

LGBTQ+ 101

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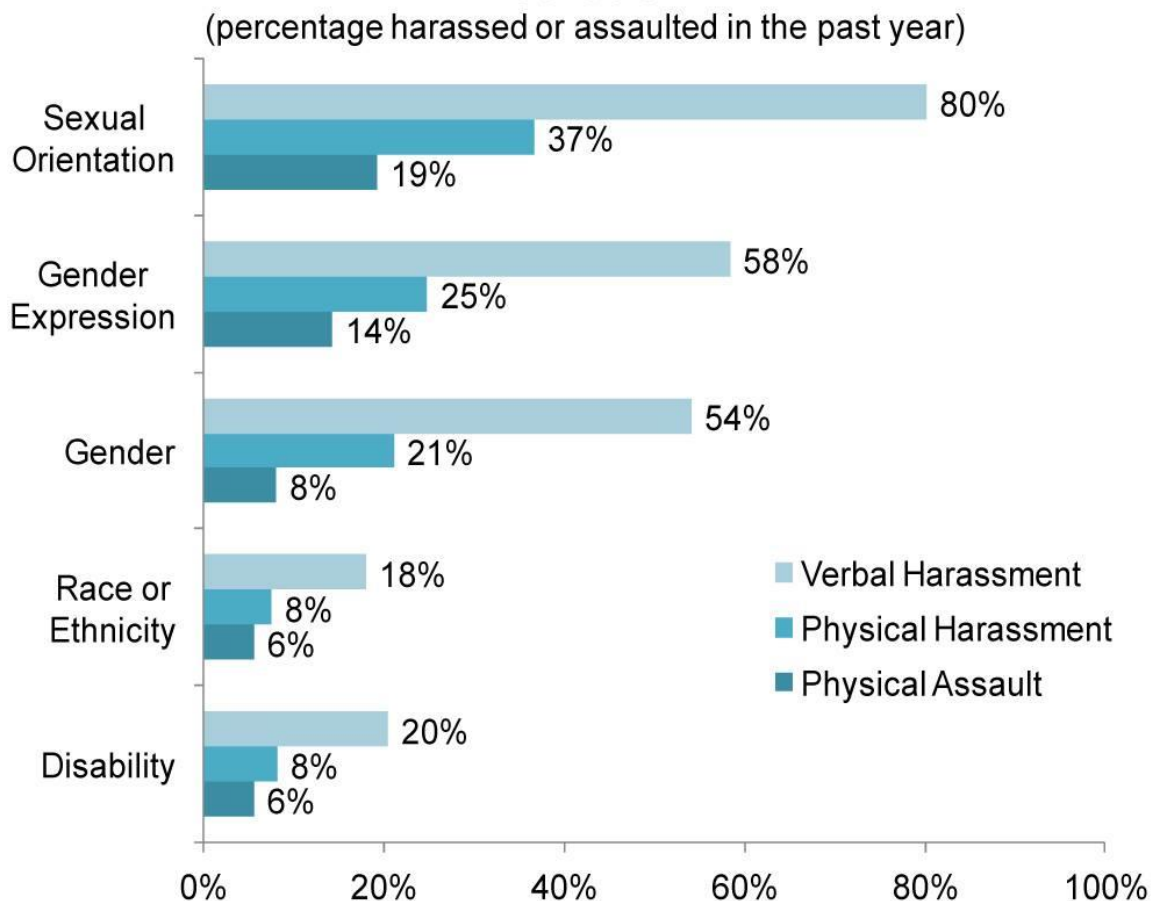
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Why should we think about LGBTQ+ issues in relation to inclusivity?

Like most people of diverse backgrounds, LGBTQIA students often deal with harassment and discrimination that makes it more difficult for them to focus on their work. Basically, it's hard to be a part of any organization and/or a productive employee when you are worried about your personal safety. Also, the same sort of mindset that makes discrimination and harassment against LGBTQ+ people possible makes possible prejudice against people with any difference.

While we understand that some of you may have personal and/or religious beliefs about homosexuality, this is not about changing your mind on any particular subject but rather giving you the tools to be a good organizational member to all people.

Figure 2. Harassment and Assault in Wisconsin Schools



From 2013 GLSEN National School Climate Survey (<http://glsen.org/statesnapshots>)

High School Experiences of LGBTQ+ Students: Transgender Students

<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/news/record/2388.html>

- ❖ Most transgender students (54%) who were victimized in school did not report the events to school authorities. Among those who did report incidents to school personnel, few students (33%) believed that staff addressed the situation effectively.
- ❖ Less than a fifth of transgender students said that school staff intervened most of the time or always when hearing homophobic remarks (16%) or negative remarks about someone's gender expression (11%).
- ❖ Almost half of all transgender students reported skipping a class at least once in the past month (47%) and missing at least one day of school in the past month (46%) because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.
- ❖ Transgender students who were out to most or all other students and school staff reported a greater sense of belonging to their school community than those who were not out or only out to a few other students or staff.

General Ally Tips

1. Don't assume you know someone's sexual orientation or gender identity (or any part of that person's identity) just by looking at that person.
2. Keep all personal information that a student or colleague may communicate in an assignment or meeting confidential. Avoid outing anyone.
3. Listen to LGBTQ+ people. They are the experts on their own experiences and identity.
4. Resist the tendency to fit individual LGBTQ+ people into popular narratives. There is no singular way to transition or identify.
5. If a person comes out to you in an assignment or meeting, listen and be supportive. Be careful about giving advice. Freely admit if you don't know something, and point the student in the direction of appropriate resources.

Transgender Ally Tips

1. Do not ask about anyone's genitals or sex practices unless you are that person's doctor or sex partner.
2. In one-on-one situations, ask people what pronouns they use. In group settings, create opportunities for transgender people to disclose this information privately and voluntarily.

Resources

- ❖ FORGE: <http://forge-forward.org/>
 - Trans-specific organization
 - Wisconsin section includes name change process & doctor list
- ❖ GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network): <http://glsen.org/>
- ❖ GSAFE (Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools): <http://www.gsafewi.org/>
- ❖ Milwaukee LGBT Center: <http://www.mkelgbt.org/>
- ❖ PFLAG (parents, families, friends, and straight allies of LGBT people) www.pflag.org

PFLAG Oconomowoc 791 Summit Ave Oconomowoc, WI 53066 pflag.ocomowoc@gmail.com	PFLAG Milwaukee 315 West Court St. #101 Milwaukee, WI 53212-0853 pflagmilwaukee@hotmail.com Phone: (414) 299-9198 http://www.milwaukee-pflag.org/index.htm
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- ❖ UW-Waukesha LGBTQIA Resource Center & Pride Alliance
Contact: Lisa Hager (lisa.hager@uwc.edu)
<http://waukeshapridealliance.pbworks.com>

Within Your Organization or Region?



What does it mean to be an Ally?

Definition

An ally is defined as an individual who works to end oppression personally and professionally through support and advocacy of an oppressed population, in this context, LGBTQ+ individuals. Allies may be prompted to action because they have personal and professional relationships with LGBTQ+ individuals or because they are alarmed at the pervasive negative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people in a heterosexist society. Although many LGBTQ+ allies identify as straight, it is important to understand that LGBTQ+ individuals can be allies to themselves and other members of the LGBTQ+ community by actively supporting the needs of their community.

Why be an Ally?

- ❖ LGBTQ+ people are not always visible, and it is difficult to readily identify people who are supportive to LGBTQ+ issues and concerns.
- ❖ As a leader and/or member of your community organization, it is helpful to be open and supportive to ALL people.
- ❖ You have the opportunity to learn, teach, and have an impact on a population you otherwise may not have.
- ❖ By being a safe person to talk with, you may help a LGBTQ+ individual develop a greater sense of self-esteem and pride in who they are.
- ❖ By confronting homophobia, you can make a difference on your organization and in the world.

Why do I want to be an Ally?

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❖

❖

Responsibilities of an Ally:

- ❖ Educate yourself. Understand how you feel about LGBTQ+ issues. Read, research, and talk directly with the people that are experiencing the oppression and the challenges. Visit <http://waukeshapridealliance.pbworks.com> for more information on being an ally!
- ❖ Use inclusive language. If a transgender person asks you to use a particular pronoun for them, do so.
- ❖ Create a comfortable setting. Be conscious of the things you use to decorate your living and work environment.
- ❖ If you are in a safe environment, consider confronting jokes and slurs. Silence may communicate your condoning the oppressive statement.
- ❖ Communicate with your fellow organization members. Take every opportunity to share your information with them.
- ❖ Listen closely and do not assume. People who want to talk will often send hints and “test the water” to see if you are open to what they need to say.
- ❖ Attend events sponsored by or in support of the LGBTQ+ community. Your attendance will demonstrate your commitment to being an ally.
- ❖ Remember that it is important to educate people, but not to judge them or write them off when they do not agree with your views.
- ❖ Treat people as unique individuals. Every person’s identity and experience of that identity is different. There is no one LGBTQ+ experience or model.
- ❖ Keep all personal information that a person may share with you confidential. Avoid outing people.
- ❖
- ❖

Ways to Support LGBTQ+ People in Your Organization:

- ❖ Take the time to examine your own personal feelings about LGBTQ+ people.
- ❖ Value LGBTQ+ perspectives and opinions your organization.
- ❖ Do not tokenize LGBTQ+ people.
- ❖ Make your environment visibly a safe place.
- ❖ Publicly acknowledge LGBTQ+ people’s presence in your organization and society.
- ❖ Do not agree with everything an LGBTQ+ person says; challenge them as well.
- ❖ Support LGBTQ+ organization members because they add to the vibrancy of thought, activity and life in your organization— not because it’s politically correct.
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2013 STATE SNAPSHOT

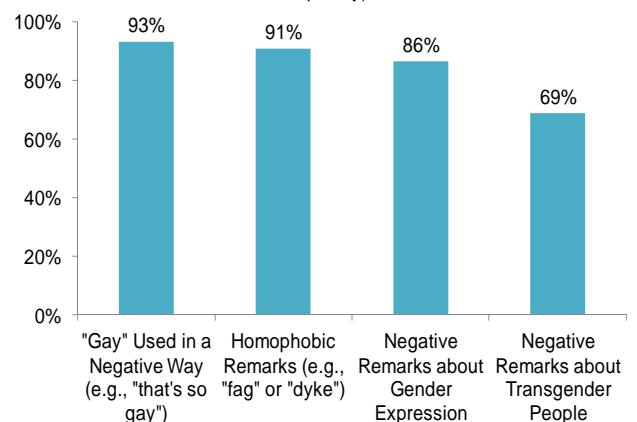
Findings from the GLSEN 2013 National School Climate Survey demonstrate that Wisconsin schools were not safe for most lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) secondary school students. In addition, many LGBT students in Wisconsin did not have access to important school resources, such as having a curriculum that is inclusive of LGBT people, history, and events, and were not protected by comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment school policies.

FACT: The vast majority of LGBT students in Wisconsin regularly heard anti-LGBT remarks.

- More than 9 in 10 heard “gay” used in a negative way (e.g., “that’s so gay”) and 9 in 10 heard other homophobic remarks (e.g., “fag” or “dyke”) at school regularly (i.e. sometimes, often, or frequently; see Figure 1).
- More than 8 in 10 regularly heard other students in their school make negative remarks about how someone expressed their gender, such as comments about someone not acting “feminine” or “masculine” enough (see Figure 1).
- 7 in 10 regularly heard negative remarks about transgender people (see Figure 1).
- Students also heard anti-LGBT language from school staff. 34% regularly heard school staff make negative remarks about someone’s gender expression and 20% regularly heard staff make homophobic remarks.

Figure 1. Hearing Anti-LGBT Remarks from Students in Wisconsin Schools

(percentage hearing remarks sometimes, often, or frequently)

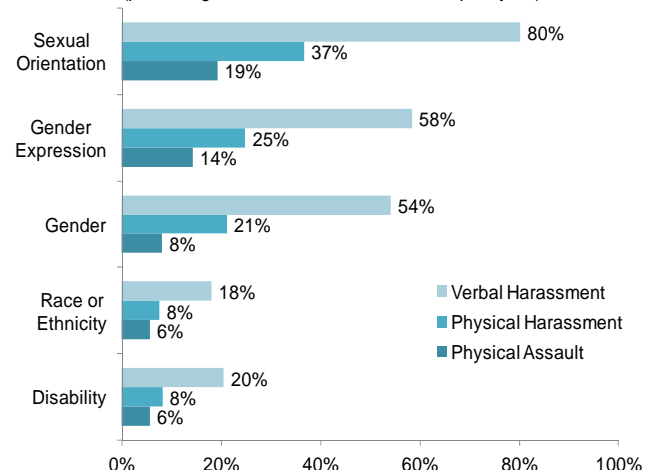


FACT: Most LGBT students in Wisconsin had been victimized at school. Many of these incidents were not reported to adult authorities.

- The majority experienced verbal harassment (e.g., called names or threatened): 8 in 10 based on their sexual orientation and nearly 6 in 10 based on the way they expressed their gender (see Figure 2).
- Many also experienced physical harassment and physical assault: for example, nearly 4 in 10 were physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved) based on their sexual orientation and more than 1 in 10 were physically assaulted (e.g., punched, kicked, or injured with a weapon) based on the way they expressed their gender (see Figure 2).
- Students also reported high levels of other forms of harassment at school: 93% felt deliberately excluded or “left out” by peers; 86% had mean rumors or lies told about them; 61% were sexually harassed; 57% experienced electronic harassment or “cyberbullying”; and 48% had property (e.g., car, clothing, or books) deliberately damaged and/or stolen.

Figure 2. Harassment and Assault in Wisconsin Schools

(percentage harassed or assaulted in the past year)

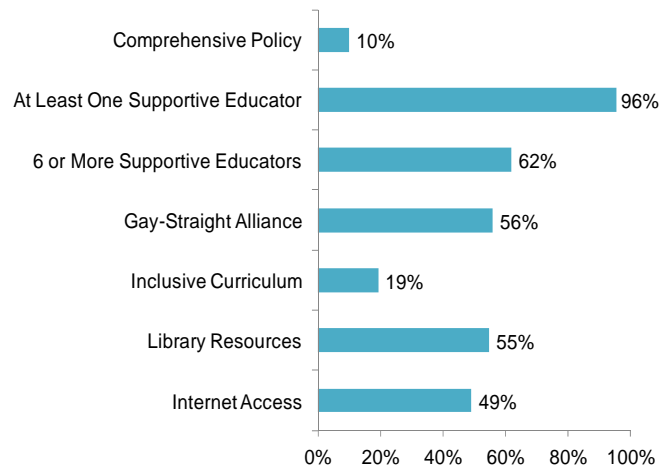


- 56% of students who were harassed or assaulted in school *never* reported it to school staff, and 58% *never* told a family member about the incident. Among students who did report incidents to school authorities, only 26% said that reporting resulted in effective intervention by staff.

FACT: Many LGBT students in Wisconsin did not have access to in-school resources and supports.

- Only 10% attended a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy that included specific protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (see Figure 3).
- Nearly all could identify at least one school staff member supportive of LGBT students, but fewer (62%) could identify 6 or more supportive school staff (see Figure 3).
- Many did not have LGBT-inclusive curricular resources: only 19% were taught positive representations of LGBT people, history, and events, and only 49% could access information about LGBT communities on school Internet (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Availability of LGBT-Related Resources and Supports in Wisconsin Schools



RECOMMENDATIONS

School-based supports such as comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policies, school personnel who are supportive of LGBT students, Gay-Straight Alliances, and LGBT-inclusive curricular resources can positively affect school climate for LGBT students. Findings from the *2013 National School Climate Survey* demonstrate that students attending schools with these resources and supports report more positive school experiences, including lower victimization and absenteeism and higher academic achievement.

Given the high percentages of LGBT students in Wisconsin who experience harassment at school and the limited access to key resources and supports that can have a positive effect on their school experiences, it is critical that Wisconsin school leaders, education policymakers, and other individuals who are obligated to provide safe learning environments for all students take the following steps:

- Implement comprehensive school anti-bullying/harassment policies;
- Support Gay-Straight Alliances;
- Provide professional development for school staff on LGBT student issues; and
- Increase student access to LGBT-inclusive curricular resources.

These actions can move us toward a future in which all students in Wisconsin will have the opportunity to learn and succeed in school, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

To learn more about GLSEN and to get involved, visit www.glsen.org or contact glsen@glsen.org.

GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network) is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students.

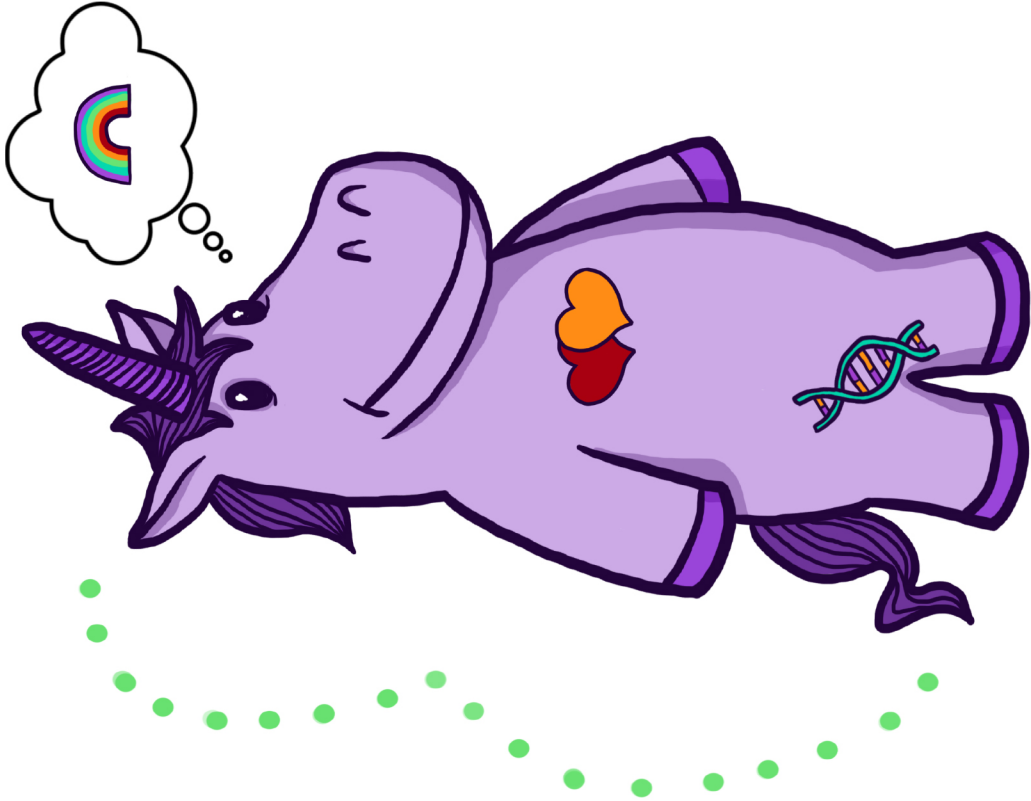
ABOUT THE RESEARCH

In 2013, GLSEN conducted the eighth National School Climate Survey (NSCS), a biennial survey of the experiences of LGBT youth in U.S. secondary schools. The national sample consisted of 7,898 LGBT students from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. A total of 162 respondents were attending schools in Wisconsin. The majority of the Wisconsin sample was White/European American (81%), 7% multi-racial, 7% Hispanic/Latino, and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, African American/Black, Middle Eastern/Arab American, or Native American/American Indian. The gender composition was 44% cisgender female, 25% cisgender male, 15% transgender, 13% genderqueer, and 3% some other gender (e.g., genderfluid). Most (96%) attended public schools. The school community makeup was 43% rural/small town, 28% urban, and 28% suburban. The results reported for Wisconsin have a margin of error of +/-7.

For the full 2013 National School Climate Survey report or for any other GLSEN research, go to www.glsen.org/research. Follow @GLSENResearch on Twitter.

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Equality Resources



Gender Identity

- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression/Presentation

- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth

- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Sexually Attracted To

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Romantically/Emotionally Attracted To

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

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

Design by Landyn Pan

Glossary of LGBTQIA-Related Terms

(from http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN_ATTACHMENTS/file/000/000/294-7.pdf)

The glossary is designed to provide basic definitions of words and phrases commonly used in discussions about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and related issues. All language is constantly evolving; new terms are introduced, while others fade from use or change their meaning over time. This remains true for the following terms and definitions. For terms that refer to people's identities, people must self-identify for these terms to be appropriately used to describe them.

Ally: A member of the majority or dominant group who works to end oppression by supporting or advocating for the oppressed population. For example, any non-LGBT person who supports and stands up for the equality of LGBT people. (sometimes referred to as a "straight ally")

Androgynous: Having the characteristics or nature of both maleness and femaleness; neither specifically feminine nor masculine.

Asexual: Someone who does not experience sexual attraction. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy or sexual abstinence, which are behaviors. Some asexuals do participate in sex, for a variety of reasons.

Biphobia: An irrational fear of or aversion to bisexuality or bisexual people.

Bisexual: A sexual orientation and/or identity of a person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to some males and some females.

Coming Out: Declaring one's identity, specifically, being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, whether to a person in private or a group of people. To be "in the closet" means to hide one's identity.

Drag: Wearing the clothing typically associated with another gender, often involving the presentation of exaggerated, stereotypical gender characteristics. Individuals may identify as drag kings (in drag presenting as male) or drag queens (in drag presenting as female) when performing gender as parody, art or entertainment.

FTM or F2M (female-to-male): An identity of a person who was assigned female at birth, and who identifies as male, lives as a male or identifies as masculine. Other related terms include: transgender male, transman and affirmed male.

Gay: A sexual orientation and/or identity of a person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to some members of the same sex. Although gay can refer to both males and females, many prefer the term "lesbian" for females. Gay is sometimes used as an umbrella term to refer to all lesbian, gay and bisexual people, but some prefer the more inclusive term "LGBT."

Gender: A social construct based on a group of emotional, behavioral and cultural characteristics attached to a person's assigned biological sex. The gender construct then classifies an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous or other. Gender can be understood to have several components, including gender identity, gender expression and gender role.

Gender Binary: The concept that everyone is of two genders: male or female. It also describes the system which society divides people into male and female roles, identities and attributes.

Gender Expression: An individual's physical characteristics, behaviors and presentation that are linked, traditionally, to either masculinity or femininity, such as: appearance, dress, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions.

Gender Identity: How we identify ourselves in terms of our gender. Identities may be: male, female, androgynous, transgender and others.

Gender-Neutral Pronoun: A pronoun that does not associate a gender with the person being discussed. Two of the most common gender-neutral pronouns are "zie" replacing she and he, and "hir" replacing her and him.

Gender Non-Conforming or Gender Variant: An identity of a person who has gender characteristics and/or behaviors that do not conform to traditional or societal binary gender expectations.

Gender Orientation: An individual's internal sense of their gender (e.g., feeling male, female or neither). Gender orientation doesn't necessarily align with the sex assigned at birth.

Gender Role: The social expectations of how an individual should act, think and/or feel based upon one's assigned biological sex. A set of traditional and stereotypical roles, traits, dress, characteristics, qualities, mannerisms and behaviors that are associated with societal norms of what is male and what is female.

Genderism: The systematic belief that people need to conform to the gender role assigned to them based on a gender binary system which allows only female and male.

Genderqueer: An identity of a person who identifies as and/or express themselves as somewhere in the continuum between maleness/masculinity and femaleness/femininity or outside of the gender binary system. Genderqueer people may or may not identify as LGBT.

Heterosexism: Applies to attitudes, bias and discrimination in favor of heterosexual sexuality and relationships. It includes the presumption that everyone is heterosexual or that male/female attractions and relationships are the norm and therefore superior. It is the belief that everyone is or should be straight.

Heterosexual: A sexual orientation and/or identity of a person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to some members of another sex (specifically, a male who is attracted to some females or a female who is attracted to some males). Often referred to as “straight.”

Homophobia: An irrational fear or aversion to homosexuality or lesbian, gay or bisexual people.

Homosexual: An identity of a person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to some members of their own sex; originated in the medical and psychological professions. Currently, many prefer the term lesbian or gay.

Intersex: A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. Intersex conditions can affect the genitals, the chromosomes and/or secondary sex characteristics.

Lesbian: A sexual orientation and/or identity of a person who is female-identified and who is emotionally and sexually attracted to some other females.

LGBT: An umbrella term referring collectively to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender. Sometimes the acronym is written as LGBTQ, with the “Q” referring to those who identify as questioning and/or queer. In the past “gay” was used as a general, overarching term, but currently the more inclusive terms LGBT and LGBTQ are regularly used and preferred by many LGBT people and allies.

MTF or M2F (male-to-female): An identity of a person who was assigned male at birth, and who identifies as female, lives as a female or identifies as feminine. Other related terms include: transgender female, transwoman, affirmed female.

Queer: An umbrella term used to describe a sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression that does not conform to heteronormative society. While it is used as a neutral, or even a positive term among many LGBT people today, historically it has been used negatively and is still considered derogatory by many.

Questioning: An identity of a person who is uncertain of their sexual orientation/identity and/or their gender orientation/identity.

Sex or Biological Sex: This can be considered our “packaging” and is determined by our chromosomes (such as XX or XY), our hormones and our internal and external genitalia. Typically, we are assigned the sex of male or female at birth.

Sexual Behavior: What we do sexually and with whom.

Sexual Identity: What we call ourselves in terms of our sexuality. Such labels include “lesbian,” “gay,” “bisexual,” “queer,” “heterosexual,” “straight,” and many more.

Sexual Orientation: The inner feelings of who we are attracted or oriented to emotionally and sexually.

Transgender: An identity of a person whose gender identity is not aligned with their sex assigned at birth and/or whose gender expression is non-conforming.

Transition: The myriad of actions a person may take to transition from one gender identity to another. These may include social, psychological and/or medical processes. Transitioning is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time, it is not a one-time event.

Transphobia: The irrational fear or aversion to transgender people or of those who are perceived to break or blur societal norms regarding gender identity or gender expression.

Transsexual: A term, originated in the medical and psychological communities, that historically referred to people whose gender identity was not aligned with their sex assigned at birth.

Two-Spirit (also Two Spirit or Twospirit): Used in many Native Americans to refer to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or gender non-conforming. The term usually implies a masculine spirit and a feminine spirit living in the same body and has been adopted by some contemporary lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Native Americans to describe themselves.

“You’re such a Tranny”

Calling someone a Tranny, whether they identify as Trans or not, can be offensive. This may be a term people within the community use for themselves, but should not be as a joke or without a person’s consent.

Using the wrong pronouns or making assumptions about others’ gender identity

It is important to respect the names and pronouns people prefer. If you are not sure, ask: “what are your preferred pronouns?”

Asking others about transperson’s identity or offering information about someone. Inquiring about someone’s identity to someone else is inappropriate. Ask yourself why you want to know. If you are concerned about using the person’s preferred pronouns ask the person directly.

“That person doesn’t really look like a man/woman”

What does a man or woman really look like? There is no one way to look like a man or a woman. It should also not be assumed that all Transmen want or have to strive to be masculine or that Transwomen should be feminine. Gender presentation is fluid and we should support all the ways people choose to present their gender.

“Why would you transition if you are going to be gay?”

Gender identity and sexual orientation are two separate aspects of one’s identity. This question demonstrates how heterosexual identity is more valued in our society and reinforces homophobia & heterosexism.

“What is your REAL Name? I mean the one you were given at birth?”

Asking this question implies that the person’s chosen name and gender identity are not “real.” It is important to respect people’s choices around sharing or not sharing personal information

Calling someone “it” or “He/She” is demeaning and does not validate their identity or respect them as a person.

and why

Transphobia: the fear or hatred of transgender people or people who do not meet society’s gender role expectations. Transphobia is closely linked with homophobia & biphobia.

“What are you REALLY? Have you had surgery, if not then you are not really a man/woman.”
Asking anyone personal questions about their bodies and/or surgeries is invasive and inappropriate. We don’t ask non-Trans people what is under their clothes, nor should we ask Trans people. It is important to honor everyone’s gender identity and not question their validity.

For more information contact the UC Davis LGBT Resource Center 530-752-2452

The following are several actions tips that can be used as you move toward becoming a better trans ally. Of course, this list is not exhaustive and cannot include all the “right” things to do or say—because each person and situation is different, there is not always one single, easy, or right answer! This list should provide you with a starting place as you learn more about trans people, gender identities and expressions, and how to ally yourself with trans communities and activism.

Don't assume you can tell if someone is transgender.

Transgender and transsexual people don't all look a certain way or come from the same background, and many may not fit your idea of what trans “looks like.” Indeed, many trans people live most of their lives with very few people knowing their trans status.

Don't make assumptions about a trans person's sexual orientation.

Gender identity is different than sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is about who we're attracted to. Gender identity is about how we know our own gender. Trans people can identify as any sexual orientation, such as gay, straight, bisexual, pansexual, queer, or asexual.

Be careful about confidentiality, disclosure, and “outing.”

Some trans people feel comfortable disclosing their trans status to others, and some do not. Knowing a trans person's status is personal information. Do not casually share this information, or “gossip” about a person you know or think is trans. Not only is this an invasion of privacy, it also can have negative consequences in a world that is very intolerant of gender difference—trans people can lose jobs, housing, family, or friends due to unwanted outing, and sadly many trans people have been killed upon revelation of their gender history.

Understand what is unique about coming out as trans.

Unlike coming out in a lesbian/gay/bisexual context, where the act of disclosing one's sexuality reveals a “truth” about that person's sexual orientation, disclosing one's trans status often has the opposite effect. That is, when a person “comes out” as trans, the listener often assumes the “truth” about the trans person is that they are somehow more fundamentally a member of their birth sex, rather than the gender/sex they have chosen to live in. In other words, sometimes “coming out” makes it more difficult for a trans person to be fully recognized as the sex/gender they are living in.

Do not tolerate anti-trans remarks or humor in public spaces.

Consider strategies to best confront anti-trans remarks or jokes in your classroom, lab, office, living group, or organization. Seek out other allies who will support you in this effort.

If you don't know what pronouns to use, ask.

Be polite and respectful when you ask a person which pronoun they prefer. Then, use that pronoun and encourage others to do so. Be patient with a person who is questioning their gender identity. A person who is questioning their gender identity might shift back and forth as they find out what identity and/or gender presentation is best for them. They might, for example, choose a new name or pronoun, and then decide at a later time to change the name or pronoun again. Do your best to be respectful and use the name and/or pronouns requested.

Don't try to tell a person what “category” or “identity” they fit into.

Do not apply labels or identities to a person that they have not chosen for themselves. If a person is not sure of which identity or path fits them best, give them the time and space to decide for themselves.

Don't assume what path a trans person is on regarding surgery or hormones, and don't privilege one path over another.

Affirm the many ways all of us can and do transcend gender boundaries, including the choices some of us make to use medical technology to change our bodies. Some trans people wish to be recognized as their gender of choice without surgery or hormones; some need support and advocacy to get respectful medical care, hormones, and/or surgery.

Don't ask a trans person what their "real name" or gender history is.

For some trans people, being associated with their birth name is a tremendous source of anxiety, or it is simply a part of their life they wish to leave behind. Respect the name a trans person is currently using.

Don't ask about a trans person's genitals or surgical status.

Think about it—it wouldn't be considered appropriate to ask a non-trans person about the appearance or status of their genitalia, so it isn't appropriate to ask a trans person that question either. Likewise, don't ask if a trans person has had "the surgery." If a trans person wants to talk to you about such matters, let them bring it up.

Don't ask a trans person how they have sex.

Similar to the questions above about genitalia and surgery—it wouldn't be considered appropriate to ask a non-trans person about how they have sex, so the same courtesy should be extended to trans people.

Don't police public restrooms.

Recognize that gender variant people may not match the little signs on the restroom door—or your expectations! Encourage schools, businesses and agencies to have unisex bathroom options, and offer to accompany a trans person to the bathroom, in a "buddy system," so they are less vulnerable.

Don't just add the "T" without doing work.

"LBGT" is now a commonplace acronym that joins lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender under the same umbrella. To be an ally to trans people, gays, lesbians and bisexuals need to examine their own gender stereotypes, their own prejudices and fears about trans people, and be willing to defend and celebrate trans lives.

Know your own limits as an ally.

Don't be afraid to admit you don't know everything! When a trans person has sought you out for support or guidance, try to find appropriate resources when you've reached the limit of your knowledge or ability to handle the situation. It is better to admit you don't know something than to provide information that may be incorrect or hurtful.

Listen to trans voices.

The best way to be an ally is to listen with an open mind to trans people themselves. They are the experts on their own lives! Talk to trans people in your community. Consult the Resource Library, the LGBT Campus Center, and our other resources to learn more about trans lives and activism.

Adapted from the trans@mit Allies Toolkit, "Action Tips for Allies of Trans People." March 31, 2006. web.mit.edu/trans/tipsfortransallies.pdf.

Some people don't feel like traditional gender pronouns (she/her, he/him) fit their gender identities. Transgender, genderqueer, and other gender-variant people may choose different pronouns for themselves. The following guide is a starting point for using pronouns respectfully.

How do I know which pronouns to use?

If the person you're referring to is a stranger or brief acquaintance (like a server, cashier, fellow bus patron, etc), you may not need to know. If the person is a classmate, student, or coworker, for example, it is best to ask. Try:

- "What pronouns do you use?"
- "How would you like me to refer to you?"
- "How would you like to be addressed?"
- "My name is Tou and my pronouns are he and him. What about you?"

How often do pronouns change?

Remember that people may change their pronouns without changing their name, appearance, or gender identity. Try making pronouns an optional part of introductions or check-ins at meetings or in class.

What if I make a mistake?

Most people appreciate a quick apology and correction at the time of the mistake. Try:

- "Her books are—I'm sorry, hir books are over there."

By correcting yourself, you're modeling respectful pronoun use for others in the conversation.

If you only realize the mistake later, a brief apology can help. Try:

- "I'm sorry I used the wrong pronoun earlier. I'll be more careful next time."

When should I correct others?

Some people may not want a lot of public attention to their pronouns, while others will appreciate you standing up for them.

If someone uses the wrong pronoun for a person who isn't present, try a brief correction:

- "I think Sam uses she and her pronouns. And yes, I'm going to her house later too!"

It can be tough to remember pronouns at first. The best solution is to practice! Correct pronoun use is an easy step toward showing respect for people of every gender.

	Nominative (subject)	Objective (object)	Possessive determiner	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive
Traditional pronouns					
He	<i>He</i> laughed	I called <i>him</i>	<i>His</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>his</i>	He likes <i>himself</i>
She	<i>She</i> laughed	I called <i>her</i>	<i>Her</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>hers</i>	She likes <i>herself</i>
Nonbinary pronouns					
These are often used by trans, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming people.					
They	<i>They</i> laughed	I called <i>them</i>	<i>Their</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>theirs</i>	They like <i>themselves</i>
Spivak	<i>Ey</i> laughed	I called <i>em</i>	<i>Eir</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>eirs</i>	<i>Ey</i> likes <i>emself</i>
Ze (or zie) and hir	<i>Ze</i> laughed ("zee")	I called <i>hir</i> ("heer")	<i>Hir</i> eyes gleam ("heer")	That is <i>hirs</i> ("heers")	<i>Ze</i> likes <i>hirsself</i> ("heerself")

Chart adapted from "The Need for a Gender-Neutral Pronoun," Gender Neutral Pronoun Blog. January 24 2001. See many more pronouns in the chart at <http://genderneutralpronoun.wordpress.com/tag/ze-and-zir/>

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Scenario 1

A member of your organization comes to you and wants to talk to you about another member. They overheard this person referring to them as a “faggot” to someone else in the organization. They shares with you that they has been called similar names since they were a child and doesn’t know how much more they can take.

How do you respond? Who in your organization could help you help this person?

Scenario 2

A person gets frustrated with how something works in your organization and says loudly to you, “Man, this is so gay!”

How do you handle this situation? Who in your organization could help you help this person?

Scenario 3

A transwoman tells you in conversation that she does not use the bathrooms at your organization because she does not belong in the men’s bathrooms but thinks that she’ll get in trouble if she uses the women’s bathrooms. Previously, she’s been planning her attendance at organization events so that she can leave to use the bathroom, but she’s not able to do that for an upcoming full-day event.

How do you handle this situation? Who in your organization could help you help this person?