

What barriers do LGBTQ+ people with IDD experience with their services?

In 2025, **LGBTQ+ people in Ohio with IDD**, their family members, and their direct support professionals were surveyed and interviewed about their experiences with disability services. Here's what they said about the biggest barriers to inclusive supports related to their LGBTQ+ identities:

“When you think about someone who doesn't have a disability and how hard it is for them to come out, you gotta think **for someone with IDD it's doubly hard**. You're not just risking Mom and Dad saying you can't live at home anymore. **You're risking throwing away the entire lifeline that you depend on for helping you with whatever you need to live.**”



About **1 in 3 LGBTQ+ People with IDD** feel that service providers are not welcoming

31%

said service providers **are not knowledgeable about LGBTQ+ needs and wants**

37%

said service providers **do not make them comfortable to be themselves**

32%

said service providers are **not responsive to their LGBTQ+ needs and wants**

33%

said service providers **are not allies to the LGBTQ+ community**



About **HALF of LGBTQ+ People with IDD** say their services were affected by non-responsive service providers

45%

said they **had a negative experience with a service provider** that they thought was because they were LGBTQ+

48%

said they **stopped going to a service provider** because they did not feel comfortable with them because they are LGBTQ+

52%

said they think **being LGBTQ+ makes it harder to find a disability service provider** that will fit their needs

Suggestions from participants to improve services:



Offer specialized training for service providers about LGBTQ+ issues, terminology, trauma-informed care, and best practices to increase understanding, competency, and inclusion



Use inclusive language and avoid prejudice or judgment in all materials, communication, and day-to-day conversations



Avoid assumptions about gender identity and sexual orientation when creating person centered plans or providing support



Make sure that questions asked of people using services about their sexuality and identity are relevant to support needs



Listen when people share their identity and/or sexuality and be affirming and supportive



Care about the whole person by supporting them in ways that are specific to who they are



Remove deadnames from files and encourage staff conversations with and about people to use preferred names and pronouns



Post flags or small symbols of support to signal safe spaces and create a welcoming environment



Have all gender, accessible bathrooms