

Gender and Sexuality in OST 102

A Guide for Developing
a LGBTQIA+ Lens in
OST Spaces



ACTNOW

Afterschool for Children & Teens

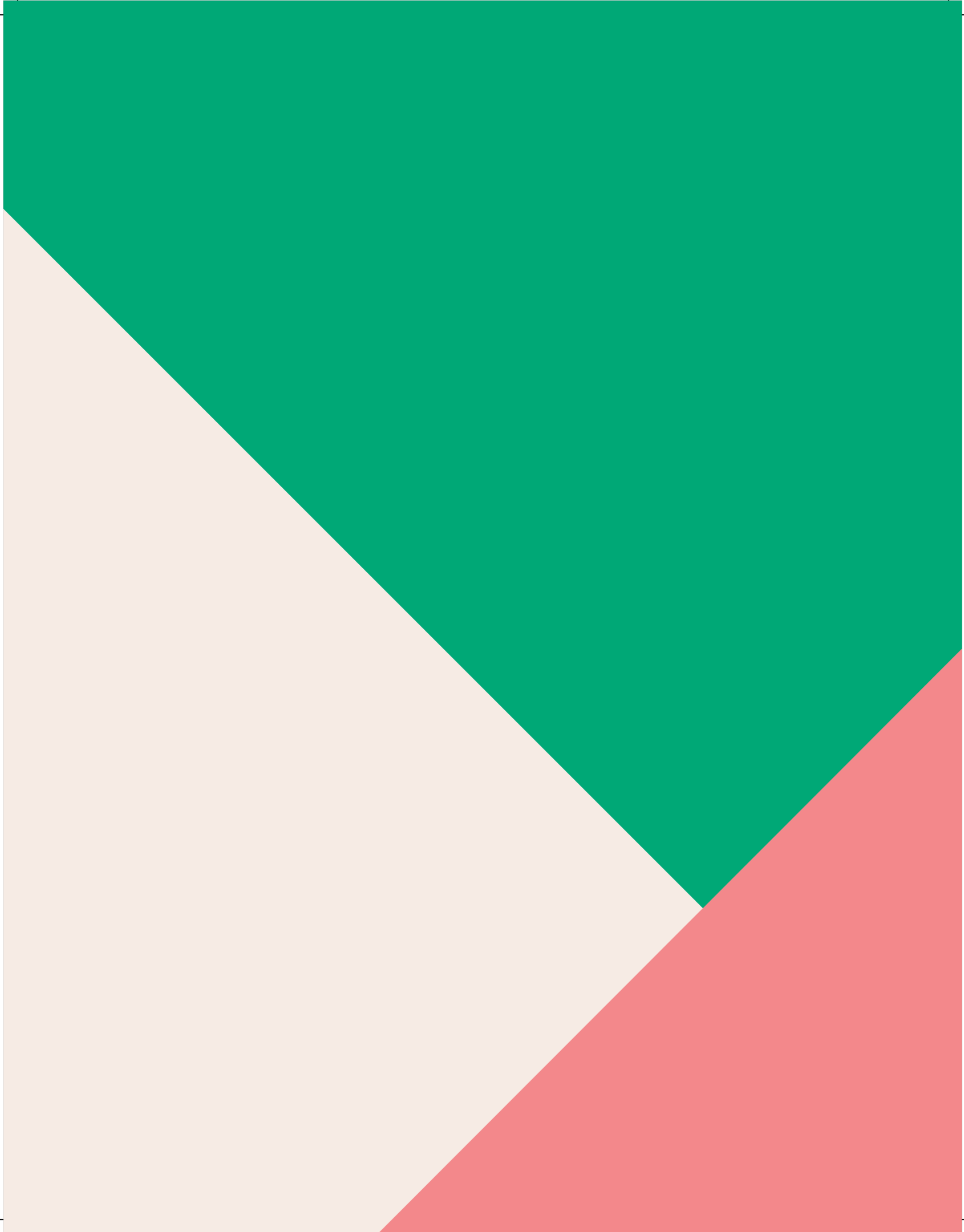


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Content Warning: Please note that this guide includes mentions of homophobia, transphobia, discrimination on the basis of gender and sexuality, suicide, and mental health crises, which some readers may find distressing.

INTRODUCTION



Throughout today's presentation, our enduring understanding is that all youth deserve access to safe spaces. Research-based strategies promote safety for youth in and outside of the LGBTQIA+ community through the following strategies:

- Inclusive policies and protocols
- Ongoing staff professional development
- Gender/Sexuality Alliances
- Inclusive curricula & spaces

Through this presentation and supplemental resources, we hope you will be able to focus on developing an LGBTQIA+ lens in Out-of-School Time (OST) spaces and developing relational and instructional approaches to best practices of inclusion and support. This resource guide utilizes the Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework developed by ACT Now in order to promote the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ youth within OST.

Gender, sex, and sexuality are large topics and this field is constantly changing and adapting. In addition to this foundational guide, you will also have access to supplemental materials. This includes a short one-pager which administrators may find useful to distribute amongst their own program staff to facilitate internal trainings and conversations relating to LGBTQIA+ inclusivity.



UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE

SEX, GENDER, AND THE GENDER BINARY

Understanding and accepting gender identities and sexualities begins with understanding the distinction between sex and gender and understanding that the gender binary is a flawed Western construct.

SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH

Sex refers to the chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male, or intersex at birth. Sex refers to the biological markers that generally can be coded as male or female. Since a person's sex may not align with their gender, such as with trans and nonbinary people, "sex assigned at birth" is the preferred terminology. There are very few instances in which a person needs to know another individual's sex assigned at birth, but in specific circumstances, such as a medical emergency, it may be important to know a person's sex. The term "sex assigned at birth" is a more inclusive way of referring to a person's sex in this scenario as it recognizes that their sex does not inherently refer to their gender. Gender refers to the social, psychological, cultural, and behavioral aspects of performing gendered traits. Gender is culturally produced. For example, wearing a dress is only considered a feminine trait because culture and society have constantly reiterated this idea and have established that dresses are feminine clothes. There is nothing inherently masculine about the color blue except that society has deemed it a boy's color. In 1918, an article from *Earnshaw's Infants' Department* stated that "the generally accepted rule is *pink* for the boys, and *blue* for the girls" and in the 1940s this idea switched so that pink was for girls and blue was for boys. There is nothing inherently tied to gender with these colors, instead, manufacturers used marketing to culturally link color to gender, making it easier to sell more baby clothes and make a larger profit.

GENDER

Gender is expressed through constantly reiterating traits that have been coded by society to be considered masculine or feminine. A person may therefore express their gender through clothing, haircuts, makeup, gender confirmation surgery, etc. Gender may be related to biological sex, however, gender refers to an individual's internal, individual identity and does not necessarily correspond with their sex-assigned-at-birth. Gender refers to a person's internal understanding of their own identity within their understanding of options for gender. The gender binary refers to the idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two. This gender binary inherently excludes intersex, two-spirit, nonbinary, trans, and many other identities. Excluding gender identities and sexualities or conflating sex and gender leads to the stigmatization and discrimination of LGBTQIA+ people. There are many genders beyond the cisgender male and female, or intersex, including nonbinary, transgender, agender, genderfluid, etc. Recognizing the difference between sex and gender is the first step in understanding the flaws within the gender binary and understanding genders beyond this binary. This understanding is foundational to compassionate comprehension of best practices for youth, such as using correct pronouns, fostering safety, and developing inclusive spaces.

SPECTRA OF IDENTITIES

A BRIEF OVERVIEW



As previously mentioned, excluding gender identities and sexualities or conflating sex and gender leads to the stigmatization and discrimination of LGBTQIA+ people. Below is a brief overview of the spectra of identities. Understanding the inherent existence of these identities (and others) eliminates the validity of the gender binary.

INTERSEX

The term intersex refers to the combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. This is a general term that can be applied to many different situations in which a person is born with reproductive anatomy which does not adhere to either entirely female or male organs. Since this term is a broad definition to describe those born into bodies that do not adhere to the traditional binary, the exact number of people born intersex is often contested but is estimated to be 1.7% of all births.

TWO-SPIRIT

The Indigenous American people have a third gender known as two-spirit and in most Indigenous tribes, two-spirit people, “were considered neither men nor women; they occupied a distinct, alternative gender status. In tribes where two-spirit males and females were referred to with the same term, this status amounted to a third gender. In other cases, two-spirit females were referred to with a distinct term and, therefore, constituted a fourth gender” (<https://www.ihs.gov/lgbt/health/twospirit/>). Prior to colonization, two-spirit people were held in high regard in society. However, colonization used religion and law to ruin the legitimacy of these people's identities. The presence of two-spirit people had diminished for a long period of time in Indigenous culture due to discrimination, but many queer, Indigenous people are now pushing to revive the traditions and acceptance of two-spirit people.

NONBINARY

Nonbinary people are people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the binary gender categories of man and woman. Individuals may feel some combination of masculine, feminine, and/or androgynous traits. Many nonbinary people also call themselves transgender and consider themselves part of the transgender community, as they have transitioned from their sex assigned at birth to nonbinary. Others do not consider themselves to be trans, since some trans people wish to conform to heteronormative ideas of gender expression, or “pass”, whereas some nonbinary people feel separated from the traditional gender binary. Many nonbinary people may use they/them pronouns, neopronouns, or multiple sets of pronouns (see *Pronoun Best Practices*).

TRANSGENDER

Transgender people are people who have transitioned (or are transitioning) from living as one gender to another. This is also an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity does not correspond in the expected (heteronormative, cisgender) way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth but does not identify as a man). Some trans people may undergo gender confirmation surgeries or other social or legal forms of transitioning. In the U.S., approximately 5.1% of adults under the age of 30 are trans or nonbinary, with 2% who are trans and 3.1% who are nonbinary.

INDOOR & OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

Indoor and outdoor environments refer to the physical environment in which a program operates. This is a foundation for the youth's experience in a program. Indoor and outdoor environments should be able to adequately accommodate all program activities. (Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework)

BATHROOMS AND LOCKER ROOMS

The Human Rights Watch has published the following specific recommendations to school districts in order to promote the safety and inclusion of transgender youth in bathrooms and locker rooms.

- "Ensure that students are able to access bathrooms, locker rooms, and other gender-segregated facilities in accordance with their gender identity"
- "Train staff on accessibility issues related to transgender students, emphasizing that staff should not question or discipline students who choose to use all-gender bathrooms or other facilities made available to them—for example, nurse or faculty bathrooms—and should recognize that such facilities may be distant from classrooms and require extra time"
 - Please Note: Transgender students should have access to facilities that match their gender identity and should not be forced to use an alternative facility. Some transgender and gender non-conforming students may prefer to use such alternative facilities for privacy, safety, etc. Additionally, another student who may be uncomfortable sharing facilities with a transgender student may be allowed access to alternative facilities, however, in such a scenario, the transgender student should not be forced to utilize alternative facilities.
- "Consider erecting stalls, barriers, and privacy curtains to maximize student privacy in bathrooms, locker rooms, and shared facilities"
- "Incorporate all-gender bathrooms and private changing and shower areas into planned renovations or any construction of new facilities"

The Human Rights Watch also recommends designating all-gender bathrooms wherever feasible, particularly in instances where single-user bathrooms are currently gendered. In Illinois, the Equitable Restrooms Act requires that all "single-occupancy restrooms shall be outfitted with exterior signage that marks the single-occupancy restroom as a restroom and does not indicate any specific gender".

ACCESSIBILITY

The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework requires that both indoor and outdoor spaces meet the needs of all staff and youth and are fully ADA compliant. It is important to view and critique these spaces with an intersectional eye. The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. To describe intersectionality she used the analogy of a car accident at an intersection. It may not be as simple to identify one cause of a car accident at an intersection as it may be to identify the cause of a fender bender in a parking lot. There may be multiple circumstances that all contributed to the accident. Since multiple factors contribute to the accident, no one aspect cannot bear the full weight. Similarly, humans and their experiences are not able to be reduced to a singular identity at any point. A queer White woman and a queer Black woman will have lived different lives and face different forms of discrimination. The intersection of a person's identities results in unique experiences and varied forms of discrimination.

Consider if your facilities are truly inclusive for all queer youth? Are there wheelchair-accessible, gender-neutral bathrooms? Does your Pride Club meet in a space where disabled students would be able to fully participate? Do you offer free transportation options for youth from low-income homes?

SAFETY & HEALTH

Ensuring the physical safety and security of youth and staff is a necessary foundation for all programs. Programs should provide safe physical environments and adequate staff supervision, as well as promote healthy environments. (Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework)

AFTERSCHOOL AS A PLATFORM FOR COMING OUT

Only about a third of LGBTQIA+ youth found their home to be LGBTQ-affirming. Approximately 55% of LGBTQIA+ youth reported that school was an LGBTQIA+-affirming space and 51% of transgender and nonbinary youth reported that school was a gender-affirming space. While rates of afterschool are not reported, it can be inferred that LGBTQIA+ youth would be most likely to attend afterschool programs where they feel accepted and welcome, which would make them more likely to feel safe enough to come out in afterschool. Having LGBTQIA+ affirming spaces in school and in out-of-school time is imperative as it results in significantly lower rates of attempted suicide within LGBTQIA+ youth. A majority of LGBTQIA+ youth found LGBT-affirming spaces online, however, with the anonymity there is no guarantee that these online spaces are truly safe or spreading reliable resources. Increasing the percentage of LGBTQIA+ youth who find school and OST space to be LGBTQIA+ affirming will ensure that youth are receiving accurate resources and real support.

TEN GOALS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WHO HAVE COME OUT

- Know the Terminology
 - See the *Glossary of Terms* booklet for a beginning guide to terms relating to the LGBTQIA+ community
- Create a Classroom Environment Welcoming to All Students Regardless of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation
- Create an Inclusive Curriculum That Respects LGBTQIA+ Identities and Experiences
 - Within your program, include activities that include diverse representation for queer youth. For example, read books that begin discussing trans identities or watch a movie with queer actors and characters. It is important to highlight diverse stories as it allows for some students to see themselves represented within what they are learning about, and encourages cisgender, straight students to also begin developing a more inclusive mindset.
- Use Inclusive Language
 - Don't assume all of your youth identify strictly as male or female. When addressing groups of people or people whose pronouns you haven't been told, use gender-neutral language such as, "friends," "folks," or "y'all," rather than "guys" or "ladies".
- Understand *Pronoun Best Practices*
- Be an Ally to Your LGBTQIA+ Students
- Be Aware of Your Own Biases and Assumptions About LGBTQIA+ People
- Display Inclusive Materials in Your Classroom
 - Including inclusive messaging, posters, or flags representing the community is a great way to indicate that you are a safe person for youth to speak to.
- Respect Students' Confidentiality and Privacy (see *Data Collection*)
- Provide Resources (see *Resources and References*)

PRONOUN BEST PRACTICES

Use a Person's Correct Pronouns When Speaking To And About Them

- The gender of your students should not impact the services you provide. Using a person's correct pronouns shows basic respect for the individual. Being referred to with the correct pronouns and seeing that OST is an actively inclusive space is often the difference between just being at an OST program and instead feeling as though they belong, are significant, and are understood and accepted in the program. Proactively model inclusivity!

How to Apologize for Misgendering

- Misgendering refers to the use of the wrong name, pronouns, or form of address for a person's gender. If you misgender someone by accident, apologize swiftly without making an excessive show out of the mistake or your guilt, which can create even more discomfort for the person who has been misgendered. Show that you care by doing better moving forward. If you see another person purposefully misgendering someone, intervene and remind the perpetrator to use correct the pronouns. Check in with the victim and follow your program's response to bullying and harassment.

Understand Using Multiple Pronouns

- Some people may use more than one set of pronouns, such as she/they, they/he, or she/him/they. Since they use more than one set of pronouns, use the pronouns they introduced themselves with interchangeably. For example, if a person uses he/they pronouns you should use both to refer to them such as "They made this art project- he did a great job!" Some people, if they use multiple pronouns, list their pronouns with the pronoun they would like used more often listed first. If someone introduces themselves as they/she, they may prefer you to use they more often than she. When you meet someone who uses multiple pronoun sets, you may kindly ask about their preferences for when and how to use each of their pronouns.

Reiterate to youth that you cannot tell a person's gender by looking at them

- When meeting someone for the first time, ask about their pronouns and then respect their pronouns. Even if the person appears cisgender, modeling best practices for your youth will encourage them to also utilize best practices.

Understanding Neopronouns

- The Human Rights Campaign states that neopronouns are pronouns and "include those pronouns besides the ones most commonly used in a particular language. As one's pronouns are ultimately a reflection of their personal identity, the number and types of (neo)pronouns a person may use is limitless." The most commonly used neopronoun sets include xe/xir/xirs, ze/zir/zirs, and fae/faer/faers. People who use neopronouns may also prefer gender-neutral honorifics such as Mx. instead of Ms. or Mr. and Zir instead of Sir or Ma'am.

Include Your Pronouns

- Putting your pronouns in your email signature, using them as part of your introduction, zoom name, etc. normalizes and de-stigmatizes individuals who may use pronouns that do not appear to match their gender presentation. It also reduces the assumption that pronouns are only used by Transgender individuals, which can help prevent students who pass from unintentionally outing themselves by introducing themselves with their pronouns. For example, an in-person introduction may sound like "Hi! My name is Mx. Evanson and I use they/them pronouns. What's your name and pronouns?" Your Zoom name for online meetings may read as your name (your pronouns). For example, Matt Tobin (he/him). You can also add your pronouns on name tags or in your email signature!

SAFETY, HEALTH, AND NUTRITION

ANTI-BULLYING

Systems are in place to protect youth from harm. Staff provides appropriate supervision for youth according to youth ages, abilities, needs, and the level of risk involved in activities. (Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework)

STATISTICS ON BULLYING

The Bullying and Suicide Risk Among LGBTQ Youth report utilized data from the Trevor Project's 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Mental Health in order to identify rates of bullying in middle and high schools. The following data is pulled from this report.

- 52% of LGBTQ youth enrolled in middle or high school reported being bullied either in person or electronically in the past year
- 33% of LGBTQ youth enrolled in middle or high school reported being bullied in-person
- 42% of LGBTQ youth were bullied electronically (e.g., online or via text message)
- 65% of LGBTQ middle school students and 49% of LGBTQ high school-aged students reported being bullied
- 61% of transgender and nonbinary students reported being bullied
- LGBTQ students who were bullied were three times more likely to attempt suicide than LGBTQ students who reported to have not been bullied
- LGBTQ students who reported their school to be LGBTQ-affirming had 30% lower odds of being bullied in the past year

ANTI-BULLYING

The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework requires that systems are in place to protect youth from harm, which should include active anti-bullying and anti-discrimination practices. Ensuring that your program is LGBTQIA+ affirming already reduces the rate of bullying, and establishing active practices which combat bullying will continue to promote the safety of LGBTQIA+ youth. Consider how your program or partnered school district's policies for bullying could be adapted to be more inclusive and have specific processes for addressing discrimination on the basis of sexuality or gender.

33%
OF LGB IDENTIFYING
YOUTH REPORTED HAVING
BEEN BULLIED
ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

ADMINISTRATION

DATA COLLECTION

The program should have sound administrative practices supported by well-defined and documented policies and procedures that meet the needs of staff and youth. (Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework)

WHY COLLECT SOGIE DATA

Collecting SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression) data from youth on the first day of your program has two main benefits, including being able to accurately report collected data and demonstrating to your youth that you are explicitly supportive of the LGBTQIA+ community and will respect all students. Developing a private survey for students to submit creates a space in which students can individually decide to share their pronouns and gender identity with you. Specifically, create space for students to share which pronouns you may use privately, in class, and with guardians.

The gender of your students should not impact the services you provide. Using a person's correct pronouns shows basic respect for the individual. Being referred to with the correct pronouns and, for a student, seeing that OST is an actively inclusive space is often the difference between just being at an OST program and instead feeling as though they belong, are significant, and are understood and accepted in the program. Furthermore, many government agencies, especially in grant proposals, will require data on your youth, including demographic breakdowns. As opposed to having to report only a youth's sex-assigned-at birth, you will be able to give an accurate report which honestly reflects the true demographic breakdown of your program.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Creating an online or physical getting-to-know-you questionnaire allows students to privately share their pronouns with you. This questionnaire also ensures that you will not misgender or assume any youth's gender

1. Full name as it appears on my roster? _____
2. Name you would like me to call you in class? _____
3. What are your pronouns? he/him she/her they/them ze/zir other:
 - a. Is it ok to use these pronouns publicly in class? Yes No
 - b. Is it ok to use these in front of other faculty? Yes No
 - c. Is it ok to use these in front of your caregivers? Yes No
 - d. Would you like to discuss this further privately with me? Yes No
4. What is something you would like me to know so that I can help you succeed in this program?
5. What's a fun fact about yourself!

Adapted from Professor Jessica Appleby. A downloadable version of her questionnaire is available at:

<https://jessicajappleby.com/2020/05/05/setting-the-tone-for-a-gender-inclusive-classroom-the-introductory-questionnaire/>

ADMINISTRATION

DATA COLLECTION

COMMON OBJECTIONS

The initial proposal to collect SOGIE data from youth can be met with resistance from other organizations or parents. The most common objections include:

- Discomfort with asking questions that seem sensitive, private, and irrelevant
- Lack of knowledge or fluency with basic SOGIE terminology and concepts
- Concern that children and teens are too young to know their SOGIE
- Objection to increased workload and additional mandates
- Concern about the risk of inadvertent or unauthorized disclosure

The following section describes possible responses to how the Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework can be utilized to combat common objections and mitigate these issues.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS

Concern: Discomfort with asking questions that seem sensitive, private, and irrelevant

- Response: Collecting SOGIE allows administrators and facilitators to accurately report collected data and demonstrate to youth that you are explicitly supportive of the LGBTQIA+ community and will respect all students.

Concern: Lack of knowledge or fluency with basic SOGIE terminology and concepts

- Response: By attending culturally responsive professional development trainings, referring to your Glossary of Terms, and ensuring yourself and other staff are committed to personally continuing to be up to date with terminology and concepts relating to the LGBTQIA+ community, you can remain knowledgeable and fluent with the language used by the community.

Concern: Children and teens are too young to know their SOGIE

- Response: While there is limited data available on this topic, early findings from a longitudinal study from the TransYouth Project indicate that children by the age of five understand gender, and transgender children have as strong of ties to their gender as cisgender children.

Concern: Objection to increased workload and additional mandates

- Response: The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework already requires that authorized program staff maintain keep files for all youth in the program and that these files contain all essential information. Since respecting youth's gender identity and developing an LGBTQIA+ affirming space in OST is essential to reducing harm to youth, this information is, therefore, essential to include in files that should already be established. While this may result in some increased workload, the increase is minimal. Additionally, these files are already subject to mandates regarding privacy and no additional mandates should be necessary.

Concern: Potential for inadvertent or unauthorized disclosure of information

- Response: The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework requires that all files of youth are maintained and disposed of in a manner that protects privacy and confidentiality and that access to confidential files meets legal requirements in accordance with federal and state regulations, which would mitigate the potential for inadvertent or unauthorized disclosure of information.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & QUALIFICATIONS

The program should recruit and retain high-quality staff and volunteers who are focused on creating a positive learning environment, and provide ongoing professional development based on assessed staff needs. (Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework)

ORIENTATION

The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework requires that all staff are given an orientation to the job before working with youth. The quality indicators of this Core Area include ensuring that written program policies and procedures, including emergency procedures and confidentiality policies, are reviewed with staff and that new staff is given a comprehensive orientation to the program philosophy, routines, and practices. In regards to working towards LGBTQIA+ inclusivity, these quality indicators should ensure that orientation for new staff includes information on SOGIE data collection and policies regarding privacy and confidentiality of data collected. New staff orientation should also explicitly include the enduring understanding that all youth deserve access to safe spaces and that any youth's gender identity or sexuality should not impact the services provided. It should be shared that the program works to be an LGBTQIA+ affirming space for all and specific anti-bullying practices and procedures should be reviewed.

ONGOING TRAINING

The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework requires that all training needs of the staff are assessed, and training is relevant to assigned responsibilities as provided, and the quality indicators include that all administrators and staff receive cultural competency training and staff receive training appropriate to their positions and responsibilities regarding working with families and relating to youth in ways that promote positive development. This ongoing training may be provided through internal staff trainings, attending professional development symposiums, hiring experts to host staff trainings, and consistently providing staff with updated resources. In order to provide holistic cultural competency trainings and ensure staff are able to adequately promote positive development for all youth, trainings must account for the experiences and needs of LGBTQIA+ youth, people of color, low-income families, youth with physical limitations, etc. Programs should work to be inclusive of all identities and be able to provide adequate services to all youth.



FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Meaningful family and community engagement are based on the premise that families, program staff, and community members share responsibility for the academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of youth. Family and community engagement occurs when there is an ongoing, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership. Family and community partnerships are fostered through a deliberate process that is embraced throughout the program and beyond. (Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework)

UNSUPPORTIVE FAMILIES

Approximately 34% of LGBTQIA+ youth find their home to be an LGBTQIA+-affirming space, according to data from the Trevor Project's 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Mental Health. Therefore, a majority of LGBTQIA+ youth do not experience direct support from within their home. Below are a few best practices for when youth's guardians may be unsupportive of their gender identity or sexuality.

1. Ask the student what their home situation is
2. Attempt to help the parents understand and accept their child
3. Attempt to demystify inaccurate or incomplete information the parent might have about their child's gender identity or sexuality
 - a. Have resources and facts on hand to support points relating to combatting misinformation and the need for acceptance and support within school, OST, and the home

DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THE HOME REGARDING GENDER

It is also possible that one member of a family or one guardian may be affirming of the youth's gender identity or sexuality and another is not. An internal conflict within the home poses different challenges and a substantial impact on the youth. If a student addresses this issue with you, action should be taken.

1. Facilitators or administrators may want to meet with the conflicting parties and explain the effect of this conflict on the youth.
2. Ensure that the youth understands that your program is an LGBTQIA+ affirming space with support and resources available.
3. If the school has observed a significant change in the student's performance attitude or behavior based on having transitioned – or having been prevented from doing so – this is important information that the school can provide to the parents.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAMMING, & ACTIVITIES



The program staff should act in partnership with youth to create a high-quality learning environment and implements age-appropriate curricula and program activities that adhere to the typical benchmarks of growth and development and meets the multiple developmental needs of children and youth. (Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework)

BEST PRACTICES

Research-based best practices for children and adolescent trans students include relational approaches, inclusive messaging, individualized attention, interrupting bullying, instructional approaches, inclusive curricula, and lesson planning and program norms. We have discussed many of these practices already in other sections. Below are additional resources to develop inclusive curricula, lesson plans, and developing new OST programming

Elementary School

- Read *Red: A Crayon's Story* by Michael Hall to teach about learning to be true to one's self no matter what others may say.
- Use GLSEN's lesson Plan "That's Just For..." to learn about gender roles and encourage everyone to accept that anyone can dress or do what they like, even if it is traditionally feminine or masculine.
 - <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Ready%20Set%20Respect.pdf>
- Use GLSEN's lesson plan "Pronouns: Little Words That Make A Big Difference" to teach about pronouns including the singular "they".
 - <https://www.glsen.org/activity/pronouns-little-words-make-big-difference>

Middle and High School

- Use these lesson plans to discuss topics regarding LGBTQIA+ history, including "The Exclusion of LGBT People from Societal Institutions: In-Group, Out-Group".
 - <https://www.lgbtqhistory.org/course/middle-school-lesson-plans-general-lgbtq/>
- For resources, including books and media, with themes relating to the LGBTQIA+ community see The LGBTQ Library
 - <https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/TT-Best-Practices-for-Serving-LGBTQ-Students-Guide-Appendix.pdf>

Developing a GSA Program

For resources on developing a GSA program visit GLSEN, [GSA Resources](#), which includes resources to create a new GSA, find members, developing inclusivity, and more. The find ideas of activities to engage in within your GSA or activities to include in other Out-of-School Time Programs to develop further inclusivity, see the GSA Network's [Fun Things to Do with Your GSA](#).

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAMMING, & ACTIVITIES

ROOTS OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

Gender stereotypes are rooted within the Western concept of the gender binary. The gender binary enforces heteronormative ideals, which not only stigmatize and invalidate the existence of queer people but also harm cisgender people. The gender binary reinforces the idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two. This means that all other gender identities are invalidated. This gender binary inherently excludes intersex, two-spirit, nonbinary, trans, and many other identities. Excluding gender identities and sexualities or conflating sex and gender leads to the inherent stigmatization and discrimination of LGBTQIA+ people.

The gender binary also assumes that all people should adhere to "traditional" gender roles and therefore reinforces heteronormativity. For example, it assumes that people who were assigned females at birth identify as women, will present feminine traits, and be sexually and romantically attracted to only men. Since the gender binary forces people to adhere to traditional gender roles, the gender binary requires that women fulfill their role within the home as caregivers, and men would be the primary provider. Many of the issues people cite within modern society in regard to gender discrimination are reinforced by heteronormativity perpetuated by the gender binary. For example, men's mental health has been often ignored, as men are expected to consistently perform masculinity and strength to the point where they feel unable to ask for support or show emotions that have been coded as feminine. Additionally, since women were delegated to be mothers, they are still expected to be the primary caregivers within their families, even if they work full-time jobs. Women, especially women of color, also still experience the pay gap and other forms of workplace discrimination. These issues are built upon the forced adherence to the ideas perpetuated by the gender binary.

GENDER ROLES WITHIN OST

Gender stereotypes perpetuated by the gender binary are also reflected within the OST space, and combating these stereotypes requires active effort. Census data from 2021 shows that within the workforce, women are still underrepresented within STEM careers. For example, only 9% of all mechanical engineers are women. Encouraging girls to pursue STEM begins in their youth and afterschool programs can specifically design programs that utilize STEM learning while also relating to girls' interests. Afterschool programming should also reflect the interests and passions of LGBTQIA+ students and encourage them to also involve themselves in fields in which they may have been historically underrepresented in. Consider how you can structure your programs to align with students' interests and make all students feel welcome.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

SPORTS TEAMS

Quality afterschool programs create structures for formal and ongoing communication, collaboration, and information sharing with school staff to strengthen continuity around student learning. A program should have its staff work closely with school staff to ensure academic components and activities are aligned with and complement school standards, curricula, and the continuous school improvement planning process. (Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework)

TRANSGENDER YOUTH

"Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools" discusses many policies and best practices for schools and afterschool programs in regard to supporting transgender students. This resource states that transgender youth should be able to participate in activities, sports teams, and any gender-specific courses which adhere to their gender identity. OST programs should support their transgender and gender non-conforming youth in all aspects and collaborate with schools in order to ensure that transgender and gender non-conforming youth are able to participate on competitive sports teams which match their gender identity. Schools in Transition states that "concerns regarding competitive advantage are unfounded and often grounded in sex stereotypes about the differences and abilities of males versus females". Gender stereotypes and the gender binary claim there are inherent biological differences between male and female youth, and therefore transgender youth may be at a disadvantage or advantage within their sport. However, many sports adjust for varying skill levels, as well as weight or size class. Additionally, all sports have specific gear and policies in place to protect all athletes, and therefore remove any significant safety concerns. The Illinois High School Association's procedure for schools to address the participation of transgender students in state finals series in athletics can be found in their handbook (see *References and Resources*).

"CONCERNS REGARDING
COMPETITIVE
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ABILITIES OF MALES
VERSUS FEMALES."
-SCHOOLS IN
TRANSITIONS



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

agender: a person with no or very little connection to the traditional system of gender, no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, someone who sees themselves as existing without gender. May also refer to themselves as gender neutral.

ally: a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Active allies take action and steps to help and support the LGBTQIA+ community.

androgyny: a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity.

aromantic: someone who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others and/or has a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behavior. Aromanticism exists on a spectrum from people who experience no romantic attraction or have any desire for romantic activities, to those who experience low levels, or romantic attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see *demirromantic*). Sometimes abbreviated to “aro” (pronounced like “arrow”).

asexual: refers to a complete or partial lack of sexual attraction or lack of interest in sexual activity with others. Asexuality exists on a spectrum, and asexual people may experience no, little, or conditional sexual attraction. Often abbreviated to “ace” for short.

bicurious: a curiosity toward experiencing attraction to people of the same gender/sex.

bigender: a person who fluctuates between traditionally “woman” and “man” gender-based behavior and identities, identifying with both genders (or sometimes identifying with either man or woman, as well as a third, different gender).

binder: an undergarment used to alter or reduce the appearance of one’s breasts (worn similarly to how one wears a sports bra).

binding: the (sometimes daily) process of wearing a binder. Binding is often used to change the way others perceive one’s anatomical sex characteristics, normally as a form of gender expression.

biological sex: a term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male, or intersex at birth. Often referred to as simply “sex,” “physical sex,” or “sex assigned at birth”. “*Sex assigned at birth*” is the preferred terminology.

biphobia: negative attitudes (such as but not limited to fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, or erasure) that one may have or express toward bisexual individuals due to their sexual orientation. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the LGBTQIA+ community as well as straight society.

bisexual: a person who experiences attraction to some people of their gender and another gender. Bisexual attraction does not have to be equally split or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders to an individual may be attracted to. Some people may use this term interchangeably with “pansexual” however other people do not find these terms to be interchangeable. Therefore, it is important to not assume which term someone identifies with and to use the term which the individual uses to describe themselves.

cisgender: a gender description for when someone’s sex assigned at birth and gender identity correspond with the heteronormative standard. For example, someone who was born with male sex traits identifies as a man. The word cisgender can also be shortened to “cis.”

closeted: an individual who has not disclosed to themselves or others their (queer) sexuality or gender identity. This may be by choice and/or for other reasons such as fear for one's safety, peer or family rejection, disapproval, and/or loss of housing, job, etc. Also known as being "in the closet." When someone "comes out" of the closet, this refers to the act of telling others of their gender identity or sexuality. (See *coming out*).

coming out: the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one's own sexuality or gender identity (to "come out" to oneself and the process by which one shares one's sexuality or gender identity with others).

demiromantic: someone with little or no capacity to experience romantic attraction until a strong emotional connection is formed with someone.

demisexual: someone with little or no capacity to experience sexual attraction until a strong romantic connection is formed with someone, often within a romantic relationship.

drag king: someone who performs (hyper-) masculinity theatrically.

drag queen: someone who performs (hyper-) femininity theatrically.

dyke: referring to a masculine presenting lesbian. Some lesbians and queer female-identified people have reclaimed this term as a positive term to self-identify. It was originally used as a derogatory term, and still often is. Therefore, it is best practice for those who are not queer female-identified people to avoid using this term.

feminine-presenting: masculine-presenting: a way to describe someone who expresses gender in a more feminine or masculine way, without inherently connecting this presentation to their gender identity.

femme: someone who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it be physically, mentally, or

emotionally. Often used to describe someone who presents as feminine specifically within a lesbian relationship.

fluid: generally with another term attached, like gender-fluid or fluid-sexuality, fluid or fluidity describes an identity that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available.

FtM / F2M; MtF / M2F: abbreviations referring to a female-to-male transgender person or male-to-female transgender person.

gay: experiencing attraction to members of the same gender. Most often used to describe men who are attracted to other men, but can also be an umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who is not straight.

gender: the repeated performance of socially constructed norms, behaviors, etc. which have been attributed to masculine or feminine roles. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Gender may be related to biological sex, however gender refers to an individual's internal, individual identity and does not necessarily correspond with their sex-assigned-at-birth.

gender binary: the western idea that there are only two genders (male and female) and that every person is one of those two.

gender confirmation surgery: may also be known as gender affirmation surgery, these are medically performed surgeries performed with the goal to alter a person's physical appearance and functional abilities in order to better conform to the gender identity the person aligns themselves with. Some refer to different surgical procedures as "top" surgery and "bottom" surgery to discuss what type of surgery they are having without having to be more explicit.

gender expression: the external display of one's gender, such as through clothing, demeanor, social behavior, etc, generally understood on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as "gender presentation."

gender fluid: a gender identity that can be understood as a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more masculine some days, and more feminine other days. Gender fluid individuals may experience varying levels of this gender combination at any point and therefore may utilize different pronouns at different times.

gender identity: the internal perception of one's own gender. Often conflated with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

gender non-conforming: a gender expression descriptor that indicates a non-traditional gender presentation or a gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary.

genderqueer: a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman. This may also be used as an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).

heteronormativity: the assumption, in individuals and/or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities, and that all people are cisgender. Heteronormativity leads to the invisibility and stigmatization of other sexualities. Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight.

heterosexual/straight: experiencing attraction solely to members of a different gender.

homophobia: an umbrella term for the anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort that one may have toward LGBTQIA+ people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQIA+. Homophobic is a word

used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ people.

homosexual: a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. Some people consider this term to be stigmatizing as it was previously used as a medical term to denote same-sex attraction as a mental illness, and thus terms such as gay and lesbian rose in popularity.

intersex: term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female.

lesbian: women who are attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

LGBTQIA+: a shorthand abbreviation of the queer community. Stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Ace/Aro, and other queer identities.

misgendering: to use the wrong name, pronouns, or form of address for a person's gender. Whether misgendering happens as an innocent mistake or a malicious attempt to invalidate a person, it is deeply hurtful and can even put a person's safety at risk if they are outed as transgender in an environment that is not tolerant. Purposefully misgendering is not okay, and you can be a good ally by standing up for others if you witness someone being harassed for their gender. If you misgender someone by accident, apologize swiftly without making an excessive show out of the mistake or your guilt, which can create even more discomfort for the person who has been misgendered. Show that you care by doing better moving forward.

microaggression: everyday comments and questions that can be hurtful or stigmatizing to marginalized people and groups. Microaggressions are subtle, and the person committing the microaggression may have no idea that their comments are harmful.

Mx.: an honorific (e.g. Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.) that is gender neutral. It is often the option of choice for folks who do not identify within the gender binary.

nonbinary: people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the binary gender categories of man and woman. Many nonbinary people also call themselves transgender and consider themselves part of the transgender community, as they have transitioned from their sex-assigned at birth to nonbinary. Others do not consider themselves to be trans. Nonbinary may also be written as non-binary and may sometimes be shortened to enby. Many nonbinary people may use they/them pronouns, neopronouns, or multiple sets of pronouns. (See *transgender*).

outing: the involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status. For example, referring to a closeted student's same-sex partner to their parents, who were unaware that their child was queer. Outing someone is not only a breach of their privacy but may also put the individual's safety at risk.

pansexual: a person who experiences sexual, romantic, and physical attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to "pan."

passing: trans people being accepted as, or able to "pass for," a member of their self-identified gender identity (regardless of sex assigned at birth) without being identified as trans. May also be used to refer to a queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight, however, it is most commonly used in reference to the transgender community.

polyamory (polyamorous): refers to the practice of, desire for, or orientation toward having ethical, honest, and consensual non-monogamous relationships (i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners). Often shortened to "poly."

queer: an umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight and/or cisgender. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, and how it is still used as a slur in many communities, it is not used by all LGBTQIA+ people as a personal label. The term "queer" can often be used interchangeably with LGBTQIA+ (e.g., "queer people" instead of "LGBTQIA+ people").

questioning: an individual who is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

QPOC / QTPOC: an abbreviation that stands for queer people of color and queer and/or trans people of color.

romantic attraction: a capacity that evokes the want to engage in romantic intimate behavior (e.g., dating, relationships, marriage), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction.

same gender loving (SGL): a term sometimes used by some members of the African-American or Black community to express a non-straight sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.

sex assigned at birth (SAAB): a phrase used to intentionally recognize a person's assigned sex (not gender identity). Sometimes specifically used as "assigned male at birth" (AMAB) or "assigned female at birth" (AFAB).

sexual attraction: a capacity that evokes the want to engage in physically intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with romantic attraction.

sexual orientation: the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

sexual preference: the types of sexual intercourse, stimulation, and gratification one likes to receive and participate in. Generally, when this term is used, it is mistakenly interchanged with “sexual orientation,” creating an illusion that one has a choice (or “preference”) to whom they are attracted to.

third gender: a person who does not identify with either man or woman, but identifies with another gender. This gender category is most commonly used by societies that recognize three or more genders. It is also a conceptual term used as a way to move beyond the gender binary.

top surgery: surgery for the construction of a male-type chest or breast augmentation for a female-type chest. Top surgery is a common form of gender confirmation surgery.

transgender: a gender description for someone who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from living as one gender to another. This is also an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity does not correspond in the expected (heteronormative, cisgender) way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man).

transgender man: a man who was assigned female at birth. He may shorten it to trans man.

transgender woman: a woman who was assigned male at birth. She may shorten it to trans woman.

transition / transitioning: referring to the process of a transgender person changing aspects of themselves (e.g., their appearance, name, pronouns, or making physical changes to their body) to align with their gender identity, rather than their sex assigned at birth. Transitioning may include social transition, legal transition, and/or medical transition. Social transition refers to telling others of one's gender identity, using a different name, using different pronouns, dressing differently, starting or stopping wearing make-up and jewelry, etc Legal transition

refers to legally changing your name and/or sex marker on documents like a driver's license, passport, Social Security record, bank accounts, etc. Medical transition refers to any hormone replacement therapy and/or one or more surgical procedures. Some transgender people may not feel they need to take any transition steps at all, while other trans people may wish to transition but cannot due to cost, underlying medical conditions, and/or fear of consequences from transphobic families, employers, etc. Avoid the phrase "sex change."

transphobia: the discrimination against, or hatred of trans people, the trans community. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society.

two-spirit: created by First Nations/Native American/Indigenous peoples, which describes a sexual orientation and/or gender/sex that exists outside of colonial constructions of the gender binary (neither man nor woman, but a distinct, alternative gender status exclusive to their ethnicity). This term should not be appropriated by or used to describe people who are not First Nations/Native American/Indigenous.

ze/zir: alternate, neopronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some trans/nonbinary people. Some people do not embrace he/she or “they/their” as their pronouns and therefore may utilize these pronouns as they better reflect the individual's personal identity.

***Pride Flags:** pride flags are representative symbols of the LGBTQIA+ community. Each flag has specific meaning and may represent a specific aspect of the community.

The following pages include example of pride flags and what they represent. The flags included within this document are those most frequently used within the LGBTQIA+ community.

agender flag:



bisexual flag:



aromantic flag:



demiromantic flag:



asexual flag:



demisexual flag:



bigender flag:



gay men's flag:



gender fluid flag:



nonbinary flag:



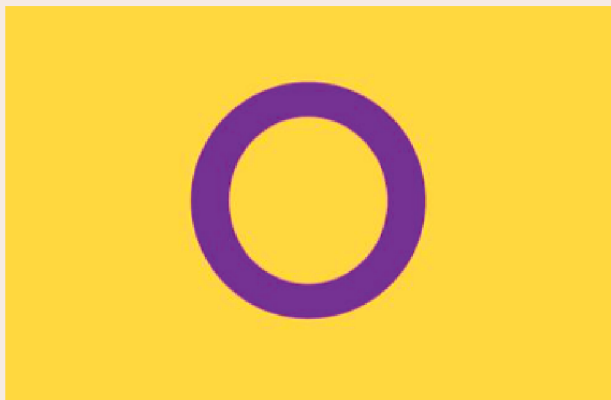
genderqueer flag:



pansexual flag:



intersex flag:



polyamorous flag:



lesbian flag:



pride (traditional) flag:



pride (progress) flag:



pride (intersex-inclusive) flag:



transgender flag:



two-spirit flag:



A Brief Note on Pride Flags:

The flags included within this document are the most frequently used within the LGBTQIA+ community. There are more flags and variations on flags, however these are the primary and most commonly used flags. Additionally, new flags are often created as vocabulary to define specific gender and sexual identities expands.

Some flags also are constantly in a state of progress and are dynamic, such as the pride flag which has gone through multiple variations and remains dynamic and has the potential to continue evolving to be more inclusive and better represent the entire community.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- **Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards Framework**
 - <https://actnowillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ACT-Now-Quality-Standards-May-2016.pdf>
- **Stop Bullying "LGBTQI+ Youth"**
 - <https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/lgbtq>
- **Society of Women Engineers**
 - <https://swe.org/research/2023/employment/#:~:text=The%20percentage%20of%20female%20engineers,informatio n%20research%20scientists%20are%20women.>
- **Jessica Appleby's Introductory Questionnaire**
 - <https://jessicajappleby.com/2020/05/05/setting-the-tone-for-a-gender-inclusive-classroom-the-introductory-questionnaire/>
- **"Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools"**
 - https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Schools-In-Transition.pdf?_ga=2.180474479.937611498.1667247074-1526859987.1667247074
- **"Bullying and Suicide Risk among LGBTQ Youth"**
 - <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/bullying-and-suicide-risk-among-lgbtq-youth/>
- **TransYouth Project & Gender Development**
 - <https://hudl.princeton.edu/research>
- **Gender Inclusive Classrooms "5 Tips for Teaching about Pronouns"**
 - <https://www.genderinclassrooms.com/single-post/2018/02/18/5-tips-for-teaching-about-pronouns>
- **The University of North Carolina "Neopronouns Explained"**
 - <https://intercultural.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/Neopronouns-Explained-UNCG-Intercultural-Engagement.pdf>
- **Social Determinants of Health**
 - <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health>
- **Local Resources for LGBTQ Youth in Chicago**
 - <https://www.afterschoolmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Local-Resources-for-LGBTQ-youth.pdf>
- **Human Rights Watch "Shut Out: Restrictions on Bathroom and Locker Room Access for Transgender Youth in US Schools"**
 - https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/09/15/shut-out/restrictions-bathroom-and-locker-room-access-transgender-youth-us?gclid=Cj0KCQjwuLShBhC_ARIsAFod4fJy8Q!pbvWVR9HGEloHOsorI0210cfCxdACSZtywtNOIXhxi8311ykaAsQ5EALw_wcB
- **Equitable Restrooms Act**
 - <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=1521&ChapterID=35>
- **Illinois High School Association Administrative Procedures, Guidelines and Policies**
 - https://www.ihsa.org/documents/forms/current/IHSA_Policies.pdf
- **Teaching Tolerance "BEST PRACTICES FOR SERVING LGBTQ STUDENTS A Teaching Tolerance Guide"**
 - <https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/TT-LGBTQ-Best-Practices-Guide.pdf>
- **Additional Resources for Learning About Two-Spirit Identities**
 - <https://oacas.libguides.com/sogje/two-spirit>
 - <https://www.ihs.gov/lgbt/health/twospirit/>
 - <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/two-spirits/>

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WE THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF
LGBTQIA+ YOUTH

