



CONCERNED MOTHER FINDS HOPE FOR HER CHILD

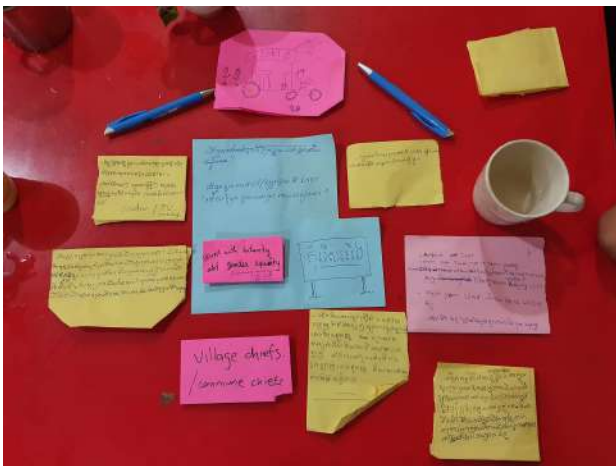
We need accurate information if we are to enable children with diverse SOGIESC (sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sexual characteristics) to feel safe, accepted and celebrated. Beautiful Life Organisation (BLO) provides this information through their drop-in centre, as well as in the way they educate, support and advocate for people.

A 45-year old mother named Bopha* residing in Phnom Penh came across our Facebook page in a desperate attempt to understand her daughter. Bopha noted that her daughter was once a happy and confident teenager, but seemed recently to be under a lot of stress - worrying about her grades, her upcoming Grade 12 exams and life in general. Her daughter finally came to her and confessed she had something going on inside.

“I feel like I am a boy... but don't worry, mum, I still love boys!”

Bopha did not understand and wondered if perhaps her daughter had been on her phone too much or if she had some kind of autism. Understandably, her daughter was noticeably upset when these ideas were put to her. She yelled at her mum that this was not the issue! Bopha noted after this time, her daughter became increasingly quiet and withdrawn. Concerned for her daughter, Bopha sent her to a mental health clinic for treatment. Bopha also tried reaching out to a few LGBTIQ+ focused organisations but was unable to reach anyone. Finally, she stumbled across a page called A Place to be Yourself (APTBY) - BLO's drop-in centre. She called the number listed and connected immediately with one of APTBY's Facilitators, Sivat.

He listened closely to her story and offered some much needed peer support. Bopha confided that she would have understood if her daughter came out as a lesbian - she knew about that - but this was something different; something new. Bopha wanted to know more so she could understand and better support her daughter, not change her. Sivat pointed out that it sounded as though her daughter was actually transgender - which is about our identity, not our sexuality. He provided some more information and resources for Bopha to look into, and also let her know that BLO offers free counselling to the LGBTIQ+ community - which absolutely includes parents of LGBTIQ+ children who are wanting to understand and support their children the best way they can.



Notes from the attendees of one of BLO's youth discussion groups

Bopha has since had two sessions with our experienced counsellor (who also happens to identify as LGBTIQ+), and feels much better and well-equipped to support her transgender son. He is reportedly doing much better, too.

*name has been changed to protect the identity of the individual