 further secures equal opportunities and treatment for men and women in all work-related matters, including hiring, pay, promotion, training, working conditions, and dismissal. Greek legal interpretation regards discrimination based on gender identity as a form of sex discrimination under this law, ensuring robust protections for trans workers (Hellenic Republic, 2022). The law also addresses unlawful harassment and sexual harassment, integrating both direct legal accountability for employers and support mechanisms for affected employees (Hellenic Republic, 2022).

The Labour Code, alongside Law 4808/2021 and the consolidated Presidential Decree 62/2025 ("Fair Work for All"), strengthens protections against unfair dismissal, upholds health and safety standards, guarantees dignity at work,



and modernizes legal responses to new forms of workplace vulnerability, including digitalization and flexible working (Kremalis Law Firm, 2025). These reforms have introduced explicit remedies for employees who face adverse or discriminatory treatment due to requests for leave, flexible schedules, or exercising employment rights, and reinforce equal pay and evaluation systems across all sectors (Kremalis Law Firm, 2025).

In addition to labour and equal treatment legislation, criminal law and gender recognition law further reinforce protection for LGBTQIA+ people in and around the workplace. Law 4285/2014 amended the earlier anti-racism framework and criminalises public incitement to violence or hatred, as well as threats and certain forms of hate speech, when motivated by characteristics such as sexual orientation, gender identity, gender characteristics, disability, race, colour, religion, or ethnic origin (Library of Congress, 2014; Ministry of Justice, 2014; OSCE, 2024). By explicitly listing sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender characteristics among the protected grounds, this law strengthens the response to hate-motivated incidents that LGBTQIA+ workers may face from colleagues, clients, or the broader public, and operates as a deterrent to severe harassment and violence connected to employment contexts (Library of Congress, 2014; OSCE, 2024).

Complementing this, Law 4491/2017 on legal gender recognition establishes the right of individuals to have their gender identity recognised in official records and to request correction of their registered sex so that it corresponds to their lived gender, without any requirement for surgery or sterilisation (Hellenic Republic, 2017). The subsequent reform of article 3(3) by Law 5089/2024, which introduced equal civil marriage, removed the previous condition that a person must be unmarried to access legal gender recognition, allowing married trans people to update their documents without divorcing (Hellenic Republic, 2024). This framework is highly relevant to employment, as accurate legal documents (ID, social security, tax and employment records) reduce the risk of unwanted outing, misgendering, and administrative barriers in recruitment, HR processes, and day-to-day workplace interactions (Hellenic Republic, 2017, 2024).

2.2.3 National Framework: Belgium

The Belgian Constitution establishes equality before the law and prohibits discrimination, forming the legal basis for all subsequent equality legislation (L&E Global, 2024). Articles 10 and 11 guarantee that all Belgians are equal and explicitly affirm equality between women and men, while also safeguarding the rights and freedoms of ideological and philosophical minorities, which informs the interpretation of later anti-discrimination and gender equality laws in employment (L&E Global, 2024; United States Department of State, 2023).

Federal Anti-Discrimination and Gender Equality Laws

Belgium's equal employment framework is anchored in three key federal laws, all applicable to employment and occupation (Federal Public Service Belgium, n.d.; L&E Global, 2024).



- **General Anti-Discrimination Law (10 May 2007)**

This law prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, instructions to discriminate, and victimisation in employment, self-employment, vocational training, and access to professions on grounds including sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, age, wealth, civil status, current or future health status, social origin, and other characteristics (Federal Public Service Belgium, n.d.; L&E Global, 2024). It applies to all stages of employment, from recruitment and selection to working conditions, promotion, and dismissal, and has been amended to explicitly recognise multiple and intersectional discrimination, as well as discrimination by association and presumed discrimination, with strengthened compensation rules (L&E Global, 2024).

- **Gender Law (10 May 2007, as amended)**

The Gender Law bans discrimination based on sex, pregnancy, motherhood, medically assisted reproduction, gender reassignment, gender identity, gender expression, and gender characteristics in domains such as employment, vocational guidance, membership of workers' and employers' organisations, social security, and access to goods and services (Federal Public Service Belgium, n.d.; Settling in Belgium, 2012). Amendments in 2014 and subsequent reforms explicitly introduced gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds, making this law central for the protection of trans and gender-diverse workers, while also covering harassment and sexual harassment and providing for civil and criminal remedies (Equaldex, 2025; United States Department of State, 2023).

- **Anti-Racism Law (30 July 1981, as amended)**

The Anti-Racism Law prohibits discrimination in employment based on nationality, so-called race, skin colour, ancestry, and national or ethnic origin, complementing the other two laws by addressing racist and xenophobic forms of discrimination (Equaldex, 2025; Settling in Belgium, 2012). This is particularly important for LGBTQIA+ youth who may experience intersectional discrimination at the nexus of race, ethnicity, and SOGIESC, adding an extra layer of protection in the labour market (OECD, 2025).

Together, these three laws apply horizontally to both public and private sectors and impose a legal duty on employers in Belgium to prevent discrimination, provide equal opportunities, and address harassment in the workplace (L&E Global, 2024; Settling in Belgium, 2012).

Gender Recognition and Identity in Employment

Belgium's Gender Recognition Act, in force since January 2018, introduced a self-determination procedure allowing individuals to change their legal gender and, where appropriate, name through an administrative process without requiring surgery or sterilisation (Belgian Ministry of Justice, 2018). This enables trans workers to obtain identity documents and employment records that reflect their gender identity, reducing risks of outing, misgendering, and administrative discrimination in job searches, hiring, HR systems, and payroll (Equal Rights Coalition, 2022; ILGA-EUROPE, 2025a). The Constitutional Court has criticised the binary nature of the law and called for either additional



categories or removal of mandatory gender registration, prompting ongoing debates on recognising non-binary markers and improving access for minors and intersex people (ILGA-EUROPE, 2025a).

Protection from Conversion Practices and Hate-Motivated Offences

Belgium has taken a pioneering step by criminalising LGBTQ+ “conversion practices”, understood as attempts to change, suppress, or “correct” a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity (Chini, 2022; EPRS, 2022). Recent amendments to the Criminal Code create specific offences targeting those who perform, organise, or promote such practices, with penalties that can include fines, imprisonment, and professional bans, reinforcing the protection of LGBTQIA+ people in health, educational, and counselling settings connected to employment guidance (ILGA-EUROPE, 2025a). Additionally, hate crime and hate speech provisions in Belgian criminal law treat bias based on sexual orientation or gender identity as an aggravating circumstance, leading to more severe penalties where offences are motivated by prejudice, thereby reinforcing safety for LGBTQIA+ people in public and workplace environments (ILGA-EUROPE, 2025a; United States Department of State, 2023).

2.2.4 Key Concepts, Theoretical Models & Recent Findings

The concepts of “protected grounds” and “equal treatment” lie at the heart of the European and national legal frameworks designed to safeguard LGBTQIA+ youth. Protected grounds refer to the specific characteristics, such as sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics, race, religion, age, and disability, which are covered by anti-discrimination laws to ensure that every individual can enjoy equal rights and is protected from unfair treatment (FRA, 2024; ILGA-EUROPE, 2025b). The principle of equal treatment means that people with these characteristics must be treated fairly and without bias in education, employment, housing, healthcare, and public services, as established both in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and key national laws.

This layered structure begins with baseline protections guaranteed by the EU Charter and relevant directives (such as Directive 2000/78/EC), which apply to all member states. These requirements are then expanded and made specific through national legislation and local policy (ILGA-EUROPE, 2025b; OECD, 2025). Greece and Belgium have both transposed EU directives into law, adding additional safeguards and support mechanisms for LGBTQIA+ citizens. Belgium, for example, has built a multi-dimensional policy system encompassing anti-discrimination legislation, hate crime penalties, and support for intersex and trans youth, while Greece has advanced in legal gender recognition and anti-discrimination for employment and education (ILGA-EUROPE, 2025b; OECD, 2025).



2.2.5 Resources and Practical Guidance

- EUR-Lex Portal for EU Law: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/>
- ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map and Country Reports: <https://rainbowmap.ilga-europe.org/>
- Greek Ombudsman (Συνήγορος του Πολίτη): <https://www.synigoros.gr/>
- Unia - Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities: <https://www.unia.be/en> and specifically for sexual orientation: <https://www.unia.be/en/discrimination-sexual-orientation>
- Institute for the Equality of Women and Men (IEFH/IGVM): <https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/en>

2.3 Practical Tools

2.3.1 Practical Tool 1: Rights Awareness Reference for SOGIESC-Inclusive Career Counselling

Discrimination sometimes is clear as day and sometimes it doesn't immediately register to a person that they've been discriminated against. They might not even be aware that anti-discrimination laws exist or what exactly they cover. For that reason, and recognising that a career counsellor or a youth worker with a close relationship with a young person might be the one they'd turn to after experiencing something like this, this tool helps these professionals link the experiences of young people to laws that protect them from such treatment. For that reason, below is a table with some of the most common or tricky instances where legal protection is violated. This table is useful in case a young person, either in the context of a counselling session or while working with a youth worker, mentions that they have experienced what they believe is discriminatory behaviour (they might say it was just unfairness if they're not familiar with anti-discrimination laws). Since career counsellors and youth workers aren't lawyers, this table acts as reliable source of information.

Example Situation in Career or Education	Protected Ground	Relevant Legal Basis
A trans job applicant is rejected after disclosing their gender identity.	Gender Identity / Expression	Equal Treatment Law 4443/2016
A lesbian student is mocked by peers and teachers ignore it.	Sexual Orientation	Law 4808/2021, Constitution article 2
Employer refuses to respect chosen name on official documents.	Gender Identity	Labour Code, Law 4808/2021, Presidential Decree 62/2025
Denial of promotion due to perceived sexual orientation.	Sexual Orientation	Equal Treatment Law 4443/2016

After it has been explained that the actions against that person were illegal, the counsellor or youth worker can provide the person with a document that lists any official websites where the person can get accurate and up-to-date



information about their options and potential next steps. First on that list are official government websites. If they're looking at their national laws, Greece's Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, Greek Ombudsman – Equal Treatment Department and Belgium's Federal Public Service Justice, Institute for the Equality of Women and Men are the place to go. For protection under the European laws, the relevant websites are EUR-Lex and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). Of course, apart from state resources, people can find relevant information on the websites of national or international NGOs, such as Thessaloniki & Athens Pride in Greece, IGLYO in Belgium and ILGA Europe or Human Rights Watch at the European level. For convenience, the career counsellors or youth workers can have these websites readily available either in print or digital format.

2.3.2 Practical Tool 2: How to handle the sharing of an incident

This is a separate tool that provides a comprehensive detailed guide for the career counsellor or youth worker to follow when a person comes and shares their experience of an incident. Career counsellors might already be familiar with some of the steps.

First, the person should share the entirety of what they want, with no interruptions. If clarification is required, it's best that it's written down and asked after the person is finished. After hearing the complete incident (or incidents, if it's about a pattern), the counsellor/youth worker can use the table from in tool 1 and check whether the law has been broken. After confirming that the situation falls indeed under the protection of anti-discrimination legislation, they should explain it to the young person, if they're unaware of the framework or the specifics. It's important to use non-legalistic language that can be easily understood. If the incident isn't protected, that should also be explained to the person, along, perhaps, with the differences between the cases covered by the law and the one they're describing. If there is some doubt whether the situation is covered by the law or if it's been established that a violation has occurred, the professional can move onto the next step, which is to provide the list with places the person can find legal information.

Along with these steps it's important to keep in mind some other things. Both this approach and the awareness tool above are here to help young people make informed decisions. For that reason, everything must be made clear to them. At the same time, counsellors and youth workers should be cognizant of the fact that talking about rights violations can be emotionally triggering. There should be check-ins with the person that they are and continue being okay (the professional can use their judgement and try not to over-check). Lastly, no matter the situation and the course of action decided by the young person, the counsellor or youth worker should stay in contact to monitor the outcome of any action or to offer further support. If, down the line it proves necessary, connect them to advocacy or legal aid.

Step Checklist



- **Step 1 – Listen**
Allow the young person to describe their experience fully, without interruption, showing empathy and attentiveness.
- **Step 2 – Use the Table**
Refer to the “Situations and Protected Rights” table to check whether the incident may be a violation of their legal rights. Explain the connection between what happened and the relevant legal protection in plain, non-legalistic language. If the incident does not correspond to anything and then they go immediately to the next step, as they are not lawyers and cannot know everything.
- **Step 3 – Share the Contact List**
Provide the young person with a copy of the “Where to Find Legal Information” list, so they can consult up-to-date legislation and seek support.
- **Step 4 – Empower, Don’t Intimidate**
Frame rights awareness as a tool for informed decision-making. Avoid overloading them with legal complexity; focus on clarity and next steps.
- **Step 5 – Ensure Emotional Safety**
Acknowledge that talking about rights violations can be emotionally triggering. Check in with them before, during, and after the discussion.
- **Step 6 – Follow-Up**
Stay in contact to monitor the outcome, offer further support, and connect them to advocacy or legal aid if needed.

2.4 Training Exercises

The table below provides step-by-step instructions / script on how to teach both the theory in 2.2 and the tools described in 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 to youth workers and/or career counsellors. It covers both online and in person training scenarios. The duration for most steps will be in brackets as a suggestion, to be adjusted based on the available time.

The scenarios mentioned at the training exercise can be found in the Annex.

Step	Duration	Materials	Description
Brief introduction to the Rainbow Bridges project (if this part is being shown separately, otherwise skip this step)	5'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	The presentation slides should be brief and outline the general goal of the project and what has happened that lead to the handbook and training seminar.



Introduction to the theoretical part	15'-20'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	First you should assess how knowledgeable the participants are when it comes to the protection of individuals from discrimination, in any case. Ask them if those laws cover LGBTQIA+ people. Proceed with showing all the relevant laws (national and European) from part 2.2 and pointing out any differences on the protection they offer. Use bullets to list all the cases that LGBTQIA+ people are protected by the law. Show some of the examples used in the theoretical part.
Practical Tool 1: Rights Awareness Reference for SOGIESC-Inclusive Career Counselling	15'-20'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	You can start this part by mentioning that since the participants don't deal with anti-discrimination cases on a daily basis, they can't possibly remember every single legal clause. This tool was created for that reason. Explain that it's a reference list, with examples of all the characteristics that fall under the SOGIESC umbrella (sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression etc.) and are protected from discrimination. This list is



			to be used to confirm whether a young person had been discriminated against and shares their experience with the counsellors or youth workers.
Practice on the tool – two exercises	10'	For online: The document with the list in digital form to send to the participants on the training chat and the document with the second exercise either For in person: Printed copies of the list and printed copies of the second exercise.	To practice the use of this list, there are two exercises. In the first, you provide the participants with a copy of the complete list from the Annex (exercise 1). Then show them slides of certain situations and ask them to determine if the situation is a violation of anti-discrimination legislation or not. In the second, you give copies of the second exercise (exercise 2 in the Annex), and give them 5' to match the situations with the area it belongs in (e.g. sexual orientation, gender identity etc.) After both are done (or one, depending on your time) ask them if any examples were more difficult than others and why. In they found everything pretty easily, ask them if they would've guessed they were examples of illegal behaviour without having the list.



Practical tool 2: How to handle the sharing of an incident	10'-15'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	For this part you remind the participants that some of the experiences can be traumatic for the young people on the receiving end. Have slides with the steps and go through them. Leave enough time for questions.
Closing of the module	10'	For online: Presentation with the reflection questions; a code for the evaluation questionnaire, if this module is taught independently. For in person: Presentation with the reflection questions; a code for the evaluation questionnaire, if this module is taught independently.	You ask the participants the reflection questions that can be found in sub-chapter 2.6 (you can add some if you want). This is the end of the module and you can invite participants to share a brief comment or a brief answer to one of the evaluation questions, if they want. If this is the end of the training as a whole, you can give them the evaluation form as well.

2.5 Trainer Notes

These are some tips that might be helpful during the training session(s):

- When asking the participants to answer something, encourage them to answer even if they're not 100% sure. Especially for things that there are correct answers to.
- During the overview of the legal framework, emphasise that they're not expected to learn all, or even any, by heart. That's why the list exists.
- Even though the second practical tool might seem like it's getting away from the scope of career counselling and the activities of a youth worker, the reality is that young people, especially when they belong in a minority group like LGBTQIA+, oftentimes confide in the people they feel safe around.



2.6 Assessment and Feedback Methods

Below are the suggested evaluation and reflection questions that the trainer(s) can give to the participants at the end of the training session. Neither list isn't absolute and the trainer(s) can modify them if they feel it necessary.

Note: The evaluation questions can be either given to the participants at the end of this part of the training or at the end of the entire training, in a form that combines the questions for all modules.

The trainers can have the participants answer these questions in order to evaluate the training. They can distribute the evaluation questionnaires them printed or in an online form.

- How familiar were you with the anti-discrimination legislation? [On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (Very familiar)]
- Did you find the practical tool useful? (Yes or No)
- Do you believe you are better equipped to support LGBTQIA+ youth professionally, if they mention anything like the situations described in this module? (Yes or No)
- Do you believe that knowing the laws can help you empower LGBTQIA+ youth? (Yes or No)
- Do you believe this tool is helpful for more inclusive career guidance? (Yes or No)
- After the completion of the training and the evaluation form, the trainer(s) can use the questions below to help the trainees reflect on everything they've gained from this second module.
- Do you believe that you've gained a new perspective on the reality of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the workplace?
- Do you think the practical tools can be used to teach the people themselves about their rights?



3. Coming Out in the Workplace: Decision-Making & Employer Assessment

3.1 Introduction to the Module

Coming out in the workplace is a deeply personal, dynamic, and context-dependent process that LGBTQIA+ youth often navigate as they enter the world of work. For many young individuals, the job is the first setting outside of school where their identity interacts with employment regulations, power dynamics, and professional expectations. Decisions about whether, when, and how to reveal one's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex traits are influenced by social support, workplace culture, individual preparation, and legal protections. Educators, career counsellors, and youth workers frequently assist LGBTQIA+ adolescents in making these decisions, but many of them lack formal tools or SOGIESC-responsive frameworks to direct these discussions.

This module provides youth workers with theoretical foundations and practical tools to help LGBTQIA+ youth make informed and autonomous decisions around coming out in professional settings. Drawing on Minority Stress Theory (Meyer, 2003), intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), and international labour protections (ILO, 2019), the module highlights both systemic barriers and supportive mechanisms relevant to workplace disclosure. Recognizing the diversity of LGBTQIA+ experiences, the module incorporates intersectional insights on migration, socioeconomic background, gender identity, disability, and racialized identities.

In alignment with the objectives of the RAINBOW BRIDGES project and Activity 3 ("Youth Training Handbook for SOGIESC-Responsive Career Guidance"), this module strengthens the capacity of youth workers to support LGBTQIA+ youth through rights-based, trauma-informed, and developmentally appropriate guidance. The module includes two practical tools: the Coming-Out Decision Matrix and the Employer Inclusivity Checklist, along with training exercises, scenarios, and structured reflection activities that enable youth workers to apply these frameworks directly in their practice. The goal is not to encourage disclosure but to ensure that LGBTQIA+ youth can make empowered, informed, and safe decisions based on their own needs and circumstances.

3.2 Theoretical Content

3.2.1 Understanding Coming-Out as a Process

Coming out is not a single event but an ongoing, context-dependent process in which individuals negotiate the visibility of their identity across environments (D'Augelli, 1994). Workplace disclosure differs from personal or social coming out because it involves hierarchical relationships, job security concerns, and professional norms. LGBTQIA+ youth may feel pressured to hide aspects of themselves due to fears of discrimination, misgendering, or exclusion, while others may view authenticity in the workplace as essential for well-being.



Disclosure decisions are highly individual. This module positions youth workers as facilitators of reflection rather than advisors who push toward any specific outcome.

3.2.2 Minority Stress Theory

Minority Stress Theory (Meyer, 2003) describes how LGBTQIA+ people's mental health and day-to-day functioning are impacted by stigma, discrimination, and expectations of rejection.

Minority Stress at work can include the anticipation of discrimination during interviews and, also, the fear of being dead-named or misgendered (incorrect use of the pronouns) by colleagues or employers, particularly in environments lacking inclusive policies. Additionally, many LGBTQIA+ individuals face excessive awareness of jokes, remarks, or 'outings', fear of punishment while reporting harassment. Over time, internalized stigma may affect self-confidence, self-esteem, and overall well-being, influencing professional performance and career development.

Coming-out decisions are framed in connection to environmental pressure rather than personal deficiencies when minority stress is understood.

3.2.3 Intersectionality in Workplace Disclosure

Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) as mentioned and clearly described in Module 1, highlights that LGBTQIA+ youth face also double, intersectional discrimination. This can be considered as an important disruptive factor for their "coming-out". For instance, a migrant trans woman may face a different set of risks than a cisgender gay youth with citizenship and family support. Factors influencing disclosure may include, first, having a disability, which can already expose a person to discrimination or exclusion, as well as socioeconomic conditions that affect job security and access to resources. Safety concerns outside the workplace, such as family or community attitudes, can also play a significant role. Legal status or a migration background may increase vulnerability, particularly in contexts where employment rights are limited or precarious. Belonging to a racial or ethnic minority can compound experiences of bias, while educational background may shape confidence, awareness of rights, and the ability to navigate workplace policies.

Intersectionality guides youth workers to avoid universalizing assumptions: <https://www.greatplacetowork.co.uk/resources/intersectionality-in-the-workplace-building-belonging-for-lgbtq-employees>

3.2.4 Legal & Policy Context

The degree of protection afforded to LGBTQIA+ people in the workplace is significantly shaped by legal and regulatory frameworks. A safe and welcoming workplace is not always ensured by official policies and legislation, even if they



can provide means of protection against harassment and discrimination. When making decisions about disclosure at work, LGBTQIA+ youth and youth workers can more effectively evaluate risks, rights, and reasonable expectations when they are aware of how these frameworks function in practice.

Belgium

Belgium has an advanced legal framework designed to stop discrimination in the workplace. While the Gender Act (2007) offers protection for sex traits and gender identity, the Belgian Anti-Discrimination Act (2007) forbids discrimination based on sexual orientation. All phases of employment, including hiring, working conditions, training access, advancement, and termination, are covered by these regulations collectively.

Belgium's national equality organization, UNIA, supports the monitoring and enforcement of these protections. When needed, UNIA can help with mediation or legal proceedings in addition to offering information, counsel, and support to people who encounter discrimination. These regulations make it illegal to discriminate against LGBTQIA+ adolescents entering or navigating the workforce, and also provide established support systems. However, subtle prejudice, ignorance, or unfriendly attitudes at work may nonetheless affect individual disclosure decisions even when legal protection is in place.

International Standards

At the international level, workplace equality is supported by key labour and human rights standards. The **International Labour Organization** has established **Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)**, which prohibits discrimination in access to employment, working conditions, and career advancement. While the convention does not explicitly name sexual orientation or gender identity, it has been interpreted to include protection for LGBTQIA+ workers within its broader principle of equal treatment.

In practical terms, international standards reinforce the idea that discrimination and harassment at work are not only national legal issues but also violations of internationally recognized labour rights. For youth workers, this framework provides a useful reference point when discussing workplace rights, even though they are not expected to act as legal advisors. Awareness of these standards helps contextualize the importance of anti-harassment measures, equal treatment legislation, and accessible reporting or complaint procedures for young LGBTQIA+ workers.

Organisational Policies

Everyday experiences at work are significantly shaped by corporate policies and workplace culture, in addition to legislation and international standards. Many companies have internal diversity, inclusion, and non-discrimination policies that may specifically address gender identity and sexual orientation. However, the existence of such policies does not always ensure that they will be implemented successfully. Youth who identify as LGBTQIA+ may work in environments where inclusive policies are merely stated on paper and where discriminatory jokes, stereotypes, or exclusionary behaviour are tolerated



informally.

Therefore, legal knowledge does not determine whether or when someone should reveal their identity at work, but it can assist people grasp what safeguards are theoretically available. Peer relationships, managerial views, and observable workplace dynamics frequently have a greater impact on decisions about coming out than do stated policies. When assisting LGBTQIA+ children in evaluating workplace safety, it is crucial to acknowledge this gap between official safeguards and lived experience.

3.2.5 Authentic Allyship & Inclusive Workplaces

Authentic allyship refers to an active and ongoing commitment to supporting LGBTQIA+ people through respectful behaviour, self-education, and accountability. It involves listening to lived experiences, using correct names and pronouns, and recognizing the diversity within LGBTQIA+ communities rather than making assumptions. Authentic allyship requires taking responsibility for mistakes, addressing harmful language or behaviour when it occurs, and challenging discrimination instead of remaining silent. It also means understanding one's own privileges and using them to help create safer, more inclusive environments. Rather than being performative or symbolic, authentic allyship is reflected in everyday actions that promote dignity, respect, and inclusion in both personal and professional settings.

<https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/ally-tips>

Superficial or symbolic gestures (e.g., Pride month posts) without structural change do not constitute meaningful inclusion (ILGA-Europe, 2023).

3.3 Detailed Practical Tools

3.3.1 Practical Tool 1: Coming-Out Decision Matrix

1. Purpose of the Tool

The Coming-Out Decision Matrix is a structured reflection tool that supports LGBTQIA+ youth in assessing whether, when, and how to disclose aspects of their identity in the workplace. It avoids prescriptive outcomes and instead promotes autonomy, safety planning, and informed decision-making.

2. Components of the Matrix

The matrix addresses six sectors:

- a) Personal Readiness
- b) Workplace Safety & Environment
- c) Potential Risks
- d) Potential Benefits
- e) Support Systems
- f) Personal Boundaries & Strategies

3. Instructions

Youth workers introduce the tool during guidance sessions. The young person



completes the matrix independently or with light facilitation. Each domain includes reflective questions (below). Once completed, the matrix supports:

- Discussing concerns
- Identify unmet needs
- Clarifying Steps
- Validating the youth's autonomy

4. Worksheet Template

A. Personal Readiness

- How comfortable do I feel with being out at work?
- What emotions arise when I imagine colleagues knowing?
- Have past experiences influenced my readiness?

B. Workplace Safety & Environment

- What signals does the workplace give about inclusion?
- Are there policies, DEI training, visible allies, or gender-neutral facilities?
- Potential Risks
- Could disclosure affect job security, promotions, or interactions?
- Are there concerns about harassment, misgendering, or stereotyping?

C. Potential Benefits

- Would being out improve authenticity, mental wellness, or workplace belonging?
- Would it enable access to support or rights?
- Support Systems
- Who can I rely on at work or outside?
- Are there mentors, friends, or HR allies?

D. Boundaries & Strategies

- Who (if anyone) do I want to tell?
- When and how would I prefer to disclose?
- What alternatives exist (selective disclosure, gradual disclosure, no disclosure)?

5. Sample (Fictional) Excerpt

- *Potential Risks.* Fear of misgendering during meetings.
- *Potential Benefits.* Relief from hiding gender identity.
- *Strategy.* Start by telling one trusted colleague.

3.3.2 Practical Tool 2: Employer Inclusivity Checklist

1. Purpose of the Tool

This checklist enables youth to systematically evaluate a workplace's LGBTQIA+ inclusivity. It empowers them to anticipate potential risks, recognize supportive environments, and compare employers before and after applying.

2. Checklist Categories

- a. Policies & anti-harassment procedures



- b. Inclusive Language & Communication norms
- c. Representation & Leadership diversity
- d. Benefits & gender-neutral facilities
- e. Training & Development (DEI & SOGIESC training availability)
- f. Confidential Reporting Mechanisms

3. Sample Checklist Items

A. Policies

- The organization explicitly prohibits discrimination based on SOGIESC.

B. Language

- Application forms include gender-neutral or open fields
- Email signatures include pronouns.

C. Representation

- LGBTQIA+ staff or allies are visible

D. Facilities

- Gender- neutral toilets
- Inclusive dress code

E. Reporting

- Anonymous and confidential reporting tools exist

F. How Youth Workers Use the Checklist

- During career counselling sessions
- Before job fairs or interviews
- When analysing potential internships
- As a companion to the Decision Matrix

3.4 Training Exercises

3.4.1 Exercise 1: "Coming-Out Reflection & Safety Scan" (Individual + Group Guided Discussion)

1. Objectives

- To support participants in reflecting on workplace disclosure factors using structured personal reasoning
- To identify safe vs. unsafe workplace signals
- To normalize selective or non-disclosure decisions

Duration: 30 min

2. Materials Needed

- Printed reflection worksheet
- Pens/markers
- Timer
- A private reflection corner or calm space inside the training room



3. Instructions

A. Facilitator Introduction (3 min)

The trainer opens the session saying: *"This exercise is for reflection. You are not required to disclose personal identities. You may answer with hypothetical situations or from a counselling perspective"* (Meyer, 2003).

B. Individual reflection (7 min)

Participants answer the questions below silently and write short notes:

- Do youth in guidance sessions sometimes hesitate to disclose identity? Why?
- What workplace signs indicate safety or inclusivity?
- What risks might feel harmful even when not explicit?
- What benefits might authenticity bring professionally?
- Who can play a support role for hesitant youth?
- Is selective disclosure a valid approach? Why?

C. Sharing Round (10 min, approx. 1 minute per participant, optional participation)

- The Trainer must record how many participants passed, as part of methodological self-awareness.
- The trainer invites participants **one by one**: *"You may share 1 takeaway, or say 'pass', both are valid."*
- The trainer must record how many participants passed, as part of methodological self-awareness.

D. Group Guided Discussion (8-10 min)

- Trainer leads a non-judgmental dialogue:
- Which safety indicators appeared most frequently?
- Which risk was the most overlooked in your view?
- Did anyone identify a benefit that helps youth's confidence?

The trainer moderated to avoid giving direct advice that pressures youth toward disclosure.

E. Wrap-up Documentation (2 min)

Participants write 3 takeaways:

- One key safety sign
- One common risk
- One support strategy

3.4.2 Exercise 2: "Persona-Based Workplace Culture Case Analysis" (Group Activity + Peer Teaching)

1. Objectives

- To analyse inclusive career guidance competences through fictional personas instead of personal disclosure
- To assess workplace culture, not encourage disclosure
- To practice presenting inclusion markers in structured bullets
- To strengthen peer learning and presentation skills

Duration: 40 min



2. Materials Needed

- Persona workplace description handouts (prepared from existing module text)
- Pens / Flipchart paper
- Timer

3. Trainer Setup (before session — 1 minute)

The trainer prepares 3 persona handouts already included in your module. Each handout must contain:

- Job sector
- Team dynamics
- Onboarding behaviour notes
- Inclusion policy reference (*if mentioned*)

4. Instructions

i. Group Formation (2 min)

Participants divide into 3 groups. Each group receives 1 persona.

ii. Round 1 – Workplace Culture Summary (12 min)

Groups summarize culture using the original competence areas already present in your doc:

- Policy clarity
- Onboarding practices
- Team communication dynamics
- Hierarchy / leadership signals
- Sector inclusion expectations

Each group writes 5 bullets summarizing findings.

iii. Round 2 – Inclusion Marker vs. Risk Structuring (12 min)

Group identifies from the existing text:

- 2 inclusion signals
- 2 risks
- 1 neutral guidance question that keeps conversation career-focused (*Nadal et al., 2016*)

iv. Group Presentations (10 min total, 3 min per group)

Groups present their 6 items:

- 5 culture bullets
- 2 inclusion signals
- 2 risks
- 1 question

Trainer-Led Debrief (5–7 min)

Facilitator asks:

- *Were policies enough to guarantee cultural safety?*
- *What part of onboarding impacted confidence or belonging?*
- *How can youth workers apply these reflection areas in real guidance work?*

The trainer closes by reinforcing:



“Our role is to facilitate reasoning, not tell youth what to do.”

3.5 Trainer Notes

- Always frame disclosure as a choice, not an expectation.
- Avoid asking youth to share personal experiences unless they volunteer.
- Normalize diverse decisions: coming out, partial disclosure, staying private.
- Use inclusive language and pronouns consistently.
- Be mindful of intersectionality, risk levels differing across identities.
- Create a supportive environment for discussions on discrimination.
- Be prepared to offer resources for mental health or legal support.

3.6 Assessment and Feedback Methods

Assessment of Learning

- Observations during discussions
- Completion of tools (Matrix & Checklist)
- Optional written reflection
- Group presentations from Exercise 2

Feedback Tools

- End-of-module anonymous survey
- One-word check-out (feelings, insights)
- Trainer self-evaluation checklist



4. Addressing Discrimination & Micro-aggressions in Career Guidance Settings

4.1 Introduction to the Module

In addition to the workplace, LGBTQIA+ youth frequently experience prejudice and microaggressions in career counselling and youth support settings, where purportedly “safe professional spaces” can occasionally perpetuate prejudice, stereotypes, or exclusion. In terms of employability paths, professional orientation, training access, internship referrals, and job-readiness support, youth workers and career counsellors frequently play a gatekeeping function (European Commission, 2020). Guidance encounters may inadvertently threaten a young person's confidence, identity safety, career goals, or psychological well-being if these experts lack SOGIESC-responsive awareness.

Everyday verbal or behavioural slights based on prejudice and heteronormative presumptions are known as micro-aggressions, and they have a cumulative effect on mental health and professional growth (Meyer, 2003; Nadal et al., 2016). When guidance is not inclusive or trauma-informed, LGBTQIA+ youth who additionally manage intersecting systemic vulnerabilities—such as immigration status, disability, race, or limited socioeconomic support—are significantly more vulnerable to harm (Crenshaw, 1989; Bowleg, 2013). In order to reestablish safety in guidance relationships and prevent harm, this module provides youth workers with non-formal learning methodologies, organized scenario-based practice, bias-interruption responses, and inclusion-assessment competencies.

In alignment with Activity 3 (ACT03), this module forms part of the Youth Training Handbook for SOGIESC-Responsive Career Guidance, which aims to re-skill youth workers to support LGBTQIA+ youth using context-relevant, equitable, and rights-sensitive non-formal methodologies (European Commission, 2020; ILO, 2019).

4.2 Theoretical Content

4.2.1 Discrimination in Guidance Contexts

Discrimination in career counselling services can occur at several levels and in a variety of ways. A young person's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC) may be the reason for a direct denial of services, restricted access to programs, or unwillingness to provide professional referrals. When ostensibly neutral policies or standards disadvantage LGBTQIA+ youth because their identities or lived realities are not acknowledged or accommodated, this can also be considered indirect discrimination. Discrimination might manifest at the interpersonal level through prejudiced remarks, presumptions, delegitimization of experiences, or misgendering by guidance counsellors. When organizations lack explicit SOGIESC protections, transparent reporting procedures, or inclusive policies, structural discrimination may continue, fostering cultures where exclusion is normalized rather than addressed.



4.2.2 Micro-aggressions as Career Barriers

In career counselling settings, microaggressions can take many subtle but damaging forms. These could include repeating assumptions about particular industries, jobs, or abilities, applauding conformance to cis-normative leadership styles or appearance, and presuming heterosexuality or binary gender norms when posing guidance-related questions. Micro-aggressions can also include advising young people to “tone down” or lessen their gender presentation, denying or discounting instances of discrimination, or dismissing concerns about coming out as “over-sensitivity”. Guidance professionals may occasionally be reluctant to regularly utilize proper names or pronouns until specifically challenged. Even though these actions are frequently seen as insignificant or inadvertent, they can have serious job-related repercussions, such as diminished professional aspirations, diminished career self-efficacy, and heightened avoidance of specific industries, services, or opportunities. (Nadal et al., 2016; Meyer, 2003).

4.2.3 Minority Stress

Minority stress may affect long-term career confidence, decision-making energy, and trust toward service providers, the navigation of job opportunities, and comfort in professional spaces (Meyer, 2003; ILO, 2019) (*also mentioned in Module 3*).

In career guidance contexts, minority stress can significantly influence how young people engage with services and professionals. It may reduce trust toward guidance providers, limit openness during counselling sessions, and increase emotional exhaustion when navigating career decisions. LGBTQIA+ youth experiencing minority stress may also hesitate to disclose relevant aspects of their identity, avoid certain services altogether, or disengage from guidance processes if they perceive them as unsafe or dismissive. Rather than affecting career confidence in abstract terms, minority stress in this context directly shapes whether young people feel supported, understood, and able to fully use career guidance services (Meyer, 2003; International Labour Organization, 2019).

4.2.4 Intersectionality and Risk Amplification

Multiple aspects of identity can overlap and intensify vulnerability in professional contexts. These combined factors shape both perceived and real safety, as well as the expectations placed on young workers.

In guidance settings, these intersecting factors can influence both perceived and actual safety, as well as expectations placed on young people by professionals. For example, LGBTQIA+ youth with disabilities may experience lowered expectations regarding leadership potential or career ambition, while those with a migration background may approach guidance cautiously due to concerns about legal status, financial precarity, or limited support networks.



LGBTQIA+ youth from racialized or ethnic minority groups may face additional pressure to conform to stereotypes that subtly shape or restrict suggested career paths, while those experiencing socioeconomic hardship may have less margin for risk when confronting discrimination or making decisions about disclosure. In guidance contexts, intersectionality therefore affects not only access to opportunities, but also how confidently young people engage with services, articulate goals, and trust that guidance processes will respect their realities.

4.2.5 Ethical Role of Youth Workers

Youth workers are essential to maintaining secure, inclusive, and encouraging career counselling procedures for young LGBTQIA+ individuals. They should never promote the disclosure of one's gender identity or sexual orientation, understanding that these choices are subjective and situational. In addition to addressing harmful attitudes or actions in a positive and encouraging way, it's critical to affirm young people's experiences without downplaying instances of bias or discrimination. By aggressively challenging prejudice and encouraging polite conversation, youth workers can contribute to the restoration of a feeling of safety in guiding situations. They can also help young people by finding situations that are affirming and safe and, when necessary, directing them to resources or specialized support services (European Commission, 2020; International Labour Organization, 2019).

4.3 Detailed Practical Tools

4.3.1 Tool 1: Sample Discrimination Recognition & Response Framework

Bias-Interruption Strategy Steps

1. Listen and validate without urgency
2. Identify type of aggression or discrimination
3. Interrupt bias professionally, using inclusive, non-judgmental language
4. Restore safety, explain inclusive principles, respect boundaries
5. Plan next steps for support or referral (Meyer, 2003; ILO, 2019; Nadal, 2018)

Example Scripts

- *"Thank you for trusting me with this; this must have been very draining to experience."*
- *"It sounds like indirect discrimination, because the process didn't take identity safety into account."*
- *"I will respect how you want to navigate this; we can explore options together."*
- *"You deserve guidance that protects your well-being; this was not okay, even if subtle."*

4.3.2 Tool 2: Mock Employer / Institution Inclusivity Assessment Checkbox

Career Guidance Dialogue Redesign: "From Harm to Inclusion" Objectives

- To strengthen participants' ability to detect implicit or explicit bias in



career guidance exchanges

- To practice transforming a non-inclusive guidance recommendation into an affirming, SOGIESC-responsive alternative

Materials

- 1 guidance prompt card per pair/team
- Pens or sticky notes
- Flipchart paper or shared document

Instructions (35–45 min)

1. Trainer forms pairs or small groups (2–4 participants)
2. Each pair/group receives one prompt card describing a biased career-guidance moment
3. Step A: Identify what was harmful, assuming, or non-inclusive
4. Step B: Rewrite the exchange into an inclusive alternative that keeps the same guidance goal without bias or stereotyping
5. Step C: Pairs/groups present their before/after redesign
6. Trainer facilitates a full room debrief

Prompt Card Examples (use without edits):

- Card A: “You’re very expressive, you should choose arts or fashion—it suits your personality more.”
- Card B: “Do you want to work part-time after your girlfriend or boyfriend moves in with you?”
- Card C: Disclosed fear of workplace bias → “Most companies have equality policies, you’ll be fine.”
- Card D: “If you want to lead teams, try to present yourself less unconventionally.”

Debrief Questions:

- What assumption was made in the original exchange?
- How did the redesign restore agency, confidence, and identity safety?
- What language or approach has changed?

4.4 Training Exercises

This module includes interactive, non-formal learning activities that enable youth workers to practice bias awareness, discrimination response, emotional safety monitoring, and inclusive communication in career guidance environments. Both exercises below ensure that participants direct their attention to recognition of bias, intervention responses, boundary respect, and restoring guidance safety, without duplicating employer or internship assessment tools from other modules.

The trainer facilitates all activities using an empowering and non-directive approach, encouraging participants to analyse situations professionally and collaboratively instead of relying on personal disclosure unless they voluntarily choose to.



4.4.1 Exercise 1: Scenario-Based Role Play (30 min)

Objectives

- To practice recognizing micro-aggressions in guidance dialogues
- To rehearse professional, inclusive, and non-judgmental bias interruption
- To restore safety and trust in guidance exchanges

Duration: 30 min

Materials Needed

- Scenario cards (never employer assessment cards)
- Pens + notepads for observers
- Timer

Instructions:

1. Facilitator Briefing (3 min)

Trainer opens the activity with: "You are practicing professional responses. You do not need to disclose personal identity; hypothetical roles are fully valid."

2. Role-Play Round 1 (9 min)

Participants form triads: Counsellor – Youth – Observer; The counsellor draws 1 unedited scenario card. During the interaction, the counsellor must:

- detect micro-aggressive or assuming language
- interrupt bias respectfully
- recentre conversation to career guidance goal

3. Role Rotation (9 min)

Roles rotate so each participant practices the counsellor role once.

1. Triad Debrief (5 min)

Inside triads, discuss:

- What was the initial micro-aggression?
- How did the intervention change the youth persona's emotional response?
- Did the counsellor recentre guidance effectively without dismissing the issue?

2. Full Group Debrief (4–5 min)

Trainer facilitates a room-level discussion with the same questions above, focusing on patterns—not personal experiences shared.

Scenario logic:

- assuming heteronormative career motivations
- stereotyping sector suitability
- praising conformity at the cost of identity
- redirecting guidance toward identity curiosity over career pathing

4.4.2 Exercise 2: Employer / Institution Evaluation Groups (40 min)



Objectives

- To transform a harmful or biased guidance exchange into a corrected alternative
 - To protect the same career guidance aim but remove assumptions or micro-aggressive phrasing
 - To build dialogue, repair competence and emotional safety sensitivity
- Duration: 35 min

Materials Needed

- 1 harmful guidance exchange excerpt per pair (taken from your doc exercise section but NOT from the 1st practical tool examples or Module 3)
- Pens + paper
- Timer

Instructions

1. Pair Formation & Prompt Delivery (2 min)

Participants form **pairs**. Each pair receives one **guidance exchange excerpt** from the module exercise section (fictional, different from Tool examples, not hiring/internship assessment).

2. Round 1 & Bias Detection (10 min)

Pairs identify the bias:

- What assumption was made?
- Was identity policing present?
- Was sector steering based on stereotype?
- Did the counsellor lose the guidance aim?

Pairs document 4 bullets summarizing detected issues.

3. Round 2 — Dialogue Repair Redesign (12–15 min)

Pairs rewrite the same exchange, ensuring the counsellor response now:

- removes assumptions
- avoids stereotypes
- restores youth autonomy
- recentres to career goal
- uses inclusive language calmly and professionally

Pairs should produce 6–7 corrected dialogue lines total.

4. Pair Presentations (6 min — 1 min per pair)

Pairs read “Before vs. After”.

5. Trainer Debrief (8 min)

Trainer facilitates:

- common bias patterns observed
- most effective trust-restoring strategies used
- tone shifts that preserved guidance goal
- why dialogue repair competence matters for youth retention in guidance services

Trainer closes by reinforcing: “The goal was repair and



empowerment, not disclosure”.

4.5 Trainer Notes

- Create a psychologically safe learning space, allow opt-out from sharing.
- Clarify power asymmetries in guidance are real, even where laws exist.
- Avoid sector stereotypes in facilitator explanations.
- Use accessible language, introduce legal protections without giving legal conclusions.
- Emphasize confidentiality, moderate discussions in a trauma-informed manner.

4.6 Assessment and Feedback Methods

- Observers use a structured observation rubric during Exercise 1.
- Groups are evaluated on bias classification accuracy during Exercise 2.
- Participants fill out an anonymous learning feedback form.
- Facilitators complete a self-evaluation worksheet.



5. Conclusions

This training handbook demonstrates that inclusive and SOGIESC-responsive career guidance is not only a matter of awareness, but also of professional competence, institutional responsibility, and ethical practice. LGBTQIA+ youth often face unique barriers during their transition into education, training, and employment, including discrimination, microaggressions, limited representation, and the pressure to conceal aspects of their identity. These challenges can affect confidence, well-being, and long-term career development if they are not addressed within guidance and support systems.

Through the modules presented in this handbook, youth workers and career counsellors are encouraged to adopt a holistic and intersectional perspective when working with LGBTQIA+ young people. Understanding the diversity of SOGIESC identities, recognizing the influence of social and structural inequalities, and being aware of legal protections are essential steps toward building more inclusive professional practices.

The practical tools included in this handbook aim to translate theoretical knowledge into actionable strategies that professionals can use in their daily work. By facilitating safe conversations, supporting informed decision-making about workplace disclosure, identifying inclusive employers, and responding appropriately to incidents of discrimination, youth workers can play a transformative role in supporting LGBTQIA+ youth.

Importantly, the handbook emphasizes that there is no single pathway or “correct” decision for LGBTQIA+ youth when navigating their professional lives. Rather than directing choices, the role of youth workers and counsellors is to create supportive environments that enable young people to reflect on their options, assess risks and opportunities, and make decisions that align with their personal needs, safety, and aspirations.

Moving forward, the approaches and tools presented here can contribute not only to improving career guidance for LGBTQIA+ youth but also to fostering more inclusive educational and employment systems overall. By integrating SOGIESC-responsive practices into youth work, counselling, and organizational culture, professionals can help ensure that all young people – regardless of identity– have equal opportunities to develop their talents, pursue meaningful careers, and participate fully in society.



6. References

- Adeyeba, M., Calvetti, S., Lockett, G., Sostre, J., Slay, L., Goldbach, J. T., & Kipke, M. D. (2025). Intersecting Identities: Exploring stigma, minority stress, resilience, and identity in sexual and gender diverse youths of color. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmmh.2025.100458>
- Belgian Ministry of Justice. (2018). New legislation for transgender persons. https://justice.belgium.be/en/themes_and_files/people_and_families/new_legislation_for_transgender_persons
- Bowleg, L., Malekzadeh, A., AuBuchon, K., Ghabrial, M., & Bauer, G. (2023). Rare exemplars and missed opportunities: Intersectionality within current sexual and gender diversity research and scholarship in psychology. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101511>
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, CELEX 12016P021 § Article 21 - Non-discrimination (2000). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/char_2016/art_21/oj
- Chini, M. (2022). Belgium bans 'conversion therapy' for LGBTQ people. The Brussels Times. <https://www.brusselstimes.com/323548/belgium-bans-conversion-practices-for-lgbtq-people>
- Constitution of Greece (2019). <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/THE%20CONSTITUTION%20OF%20GREECE.pdf>
- Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 Establishing a General Framework for Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation (2000). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2000/78/oj/eng>
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>
- EPRS. (2022). LGBTI rights in the EU. European Parliament. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733521/EPR_S_BRI\(2022\)733521_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733521/EPR_S_BRI(2022)733521_EN.pdf)
- Equal Rights Coalition. (2022). ERC WG on National Laws and Policies. <https://equalrightscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ERC-Legal-Gender-Recognition-Factsheet-1-Dec.pdf>
- Equaldex. (2025). LGBT Rights in Belgium. <https://www.equaldex.com/region/belgium>
- European Commission, Migration Policy Group., & Universiteit Utrecht. (2024). Country report: Non discrimination: transposition and implementation at national level of Council Directives 2000/43 and 2000/78: Greece 2024. Publications Office. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2838/012703>
- European Disability Forum. (2024). Policy recommendations on intersectionality between disability and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGTBI). <https://www.edf-feph.org/publications/policy-recommendations-disability-lgbti/>
- European Labour Authority. (2024). Regulating digital platforms Articles 68-72 of Law 4808/2021. <https://www.ela.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-06/Good-practice->



[fiche-EL-UDW_Regulating-the-digital-platforms-economy.pdf](#)

- Federal Public Service Belgium. (n.d.). Legislation. <https://equal.belgium.be/en/legislation>
- FRA. (2024). LGBTIQ equality at a crossroads. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2024-lgbtqi-equality_en.pdf
- FRA. (2025). Article 21—Non-discrimination. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/eu-charter/article/21-non-discrimination#explanations>
- Hellenic Republic. (2017). Νομική αναγνώριση ταυτότητας φύλου (ΝΑΤΦ): Ν. 4491/2017, νομολογία, διαδικασία, προϋποθέσεις, τοπική αρμοδιότητα του δικαστηρίου. Δικηγορικό Γραφείο | Ευγενία Φωτοπούλου | Δικηγόροι Αθηνών. <https://efotopoulou.gr/nomiki-anagnorisi-taftotitas-filou-natf-n-44912017-nomologia-diadikasia-proipotesis-topiki-armodiotita-tou-dikastiriou/>
- Hellenic Republic. (2022). Direct and Indirect Discrimination on Grounds of Gender and Sexual Harassment.
- Hellenic Republic. (2024, February 17). Νόμος 5089/2024—ΦΕΚ 27/Α/16-2-2024. e-nomothesia.gr | Τράπεζα Πληροφοριών Νομοθεσίας. <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/oikogeneia/n-5089-2024.html>
- Hulko, W., & Hovanes, J. (2017). Intersectionality in the Lives of LGBTQ Youth: Identifying as LGBTQ and Finding Community in Small Cities and Rural Towns. Journal of Homosexuality, 427–455. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2017.1320169>
- ILGA-EUROPE. (2025a). Annual Review 2025: Belgium. <https://www.ilga-europe.org/files/uploads/2025/02/Annual-Review-2025-Belgium.pdf>
- ILGA-EUROPE. (2025b). Rainbow Map Belgium. <https://rainbowmap.ilga-europe.org/countries/belgium/>
- Ioverno, S. (2023). Inclusive National Educational Policies as Protective Factors for LGBTI Youth Adjustment: An European Cross-National Study. 72(6), 845–851. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2023.01.013>
- Kremalis Law Firm. (2025). Labour Code Codified by Presidential Decree 62/2025. <https://kremalis.com/new-labour-code-codified-by-presidential-decree-62-2025/>
- L&E Global. (2024). Anti-Discrimination Laws Belgium. <https://leglobal.law/countries/belgium/employment-law/employment-law-overview-belgium/04-anti-discrimination-laws/>
- Library of Congress. (2014). Greece: New Law Criminalizes Denial of Genocide, Hate Speech, and Other Acts of Racism [Web page]. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2014-09-24/greece-new-law-criminalizes-denial-of-genocide-hate-speech-and-other-acts-of-racism/>
- Mahowald, L. (2022). LGBTQI+ Nondiscrimination Laws Improve Economic, Physical, and Mental Well-Being. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/lgbtqi-nondiscrimination-laws-improve-economic-physical-and-mental-well-being/>
- Ministry of Justice. (2014). ΝΟΜΟΣ ΥΠ’ ΑΡΙΘΜ. 4285. https://ministryofjustice.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/24aNomos_n4285_2014-1.pdf
- OECD. (2025). Over the Rainbow? The Road to LGBTI Inclusion Belgium. <https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2025>



[/07/over-the-rainbow-the-road-to-lgbti-inclusion-country-notes_247c0764/belgium_a7d765c3/39f3ec5c-en.pdf](#)

- OHCHR. (2019). The inclusion of LGBT people in education settings of paramount importance to “leaving no one behind”. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2019/10/inclusion-lgbt-people-education-settings-paramount-importance>
- OSCE. (2024). Hate crime legislation in Greece | HCRW. <https://hatecrime.osce.org/hate-crime-legislation-greece>
- Russell, S., Bishop, M., Saba, V., James, I., & Ioverno, S. (2021). Promoting School Safety for LGBTQ and All Students. 160–166. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23727322211031938>
- Saggu, A. (2022). Why is LGBTQI+ inclusive education so important and what can be done? Social Development Direct. <https://www.sddirect.org.uk/blog-article/why-lgbtqi-inclusive-education-so-important-and-what-can-be-done>
- Settling in Belgium. (2012). Equal treatment in the workplace. <https://settlinginbelgium.be/en/work-and-retirement/equal-treatment-in-the-workplace>
- UNHCR. (2024, April). Multilingual glossary of terms on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. <https://www.refworld.org/reference/tools/unhcr/2024/en/147995>
- United States Department of State. (2023). 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Belgium. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/belgium/>
- African American Policy Forum. (n.d.). *Intersectionality primer*. [Intersectionality primer - African American Policy Forum.pdf](#)
- European Commission. (n.d.). *EU actions against discrimination*. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination_en
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (n.d.). *Intersectionality — definition and guidance*. <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1284>
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (n.d.). *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>
- ERYICA – European Youth Information and Counselling Agency. (n.d.). *Youth worker ethical guidelines and resources*. <https://www.eryica.org/resources>
- GLSEN. (n.d.). *Educator resources for LGBTQ+ inclusion*. <https://www.glsen.org/resources>
- Human Rights Campaign. (n.d.). *Corporate Equality Index*. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/corporate-equality-index>
- ILGA-Europe. (2023). *Annual review of the human rights situation of LGBTQ people in Europe*. <https://www.ilga-europe.org/rainbow-europe/>
- International Labour Organization. (2019). *Eliminating discrimination in employment and occupation (Convention No. 111)*. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312256
- International Labour Organization. (n.d.). *Equality and non-discrimination at work*. [ILO Homepage | International Labour Organization](#)



- Kitterman, T. (2024, June 25). *Intersectionality in the workplace: Building belonging for LGBTQ+ employees*. Great Place To Work. <https://www.greatplacetowork.co.uk/resources/intersectionality-in-the-workplace-building-belonging-for-lgbtq-employees>
- LGBTQIA Resource Center. (2024, March 18). *How to be an ally*. University of California Davis. <https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/ally-tips>
- Out & Equal. (n.d.). *Workplace inclusion resources*. <https://outandequal.org/resources/>
- Stonewall. (n.d.). *LGBTQ+ inclusive workplaces: Resources for employers*. <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources>
- UCLA School of Law, Williams Institute. (n.d.). *LGBTQ+ mental health and minority stress*. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/topic/lgbtq-mental-health/>
- UNIA. (2022). *Discrimination and equal opportunities in Belgium: Annual report*. <https://www.unia.be/en>
- Yogyakarta Principles. (n.d.). *Principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity*. <https://yogyakartaprinciples.org>
- Borresen, K. (2021). *14 microaggressions LGBTQ people deal with all the time*. *HuffPost*. Retrieved from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/microaggressions-lgbtq-people-deal-with_L_60c12080e4b059c73bd556e2
- Crenshaw, K. (2016, October 27). *The urgency of intersectionality* [Video]. TEDWomen. https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality
- European Commission. (n.d.). *EU actions to combat discrimination*. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination_en
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (n.d.). *Intersectionality — definition and concepts*. <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1284>
- Grigoreva, D., & Szaszko, B. (2024). *Minority stress and psychological well-being in queer populations*. *Scientific Reports*, 14, Article 27084. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-78545-6>
- GUIDE Project. (2025, October 22). *Intersectionality in gender-sensitive career guidance: Recognizing multiple identities to empower all*. <https://guideproject.eu/2025/10/22/intersectionality-in-gender-sensitive-career-guidance-recognizing-multiple-identities-to-empower-all/>
- Human Rights Campaign. (n.d.). *LGBTQ+ workplace resources and equality tools*. <https://www.hrc.org/resources>
- ILGA-Europe. (2023). *Rainbow Europe: Annual review of the human rights situation of LGBTI people in Europe*. <https://www.ilga-europe.org/rainbow-europe/>
- International Labour Organization. (2019). *Eliminating discrimination in employment and occupation: Convention No. 111*. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312256
- Nadal, K. L. (2019). *A decade of microaggression research and LGBTQ communities: An introduction to the special issue*. *Journal of*



Homosexuality, 66(10), 1309–1316.

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1539582>
- Online MSW Programs. (n.d.). *Social work and the LGBTQIA+ community*. <https://www.onlinemswprograms.com/resources/social-work-lgbtqia/>
- Out & Equal. (n.d.). *LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion resources*. <https://outandequal.org/resources/>
- Stonewall. (n.d.). *Guidance on creating inclusive workplaces*. <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources>
- Sue, D. W., & Spanierman, L. B. (2020). *Microaggressions in everyday life* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366596089_Microaggressions_in_Everyday_Life_2nd_ed
- Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting inclusion and equity in education: Lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(1), 7–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.1729587>



Annex 1: Module 1 Exercises

1.1 Module 1: Exercise 1

Step	Duration	Materials	Description
Brief introduction to the Rainbow Bridges project	5'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	The presentation slides should be brief and outline the general goal of the project and what has happened that lead to the handbook and training seminar.
Introduction to the theoretical part	15'-20'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	First assess how familiar the participants are with the terminology. Show them 3-4 different terms, at least one of them less common, like intersex or asexual, and ask them to define them. Use that as a starting point to properly give the definition of the terms found in 1.2. Then start to lead to the practical tool. Talk about how important these identities are in the professional path of young people and how sometimes they come up within the guidance framework.
Describe the main use of the practical tool	3'-5'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	Using the information from this handbook you can outline all the reason why such a tool will or can be beneficial for the professionals. Explain that you'll walk them through all the steps.
Tool Step 1: Preparation & Safeguarding	3'	For online: Presentation	Explain that this is so the person is feeling safe, knows why and how everything is happens and is aware of

		For in person: Presentation	things that might be triggering.
Tool Step 2: Lived Experience Collection	5'-10'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	For the explanation of this tool step, you can remind the participants that the people in front of them might not know where to start or how to describe what they want. In this step the counsellor/youth worker will have to guide the person while they tell them their experience. Emphasise the four key pillars of this step and that any guiding or clarifying questions should have them in mind.
Tool Step 3: Case Study Structuring	10'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	You can transition from the previous step by reminding the participants that information such as that provided by the person can be useful to other professionals and therefore the time has come to create a case study to help them. Show them the structure from 1.3 and describe what each part is for.
Practical exercise: role playing	30'-35'	For online: digital copies of the role sheets and tool steps. Some function like break-out rooms for separate work For in person: printed: role sheets, the tool steps twice; pens; pencils; markers Room for the teams to work separately.	Split the participants in groups of 3 (if the numbers don't work, prefer 4-member teams rather than pairs). One person will be given the profile of a young person sharing an experience, one person will act as a youth worker/ career guidance counsellor, and one person will be the observer. (If there are 4 people, have two observers) The teams will have 25' to act out the scenario of a young LGBTQIA+ person sharing an experience with a youth



			worker/ career counsellor, and 5' for the observer to make comments. At the end you will ask the participants to share how they felt during this exercise.
Closing of the module	10'	For online: Presentation with the reflection questions; a code for the evaluation questionnaire, if this module is taught independently. For in person: Presentation with the reflection questions; a code for the evaluation questionnaire, if this module is taught independently.	You ask the participants the reflection questions that can be found in sub-chapter 1.6 (you can add if you want). This is the end of the module and you can invite participants to share a brief comment or a brief answer to one of the evaluation questions, if they want. If this is the end of the training as a whole, you can give them the evaluation form as well.



Annex 2: Module 2 Exercises

2.1 Module 2: Exercise 1

The table below provides step-by-step instructions / script on how to teach both the theory in 2.2 and the tools described in 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 to youth workers and/or career counsellors. It covers both online and in person training scenarios. The duration for most steps will be in brackets as a suggestion, to be adjusted based on the available time.

Step	Duration	Materials	Description
Brief introduction to the Rainbow Bridges project (if this part is being shown separately, otherwise skip this step)	5'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	The presentation slides should be brief and outline the general goal of the project and what has happened that lead to the handbook and training seminar.
Introduction to the theoretical part	15'-20'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	First you should assess how knowledgeable the participants are when it comes to the protection of individuals from discrimination, in any case. Ask them if those laws cover LGBTQIA+ people. Proceed with showing all the relevant laws (national and European) from part 2.2 and pointing out any differences on the protection they offer. Use bullets to list all the cases that LGBTQIA+ people are protected by the law. Show some of the examples used in the theoretical part.
Practical Tool 1: Rights Awareness Reference for SOGIESC-Inclusive Career Counselling	15'-20'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	You can start this part by mentioning that since the participants don't deal with anti-discrimination



			cases on a daily basis, they can't possibly remember every single legal clause. This tool was created for that reason. Explain that it's a reference list, with examples of all the characteristics that fall under the SOGIESC umbrella (sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression etc.) and are protected from discrimination. This list is to be used to confirm whether a young person had been discriminated against and shares their experience with the counsellors or youth workers.
Practice on the tool – two exercises	10'	For online: The document with the list in digital form to send to the participants on the training chat and the document with the second exercise either For in person: Printed copies of the list and printed copies of the second exercise.	To practice the use of this list, there are two exercises. In the first, you provide the participants with a copy of the complete list from the Annex (exercise 1). Then show them slides of certain situations and ask them to determine if the situation is a violation of anti-discrimination legislation or not. In the second, you give copies of the second exercise (exercise 2 in the Annex), and give them 5' to match the situations with



			the area it belongs in (e.g. sexual orientation, gender identity etc.) After both are done (or one, depending on your time) ask them if any examples were more difficult than others and why. In they found everything pretty easily, ask them if they would've guessed they were examples of illegal behaviour without having the list.
Practical tool 2: How to handle the sharing of an incident	10'-15'	For online: Presentation For in person: Presentation	For this part you remind the participants that some of the experiences can be traumatic for the young people on the receiving end. Have slides with the steps and go through them. Leave enough time for questions.
Closing of the module	10'	For online: Presentation with the reflection questions; a code for the evaluation questionnaire, if this module is taught independently. For in person: Presentation with the reflection questions; a code for the evaluation questionnaire, if this module is	You ask the participants the reflection questions that can be found in sub-chapter 2.6 (you can add some if you want). This is the end of the module and you can invite participants to share a brief comment or a brief answer to one of the evaluation questions, if they want. If this is the end of the training as a whole, you can give them the evaluation form as well.



		taught independently.	
--	--	--------------------------	--



Annex 3: Module 3 Exercises

3.1 Module 3: Exercise 1

Exercise 1: “Coming-Out Reflection & Safety Scan” (Individual + Group Guided Discussion)

4. Objectives

- To support participants in reflecting on workplace disclosure factors using structured personal reasoning
- To identify safe vs. unsafe workplace signals
- To normalize selective or non-disclosure decisions

Duration: 30 min

5. Materials Needed

- Printed reflection worksheet
- Pens/markers
- Timer
- A private reflection corner or calm space inside the training room

6. Instructions

F. Facilitator Introduction (3 min)

The trainer opens the session saying: *“This exercise is for reflection. You are not required to disclose personal identities. You may answer with hypothetical situations or from a counselling perspective”* (Meyer, 2003).

G. Individual reflection (7 min)

Participants answer the questions below silently and write short notes:

- Do youth in guidance sessions sometimes hesitate to disclose identity? Why?
- What workplace signs indicate safety or inclusivity?
- What risks might feel harmful even when not explicit?
- What benefits might authenticity bring professionally?
- Who can play a support role for hesitant youth?
- Is selective disclosure a valid approach? Why?

H. Sharing Round (10 min, approx. 1 minute per participant, optional participation)

- The Trainer must record how many participants passed, as part of methodological self-awareness.
- The trainer invites participants **one by one**: *“You may share 1 takeaway, or say ‘pass’, both are valid.”*
- The trainer must record how many participants passed, as part of methodological self-awareness.

I. Group Guided Discussion (8-10 min)

- Trainer leads a non-judgmental dialogue:
- Which safety indicators appeared most frequently?
- Which risk was the most overlooked in your view?



- Did anyone identify a benefit that helps youth's confidence?
The trainer moderated to avoid giving direct advice that pressures youth toward disclosure.

J. Wrap-up Documentation (2 min)

Participants write 3 takeaways:

- One key safety sign
- One common risk

One support strategy

3.2 Module 3: Exercise 2

Exercise 2: “Persona-Based Workplace Culture Case Analysis” (Group Activity + Peer Teaching)

5. Objectives

- To analyse inclusive career guidance competences through fictional personas instead of personal disclosure
- To assess workplace culture, not encourage disclosure
- To practice presenting inclusion markers in structured bullets
- To strengthen peer learning and presentation skills

Duration: 40 min

6. Materials Needed

- Persona workplace description handouts (prepared from existing module text)
- Pens / Flipchart paper
- Timer

7. Trainer Setup (before session — 1 minute)

The trainer prepares 3 persona handouts already included in your module. Each handout must contain:

- Job sector
- Team dynamics
- Onboarding behaviour notes
- Inclusion policy reference (*if mentioned*)

8. Instructions

v. Group Formation (2 min)

Participants divide into 3 groups. Each group receives 1 persona.

vi. Round 1 – Workplace Culture Summary (12 min)

Groups summarize culture using the original competence areas already present in your doc:

- Policy clarity
- Onboarding practices
- Team communication dynamics
- Hierarchy / leadership signals



- Sector inclusion expectations

Each group writes 5 bullets summarizing findings.

vii. Round 2 – Inclusion Marker vs. Risk Structuring (12 min)

Group identifies from the existing text:

- 2 inclusion signals
 - 2 risks
 - 1 neutral guidance question that keeps conversation career-focused
- (Nadal et al., 2016)

viii. Group Presentations (10 min total, 3 min per group)

Groups present their 6 items:

- 5 culture bullets
- 2 inclusion signals
- 2 risks
- 1 question

Trainer-Led Debrief (5–7 min)

Facilitator asks:

- *Were policies enough to guarantee cultural safety?*
- *What part of onboarding impacted confidence or belonging?*
- *How can youth workers apply these reflection areas in real guidance work?*

The _____ trainer _____ closes _____ by _____ reinforcing:
"Our role is to facilitate reasoning, not tell youth what to do."

Annex 4: Module 4 Exercises

4.1 Module 4: Exercise 1

Exercise 1: Scenario-Based Role Play (30 min)

Objectives

- To practice recognizing micro-aggressions in guidance dialogues
- To rehearse professional, inclusive, and non-judgmental bias interruption
- To restore safety and trust in guidance exchanges

Duration: 30 min

Materials Needed

- Scenario cards (never employer assessment cards)
- Pens + notepads for observers
- Timer

Instructions:

1. Facilitator Briefing (3 min)

Trainer opens the activity with: “You are practicing professional responses. You do not need to disclose personal identity; hypothetical roles are fully valid.”

2. Role-Play Round 1 (9 min)

Participants form triads: Counsellor – Youth – Observer; The counsellor draws 1 unedited scenario card. During the interaction, the counsellor must:

- detect micro-aggressive or assuming language
- interrupt bias respectfully
- recentre conversation to career guidance goal

3. Role Rotation (9 min)

Roles rotate so each participant practices the counsellor role once.

1. Triad Debrief (5 min)

Inside triads, discuss:

- What was the initial micro-aggression?
- How did the intervention change the youth persona’s emotional response?
- Did the counsellor recentre guidance effectively without dismissing the issue?

2. Full Group Debrief (4–5 min)

Trainer facilitates a room-level discussion with the same questions above, focusing on patterns—not personal experiences shared.

Scenario logic:

- assuming heteronormative career motivations
- stereotyping sector suitability
- praising conformity at the cost of identity



redirecting guidance toward identity curiosity over career pathing

4.2 Module 4: Exercise 2

Exercise 2: Employer / Institution Evaluation Groups (40 min)

Objectives

- To transform a harmful or biased guidance exchange into a corrected alternative
 - To protect the same career guidance aim but remove assumptions or micro-aggressive phrasing
 - To build dialogue, repair competence and emotional safety sensitivity
- Duration: 35 min

Materials Needed

- 1 harmful guidance exchange excerpt per pair (taken from your doc exercise section but NOT from the 1st practical tool examples or Module 3)
- Pens + paper
- Timer

Instructions

1. Pair Formation & Prompt Delivery (2 min)

Participants form **pairs**. Each pair receives one **guidance exchange excerpt** from the module exercise section (fictional, different from Tool examples, not hiring/internship assessment).

2. Round 1 & Bias Detection (10 min)

Pairs identify the bias:

- What assumption was made?
- Was identity policing present?
- Was sector steering based on stereotype?
- Did the counsellor lose the guidance aim?

Pairs document 4 bullets summarizing detected issues.

3. Round 2 — Dialogue Repair Redesign (12–15 min)

Pairs rewrite the same exchange, ensuring the counsellor response now:

- removes assumptions
- avoids stereotypes
- restores youth autonomy
- recentres to career goal
- uses inclusive language calmly and professionally

Pairs should produce 6–7 corrected dialogue lines total.

4. Pair Presentations (6 min — 1 min per pair)

Pairs read “Before vs. After”.



5. Trainer Debrief (8 min)

Trainer facilitates:

- common bias patterns observed
- most effective trust-restoring strategies used
- tone shifts that preserved guidance goal
- why dialogue repair competence matters for youth retention in guidance services

Trainer closes by reinforcing: "The goal was repair and empowerment, not disclosure".

