Spectrum Center Educational Series:
Sexuality and Gender Identity

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GROUND YOURSELF – create an educational space

- Be Smarter Than Your Phone
- Ask Questions
- Vegas Rule – Confidentiality
- Reserve The Right To Change Your Mind
- LOL
What is an ALLY?

Ally –
: one that is associated with another as a helper

: a person or group that provides assistance and support in an ongoing effort, activity, or struggle

https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ally
COMMITTING TO GROWTH
AWARENESS

• Explore how you are similar and different from the LGBTQ* community

• Evaluate your beliefs about sexuality and gender norms

• Take a closer look your own identity
Awareness: become more aware of who you are and how you are different from and similar to the communities to whom you have allyship.

Strategies for awareness:

- Conversations with individuals
- Deeply engage in community
- Education on the history of discrimination and the issues individuals may face
- Self-examination.

Knowledge/Education: begin to acquire knowledge about sexuality and gender identity and what the experience is for LGBTQ2 persons.

- Learn about laws, policies, and practices and how they affect LGBTQ2 persons.
- Educate yourself about LGBTQ2 culture and norms of this community.
- Engage with local and national LGBTQ2 organizations for information and experience.

- Adapted from Evans, N. J. & Wall, V.A. (1991). Beyond Tolerance: Gay, Lesbians, and Bisexuals on Campus. USA. ACPA.
**Skills:** Develop skills in communicating the knowledge that you have learned.

- Attend and participate in workshops
- Develop supportive connections within communities and organizations
- Develop confidence in interventions or awareness raising.

**Action:** Action is the only way that we can affect change in the society as a whole.

By keeping our awareness, knowledge, and skills to ourselves we deprive the rest of the world of what we have learned - keeping others from having the fullest possible life.

- Adapted from Evans, N. J. & Wall, V.A. (1991). Beyond Tolerance: Gay, Lesbians, and Bisexuals on Campus. USA. ACPA.
Developing an understanding of the experiences of those around you.

**Affirming Spaces vs. Public Spaces**

- Hyper-awareness
- Cultural language - *code switching 101*
- Navigation and exhaustion of being the identity

**Online Presence vs. In Person**

- The digital wall
- Anonymity of authenticity(?)
- Self-realization
- Lifescape
  (avoiding deadnaming and trauma)
Heterosexual and Cisgender Social Advantage
• Heterosexual Advantage
  – Role models are everywhere!
  – Validation
  – Institutional Acceptance
  – No hoops or obstacles in marriage.

• Cisgender Advantage
  – Not questioning “normalcy”
  – Cultural validation
  – Institutional Acceptance
  – And of course... Legal identity.

When did you choose?
Things most people don’t and will not hear

• “I think my friend is straight, do you know them?”
• “How do you have sex?”
• “Why don’t you just make up your mind?”
• “I don’t have a problem with heterosexuals, but...”
• “What’s your REAL name?”
• “When did you decide that you were a man/woman?”
• “Oh my gosh, you look so real!”
• “Are you in the right bathroom?”
• “How do you have sex?”
• Learn more about the LGBTQ* community
• Don’t place the intellectual labor on those who are minoritized
  – Terminology
  – Symbols
  – History & Culture
Describing the the unknown...

The invention of sexuality...
  Karl Heinrich Ulrichs
  Substantial research on sexuality (father of terminology?)

  Johann Bachofen (1861)
  History of sexuality

  Karl Maria Benkert (1868)
  Homosexuality first coined

  C. G. Craddock (1892)
  Psychopathia Sexualis
  Heterosexual first coined

1914: Portland, Oregon: A dictionary of criminal slang is published.
First printed use of the term “faggot” in regard to a gay man.
KNOWLEDGE - Terminology

- **Allosexual**
  - Gay
  - Lesbian
  - Bisexual
  - Pansexual
  - Straight

- **Asexual**
  - Aromantic
  - Grey Ace
  - Apothisexual

- **Romantic Attraction**

- **Sexual Attraction**
KNOWLEDGE – Symbols

- Pink triangle
- Lambda symbol (Λ)
- Rainbow flag
- Transgender flag
- Black triangle
- Red ribbon
- Male, female, and transgender symbols
- Genderqueer flag
What do the terms cisgender and transgender mean?

- **Cisgender**: Refers to individuals whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Transgender**: Refers to individuals whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Binary**
- Trans man
- Trans woman

**Non-Binary**
- Genderqueer
- Demiboy
- Demigirl
- Neutrois
- Genderfluid
- Bigender
- Agender
- And more!
Gender is not a dirty word....

- **Cisgender (cis):** referring to the alignment of one’s gender identity with one’s sex assigned at birth. (Trans Student Educational Resources 2017)

- **Transgender (trans):** denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with sex assigned at birth. (Trans Student Educational Resources 2017)
What is biological sex?

• Biological sex is a collection of traits that tend to differ between sexes, but often vary within each sex and overlapping between sexes (Serano 2017)
• Primary sex characteristics includes chromosomes, hormones, brain development, body structures (internal and external)
• Secondary sex characteristics include facial and body hair, body size, vocal range, shape, and fat distribution, etc.

https://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/n/new_parents.asp
What is Gender?

- **Gender/Gender Identity**: One’s internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or other gender(s). (Trans Student Educational Resources 2017)

- **Gender Expression/Presentation**: The physical manifestation of one’s gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc.. (Trans Student Educational Resources 2017)
How to Use the Word “Transgender”
(Kapitan 2017)

- *Transgender* is an adjective
- Examples: *transgender people; a transgender person*
- Avoid: *transgenders; transgendered*
- *Transgender* is a descriptive term, not (usually) a gender and not always an identity
Language is always evolving.

- What are some words or phrases you are familiar with that others may not be?
- How has technology shaped language?
Non-binary Gender Identities

• *Transgender* does not refer only to binary-identified trans women and men. Many trans people (~35%) are **non-binary** (Kapitan 2017).

• Non-binary people do not identify (exclusively or at all) as male or female.

• Some non-binary people take certain steps to transition socially or medically. Others do not want to or are not able to.

• **TGNC**: transgender and gender nonconforming
Words for Assigned Sex/Gender

- **AFAB**: Assigned female at birth
- **DFAB** (designated female at birth) and **CAFAB** (coercively assigned female at birth) are also used
- **AMAB**: Assigned male at birth
- **DMAB** (designated male at birth) and **CAMAB** (coercively assigned male at birth) are also used
- Don’t use: *born a woman; born a man; biologically female; biologically male; genetically female; genetically male; pre-op; post-op* (Kapitan 2017)

https://www.shutterstock.com/image-illustration/symbols-male-female-trans-gender-on-117276277
A Pronoun Primer

I DON'T "IDENTIFY" I AM

I DON'T HAVE "PREFERRED PRONOUNS" I HAVE PRONOUNS

I'M TRANSGENDER MY GENDER IS AS VALID AS YOURS
If you are worried about asking pronouns and potentially ‘out’ someone here’s a simple solution.

Name you want folx to refer to you: ___________________________________

Name you were given at birth: _________________________________________

Pronouns: _____________________________

May I use these pronouns in public? YES NO

May I use these pronouns when I need to contact you? YES NO

May I use these pronouns with other employees? YES NO

Would you like for me to follow up with you (in a private conversation) so I can learn more about your pronouns and/or be an ally to you? YES NO

*tell me three things about you – hobbies, facts, things you may want me to know about you*
What do you use?

He Him His
She Her Hers
They Them Their
Ze Zim Hir
**Neo-Pronouns**

Student: Can I borrow a pencil?
Teacher: I don't know. Can you?
Student: Yes. I might add that colloquial irregularities occur frequently in any language. Since you and the rest of our present company understood perfectly my intended meaning, being particular about the distinctions between "can" and "may" is purely pedantic and arguably pretentious.
It’s not that difficult...

It’s none of your business
Everyone has a gender
Everyone has a sexuality
You have the right to privacy
Everyone else does too
What can you do to be more conscious of identity – pronouns – ‘outing’?

- In the classroom
- At work
- With residents
- With supervisors
- In general public

- What are some situations where you will need to be more conscious of identity?
- Of pronouns?
- ‘Outing’ someone
BUT IF YOU
DO MISGENDER
SOMEONE...
When you accidentally misgender someone:

**DON'T**

She - I mean he! He. Oh my god...

I am so SO SO sorry!

I didn’t mean it, you know

I'm the LAST person who-

It's ok.

It's FINE.

**WHY?**

Your mistake should not turn into a weird self-flagellation 'make me feel better' moment. It's really not about you.

**DO**

She - sorry, I mean he - he and I used to...
AFFIRMING SOMEONE’S IDENTITY CAN SAVE THEIR LIFE

Using a transgender youth's chosen name at work, at school, with friends, and at home:

- reduces depression symptoms by 71%
- reduces thoughts of suicide by 34%
- reduces suicide attempts by 65%

Supporting the Labor

Speak UP
Speak OUT

*But Do Not*

SPEAK FOR
How to Support

- Educate yourself about LGBTQIA+ history, rights, and inclusive practices
- Use sexuality and gender inclusive language and encourage your school/workplace to do so as well
- Advocate for gender neutral/all gender restroom facilities
- Ask about names and pronouns, use correct pronouns, and accept correction
- Listen respectfully to the experiences people, and don’t assume they are always willing to provide education
- Support government and workplace policies that protect people from discrimination based on gender identity and/or sexuality
- Stand up for those facing harassment, bullying, and violence
- Disrupt conversations that promote transphobia and misconceptions about transgender identity
SKILLS –

• Create an inclusive environment and use open and affirming language
• Listen and be supportive
• Know what resources are available
• Don’t make assumptions
• Learn more about LGBTQ2* issues
• Be proactive in acknowledging and making changes; don’t wait for a problem to arise

• Call someone knowledgeable on campus if an incident occurs or you need information
• Don’t tolerate intolerance in any part of your life
SKILLS —

- Get involved in the LGBTQ2* community on campus
- Talk to your friends/family/coworkers about LGBTQ2* issues and concerns
- Make mistakes & learn from them
- Challenge, educate, support!

And above all... If you are not comfortable with LGBTQ2* issues recognize your level of comfort and allow someone who is more comfortable or knowledgeable to work with students/faculty/staff that seek help.
Action - Challenge Trans*Phobia and Homophobia

**Name it:** When you witness bias, call the offending party on it by saying, "That term is not acceptable," or, "Using words like that is hurtful and offensive."

**Claim it:** Make it your issue. Say, “People I care about are LGBTQ2*, and I don’t like to hear those words.”

**Stop it:** Make a request for the behavior to stop by saying, “Please don’t use those words,” or “Cut it out, please.”
ACTION – Challenge Trans* Phobia and Homophobia

Get Help: Trust your instincts. Being an ally does not mean you should compromise your safety at any time.

Give Emotional First Aid: Don’t get so caught up in addressing the bias that you forget the person who was being picked on. If you have defused a situation, always be sure to ask the person if they are all right.

Easy Does it: Some situations call for a lighter hand. Use humor, don't take it personally when someone makes a misguided controversial remark, and ask questions such as, "What do you think a gay or lesbian person would think about that comment?"

Remember Everyone's Rights: There is a difference between free speech and using words as weapons.
QUESTIONS? THOUGHTS? CONCERNS? DISCUSSION?

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References


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