Safe Zone Participant Manual

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Introduction

Our campus is home to a diverse, vibrant, and engaged community including many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ), and allied students, staff, and faculty. Many LGBTQ and allied people have found the campus and surrounding community an ideal place to learn, work, and live.

Adelphi University strives to be a welcoming and affirming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer-identified and transgender students, and their allies.

Manual's Purpose and Use

This manual is intended to provide participants of the Safe Zone program at Adelphi University with information and material that will be useful in providing assistance to students, faculty and staff of the LGBTQ community and their allies. It includes material from several other college and university's programs as well as material developed by the Safe Zone coordinators.

This manual has been designed to help you learn more about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer issues. It is meant to be used as a guide with the understanding that not all individuals use the same definitions for all the terminology and concepts outlined in this book. Learning about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQ) issues is a lifelong process and you should not expect to learn everything you need to know quickly. In addition, there is a lot of information that is not included in this booklet.

Mission of the Adelphi University Safe Zone Program

The mission of the Safe Zone program at Adelphi University is to identify and support students, faculty, and staff who identify as a Safe Zone advocate on behalf of the LGBTQ community. Through education, advocacy and awareness, they will be empowered to speak out against homophobia and heterosexism. The program's goal is to contribute to an open campus climate that is safe, accepting and just for all members of the University community.

Goals of the Adelphi University Safe Zone Program

1. To identify a network of allies who are concerned, empathetic, and knowledgeable about LGBTQ issues.
2. To provide evidence of the support of LGBTQ people and their allies within the Adelphi University community by posting a sign as tangible evidence of that support.
3. To reduce the fear of reprisal and discrimination by LGBTQ people and their allies within the Adelphi University community.
4. To assist LGBTQ and allied students in achieving their educational goals by creating an environment in which they can be themselves.

Who can participate in the program?

Anyone in the Adelphi Community can be a Adelphi Safe Zone participant, including faculty, staff, and students. It is hoped that community members of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions will become participants.

What Does One Need to do to be a Safe Zone Participant?

- Belief that the campus is enriched by the presence of LGBTQ people
- Awareness of the presence of LGBTQ students and colleagues
- Discussion of issues in a non-judgmental manner
- Assist LGBTQ students in accessing support and information resources
- Maintain confidentiality
- Use inclusive language, avoid stereotyping, and do not assume heterosexuality
- Maintain professional, clear, ethical boundaries
- Display the safe zone symbol in a visible place
- Attend the training
- Maintain the resource manual
- Attend the update sessions

By Posting the Adelphi Safe Zone Symbol, Individuals are Affirming that they:

- Are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy
- Avoid heterosexist assumptions, confront homophobia, and use inclusive language
- Believe that the campus is enriched by the inclusion of LGBTQ people
- Refer individuals to appropriate resources when needed

“Free to Be Me” Statement

I, _____, hereby have permission to be imperfect with regards to people who are different from me. It is okay if I do not know all the answers about LGBT issues or if, at times my ignorance and misunderstanding becomes obvious.

I have permission to ask questions that may appear stupid. I have permission to struggle with these issues and be up-front and honest about my feelings.

I am a product of a heterosexist and transphobic culture and I am who I am. I don’t have to feel guilty about what I know or believe, but I do need to take responsibility for what I can do now:

Try to learn as much as I can.

Struggle to change my false/inaccurate beliefs or oppressive attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people.

Signed,

_____

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” ~ Margaret Mead

Center for Student Involvement

The **Center for Student Involvement** supports co-curricular education as a vital component of the college experience. The Center serves as a resource for more than 80 student organizations that include academic, social, community, and religious groups. In addition, CSI is host to countless programs throughout the semester that give students opportunities to learn, socialize, and grow.

Multicultural Affairs is an area within the Center for Student Involvement that seeks to promote an inclusive and socially just university environment. Multicultural Affairs acts as an educational resource that prepares students to succeed in a heterogeneous and constantly evolving society. Through collaboration with various University departments and students, Multicultural Affairs will provide multi-faceted activities and services that will educate and empower students, faculty and staff. Multicultural Affairs seeks to explore the complex intersection of our social identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and spiritual diversity. Multicultural Affairs encourages all members of the campus community to participate in our programs.

Multicultural Affairs supports the recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff of color as well as the academic success and personal development of all students, with emphasis given to students of traditionally underserved populations.

Goals of Center for Student Involvement, Multicultural Affairs

1. Foster a campus climate that celebrates and embraces difference.
2. Serve as a resource to the campus community in efforts to respond to the expanding meaning of diversity within the student population.
3. Support the success and retention of students from traditionally. underserved backgrounds.

Multicultural Affairs achieves these goals by providing:
Social Justice and Cultural Programming
Education, Workshops, and Training
Advocacy
Diversity Organizations

More information can be found at: http://students.adelphi.edu/sa/csi/multicultural/

Residential Life and Housing

The Office of Residential Life and Housing maintains the philosophy that education is not limited to the classroom. Living in the residence halls is about more than just living on campus, it fosters a spirit of community and enjoyment that extends and complements one's classroom experience. It is the Office of Residential Life and Housing's mission to support our students' well-being, growth, and success by fostering a positive environment that encourages personal and academic achievement.

More information can be found at: http://students.adelphi.edu/sa/rlh/

Adelphi Policies

ANTI-HARRASMENT POLICY

Adelphi University is proud of its work and academic environment, and will take all necessary steps to ensure that it remains pleasant and collegial for employees, faculty members and students, all of whom are required to treat each other with courtesy, consideration and professionalism. The University will not tolerate harassment of any employee, faculty member or student by any other member of the University community based on an individual's race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, genetic predisposition or carrier status, religion, veteran status, or any other basis protected by applicable local, state or federal laws.

With this policy, the University prohibits not only unlawful harassment, but also other unprofessional and discourteous actions. Accordingly, derogatory or inappropriate remarks, slurs, or jokes related to any unlawful factor will not be tolerated. The University shall make this anti-harassment policy available in various and appropriate places on campus and on the University website. Harassment in any context, in addition to being unlawful, is reprehensible and is a matter of particular concern to an academic community in which students, faculty and staff are related by strong bonds of intellectual dependence, collegiality, and trust.

To demonstrate its commitment to maintaining an environment free of harassment, Adelphi University created an Anti-Harassment Committee to draft this policy and address issues of harassment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to: students involved in academic, educational, recreational, and living programs; applicants in the admissions process; and recipients of Adelphi's programs or services, including participants in Adelphi-based research projects and activities, student teaching, internships and field placement regardless of locations; and all employees and applicants for employment in all positions. The policy also encompasses University-sponsored events which occur off-campus and all campuses and/or satellite sites are covered by this policy.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Adelphi University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and non-discrimination regarding all educational, student programs and employment actions and further commits not to discriminate against any individual on the basis of an individual’s race, creed, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, disability, genetic predisposition or carrier status, age, religion, marital status, veteran status, or any other basis protected by applicable local, state or federal laws.

Adelphi University shall take affirmative steps and apply every good faith effort toward achieving non-discrimination and equality of opportunity in educational, student programs, and employment actions.

This policy has been designed to insure that employment practices (including compensation, benefits, terminations, recruitment, promotions, and all other terms and conditions of employment) as well as programs involving students both in academic and non-academic programs are administered without regard to individual's race, creed, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, disability, genetic predisposition or carrier status, age, religion, marital status, veteran status, or any other basis protected by applicable local, state, or federal laws.

The University undertakes to comply fully with all applicable federal, state and local laws relating to equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, and non-discrimination in public services.

It is Adelphi University's policy to maintain a program of Affirmative Action to which efforts will be directed to review and update existing practices both for conformity with government regulations and for consistency with the standards of conduct that are endemic to a University. The adoption and implementation of this Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Policy (AA/EEO) acknowledges Adelphi University's responsibility to provide an equal opportunity workplace. Reports of concerns about this policy should be made to the Office of Human Resources.

Cycle of Socialization

From book: Readings for Diversity and Social Justice By Maurianne Adams.

Symbols of Pride

Listed below are some symbols that have been adopted by gay, lesbian, and their allies along with the significance of each.

Stonewall and Pride Celebrations
On June 28, 1969, a routing raid on the Stonewall Bar on Christopher Street in New York City turned into a riot when patrons resisted. The patrons barricaded themselves inside the bar. The riot escalated until reinforcements arrived. The riots continued for several evenings. This rebellion, begun by drag queens and bar patrons, marked the beginning of the modern gay and lesbian movement. Each June, Pride marches, rallies, and celebrations are held throughout the nation commemorating Stonewall.

Double Woman Symbol
Also known as “the mirror of Venus,” this symbol represents the planet Venus, metal copper and femininity. The double woman symbol represents woman loving woman.

Double Man Symbol
This symbol is derived from the astrological symbol of Mars. Mars was the Greek God of War and patron of warriors. The arrow is a phallic symbol. The double man symbol represents man loving man.

The Pink and Black Triangles
When the Allied forces liberated the Nazi concentration camps, the horrors they discovered shocked a disbelieving world. Millions had been systematically tortured and murdered seemed beyond human capacity for violence and hate. The Holocaust forever changed our understanding of the potential of evil Concentration camp prisoners were identified by patches they were forced to wear, many of which were colored triangles, and pink was reserved for male homosexuals. Lesbians who were prisoners of the concentration camps wore black triangles. When liberation came in the mid-1940s, most of the survivors were set free. Homosexuals, however, were taken by the U.S. Army personnel from concentration camps to allied prisons. Since the 1940’s, the pink triangle has become one of the most recognizable and powerful symbols for gay people and the oppression they have faced throughout Western History. The pink triangle was a commonly used insignia throughout the early gay liberation movements. It appears in photographs and film footage of the early marches and demonstrations. Today, the pink triangle, sometimes displayed with a black triangle, is a reminder of the statement, “Never Again!”

The Rainbow Flag

The Rainbow Flag has been adopted by the gay and lesbian community as its own design. It depicts not the shape of the rainbow but its colors in horizontal stripes. Created in 1978 for San Francisco's Gay Freedom Celebration by local artist, Gilbert Baker, it was inspired by the "Flag of the Races", which had five stripes – one each for the colors of humankind's skin– flown at the 1960 college campus demonstrations. Major gay and lesbian parades in New York, Houston, Vancouver and Toronto began to fly the six-stripe Rainbow Flag. It is prominently displayed at all homosexual events. In New York, the Rainbow Flag drapes coffins of people who have died of AIDS and is frequently displayed on hospital doors. The AIDS ward of Sydney, Australia hospital flies the Rainbow Flag as a symbol of hope. A gay yacht club in the Netherlands uses a burgee based on the Rainbow Flag. In a few short years, the flag has spread worldwide to represent a movement. Its success is not due to any official recognition but to the widespread spontaneous adoption by members of the community it represents.

The Labrys

The double-bladed ax comes from mythology as the scepter of the goddess Demeter (Artemis). It may have originally been used in battle by female Scythian warriors. The labrys appears in ancient Cretan art and has become the symbol of lesbianism.

The Lambda

Chosen by the Gay Activist Alliance in 1970 as the symbol of the gay movement, the lambda is the Greek letter "L". A battle flag with the lambda was carried by a regiment of ancient Greek warriors who were accompanied in battle by their young male lovers and noted for their fierceness and willingness to fight to the death.

Freedom Rings

Designed by David Spada with the Rainbow Flag in mind, these six colored aluminum rings have come to symbolize independence and tolerance of others. They were quickly adopted by the Gay community and at a recent march in New York, onlookers waited five deep to purchase them. The rings are frequently displayed or worn as jewelry - necklaces, bracelets, rings, and key chains.

Source: Safe Zone Guide, Florida State University (Adapted by Vernon Wall, 1992)

Language/Terminology

Ally: A person who supports and honors sexual diversity, acts accordingly to challenge homophobic and heterosexist remarks and behaviors, and is willing to explore and understand these forms of bias within him or herself.

Asexual: A term used to identify someone who does not experience sexual attraction to anyone.

Berdache: A generic term used to refer to a third gender person (woman-livingman). The term 'berdache' is generally rejected as inappropriate and offensive by Native Peoples because it is a term that was assigned by European settlers to differently gendered Native Peoples. Appropriate terms vary by tribe and include: 'one-spirit','two-spirit', and 'wintke.'

Bisexual: A person (male or female) who has significant sexual and or romantic attractions to both males and females or someone who identifies as a member of this community.

Biphobia: The fear, hatred, or intolerance of bisexual people.

"Bottom Surgery": Surgery on the genitals designed to create a body in harmony with a person's preferred gender expression.

Butch/Femme Queen: Popular identities in the African-American and Latino ball scene. "Queen" usually refers to queer males and the butch/femme part refers to the individual's gender expression.

Cisgender/Cissexual: "Cis" is a prefix that means "on this side (of)" or "not across." Cisgender and cissexual are descriptions of a non-transgender or non-transsexual man or woman when discussing trans issues. Cisgender/cissexual individuals therefore have a gender identity and body concept that is culturally/socially congruent with their sex and gender designation at birth. These terms are less biased than the popular terms "biomen," "bioguy," or "biowoman."

Cissexism: Discrimination and invisibility experienced by TGI people who do not conform to binary gender, body concept, or anatomy that matches their sex designation at birth.

Closet: Used as slang for the state of not publicizing one's sexual identity, keeping it private, living an outwardly heterosexual life while identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender, or not being forthcoming about one's identity. At times, being in the closet also means not wanting to admit one's sexual identity to oneself.

Coming Out: To disclose one's own sexual identity or gender identity. It can mean telling others or it can refer to the time when a person comes out to him/herself by discovering or admitting that their sexual or gender identity is not what was previously assumed. Some people think of coming out as a larger system of oppression of LGBT people- that an LGBT person needs to come out at all shows that everyone is presumed heterosexual until demonstrated otherwise. But this word need not apply only to the LGBT community. In some situations, a heterosexual may feel the need to come out about their identity as well.

Crossdresser: A person who wears clothing associated with a gender identity other than what the person holds for hirself.

Domestic Partner: Unmarried partners who live together. Domestic partners may be of opposite sexes or the same sex. They may register in some counties, municipalities, and states and receive some of the same benefits accorded married couples. Domestic Partnership rights vary from state to state. The term is typically used in connection with legal and insurance matters.

Down Low: Often used in communities of color. Refers to men who secretly have sex with men, frequently while in relationships with women, but who do not identify as gay or bisexual. Sometimes abbreviated as DL. Use with caution, as people generally do not identify themselves with this term. "Downe" is a variation on Down Low, and is typically used to describe those who are out of the closet, but may not be open about their identity.

Dyke: A derogatory slur for lesbians. Reclaimed by some as a term of pride.

Fag(got): A derogatory slur for gay men. Reclaimed by some as a term of pride. Derived from the word faggot (literally "small bundle of sticks"), an allusion to the Inquisition-era practice of burning people at the stake for suspected homosexual practices.

Fluid: An identity assumed by individuals who feel as though their sexual orientation is more flexible and not definable by any singular position on a continuum of sexual orientation. These individuals identify as neither heterosexual nor homosexual, but somewhere in between. This identity is wider than bisexual as it leaves open the possibility for the attraction to individuals who identify as transgender, genderqueer, and/or intersex.

Gay: A man who has significant sexual and or romantic attractions to other men, or who identifies as a member of the gay community. At times, "gay" is used to refer to all people, regardless of sex, who have their primary sexual and or romantic attractions to people of the same sex. Lesbians and bisexuals may feel excluded by this word.

Gender: a culture and system of meaning that is assigned to, associated with, and educated to people according to the interpretation of their body

Gender Affirmation: This term refers to the social, legal, and/or medical process of affirming a gender identity and/or body concept different from a person's birth designation. This term is more clinically accurate and less sensationalist than "sex change;" it is often more culturally sensitive than "transition." People seeking gender or body concept affirmation are already who they affirm themselves to be inside. A man designated female at birth isn't "a woman becoming a man;" his identity as a man motivates him to seek affirmation.

Gender Binary: The idea that there are only two genders – male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or.

Gender Cues: What human beings use to attempt to tell the gender/sex of another person. Examples include
hairstyle, gait, vocal inflection, body shape, facial hair, etc. Cues vary by culture.

Gender Identity: A person's sense of being masculine, feminine, or other gendered.

Genderfuck: The idea of playing with 'gender cues' to purposely confuse "standard" or stereotypical gender expressions, usually through clothing.

Gender Normative: A person who by nature or by choice conforms to gender based expectations of society.

Gender Variant: A person who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, cross-dresser, etc.).

Genderqueer: A person whose gender identity is neither male nor female, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination. They can see themselves as different times, both, male, female, or no gender at all.

Heterosexism: The individual person, group, or institutional norms and behaviors that result from the assumption that all people are heterosexual. The system of oppression, which assumes that heterosexuality is inherently normal and superior, negates LBGT peoples' lives and relationships.

Heterosexual Privilege: The benefits and advantages that heterosexuals receive in a heterosexist culture.

Hijra: An Indian/South Asian term that refers to people born with XY chromosomes or an intersex combination and identify as belonging to a third sex

that perform traditional religious ceremonies at marriages and births of male babies – believed to bring good luck and fertility.

Hir: gender neutral used in place of her, his and him. Pronounced “here.”

Homophobia: The fear and hatred of or the discomfort with people who love and sexually desire members of the same sex. Homophobic reactions often lead to intolerance, bigotry, and violence against anyone not acting within heterosexual norms. Because most LGBT people are raised in the same society as heterosexuals, they learn the same beliefs and stereotypes prevalent in the dominant society, leading to a phenomenon known as “internalized homophobia.”

Homosexual: The formal or clinical term that was coined in the field of psychology, sometimes meaning only “gay male,” but at times encompasses lesbians and occasionally bisexuals. The word is often associated with the proposition that same sex attractions are a mental disorder, and is therefore distasteful to some people.

In the Life: Often used by communities of color to denote inclusion in the SGL (see below) or LGBTQ communities

Internalized Homophobia: A term used to describe lesbians, gay men and bisexuals who have internalized and accept societal prejudices, myths and lies about LGB people.

Kathoey: In Thailand, this term usually refers to what Westerners might refer to as a MTF or a feminine gay male and has higher visibility and acceptance than its counterparts in Western societies.

Lesbian: A woman who has significant sexual and or romantic attractions to other women, or who identifies as a member of the lesbian community. Bisexual women may not feel included by this term.

LGBT: An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. At times, a Q will be added for ‘Queer’ and/or ‘Questioning’, an A for ‘Ally’, and/or a TS for ‘Two Spirit’.

Lifestyle: This is a word that is often used outside the LGBT community to describe living life as an LGBT person, i.e. the “gay lifestyle.” Many people do not find this word particularly appropriate or positive because it seems to trivialize personal identity, as well as not make space for the large variety of lifestyles that lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender people live.

Men Loving Men (MLM): Commonly used by communities of color to denote the attraction of men to men.

MSM: Men who have sex with men

Outing: The act of revealing someone's gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender identity without permission.

Pansexual, omnisexual, and pomosexual: (postmodern sexuality): Sometimes substitute terms for bisexual that rather than referring to *both* or "bi" gender attraction, refer to *all* or "omni" gender attraction, and are used mainly by those who wish to express acceptance of all gender possibilities including transgender and intersex people, not just two. Pansexuality sometimes includes an attraction for less mainstream sexual activities, such as BDSM

Queer: Originally a derogatory slur, it has recently been reclaimed by some to be an inclusive word for all of those within the sexual minority community. Because of the original derogatory nature of the word, it is not necessarily accepted by all.

Questioning: The process of considering or exploring one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Same Gender Loving (SGL): Commonly used by communities of color to denote attraction to the same gender.

Sex: a socially-constructed identity that is usually based on biological markers such as chromosomes and genitalia. In western culture, two sexes are institutionally recognized - male and female.

Straight: A person (male or female) who has significant sexual and or romantic attractions to primarily members of the other sex.

"Top Surgery" - This term usually refers to surgery for the construction of a male-type chest, but may also refer to breast augmentation.

Transgender: An umbrella term for those individuals whose gender identity does not match with that assigned for their physical sex.Includes transsexuals, both operative & non-operative, bigendered people, intersexed, & transgenderists.

Transition: This is primarily used to refer to the process a transgendered person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression. This can include changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents, using hormone therapy, or having sexual reassignment surgery.

Transphobia: The fear, hatred, or intolerance of people who identify or are perceived as transgendered.

Transsexual: A person who transgresses the sex assigned to hir body at birth. This is done by rejecting the sex category that was assigned to the individual. For example, someone who was pronounced to be male upon birth and later in life, rejects that claim and identifies as female or something else, can be seen as a transsexual (remember, sex is an identity and all identities are socially constructed). Some transsexuals choose to modify their body through hormones and/or surgery. The most common transsexual identities are FTM (female-to-male) and MTF (male-to-female).

Transvestite – Someone who dresses in clothing generally identified with the opposite gender/sex. While the terms 'homosexual' and 'transvestite' have been used synonymously, they are in fact signify two different groups. The majority of transvestites are heterosexual males who derive pleasure from dressing in "women's clothing". (The preferred term is 'cross-dresser,' but the term transvestite' is still used in a positive sense in England.)

Two-Spirit: Native-American people who would be identified as being LGBTQ by Western culture. Created in 1990 in reference to third and fourth genders that were recognized in many traditional Native American cultures.

Women Loving Women (WLW): Commonly used by communities of color to denote the attraction of women to women.

WSW: Women who have sex with women

Ze: gender neutral term used in place of he or she. Pronounced "z."

Adapted from Brown University's Safe Zone Manual and New York University's Safe Zone Handbook.

Offensive Terminology to Avoid

Offensive: "homosexual"
Preferred: "gay", "gay man," or "lesbian"
Please use "lesbian" or "gay man" to describe people attracted to members of the same sex. Because of the clinical history of the word "homosexual," it has been adopted by anti-gay extremists to suggest that lesbians and gay men are psychologically or emotionally disordered – notions discredited by both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s.

Offensive: "homosexual relations/relationship," "homosexual couple," "homosexual sex," etc.
Preferred: "relationship" (or "sexual relationship"), "couple" (or if necessary, "gay couple"), "sex," etc.
Identifying a same-sex couple as a "homosexual couple" or characterizing their relationship as a "homosexual relationship" may be offensive because these constructions are frequently used by anti-gay extremists to denigrate gay and lesbian people, couples, and relationships. As a rule, try to avoid labeling an activity, emotion or relationship "gay" or "lesbian" unless you would call the same activity, emotion or relationship "straight" if engaged by someone of another sexual orientation.

Offensive: "sexual preference"
Preferred: "sexual orientation"
The phrase "sexual preference" is generally used to suggest that being lesbian or gay is a choice and therefore "curable." The term "sexual orientation" is the accurate description of an individual's enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex and is inclusive of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and heterosexual men and women.

Offensive: "gay lifestyle" or "homosexual lifestyle"
Preferred: "lesbian" or "gay"
There is no single lesbian or gay lifestyle. Lesbians and gay men are diverse in the ways they lead their lives. The phrase "gay lifestyle" suggests that their sexual orientation is a choice and therefore "cureable."

Offensive: "admitted homosexual" or "avowed homosexual"
Preferred: "lesbian" or "gay"
The words "admitted" or "avowed" suggest that being a lesbian or gay man is somehow shameful or inherently secretive.

Offensive: "gay agenda" or "homosexual agenda"
Preferred: "lesbian and gay civil rights movement" or "lesbian and gay movement"

Lesbian and gay men are as diverse in their political beliefs as other communities. The commitment to equal rights is one shared with civil rights advocates who are not necessarily lesbian or gay.

Offensive: "special rights"
Preferred: "equal rights" or "equal protection"
Anti-gay extremists have characterized civil rights and equal protection of the law for LGBT Americans as "special rights" in an attempt to energize opposition to anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws.

"fag," "faggot," "dyke," "homo," "queen," "she-male," "he-she," "it," "tranny," and similar epithets.
The criteria for using these derogatory terms should be the same as those applied to hate words for other groups: they should not be used except in a direct quote which reveals the bias of the person quoted.

"deviant," "disordered," "dysfunctional," "diseased," "perverted," "destructive," and similar descriptions.
The notion that being gay or lesbian is a psychological disorder was discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Today, words such as "deviant," "diseased" and "disordered" are often used to portray lesbians and gay men as less than human, mentally ill, or as a danger to society.

Adapted from University of Alabama at Birmingham's Training and Reference Manual for the Safe Zone Program.

History of the Queer Movement

Queer history is generally split into two distinct periods: Pre and Post Stonewall.

Pre-Stonewall

i. Alternative sexualities were kept secret and were largely illegal

ii. People did practice homosexual sex as far back into ancient Greece and before, but almost no one publicly identified based on sexuality. People did identify as homosexual, but only in safe, intimate communities.

iii. The legality of queer sex really came to the public consciousness in England with Oscar Wilde's accusations of "Gross Indecency" for his affair with Bosie, the son of the Marquess of Queensbury. Wilde was convicted, sent to jail and wasted away in prison and finally died in France.

iv. Afterwards, clandestine methods of displaying and engaging in queer culture came about through societies like the Daughters of Bilitis, the first lesbian rights organization (started in San Francisco) in the United States. However, homosexuality was still criminal. The FBI and the Postal service kept track of known homosexuals and gay mailings for future reference and prosecution.

Stonewall

In late 1969 the police raided the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village. Police raids were common in gay bars, and generally required the patrons to stand on separate ends of the bar and prove their sex through 5 gender specific items of clothing. That night the police raided twice, provoking the hustlers, transvestites, gays, lesbians, and homeless youth to finally fight back. They held off the NYPD for two days and began the gay rights movement.

Post-Stonewall

i. While Stonewall marked a huge step in the gay rights movement, the AIDS crisis of the late 70s and 80s started to see "a radical re-medicalization of sexuality". Despite thousands of (mostly) gay men dying of this disease, the Reagan administration abstained from funding AIDS research on moral grounds; it wasn't until Reagan's friend Rock Hudson was found to be HIV+ that serious AIDS research began.

ii. The AIDS crisis also caused a bond to form between the gay and lesbian communities. This banding together saw the creation of ACT-UP, a loud, brash,

group that caused people to pay attention to the AIDS crisis, rather than simply writing it off as a gay man's disease.

iii. Post-Stonewall saw a huge increase in acceptance of queer people among the general population, but little increase in legitimate political rights. Today you can go see pride marches every year on the anniversary of the riots, and homosexuality has finally been removed from its classification as a mental disease in the DSM (Diagnostic and Symptoms Manual), but truly equal rights are a long ways off.

Adapted from Wagner College's Safe Zone Program.

LGBTQ Theory/Development Models

Psychologists have researched how LGBTQ identities are developed. It is important to have a knowledge and understanding of how a positive LGBTQ identity is developed in order to comprehend the experiences of LGBTQ people.

Vivienne Cass identified six stages involved in the development of a "homosexual" identity in 1979.

Stage 1: Identity Confusion

a. The individual first becomes aware of homosexual thoughts, feelings, and attractions
b. Accompanied by confusion and anxiety (defies societal norms)
c. When individuals react positively towards new feelings by seeking more information, they move to the next stage

Stage 2: Identity Comparison

a. Individuals are now confronted with the issue of how to manage the social alienation that accompanies their newly realized identity
b. May address this problem in the following ways:
i. Seek out other homosexual individuals to learn more about it
ii. Continue to maintain a heterosexual public identity while attempting to "explain" their homosexual behaviors
iii. May attempt to change their homosexual behaviors
iv. May completely inhibit their own homosexual behavior and denigrate homosexual behavior in general

Stage 3: Identity Tolerance

a. If interactions with other homosexual individuals have been positive, individual may become more public about this identity
b. If interactions are negative, may withdraw and remain "in the closet"

Stage 4: Identity Acceptance

a. A positive connotation is placed on homosexual identity in this stage
b. Frequent contacts with other homosexuals and friendships develop
c. Norms and behaviors of chosen social groups may impact how the individual chooses to present him/herself in mainstream heterosexual society
d. Some individuals may choose to continue to "pass" as heterosexual
e. Some may be selectively out to others and some may be more public about their homosexual identity

Stage 5: Identity Pride

a. Individuals focus on gay issues and activities
b. Contact with heterosexuals is minimized
c. Feelings of both pride in homosexual community and anger at things "not gay" spur activism and confrontation of an oppressive society

d. Individuals are publicly and vocally out

Stage 6: Identity Synthesis
a. Homosexual and heterosexual worlds are less dichotomized
b. Individuals are judged based on personal qualities rather than solely on the basis of their sexual identity
c. The individual's public and private identities become more congruent as comfort and confidence in their identity increases
d. Homosexual identity is now seen as just one aspect of self rather than as one's entire identity

McCarn and Fassinger Model
Important Points:
The Fassinger model describes two parallel branches, Individual Sexual Identity and Group Membership that exist alongside each other with four phases of development that do not necessarily coincide at the same time. This explains why individual identity can be different then a group identity. Example: being in love with a same-sex person (Individual, Phase 2) may spark the realization that persons with same-sex orientation exist and are personal relevance (Group, Phase 1), or an activist who has been politically involved with the LGBT community (Group, Phase 3) may only later realize that he or she is sexually attracted to same-sex people (Individual, Phase 2)."

The individual sexual identity branch is concerned with the personal development and feelings associated with a same-sex orientation.

The Group Membership Identify branch describes a redefinition of belonging to a community of people and what that group means.

A LGB person is not likely to experience one branch without experiencing parts of the other branch.

Care should be taken in that not all LGB people develop a positive sexual identity in the context of a "relational identity" or significant romantic relationship.

McCarn & Fassinger's (1996) model was based on a study of lesbian women and incorporates a parallel development theory. The left side of the chart explores individual identity development while the right side of the chart details the group identity process. This helps to explain the differences you might see between a student's individual behavior and group behavior.

Individual Sexual Identity

Awareness:
Of feeling or being different

Feeling confusion, fear and/or bewilderment

Exploration:
Of strong/ erotic feelings for indviduals of the same sex or a particular person of the same sex
May feel longing, excitement and wonder.

Deepening/ Commitment
To self-knowledge, self-fulfillment, and crystallization of sexuality. Anger and sadness as well as acceptance and self-assurance may occur.

Internalization/ Synthesis
Of love for same sex, sexual choices, into overall identity
Unwillingness to change preferences and contentment and pride about those preferences and contentment and pride about those preferences.

Group Membership Identity

Awareness:
Of existence of different sexual orientations in people may acknowledge that heterosexism exists, and is likely to produce confusion and bewilderment.

Exploration:
Of one's attitudes and membership regarding lesbians/gays as a group. May produce anger, anxiety and guilt due to an increasing awareness of heterosexism, but many individuals exploring the existence of other LGBTQ people also will experience a new found excitement, curiosity and joy.

Deeping/Commitment:
To personal involvement with LGBTQ community, with awareness of oppression and consequences of choices. Reflected in combination of excitement, pride and rage, and for many, intense identification with the LGBTQ community and rejection of heterosexual society.

Internalization/ Synthesis
Of identity as a member of an oppressed group, across contexts. Reflected in feelings of comfort, fulfillment, security, and an ability to maintain one's sense of self as LGB across contexts, and it is likely that some identity disclosure will have occurred, depending on individual circumstances.

GLBT Developmental Tasks for African American Students

African American Students in General	GLBT African American Students
1. Developing ethnic and racial identity	An understanding that gayness is not a white phenomenon
2. Interacting with the dominant culture	Dealing with homophobia from general society; what are the benefits or risks to “coming out?”
3. Developing cultural aesthetics and awareness	No Difference
4. Developing Identity	Who am I as a racialized homosexual being? For men: trying to define black manhood; For women: learning how to sort through issues of physical attractiveness. Must deal with racism, sexism, and homophobia. Have evolved outside of society’s definition of femininity
5. Developing Interdependence	What will my family, friends, and community think? Will they disown me? Social isolation and/or secrecy. Fear of being found out. Maintaining ties to family and community.
6. Fulfilling affiliation needs	Much of one’s identity is constructed on the basis of community connection. Social isolation and/or secrecy. Managing the coming out process and maintaining strong connection to group.
7. Surviving intellectually	Learning how to deal with stress of academia while trying to sort out one’s identity. What will my professor think? Will often travel to other cities for social outlets (this is time that could be used to study instead of spending 2 ½ hours on the road to Atlanta)

8. Developing spiritually	Maintaining connections with religious organizations. Fear of being ousted from their church. Wrestling with relationship with higher power.
9. Developing Social responsibility	Dealing with the "coming out" process and recognizing the need to be role models for other African American GLBTs. Reducing the invisibility.

Those who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women, those of us who are poor, who are lesbian, who are Black, who are older- know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths.
-Audrey Lordes (1984) Sister Outsider

Source: Angela D. Coker, PhD, LPC, NCC, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Education

National Statistics

The Climate for LGBT Students in Middle and High Schools

• 84.6% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, 40.1% reported being physically harassed and 18.8% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation.
• 63.7% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, 27.2% reported being physically harassed and 12.5% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their gender expression.
• 72.4% heard homophobic remarks.
• 61.1% of students reported that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation, and 39.9% felt unsafe because of their gender expression.
• 30.0% of LGBT students missed at least one day of school in the past month because of safety concerns.
• The reported grade point average of students who were more frequently harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender expression was almost half a grade lower than for students who were less often harassed (2.7 vs. 3.1).

Source: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
The 2009 National School Climate Survey
Based on a sample of 7,261 middle and high school students

Suicide and Mental Health Issues for LGBT Youth

•Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are up to four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers.
Source: The Trevor Project, Massachusetts Youth Risk Survey 2007

•More than 1/3 of LGB youth report having made a suicide attempt.
Source: The Trevor Project, D'Augelli AR - Clinical Child Psychiatry and Psychology 2002

•Nearly half of young transgender people have seriously thought about taking their lives and one quarter report having made a suicide attempt.
Source: The Trevor Project, Grossman AH, D'Augelli AR - Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior 2007

•Questioning youth who are less certain of their sexual orientation report even higher levels of substance abuse and depressed thoughts than their heterosexual or openly LGBT-identified peers
Source: The Trevor Project, Poteat VP, Aragon SR, et al – Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 2009

•LGB youth who come from highly rejecting families are more than 8 times as likely to have attempted suicide than LGB peers who reported no or low levels of family rejection

Source: The Trevor Project, Ryan C, Huebner D, et

•Lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents are 190 percent more likely to use drugs and alcohol than are heterosexual teens
Source: The Trevor Project, Marshal MP, Friedman MS, et al – Addiction 2008).2009;123(1):346-352

Family and Shelter
•Half of gay males experience a negative parental reaction when they come out and in 26% of those cases the youth was thrown out of the home.
•Studies indicate that between 25% and 50% of homeless youth are LGBT and on the streets because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
•LGBT youth are overrepresented in foster care, juvenile detention, and among homeless youth.

Source: PFLAG New York City

Intersexuality

What does intersex mean?
An intersex individual is born with a variation or ambiguity or external genitalia, internal genitalia, or sex chromosomes in relation to male and female biology.

What is a hermaphrodite?
The term *hermaphrodite* literally refers to a creature that has both male and female reproductive organs, which only exists in myth for humans. It is an outdated, improper term to refer to intersex individuals and can be seen as derogatory.

What are Disorders of Sex Development (DSD)?
This term and its guidelines are used by medical doctors to describe and "help" intersex. Many intersex individuals oppose its usage because their bodies are not disorders and it further pathologizes them. For more information about this controversial term you can visit http://www.intersexualite.org.

How many people are born with intersex?
The number of intersex individuals is difficult to determine. The Intersex Society of North America states that 1 in 100 babies have some sort of variation of the external genitalia from the "standard male and female" but are not labeled as intersex. Also, about 1 in 1,000 babies are born with ambiguous external genitalia. In the U.S., intersex people are forced to be legally made male or female. Most of these individuals have genital surgery performed on them following birth, to "normalize" their genitals, sometimes without the knowledge or consent of the parents.

How do intersex individuals define their gender identity?
Some intersex individuals identify as a boy/man or a girl/woman. Some intersex people have a more ambiguous gender identity, such as androgyne, genderqueer, bi-gender, multigender, two-spirit, or another self-identified gender. The term *intersex* can be a self-identified label, like transgender, but may not be a gender identity by itself.

Bisexuality

Bisexuality: Myths and Reality

Myth: People who consider themselves bisexual are just confused or going through a phase. They'll settle down and realize they're actually homosexual.
Reality: Some people go through a transition period of identifying as bisexual before coming out as lesbian or gay. Others may explore same-sex attraction and relationships and then assume a heterosexual identity. For others, bisexuality remains long term orientation. For some bisexual people, same-sex attractions were a transitional phase to coming out as bisexual.

Myth: People who consider themselves bisexual are really heterosexual, but are experimenting.
Reality: Whether an individual is an "experimenting heterosexual" or a bisexual depends on how one defines him or herself.

Myth: People who consider themselves bisexual are actually lesbian/gay, but haven't fully accepted themselves and finished coming out of the closet.
Reality: Bisexuality is a legitimate sexual orientation. Many bisexuals are completely out of the closet as bisexuals, while others continue to hide their identity.

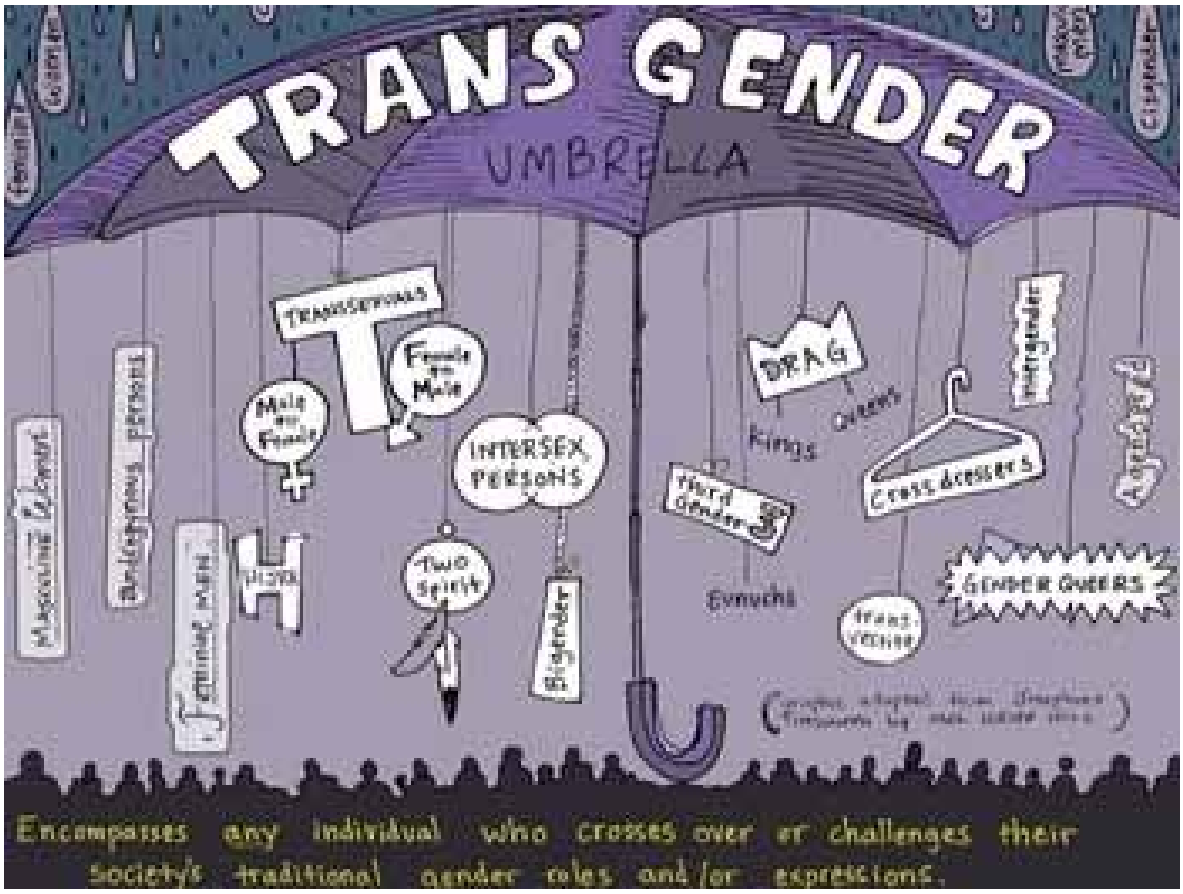
Myth: Bisexuals are shallow and narcissistic and are promiscuous swingers who are attracted to every woman and man they meet.
Reality: The "sex" in bisexuality gets overemphasized. Bisexual people have a range of sexual behaviors like all other sexualities. Our culture projects onto bisexuals its fascination with and condemnation of sex and pleasure. In, reality bisexuals are just like everyone else.

Myth: Bisexuals get the best of both worlds and a doubled chance for a date on Saturday night.
Reality: Combine our society's extreme heterosexism and homophobia with lesbian and gay hesitance to accept bisexuals into their community, and it might be more accurate to say that bisexuals get the worst of both worlds.

Myth: Bisexuals are desperately unhappy endlessly seeking some kind so peace which they cannot ever find.
Reality: Like lesbians and gays who have been told that they will live awful lives, bisexuals often respond that much of the pain they experience comes from oppression.

Myth: Bisexuals are responsible for spreading AIDS into the heterosexual community.
Reality: AIDS can be spread by anyone, to anyone if safe sex is not practiced. Bisexuality is not the problem behind the spread of AIDS, unsafe sex is.

Transgender Information



The term Transgender (or TG) refers to people whose appearance and behavior do not conform to the cultural "norm" for the gender into which they were born. In other words, TG people, to varying degrees, "transgress" cultural norms as to what a man or a woman "should be." Not all people who transgress cultural norms in regards to gender are, or should be, considered TG. However, the term transgender is sometimes used in the case of a "sexual minority" or an umbrella term to identify such individuals.

Transsexuals were born into one gender but identify psychologically and emotionally as the other. Transsexuals are generally thought to have a condition called gender dysphoria (also called Gender Identity Disorder). Those who are born physically male but are emotionally and psychologically female are called Male to Female or MTF's. Those who are born female but are emotionally and psychologically male are called Female to Male or FTM's. There is some disagreement as to whether gender dysphoria is a physical condition, a psychological condition or both. Some scientists believe that gender dysphoria occurs when the developing fetus is in the womb and that a chemical imbalance occurs in their development that affects sexual difference. The primary way transsexuals differ from other TG people is that in almost all cases, they seek to

modify their bodies through hormones, SRS (Sexual Reassignment Surgery) or both. This process (which may take several months or many years) is called Transition, where transsexuals will make major life changes in order to bring their physical appearance in line with their gender identity. Some of those changes include changing their name and gender designation on legal documents such as birth certificates, driver's licenses and social security records. However it is achieved, the ultimate goal of transition is to enable the transsexual to live completely as the gender with which they identify. It is extremely important to remember that male to female transsexuals are women, just as female to male transsexuals are men and should be referred to and treated as such.

Hormones and Sex Reassignment/Gender Realignment Surgery
For some transgender people, hormonal and/or surgical modifications are not necessary in order for them to express their gender identity. Some TG people find that the financial costs are prohibitive or they may have a physical condition that precludes their being able to take advantage of the procedures. And still others may object to hormonal and/or surgical modifications for personal, spiritual or political reasons.

Of those who do choose to physically modify their bodies, two methods are used - hormones and Sexual Reassignment Surgery or SRS. Hormones are controlled substances and must be prescribed by a medical doctor. Both MTF's and FTM's use hormones to change their physical characteristics. For MTF's, estrogen is taken feminize facial and bodily characteristics. Their body fat redistributes itself to a more womanly shape. Breast size increases, and body hair decreases. Estrogen does not affect facial hair, however, and MTF's must use painful and expensive electrolysis treatments to remove their mustaches and beards. Taking estrogen also results in the shrinking of the penis and testicles. Male to female (MTF) transsexuals do not have a menstrual cycle, nor can they give birth.

The hormone testosterone is taken by female to male transsexuals, which results in the growth of facial and body hair, the lowering of the voice, increase in sex drive, and the cessation of menstruation. FTM's on testosterone are also subject to male pattern baldness and sometimes increased cholesterol levels.

The most common type of sex reassignment surgery for female to male transsexuals involves the removal or reduction of the breasts, depending on breast size. Some FTM's also choose to have some sort of genital reconstructive surgery, either a metaoidioplasty (which is the freeing of the clitoris to make it longer and more sensitive) or the more complex phalloplasty. Phalloplastic surgery involves the removal of tissue, usually from the forearm, to construct a penis. While there have been marked improvements in phalloplastic surgeries in recent years, the successes of the procedure remains mixed. In addition, some FTM's may also have vaginectomies or hysterectomies, either electively or as a response to some medical necessity. Rarely do FTM's require cosmetic surgery to increase or augment masculine features.

For male to female (MTF) transsexuals, the results of SRS surgical procedures are far more successful. A process called vaginoplasty entails the removal of the testes with the scrotal tissue used to create labia. The penis is inverted to create a vagina. Many MTF's also have cosmetic surgery to feminize their facial features, to reduce the size of their Adam's apple, and many receive breast implants as well.

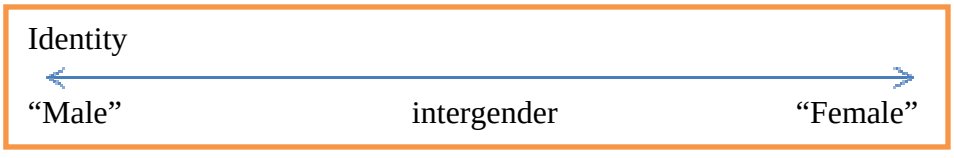
In order for a transsexual to receive hormones and SRS, they must, in most cases, go through stringent reviews by medical doctors and psychologists. Most medical professionals use a set of guidelines called The Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorders developed by the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association. These standards define the criteria which determines if someone is indeed transsexual and if they are emotionally and psychologically suited for sexual reassignment surgery. Any medical doctor or psychiatrist can prescribe hormones once they determine their patient is suitable. However, SRS requires highly specialized surgical expertise and should be done only by those experienced in such procedures.

Some persons in the gender community prefer to use the term “sex confirmation surgery” or “gender realignment surgery” in place of “sex reassignment surgery.” Many contend that there is nothing to “reassign,” but rather the surgery confirms the body to the internal gender identity. The term “gender realignment surgery” points to how the surgical procedure uses science to realign the body to agreement with the internal sense of self.
Adapted from: New York University’s Safe Zone Manual

Sex/ Gender/ Sexuality Continuums
Sex, gender, and sexuality can all be thought of as continuums. Where would you fall onto these continuums?

Sex

Gender



Identity: Views of self in relation to how society defines a man or woman.

Expression: The way one allows others to see him/her.

Attribution: What someone assumes about your gender when they look at you.

Sexuality

Source: "Transgender Youth," National Youth Advocacy Coalition, and Mycroft Holmes, BAGLY

Some Issues that Transgender People Face

- Of the fifty states, only eight and the District of Columbia protect individuals from discrimination based on gender identity and expression. Even when legal protections for gay men and lesbians exist, they do generally not cover TG people because very few communities explicitly state "gender identity" or "gender expression" in their protection ordinances.
- Violence against TG people can be particularly brutal. In 1997, in Washington D.C. a pre-operative transsexual woman named Tyra Hunter was fatally injured in an auto accident. Paramedics at first refused to treat her after they discovered she had male genitalia, laughing and mocking her as she lay dying.
- Most insurance companies, employee health plans and HMOs specifically exempt coverage for sex reassignment surgery, hormones, counseling and electrolysis. This decision, according to the insurance companies, is based on their designation of Sexual Reassignment Surgery or SRS, as purely cosmetic - like a chin tuck or an eyelid lift - and therefore, not

medically necessary. Today, this decision stands in spite of the fact that the medical necessity of SRS for transsexuals is well documented by the leading medical professionals in the field. Thus, most transsexuals must cover the entire expense of hormone treatment and SRS out of their own pocket (the cost of surgery can run anywhere from $3,500 to well over $100,000, depending upon the procedure).

- TG youth living on the streets are more likely than other youth to engage in prostitution or consensual sex with a variety of partners without using safe sex techniques.
- In most cases, pre-operative transsexuals are classified according to their birth sex for purposes of prison 7 shelter housing. This puts them (particularly MTF's) at a substantial risk of physical and sexual violence at the hands of other inmates & residents.
- TG people, unable to access or afford appropriate treatment for their transition, often must bypass traditional medical care and inject "black-market" hormones or steroids obtained illegally putting them significantly at-risk for severe health problems.
- TG people with children are often denied custodial or visitation rights in divorce settlements.

Privileges Non-Trans Individuals May Take for Granted

- My validity as a man/woman/ human is not based upon how much surgery I've had or how well I "pass" as a non- trans person.
- I don't have to hear "So have you had the surgery?" or "Oh, so you're really [an incorrect sex or gender]?" each time I come out to someone.
- Strangers do not ask me what my "real name" (birth name) is and then assume they have a right to call me by that name.
- People do not disrespect me by deliberately using incorrect pronouns even after they've been corrected.
- I do not have to worry about whether I will be able to find a bathroom to use or whether I will be safe changing in a locker room.
- When I go to the gym or a public pool, I can use the showers.
- Strangers don't assume they can ask me what my genitals look like and how I have sex.
- If I end up in the emergency room, I do not have to worry that my gender will keep me from receiving appropriate treatment nor will all of my medical issues be seen as a product of my gender. (i.e. "Your nose is running and your throat hurts? Must be due to hormones.")
- My health insurance provider (or public health system) does not specifically exclude me from receiving benefits or treatments available to others because of my gender.
- When I express the internal identities in my daily life, I am not considered "mentally ill" by the medical establishment.
- I am not required to undergo extensive psychological evaluation in order to receive basic medical care.

- The medical establishment does not serve as a “gatekeeper” which disallows self-determination of what happens to my body.

Source: Worcester Polytechnic Institute’s Safe Zone Training Manual, Jared (queerboysf@hotmail.com)

Why Transgender Matters To You
By Joelle Ruby Ryan, tgnh.org

Transgender refers to a range of behaviors, identities and expressions which challenge the rigid bipolar gender system in our society. In our culture, people labeled “male” at birth are expected to conform to masculine stereotypes, identify as heterosexual and be content with the category “man.” People termed “female” are required to be “feminine” straight women by conventional society and are bound by a patriarchal system which systematically devalues and oppresses women. Anyone who strays from the strict categorizations of gender traditionalism and heterosexuality are often called “freaks,” “perverts,” and “deviants” and are considered outcasts by mainstream society.

Since the 1990s, the Transgender Liberation Movement has been fighting back against conservative gender ideology and is attempting to cast gender as a civil rights issue on both the national and international stage. Many people reading this column may know little about Transgendered people’s lives, and may wonder: what does transgender have to do with me? There are many reasons why Transgenderism matters to you. Here are some important ones to reflect upon and to begin the conversation:

YOU may be transgender. Approximately 5% of the population have gender identities or expressions which place them into the Transgender population. Transgender refers to people who do not fully identify with the gender assigned to them at birth. This includes folks who permanently cross the gender divide as well as people who “trans” it occasionally and who blur the categories altogether. Transgender is an umbrella term which includes cross-dressers, transsexuals, transgenderists, drag queens, drag kings, gender queers and a plethora of other gender-diverse constituencies. If you experience a frequent discomfort with your assigned sex or if you desire to dress in clothing associated with the “opposite” gender, you may be Transgender. While it is difficult to come out as Trans, there are many people out there to support you in your unique gender journey. Stand tall and be proud of who you are; revel in your chose gender expression and realize that you are not alone.

You probably know someone who is Transgender. “SOFFA” refers to Significant Others, Friends, Family and Allies of the Gender Community. Even if you yourself are not Trans, the chances are strong that you will discover that someone in your circle of friends and families identifies as gender-different. As more and more Trans people bust open the closet door, their friends and family

members undergo a “coming out” of their own. As a persecuted minority, us Trannies need the support, loyalty, love and compassion of those close to us. If you are the Loved One of a Trans person, examine your own fears and biases and increase your cultural competency of gender issues. Reach out to you Trans friends and family members and offer them your unconditional love, even if you do not fully understand. Too many Trans people lose their family members or partners when they come out or are thrown our of the house; this needs to change and starts with each SOFFA taking a stand and deciding to stand by the Trans Loved One.

Discrimination against any human being is wrong. Transgender people face employment discrimination, are denied housing, are the victims of hate crimes, and are laughed at, derided and degraded on the streets and in the community. Approximately two transgender people are viciously and brutally murdered every month in this country in horrific violent attacks. Transphobia refers to the irrational fear and hatred of folks who cross, blur or transgress the traditional gender categorizations of male and female. Transphobic attitudes lead to institutional discrimination that oppresses Trans people and causes much undue physical, economic and emotional distress and suffering. The hopeful news is that it doesn’t have to be this way! Each and every one of us has the power to make a difference and to improve the world for all our fellow human beings. Take a stand against transphobia and work to challenge your own assumptions around gender.

The Transgender Liberation Movement is a fight for freedom and justice which intersects with other social justice struggles. Feminism, the anti-racism movement, the LesBiGay Movement, the movement for Economic Justice and the Disability Rights Movement (to name but a few) are all deeply intertwined with the movement for Gender Freedom. The powers-that-be succeed because they count on oppressed people fighting against each other, squabbling over a sliver of the pie while the ruling class enjoys the lion’s share of economic power and institutional resources. By pitting us against each other, they prevent us from organizing and winning real social change. In order to be victorious in our movement for Gender Liberation, we must unite and learn to link our diverse struggles for emancipation

The Transgender Movement is fundamentally about GENDER and thus it is an issue which affects ALL of us. Is anyone really 100% male or 100% female? Doesn’t everyone, in one way or another, differ from the socially-constructed notion of a “real man” or a “real woman?” Every person I know has felt limited, constrained or devalued for exhibiting “opposite” gender traits, behaviors or mannerisms at some point in their life, and what a shame that is! Each and every one of us are a complex mixture of male and female, masculine and feminine. No one should be made to feel shame or guilt for expressing the full range of human emotions and behaviors, for they are our unique and Goddess-given birthright. Gender is not a black-or-white proposition; rather, there exists an infinite rainbow

of innovative options. I urge you to bravely stretch and discard outdated gender roles, requirements and expectations and open yourself up to the full and vibrant spectrum of human freedom.

I hope that after reading this you look at “Transgender” in a slightly new way and that you challenge yourself and others to become a Trans Ally: a person who speaks out against gender-phobia and who celebrates the beauty of Gender Diversity.

How You Can Support Transgender People
Apart from speaking out against transphobia and educating our communities about the realities of transgender people and their lives, allies can also make an effort to be respectful and supportive of transpeople and their experiences. If you know transgender people in their community be sure to respect their identity and expression.

Validate their identity. Simply acknowledging and believing a transperson’s gender can be an extreme relief. Be sure to use their preferred pronoun and name.

Respect their privacy. Many transpeople want only a few trusted people to know their history or physical status. Make sure it is okay with the person to discuss with other people that they are transgender or other related specifics of their lives.

Consider transgender people when announcing community events. At present when a "men's event" or "women's event" is announced, transpeople cannot always assume they are welcome. Specify women or men-identified. Remember also that some people identify as both, neither, or other, "all genders welcome" is a good all-inclusive phrase.

Include protection for transgender people in worker contracts and laws. It is currently legal in most areas to discriminate on the basis of gender expression and/or identity. A big way allies can help is by advocating and implementing explicit protection for Trans workers and citizens.

Be aware of gendered spaces. Be sensitive to the fact that bathrooms, locker rooms, and gender-specific events can be a place of potential embarrassments or violence for transpeople.

Just ask! If you are not sure what pronoun a person prefers or how they identify, just ask. If for some reason asking doesn't feel comfortable, try to speak without using genderspecific pronouns.

If you make a mistake, apologize and move on. Occasionally you might accidentally use a wrong pronoun or say a wrong name when addressing

someone who is transgender. Apologize and correct yourself, but not too profusely.

Acknowledge their experience. If a transperson does talk about their body, identity and experience you at times might be surprised to hear that their lives do not match up to your expectations. For instance, a male you know might have given birth at some point. This is simply part of the Trans experience. Accept it and learn!

Above all it is important to send the message out to transgender people in our communities that they are welcome, appreciated, and that transphobia will not be tolerated. By holding people accountable for transphobic actions and by including transpeople in our events we can all benefit from living in safer communities.

Source: Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Safe Zone Training Manual, Adapted from a publication by Gender Queer (GQ), a subgroup of the University of Oregon Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Alliance

How the Needs of T Might Differ from LGBQ

• They may identify as heterosexual, so they may not be dealing with issues of sexuality. However, depending on how they sexually identify, transgender people may face discrimination from both heterosexuals and LGB people.
• They may experience more verbal and physical attacks than most LGB people if they cross-dress or otherwise "look gender variant."
• They are generally less accepted in society than LGB people, in large part due to ignorance. There is little understanding of transgender lives; they are not visible in popular culture beyond stereotypes and almost no research has been done on their experiences.
• They sometimes experience a lack of acceptance and support from the LGB community.
• As a result of the lack of acceptance and support in the dominant culture and in the LGB community, they often lack a strong community and positive role models or images. Consequently, transpeople, especially trans youth, may feel isolated and marginalized.
• Transpeople may want to remain closeted because of the legitimate fear of how they will be treated by their professors, employers, co-workers, friends, and others in their field.
• Transpeople often have a hard time finding medical help that is knowledgeable and understanding concerning transgender issues.
• If transitioning, they will need to change their identification as well as other records and documents. Keep in mind that different states and institutions have different rules about when and if these changes are possible
• They are especially vulnerable to attack, harassment, and/or embarrassment when trying to use the gender appropriate bathroom.

• Transpeople often have others refer to them as a gender different than the one with which they wish to identify or insist on calling them by their given name even though they have changed it.

Source: University of Alabama, Birmingham's Safe Zone Training and Reference Manual
Beemyn, B. (2003, Fall). Serving the needs of transgender college students. Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education,1, 33-50.

What is Homophobia?

Homophobia takes many different forms. Sometimes it takes the form of physical acts of hate, violence, verbal assault, vandalism or blatant discrimination, such as firing an employee, evicting someone from their housing, or denying them access to public accommodations based solely on their sexual orientation or their perceived/assumed sexual orientation. There are many other kinds of homophobia and heterosexism that happen every day. We often overlook these more subtle actions and exclusions because they seem so insignificant by comparison but they are not. It is important for supportive allies of the GLBT community to recognize certain homophobic levels of attitude so that they may take steps towards changing that attitude.

Examples of Homophobia

- Looking at a lesbian or gay man and automatically thinking of her/his sexuality rather than seeing her/him as a whole, complex person.
- Changing your seat in a meeting because a lesbian or gay man sat in the chair next to yours.
- Thinking you can spot one.
- Using the terms “lesbian” or “gay” as accusatory.
- Thinking that a lesbian (if you are female) or gay man (if you are male) is making sexual advances if she/he touches you.
- Feeling repulsed by public displays of affection between lesbians and gay men but accepting the same displays of affection between heterosexuals.
- Not confronting a homophobic remark for fear of being identified with lesbians and gays.
- Not asking about a woman’s female lover or a man’s male lover although you regularly ask “How is your husband/wife?” when you run into a heterosexual friend.
- Feeling that gays and lesbians are too outspoken about lesbian and gay civil rights.
- Feeling that discussions about homophobia are not necessary since you are “okay” on these issues.
- Being outspoken about gay rights, but making sure everyone knows you are straight.
- Feeling that a lesbian is just a woman who couldn’t find a man or that a lesbian is a woman who wants to be a man.
- Feeling that a gay man is just a man who couldn’t find a woman or that a gay man is a man who wants to be a woman.
- Worrying about the effect a lesbian or gay volunteer/co-worker will have on your work or your clients.
- Failing to be supportive when your gay friend is sad about a quarrel or breakup.

- Asking your lesbian or gay colleagues to speak about lesbian or gay issues, but not about other issues about which they may be knowledgeable.
- Focusing exclusively on someone's sexual orientation and not on other issues of concern.
- Being afraid to ask questions about lesbian or gay issues when you don't know the answers.

Homophobia Hurts Everyone

You do not have to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual, or know someone who is, to be negatively affected by homophobia. Though homophobia actively oppresses gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, it also hurts heterosexuals.

- Homophobia locks all people into rigid gender-based roles that inhibit creativity and self-expression.
- Homophobic conditioning compromises the integrity of heterosexual people by pressuring them to treat others badly, actions contrary to their basic humanity.
- Homophobia inhibits one's ability to form close relationships with members of one's own sex.
- Societal homophobia prevents some LGBTQ people from developing an authentic self-identity and adds to the pressure to marry, which in turn places undue stress and oftentimes trauma on themselves as well as their heterosexual spouses and their children.
- Homophobia is one cause of premature sexual involvement, which increases the chances of teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Young people, of all sexual identities, are often pressured to become heterosexually active to prove to themselves and others that they are "normal."
- Homophobia can be used to stigmatize, silence, and on occasion, target people who are perceived or defined by others as gay, lesbian, or bisexual but who are in actuality heterosexual.

For LGBTQ people in the closet hurt comes from:

- Having to lie and pretend.
- Thinking they are the only one.
- Thinking that something is wrong with them.
- Feeling panic about being found out and feeling like a coward or dishonest

For LGBTQ people coming out hurt comes from:

- Rejection from friends, family, work and other interests.
- People refusing to accept their sexual orientation, seeing it as a phase, trying to get the person to change – "see a psychiatrist" or attend "reparative therapies", such as ex-gay ministries.

- Having to deal with fear and anger toward them from nearly everyone, including those who have been their greatest supporters in the past.
- Losing their job, living space, and financial support.

For those already out of the closet hurt comes from:

- Dealing with put-downs, jokes and being talked about by others.
- Not getting jobs or into groups or organizations.
- Being made into a special case - as “good” or “different” gay, lesbian, or bisexual person.
- Not having guaranteed civil rights protection to grieve discrimination.
- Having outright legalized mistreatment by having children taken away, being denied access to their partner, not getting benefits that are given to opposite sex partners.
- Dealing with people’s misinformation and AIDS fear.

Source: Diversity Works, Amherst, MA

What is Heterosexism?

Heterosexism results from the underlying cultural and social assumption that everyone is heterosexual and if not, they should be. Although it is a passive form of prejudice, heterosexism is a potent, oppressive force that disavows lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender identities and undermines the development of healthy, positive lesbian, bisexual, gay or transgendered identities and relationships. Institutionalized heterosexism impacts LBGTQ people in very real, tangible ways.

Examples of Heterosexism

- The assumption that everyone you meet is heterosexual.
- The assumption that everyone has or is interested in having an opposite-sex partner.
- The assumption that all mothers and fathers are heterosexual.
- The assumption all sexually active women use birth control.
- The assumption that all unmarried people are “single,” while in reality they may have a same-sex partner.
- The assumption all children live in families with a male-female couple in parental roles.
- The use of language that presumes heterosexuality in others, such as “husband” or “wife,” instead of gender neutral language such as “partner.”
- The use of official forms which allow only for designation as married or single.
- The denial of equal employment benefits to people with same-sex partners (i.e., spousal insurance).
- The omission of any discussion of same-sex relationships of persons who are LBGTQ as part of educational curricula.

Examples of Rights and Privileges of Heterosexuals

Employment

- Able to share personal life in social settings
- Heterosexuality is not a negative issue in hiring, promotion, competency
- Tremendous range of occupational choices

Religion

- No condemnation of heterosexuality
- “Lifestyle” not considered a sin
- Automatic acceptance of partner
- Heterosexual marriage is recognized and validated

Social

- Validation of sexual orientation in media
- Greater quantity and quality of role models
- Public expressions of affection accepted, often expected

- Ability to purchase family memberships in health clubs or other recreational activities

Family of Origin
- Acknowledgment of partner
- Public support of relationships
- Routine inclusion of spouse in all social and familial gatherings

Financial
- Joint banking options
- Mixing of assets
- Reduced insurance rates
- Inheritance rights
- Social security and retirement benefits

Mental Health
- Sexual orientation is not viewed as the primary reason for seeking treatment
- Assumption of “normalcy”
- Social and cultural support for the identity formation and partner choice

Children
- Socially accepted and legally outlined bonds to children
- Competency as a parent not linked to sexual orientation
- No threat of children being taken from parents due to sexual orientation

Medical
- Access to hospitalized spouse
- Authority to make medical decision for spouse
- Ability to insure spouse and children
- Ability to take family or medical leave for partner

Educational
- Most people studied have heterosexuality in common with students
- Most ideas/ topics/ persons studied based on assumptions of heterosexuality

Legal
- Legal expectations of spouses are clearly outlined
- Legal recourse of disputes (e.g, divorce, custody of children, property dissolution.)
- No threat of harassment or jail for sexual practices
- Immigration status can be obtained through marriage
- Freedom from sanctioned discrimination

Source: New York University’s Safe Zone Handbook

Heterosexual Questionnaire

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?
4. Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
5. Isn't it possible that all you need is a good gay lover?
6. Heterosexuals have histories of failures in gay relationships. Do you think you may have turned to heterosexuality out of fear of rejection?
7. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how do you know you wouldn't prefer that?
8. If heterosexuality is normal, why are a disproportionate number of mental patients heterosexual?
9. To who have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
10. Your heterosexuality doesn't offend me as long as you don't try to force it on me. Why do you people feel compelled to seduce others into your sexual orientation?
11. If you choose to nurture children, would you want them to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they would face?
12. The great majority of child molesters are heterosexuals. Do you really consider it safe to expose your children to heterosexual teachers?
13. Why do you insist on being so obvious and making a public spectacle of your heterosexuality? Can't you just be what you are and keep it quiet?
14. How can you ever hope to become a whole person if you limit yourself to a compulsive, exclusive heterosexual object choice and remain unwilling to explore and develop your normal, natural, healthy, God-given homosexual potential?
15. Heterosexuals are noted for assigning themselves and each other to narrowly restricted, stereotyped sex-roles. Why do you cling to such unhealthy role-playing?
16. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
17. With all the societal support marriage receives, the divorce rate is spiraling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?
18. How could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual, considering the menace of overpopulation?
19. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed with which you might be able to change if you really want to. Have you considered aversion therapy?
20. Do heterosexuals hate and/or distrust others of their own sex? Is that what makes them heterosexual?

Oppression and Privilege

Social Identity includes sexuality, race, class, gender, ability, etc. Each of us have a number of different social identities. Social group differences have been constructed in a way over time so that social meanings justify inequality and oppression.
Privileged Identity: Within each social identity category some people have greater access to power and privilege based upon membership in their social group.
Oppressed Identity: Groups whose access to social power is limited or denied

Levels and Types of Oppression:
Individual: attitudes and actions that reflect prejudice against a social group.
Examples:
Individual Conscious
Using a derogatory term to refer to LGBT people
Individual Unconscious:
A high school teacher assumes all of her students are interested in dating classmates of the opposite sex

Cultural: Social norms, roles, rituals, language, music, and art that reflect and reinforce the belief that one social group is superior to another.
Examples:
Cultural Conscious
LGBTQ representations in the media
Cultural Unconscious
LGBTQ representations in the media

Institutional: Policies, laws, rules, norms, and customs enacted by organizations and social institutions that disadvantage some social groups and advantage other social groups.
Examples:
Institutional Conscious
Laws which prohibit same sex marriage
Institutional Unconscious
A university's anti-discrimation policy which includes gender and sexuality but not gender expression

Coming Out

Things to Consider When Coming Out

Coming Out To Oneself
The first part of coming out is coming out to oneself which is the process of recognizing, understanding and accepting your sexual orientation and gender identity. Some individuals desire and engage in same-sex behavior but do not identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, sometimes because of the stigma associated with a non-straight orientation.

Here are some questions to ask yourself when thinking about and exploring your sexual orientation:
-Who do I have crushes on?
-Who do I fantasize about being with?
-Who do I have emotional, romantic and sexual feelings and attraction towards?

For transgender people, they sometimes feel that the gender which they were assigned at birth does not fit them.

Some questions to ask yourself when exploring your gender might include:
-Do I feel like my birth assigned gender aligns with how I feel about my gender?
-Do I ever feel like my body and mind aren't in synch when it comes to my gender?
-Do I feel more comfortable identifying and/or expressing my gender other than the gender I was assigned at birth?
-Do I like to imagine what it might be like to identify and/or be perceived as another gender?

Coming Out To Others
Coming out is a process. Depending on the person and their experiences, it can last a short period of time or it can be a lifelong process. There is not one way to come out and only you can decide when, how and who you are ready to come out to as a LGBTQ.

Source: The Trevor Project

When Someone Comes Out to You

Most people in our society have been taught to fear, despise, or hate people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and/or transgender. All of us have been exposed to a vast amount of negative, derogatory, and inaccurate information about people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender. When someone comes out to you, they share the information about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity with a keen awareness of the risks involved: the risk of losing their relationship with you, the risk of being rejected, the risk of being misunderstood, and many other risks. Unless you have given some indication of your feelings or beliefs about sexual orientation and/or gender identity, they may have no way of knowing in advance whether your reaction will be positive or negative.

There are a variety of contexts in which someone might decide to come out to you:

- They may have chosen to come out to you because you are a close friend or family member, and they want to have an honest and genuine relationship with you.
- They may feel you are a person who will be understanding and accepting, and so trust you with this very personal information.
- They may not be sure how you will react, but they prefer to be honest and are tired of putting time and energy into hiding their identity.
- They may decide to come out to you before they really know you, in order to establish an honest relationship from the beginning.
- They may come out to you because some aspect of your professional relationship makes it difficult to continue to hide their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- They may come out to you because you are in a position to assist them with a concern, determine their access to certain resources, or address policies which impact their life.
- When someone comes out to you, the news may come as a total surprise, you may have already considered the possibility that this person might be lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender, or it may not be important to you one way or the other.

What persons who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender have been told about their identity . . . and what you should not say:

- You're just going through a phase.
- You're just depressed.
- You're just confused.
- Maybe you can find a therapist who can help you get over this.
- It's just because you've never had a relationship with someone of the opposite sex.
- You can't be gay -- you've had relationships with people of the opposite sex.
- It's just because you haven't had the proper male/female role models.
- You can't be a lesbian -- you're too pretty!

Ways You Can Support Someone Who Has Come Out to You

Don't judge. Regardless of your own personal beliefs about LGBTQ people, keep in mind that the person has made himself or herself vulnerable. Simply listen to the person.

Acknowledge them. Let them know that you heard what they said and ask open-ended questions to show that you are interested and care.

Recognize the trust. If someone voluntarily comes out to you this individual is putting a lot of trust in you and has used a lot of courage. It can be beneficial to acknowledge that courage and trust.

Match their words. Remember that this is about how they identify. It is important to use the same language that they use. If the person self-identifies as gay, then use the word "gay." If he or she uses queer, then use the word "queer."

Don’t let sex be your guide. Don’t assume, just because someone has had a same-sex sexual encounter that the person identifies as gay. Also don’t assume, just because someone identifies as gay, that the person has had a same-sex sexual encounter.

Maintain contact. Let the person know that they are still important to you. You don’t need to change the way you interact or how often you see the person in the future.

Keep confidentiality. LGBTQ people face many forms of discrimination and harassment in society. It is important to make sure to never share a person’s identity unless it is with someone he or she has told you knows. A good rule of thumb is, “if you’re not sure, don’t share.”

Give resources. When someone comes out to you, it is possible that he or she is already very knowledgeable about resources, but the individual also might not know of any. Share what resources you have and make an active effort to learn about new useful resources.

Just listen. The most important thing you can do is to listen. Being LGBTQ isn’t a problem that needs solving or something that becomes easy to deal with given just the right resource. LGBTQ identities are part of who people are. When you listen to people tell you about their identities, you learn more about who that person is.

Adapted from University of Alabama Birmingham’s Safe Zone Training and Reference Manual and New York University’s Safe Zone Handbook

Allies of the LGBTQ Community

What is an Ally?

- A person who works to end oppression through support and advocacy of an oppressed population.
- Specific to the LGBTQ community, an ally honors sexual and gender diversity and provides support for individuals at varying stages of sexual and gender identity development.
- Allies are a key component to creating a safer climate for the LGBTQ community.

An Ally Strives To…

- Be a friend and a listener.
- Be open-minded and willing to talk.
- Commit themselves to personal growth in spite of the discomfort it may sometimes cause.
- Recognize their personal boundaries.
- Recognize when to refer someone to additional resources.
- Confront their own prejudices.
- Believe that all persons should be treated with dignity and respect.
- Engage in the process of developing a culture free of homophobia and heterosexism.
- Recognize his or her mistakes and not use them as an excuse for inaction.
- Recognize the legal privileges that heterosexuals have and which LGBTQ. people are denied.
- Support the Safe Zone program.

An Ideal Ally….

- Uses gender neutral terms.
- Doesn't preface a statement on LGBTQ issues with, "I'm straight, but…"
- Don't expect an LGBTQ person to speak for the entire community.
- Doesn't assume.
- Treats partners of LGBTQ friends as they would a heterosexual friend's partner.
- Doesn't think of people as "my gay/lesbian student or friend."
- Objects to homophobic jokes in all situation and doesn't tolerate .homophobic comments.
- Understands the basic of LGBTQ issues but is not afraid to ask questions.

Benefits of Being an Ally

- Become less locked into sex roles and gender stereotypes.
- Can help the lives of members of the LGBTQ community.
- Able to make a difference in the campus environment.

- Forms of oppression impact everyone; you actively take a role in relieving oppression.
- You can be there for your friend, classmate, roommate, teammate, brother, sister, professor, mother, father, other peers, and other people you know who are LGBTQ.
- Safe Zones help LGBTQ people develop a stronger self-esteem and can lower occurrences of depression, abuse of drugs and alcohol, and suicide.

Ideas for Being an Ally in Our Community

- Think before you speak: do you ever catch yourself saying “that’s so gay” or “bitch?” Try not using either of these phrases for an entire week.
- Recognize your own prejudices: make a list of the stereotypes that have been associated with an aspect of your identity… do you fit these stereotypes? Then make a list of prejudices you hold for other groups and compare the lists.
- Encourage acceptance, not just tolerance
- Deconstruct the media: take a look at one story being converted in the major news networks, podcasts, and blogs. See if the facts change.
- Speak Out: if you notice someone is making an offensive comment towards someone else, don’t be afraid to express your discomfort.
- Learn from someone who is different from you
- Educate yourself and others
- Read up on social justice issues
- Read books/articles on people different from yourself.
- Reflect on your own experiences and how you might be a better ally in the future
- Don’t assume to completely know someone else’s experience.
- Try and empathize not sympathize
- Don’t judge others.
- Keep an open mind.
- Understand your own privileges
- Acknowledge the power bestowed upon you based on your social group membership.
- Don’t deny your privileges.
- Utilize your power to bring about social change that benefits all people, especially those underprivileged.
- Seek to understand all the different forms of oppression.
- Let your actions speak louder than your words.
- Notice the numerous intersections between different forms of oppression.
- Do it because it’s the right thing to do.
- Try to acknowledge your own prejudices and baggage.
- Challenge the norm
- Never speak for an entire group’s experiences or try to represent an entire group.
- Remember to speak only for your own experiences.

- Recognize that no one form of oppression is more significant than another-there is no hierarchy of oppressions.
- Accept that none of us are experts in diversity.
- Know that the past is not your fault, but the present and future are your responsibility.

An Ally's Promise
I believe success is the freedom to be yourself.
I believe nobody is wrong they are only different.
I believe your circumstances don't define you,
rather they reveal you.
I believe without a sense of caring,
there can be no sense of community.
I believe our minds are like parachutes.
They only work if they are open.
I believe we only live life once,
but if we live it right, one time is all we'll need.
I believe we must first get along with ourselves
before we can get along with others.

I will
I will seek to understand you.
I will label bottles, not people.
I will grow antennas not horns.
I will see the diversity of our commonality.
I will see the commonality of our diversity.
I will get to know who you are rather than what you are.
I will transcend political correctness
and strive for human righteousness.

I challenge you
I challenge you to honor who you are.
I challenge you to enjoy your life rather then endure it.
I challenge you to create the status quo rather than accept it.
I challenge you to live in your imagination
more than your memory.
I challenge you to live your life as a revolution
and not just a process of evolution.
I challenge you to ignore other people's ignorance
challenge you to ignore other people's ignorance
so that you may discover your own wisdom.

I promise you
I promise to do my part.
I promise to stand beside you.
I promise to interrupt the world
when its thinking becomes ignorant.
I promise to believe in you,
even when you have lost faith in yourself.
I am here for you.

Source: Anthony J. D'Angelo from Inspiration for LGBT Students & Their Allies

Resources

Adelphi University Resources:
Center for Student Involvement
516-877-3603
csi@adelphi.edu
http://students.adelphi.edu/sa/csi/multicultural/

Office of Residential Life and Housing
516-877-3650
housing@adelphi.edu
http://students.adelphi.edu/sa/rlh/

Student Counseling Center
516-877-3646
http://students.adelphi.edu/sa/scc/

Health Services Center
516-877-6000
http://students.adelphi.edu/sa/hs/

Adelphi Collaboration Project
2011-2012 ICAN/WeCan End Gendered Violence
http://events.adelphi.edu/endviolence/

Gender Studies Department
516-877-4595
http://academics.adelphi.edu/artsci/genderstudies/

University Diversity Committee
Contact Jean Lau Chin, Diversity Committee Chair
chin@adelphi.edu
516-877-4185

Human Resources Department
516-877-3220
humanres@adelphi.edu
http://intranet.adelphi.edu/hr/

Off Campus Resources:

Support/Counseling
Pride For Youth
516-679-9000
http://www.longislandcrisiscenter.org/pfy/about.html
Pride for Youth is a service and an advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. Our mission is to enhance the health, wellness and cultural competency of LGBT young people through supportive services, education and youth development.

Long Island Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Services Network

The Center at Bayshore: 631-665-2300
The Center at Garden City: 516-750-4715
http://www.liglbtnetwork.org/
The Long Island GLBT Services Network is an association of five non-profit organizations serving Long Island's GLBT community throughout the lifespan: Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth (LIGALY), The Long Island GLBT Community Center (The Center), Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders – Long Island (SAGE-LI), The East End Gay Organization (EEGO) and Equality Long Island (EQLI). Together, each organization works to end homophobia on Long Island, to provide a home and safe space for the GLBT community, and to advocate for equality.

The Trevor Project
866-4-U-TREVOR
www.thetrevorproject.org
The Trevor Project is a nonprofit endeavor created by the makers of the short film TREVOR to promote tolerance for gay and questioning youth. Hotline includes suicide prevention services.

Bisexual Information and Counseling Incorporated (BICS)
212-595-8002
Information and counseling on health and relationship issues. General and professional discussion groups.

New York Bisexual Women
www.biwomen.org/nyc.htm
A support and discussion group open to all bifriendly women. We strive to provide a safe space for women to be honest about our sexuality, and to support each other's honesty. Everyone is welcome.

Center Gender Identity Project
212-620-7310, ext-251
Support for transgender people, peer counseling, support groups, referral, advocacy, professional training on gender dysphoria.

Project Connect
212-620-7310, ext-250
Substance abuse counseling. Free, gay-affirmative; support groups. Pre-group interview required.

The Door
212-941-9090
www.door.org
Crisis intervention, long term counseling, drop-in center, medical care, housing referral service, legal, educational & vocational programs for young people ages 12 to 21.

Identity House
212-243-8181
www.identityhouse.org
New York City's oldest LGBT counseling and referral organization. Peer counseling, therapy referrals, coming out discussion groups, conferences and social events.

Parents and Friends of Lesbian and Gays (PFLAG)
212-463-0629
www.pflag.org
Support group for parents and friends of LGBTQ individuals to help promote understanding and acceptance.

Health
AIDS Hotline
212-447-8200 or 1-800-Talk-HIV
Information, counseling & referrals available 7 days a week, 9am to 9pm.

Bailey House, Inc.
212-633-2500
www.baileyhouse.org
Housing and services for people with AIDS; technical assistance program, communication resources.

Callen Lorde: Michael Callen and Audre Lorde Community Health Center
212-271-7200
www.callen-lorde.org
Quality, affordable Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender health facility. General care, dermatology, mammography, STD screening/care, HIV related health services, counseling, community training and more. Service provided regardless of pay.

Office of Gay and Lesbian Health (NYC Department of Health)
212-442-6944
Health education, information, advocacy and referrals.

Bias Crimes/Domestic Violence
New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project
212-714-1184
www.avp.org
Counseling, advocacy and training. Peer and short term counseling for sexual assault, domestic violence, HIV related violence and other victimization. Confidential hotline: 212-714-1141.

Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic Violence
24 Hour Hotline: 516-542-0404
http://www.cadvnc.org/cadv/
The Coalition offers confidential, specialized services for victims of domestic violence/dating violence, elder abuse, children who witness domestic violence, and sexual assault survivors.

Safe Horizons
212-577-7700
www.safehorizons.org
Services for victims of crimes, 24-hour phone crisis counseling, information, referral and advocacy.

LGBTQ Spiritual and Religious Resources
Spiritual

Adodi New York
543 West 43rd St. Suite 8045 New York, 10036
Phone: 212-927-7136
Email: adodiny@aol.com
Website:http://members.aol.com/adodiny
A spiritual support group for gay black men.

Mormon Affirmation
Murray Hill Station
PO Box 527 New York, NY 10156
Hotline: 212-757 2837
Phone: 212-853-9434
http://www.affirmation.org/nyc
Email: AffirmNYC@aol.com
A support group for LGBT Mormons and supporters. Meets 2nd Sunday each month at LGBT Community Services Center, 208 West 13th St, NYC.

Jewish
Congregation Beth Simchat Torah
57 Bethune St New York, NY 10014
Phone: 212-929-9498
Email: office@cbst.org
Web: www.cbst.org/
LGBT synagogue serving the community since 1973.

Congregation B'nai Jeshurun
86th and West End Ave or 257 W. 88th St. New York, NY 10024
Phone: 212-787-7600 ext. 325
Web: www.bj.org
Shabbat dinners, holiday programs, co-sponsored activities with Out LGBT Jewish groups. ASL interpretation available.

Buddhist
Buddhist Lesbians and Gays of New York
Phone: 212-803-5192
Meets the 2nd Tuesdays from 6-8pm a the LGBT Community Services Center
208 West 13th St. Meditation and discussions.

Christian
Garden City Community Church
Phone: 516-746-1700
http://www.gardencitycommunitychurch.org/

Christian Gays and Lesbians
Phone: 212-529-2365
Fellowship meets 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month.

Metropolitan Community Church of New York
446 West 36th St. New York, NY 10018
Phone: 212-629-7440
Email: mccnewyork@aol.com

Web: www.mccny.org
Sunday worships at 7pm and 10pm.
Open to all for Bible Study, counseling, holy unions and memorial services.

Dignity/New York
PO Box 1028 Old Chelsea Station New York, NY 10011
Phone: 212-818-1309
National organization for LGBT Roman Catholics. Meets on Saturdays at the LGBT Community Services Center, 208 West 13th St.

Integrity/New York
P.O. Box 20067 New York, NY 10011
LGBT Episcopal Group

More Light Presbyterians for LGBT Concerns
C/o James Anderson, Communications Secretary
PO Box 38 New Brunswick, NJ 089093
Phone: 732-249-1016
Email: jda@sclis.rutgers.edu
Web: www.mlp.org

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship/Huntington LGBT Concerns Committee
109 Broadway Road Huntington, NY 11743
Phone: 516-427-9547
Email: uufhliny@aol.com
Web: www.uufh.org
Monthly meeting and activities for LGBT people.

Muslim/Islamic
Al-Fatiha Foundation
405 Park Avenue, Suite 1500
New York, NY 10022
www.al-fatiha.org
Phone: 212 752 3188
Email: gaymuslims@yahoo.com