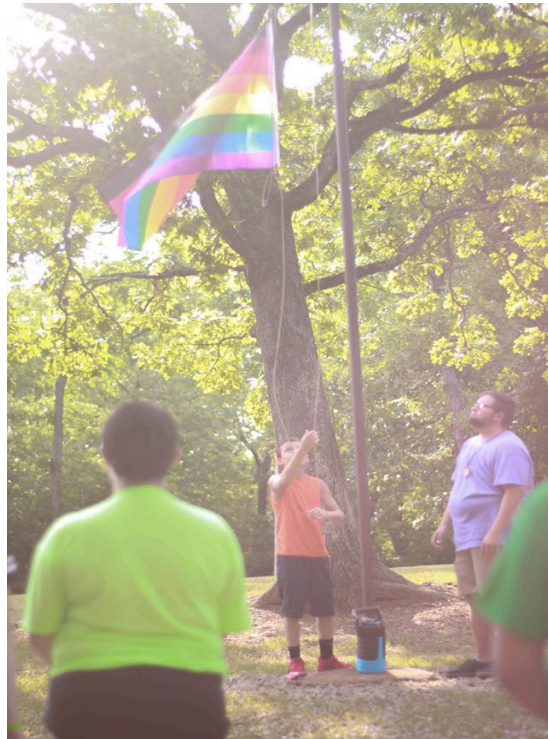




We ARE Here:

Supporting and Affirming
LGBTQ+ Staff and Young
People in Your Programs



BEN MATTHEWS



5.13.2020



Ben Matthews

They/Them or He/Him

Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion Specialist

CAMP FIRE NHQ

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Objectives for this session

Participants will leave with a better understanding of:

- The Basics: Terminology around LGBTQ+ Identities
- The Importance Of Visibility and Staff Support
- Privacy
- Impact of Gendered Spaces and Activities
- Things You Can Do to Support LGBTQ+ Folks Today!



*****Content Warning:** We will be discussing suicide and contributing factors. If at anytime you need to leave the conversation or room, please do so.

LGBTQQ2IAA+ What?

Terminology Around LGBTQ+ Identities



Lesbian

Questioning

Gay

Two Spirit

Bisexual

Intersex

Transgender (Trans*)

Asexual

Queer

Agender

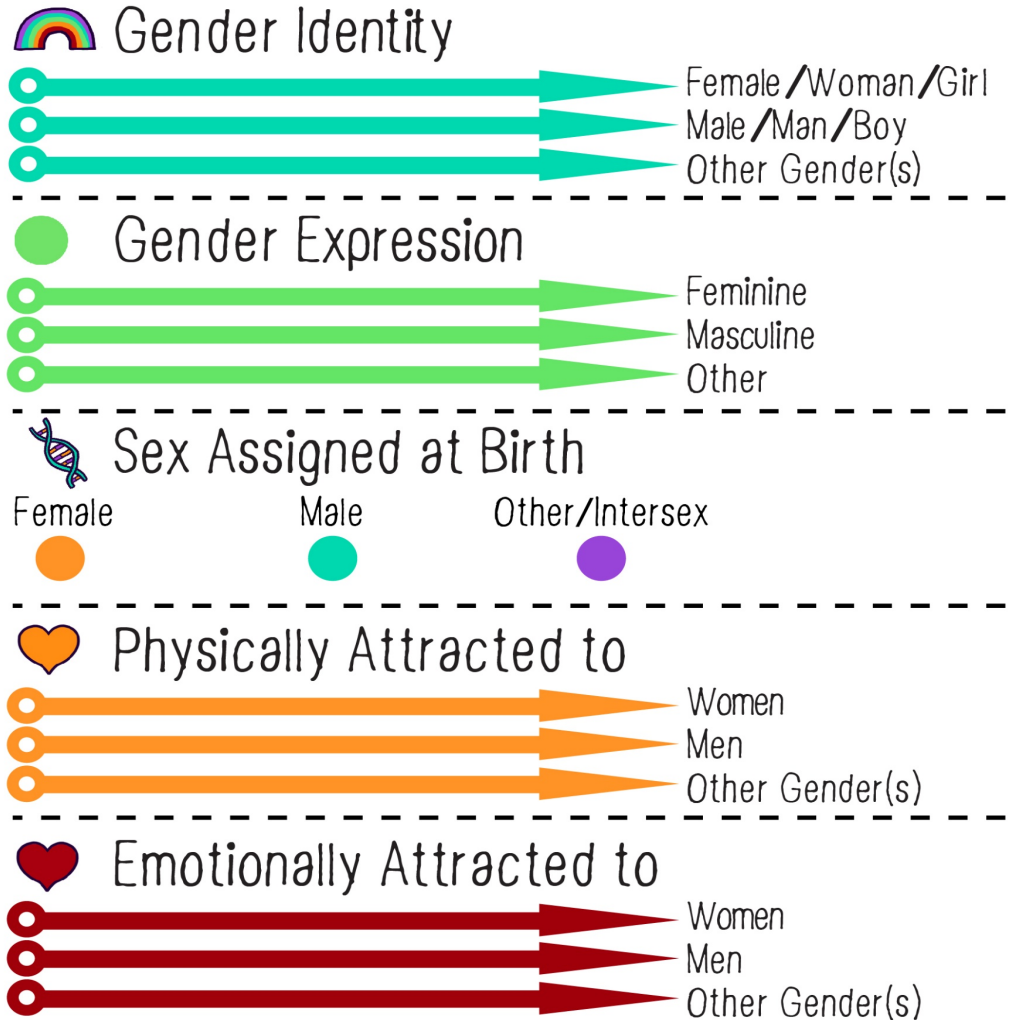
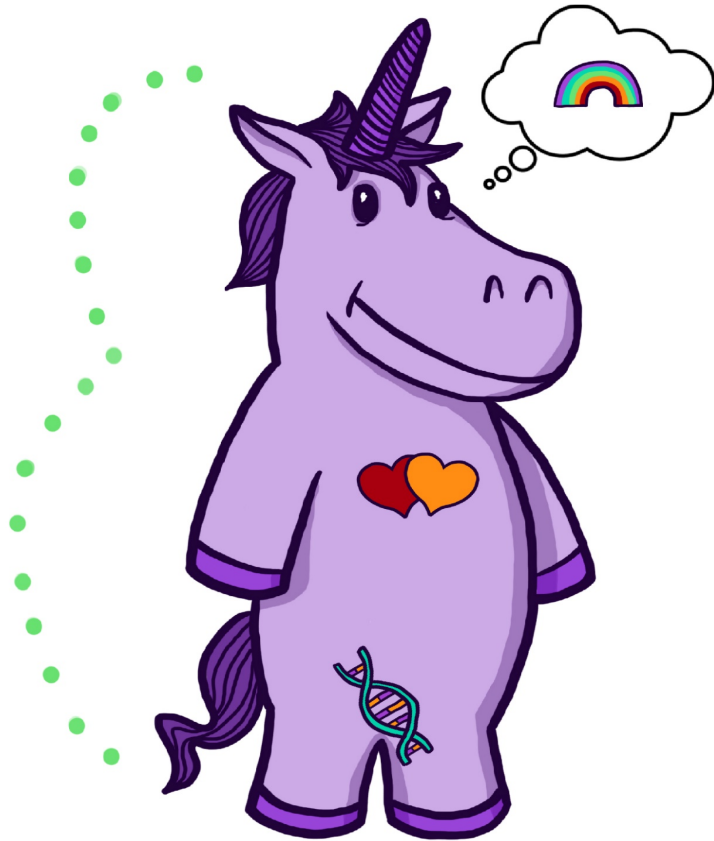
And SO many more!!!



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The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

What We Know

LGBTQ+ People are More Likely to Experience Suicidal Ideation or Attempts.



- 57% of respondents said they don't fit into the traditional definition of heterosexuality
- 39 % of LGBTQ respondents seriously considered attempting suicide in the past twelve months
- Over 18% of LGBTQ respondents attempted suicide in the past twelve months
- More than half of transgender and non-binary youth have seriously considered suicide
- 71% of respondents reported feeling sad or hopeless for at least two weeks in the past year

The Valentine Study: <https://www.ditchthelabel.org/research-papers/the-valentine-study/>
Trevor Project 2019 National Survey: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2019/?section=Introduction>



What We Know

Some of the Contributing Factors

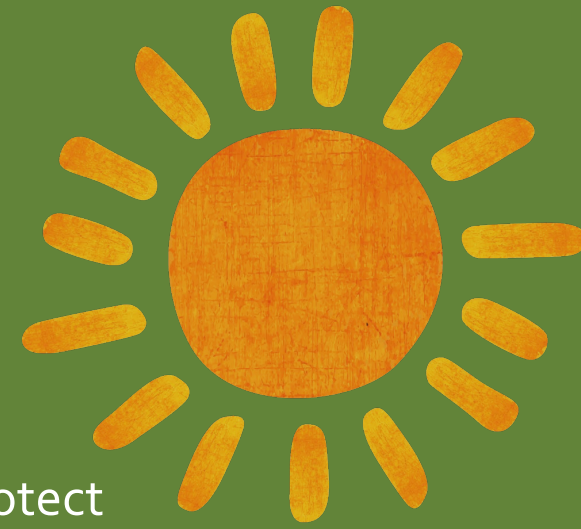
- Lack of support from parents and other family members
- Predisposition to depression, anxiety and substance abuse
- Dual stigma of being different in sexual orientation/gender identity and the stigma of suicide in general
- Isolation from conventional society
- Body image anxiety
- Institutional prejudice manifesting as laws and policies which create inequalities and/or fail to provide protection from discrimination (even more so in the current political climate)
- Fear of being harassed, disowned by family and friends, physically assaulted, or worse



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Where to Start...

Put It In Writing



According to research from The Williams Institute, anti-bullying laws that explicitly protect youth based on sexual orientation are associated with fewer suicide attempts among all youth, regardless of sexual orientation.

Name of Organization does not tolerate bullying or harassment, including on the basis ...

“We are inclusive, welcoming children, youth and adults regardless of race, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or other aspect of diversity.”

Make use of this language for youth and staff recruitment, workplace policy, during the hiring process, as well as in LGBTQ+ specific anti-bullying policies



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Visibility and Staff Support

"You can't be what you can't see."

- Marian Wright Edelman

- It starts with your staff!!!
- Ensure LGBTQ+ workplace policies are in place and up to date (including policies around bathrooms, dress codes, and harassment)
- Connect with the community through training, marketing, and partnerships
- Provide regular Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training for ALL staff
- Encourage staff to be themselves while working with youth
 - Set clear boundaries that differentiate between identity and personal life
- BE LOUD! BE PROUD! As with affirming laws, your employees and young people are looking for your support even BEFORE they get to your programs



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Privacy

Disclosure of Identity & Coming Out

"COMING OUT" ... "of the closet."
is the process by which someone...

1. Accepts and identifies with their gender identity and/or sexual orientation; and
2. Shares their identity willingly with others.

Sometimes We talk about coming out as if it were a one time thing. But for most folks coming out is a series of decisions – sometimes daily – that LGBTQ people navigate in every new setting they enter. (Most people aren't like Ellen, where they come out once and then the whole world knows.)

People may be "OUT" ⇨ in some spaces, and "IN" ⇨ in others.
⇨ / ⇨ to Family ⇨ / ⇨ to Friends ⇨ / ⇨ to Classmates/Coworkers ⇨ / ⇨ to Religious Community
A decision to come out to a person or group is one of safety, comfort, trust, & readiness.



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Privacy

Disclosure of Identity & Coming Out

It's dangerous, unhealthy, and unhelpful to force someone to come out, or to "out" someone else (i.e., disclosing someone's gender identity or sexual orientation to others without the person's consent), **regardless of your intentions** (sometimes people think they're being helpful, or acting on the person's behalf to conquer their fears), but...

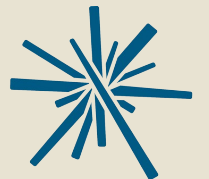
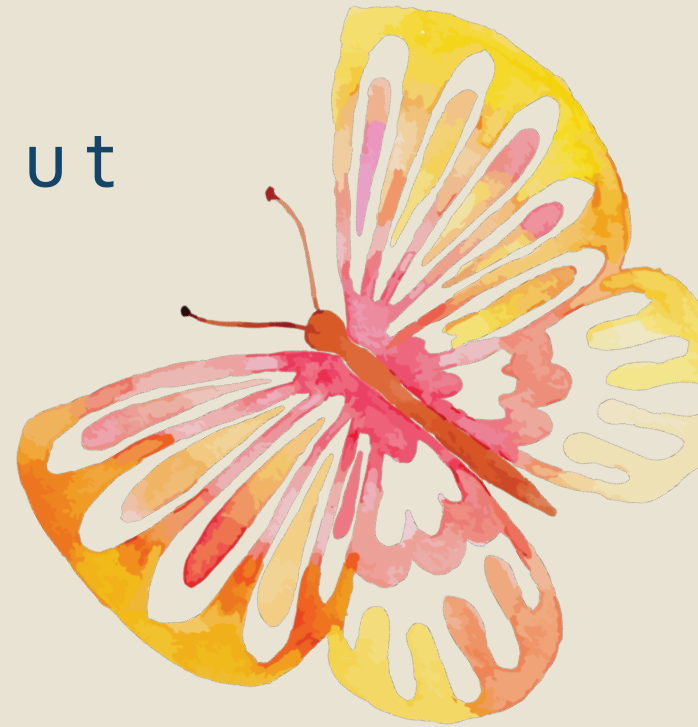
IF SOMEONE COMES OUT TO YOU...

DON'T:

1. Say "I always knew," or downplay the significance of their sharing with you.
2. Go tell everyone, bragging about your "new trans friend."
3. Forget that they are still the person you knew, befriended, or loved before.
4. Ask probing questions, or cross personal barriers you wouldn't have crossed earlier.
5. Assume you know why they came out to you.

DO:

1. Know this is a sign of huge trust! (Yay!)
2. Check-in on how confidential this is (Do other people know? Is this a secret?)
3. Remember that their gender/sexuality is just one dimension (of many) of them.
4. Show interest and curiosity about this part of them that they are sharing with you.
5. Ask them how you can best support them.

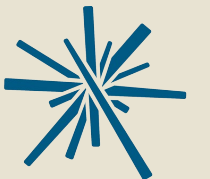


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Privacy

Disclosure of Identity & Coming Out

- Who needs to know?
 - You do not need to, and SHOULD NOT contact parents
 - Only select staff need to know this information, and the young person should ALWAYS be asked for their permission before this information is shared with ANYONE. Be open and honest about who needs the information, how it will be used/protected, and why.
- How will you protect this information?
 - Staff Training on sensitive information (Including contact with parents)
 - Update names and pronouns on ALL documents accessed by direct service staff whenever possible
 - Keep a pulse on gossip, and enforce your new anti-bullying policy
 - **Be careful to not confirm someone's identity in the process



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Names and Pronouns

How To Get It Right



- Calling a transgender person by the same name they refer to themselves can reduce their chance of suicide by as much as 65% according to a study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health in 2018.
- Compared to those who are not able to use their own name in any situation, researchers found 71% fewer indications of severe depression.



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Names and Pronouns

How To Get It Right

- Keep access to legal names minimized ONLY to staff who absolutely need to know. Deadnaming is a form of harassment and should not be tolerated
- Allow young people to self-identify. Most young people are not out to their parents/caretakers, who typically fill out paperwork
- Allow room for exploration. Some youth may be trying out a new name or pronouns for the first time. Roll with it ! Make space for them to update their nametags (names and pronouns) and do introductions often
- Normalize introductions with pronouns
- Hold everyone accountable to using the correct names and pronouns



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Gendered Spaces

Bathrooms, Cabins, Showers

Young people need access to bathroom, shower, changing, and housing facilities that make them feel safe and affirm their identities.

- Act according to the current situation and avoid hypotheticals
- Know where your gender neutral, single stall, or family restroom is located
- Ask only necessary questions. Avoid assumptions based on a person's presentation. You do not EVER need to know what physical anatomy a person has, therefore you should never ask
- If anyone reports abuse, treat it as abuse
- If someone reports being uncomfortable, treat it as a learning opportunity and do what you can to ease their discomfort
 - Assure them that the you organization takes the safety of ALL of their staff and participants very seriously, and that all reports of abuse and harassment will be investigated
 - Suggest that they use the single stall/gender neutral restroom
 - Suggest that they wait until the person they are uncomfortable with leaves the restroom



Little Things Make Big Differences

THE WORDS WE USE MATTER

- Dress Codes
- Small Group Selection
- Addressing people
- Gendered Language is

EVERYWHERE!

**Add your pronouns to
your email
signature, business cards,
and bios!**

Gendered Language

Ladies and Gentlemen, Guys

“Man up”

Manpower

Policeman, Fireman, Mail Man

Inclusive Alternatives

Folks, Friends, Y’All, People

Toughen up, Be Strong

People power, Resources

Police Officer, Fire Fighter, Mail Carrier



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Resources

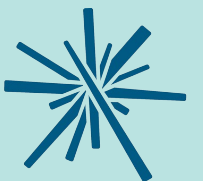
Knowing where to go

Training

- Trans Student Educational Resources: <http://transstudent.org/>
- The Safe Zone Project: www.safezoneproject.org
 - <https://thesafezoneproject.com/resources/vocabulary/>
- Connect with local resources and build relationships
- QPR Institute: www.qprinstitute.com

Support and Services

- The Trevor Project: www.thetrevorproject.org / Text and Chat support
24 hour hotline: 1-866-488-7386
- Trans Lifeline: www.translifeline.org / 24 hour hotline: 1-877-565-8860
- Crisis Text Line: <https://www.crisistextline.org> / Text a crisis counselor 24/7
- Q Chat Space: <https://www.qchatspace.org> / Facilitated peer chat support
- It Gets Better Project: www.itgetsbetter.org/get-help / Resource Directory
- **CONNECT WITH LOCAL RESOURCES AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS**



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Questions?
Comments?
Scenarios?



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