



## Handling difficult questions

Sometimes young people will ask questions that we do not know the answer to, or that might make us feel embarrassed, or that we are just not sure how to give an appropriate answer to.

E.g. "What does gay mean?"

"What's a blow job?"

"Are you gay?"

The following guidance is helpful in dealing with any scenario or question:

1. Stay calm!
2. Give a short, factual answer if you can. The younger the child, the shorter your answer can be.
3. Once you have given your response to the young person, ask "Does that answer your question?" and this gives the young person an opportunity to seek further clarification if s/he needs to.
4. If you don't know the answer or are unsure how to respond then say that you would like to think a bit more about what they have said and that you will get back to them by the end of the day/tomorrow/the end of the week.
5. If you are asked any questions about your personal life, think about whether it is an appropriate question and whether you as an individual feel comfortable to answer and to what level. You can explain that your personal life is private but you are happy to talk about whatever it is that they have asked in a general way. If it feels appropriate and safe and you feel comfortable to share your experience or views, then it can be really important, helpful and powerful for young people.

As we have said, it is important to be prepared and know some of the resources available so that you feel more confident about undertaking this work.