

# A Queer Look:

How to Support (and Understand) our LGBTQIA+ Community

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## A Queer Look ~ Just the Basics

Workshop Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to define at least five LGBTQIA+ terms.
2. Participants will be able to describe awareness of the sexual orientation spectrum.
3. Participants will be able to identify three components of gender.
4. Participants will be able to identify at least two ways to support LGBTQIA+ students.
5. Participants will be able to describe an appropriate response to students' use of pronouns

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# About Me...

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# Lesbian

# She/Her/Hers

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## Let's start broad...LGBTQIA+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender,  
Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual

- ✓ Ever evolving acronym
- ✓ The + allows for the distinction to be made that there are many others (that we will explore) that people use to describe their experiences of their gender, sexuality and physiological sex characteristics.
- ✓ Everyone possesses both a gender identity and a sexual orientation.

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## Biological Sex

- At birth, we are assigned a sex, generally based on the appearance of external anatomy, but is a combination of attributes - chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.
- Often confused with gender
- **Sex Assigned at Birth:** This term is a more inclusive alternative to "sex" or "biological sex," as it recognizes that sex categories are socially constructed, rather than biologically mandated, and that one's sex assigned at birth does not automatically determine one's gender identity.




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## Intersex


- ✓ Term used for someone who, due to a variety of factors, has reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male sex. Some may identify with the sex assigned to them at birth, others may not.
- ✓ Replaces the offensive, antiquated term Hermaphrodite.
- ✓ Research suggests that anywhere from 1.7% - 4% of babies born each year are born with ambiguous genitalia. (nih.gov)

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## Sexual Orientation

- ✓ Our desire for emotional, romantic and/or sexual relationships with others based on gender expression, gender identity and/or sex.
- ✓ Defines who we are/are not attracted towards
- ✓ Sometimes, this is also broken down further - romantic orientation.
- ✓ There are said to be up to 9 - 15 sexual orientations



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## Terms for Sexual Orientations

- **Heterosexual/Straight** - Women who are attracted to men and men who are attracted to women. (Transgendered men could identify as straight)
- **Lesbian/Gay/Homosexual** - Someone who is attracted to those of their same gender. Gay can be an umbrella term or refer specifically to men attracted to men. Homosexual should be avoided because of the "clinical history" it has, many feel it refers to being emotionally disordered or psychologically disordered.
- **Bisexual/Bi** - Someone who is attracted to those of their same gender as well as those of a different gender. Sometimes can be used as an umbrella term to describe those attracted to more than one gender - closely related to Pansexual/omnisexual.
- **Pansexual/Omnisexual** - someone who is emotionally, romantically, sexually, affectionately, or relationally attracted to people regardless of their gender identity or sex assigned at birth.
- **Asexual/Ace** - someone who experiences little or no sexual attraction, or someone who experiences attraction but feels no need to act out that attraction sexually. Many still also identify with a more specific sexual orientation. May have sex with others for other reasons such as physical enjoyment.

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## Romantic Orientation and Other Terms

- **Aromantic** - someone who does not experience romantic attractions to others
- **Bioromantic** - a person who has romantic attraction to two or multiple genders.
- **Demisexual** - someone who may only experience sexual attraction after a strong emotional attachment is formed. May be seen as falling on the asexual spectrum.
- **Polyamorous** - the practice of having more than one romantic relationship during a period of time, or referring to someone open to having multiple partners, while not currently in multiple romantic relationships. May be shortened to "poly."
- **Sexual fluidity** - The concept that sexual orientation can vary across the lifespan and in different contexts. This does not mean that it can be changed through volition or therapy.
- **Same-Gender Loving (SGL)**: How some African Americans prefer to describe their sexual orientation, seeing "gay" and "lesbian" as primarily white terms. "Same-sex loving" is also in use.



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# What is Gender?

- ✓ A socially constructed system of classification that assigns qualities of masculinity and femininity to people.
- ✓ Can change over time and vary between cultures.
- ✓ Three components of Gender:
  - ✓ Biological Sex (our bodies)
  - ✓ Gender Identity
  - ✓ Gender Expression



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# Gender Identity

One's internal and deeply held sense of gender.

Unlike expression, this is not visible to others.

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## Gender Identity Terms

**Binary** - the belief that such things as gender identity have only two distinct, opposite, disconnected forms - male and female only exist.

**Non-binary** - An umbrella term describing anyone whose gender identity falls outside the binary of woman/man. Can also be used as an identity itself

**Cisgender** - someone whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth. In other words, does not identify as transgendered or non-binary

**Transgender** - Someone whose gender identity differs from the one they were assigned at birth.



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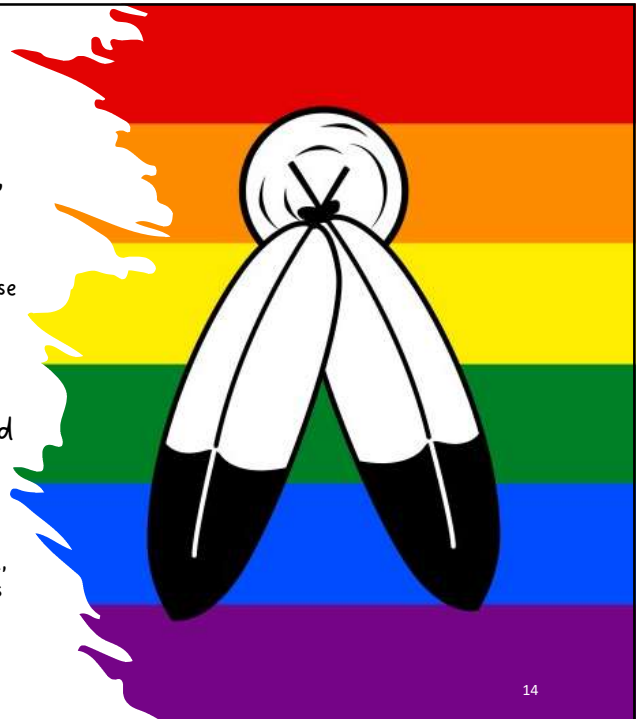
## Additional Gender Identity Terms

✓ **Transsexual** - someone who has undergone, or wishes to undergo Gender Affirmation Surgery.

\*\*note that this is an older term, many do not use this term, but there is some indication that it is returning to use.\*\*

✓ **Third Gender** - A term for those who belong to a gender category not recognized in the Western binary construct.

✓ For example: Native American **two-spirit people** (implies a masculine and a feminine spirit in one body), hijra in India, kathoys in Thailand, and travestis in Brazil. Recognizes that people's identities are specific to their culture.




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## Additional Transgender Terms

- ✓ **FTM:** Female-to-male transgender person, often identifying as a trans man. Someone assigned female at birth who identifies as male or on the male-aligned identity. Also referred to as "transmasc" or "transmasculine."
- ✓ **MTF:** Male-to-female transgender person, often identifying as a trans woman. Someone assigned male at birth who identifies as female or a female-aligned identity. Also referred to as "transfem" or "transfeminine."

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## Gender Non-Conforming (GNC)

A person who does not subscribe to gender expressions or roles expected of them by society.

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## GNC Terms



- ✓ **Agender** - Without gender. Often used as an identification for people who do not identify with or conform to any gender, or someone who has little to no personal connection with gender
- ✓ **Bigender** - someone who identifies with both male and female genders, or even a third gender.
- ✓ **Genderfluid** - A person whose gender expression and/or gender identity varies over time.
- ✓ **Genderflux** - A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression varies in intensity, but not necessarily across genders.
- ✓ **Genderqueer** - A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression falls outside of the masculine/feminine gender binary. Genderqueer is also considered part of the umbrella of non-binary identities.
- ✓ **Omnigender** - Identifying as all genders. The term is specifically used to refute the concept of only two genders.
- ✓ **Pangender** - Exhibiting characteristics of multiple genders; deliberately refuting the concept of only two genders.

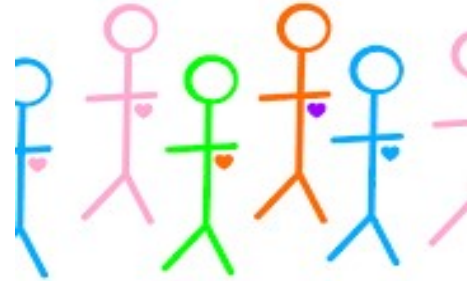
## Gender Expression



One's external manifestations of gender. This can be expressed through names, pronouns, clothing, haircuts, behavior, voice, body characteristics, etc.

## Gender Expression Terms

- ✓ **Androgynous:** A display that integrates a combination of masculine and feminine elements. For some, androgyny is about achieving a "gender neutral" expression, whereas others may wish to acknowledge their relationship to masculinity and femininity.
- ✓ **Femme:** A term referring to the broad, dynamic representations of femininity/feminine characteristics regardless of gender.
- ✓ **Masc:** A term referring to the broad, dynamic representations of masculinity/masculine characteristics regardless of gender.



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## Queer

Anyone who is not heterosexual  
and/or cisgender

Although some see this as an  
offensive word, many have  
reclaimed the word as  
empowerment

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## Questioning

The time in many peoples lives when they question or experiment with their gender expression, identity or sexual orientation

- ✓ Unique to each person
- ✓ Could happen multiple times in one's life
- ✓ Important to understand that people don't "just know" and the factors contributing to that



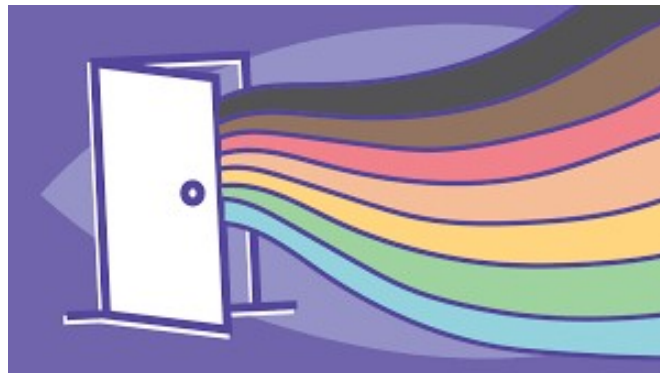
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## Coming Out



Process through which an individual accepts their sexual orientation and/or gender identity as part of their overall identity.

- ✓ Lifetime process, not singular event
- ✓ Sometimes telling those closest is the hardest
- ✓ Sometimes GNC youth will come out as gay first

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# LGBTQIA+ Students

\* Statistics according to GLSEN.org & HRC.org



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- ✓ More than half of LGBTQIA+ students feel unsafe at school
- ✓ Fewer than 25% of these students see positive representations of queer people in their classrooms
- ✓ Greater than 50% hear negative remarks about their sexuality or gender identity from school staff
- ✓ Only about 18% of LGBTQIA+ students feel they can be their authentic selves at school

Because of statistics like these, LGBTQIA+ students are more likely to be truant, see their grades suffer, use alcohol/drugs, self harm, consider suicide, become a victim of crime, and at higher risk of homelessness.

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## Supporting Our GNC Youth

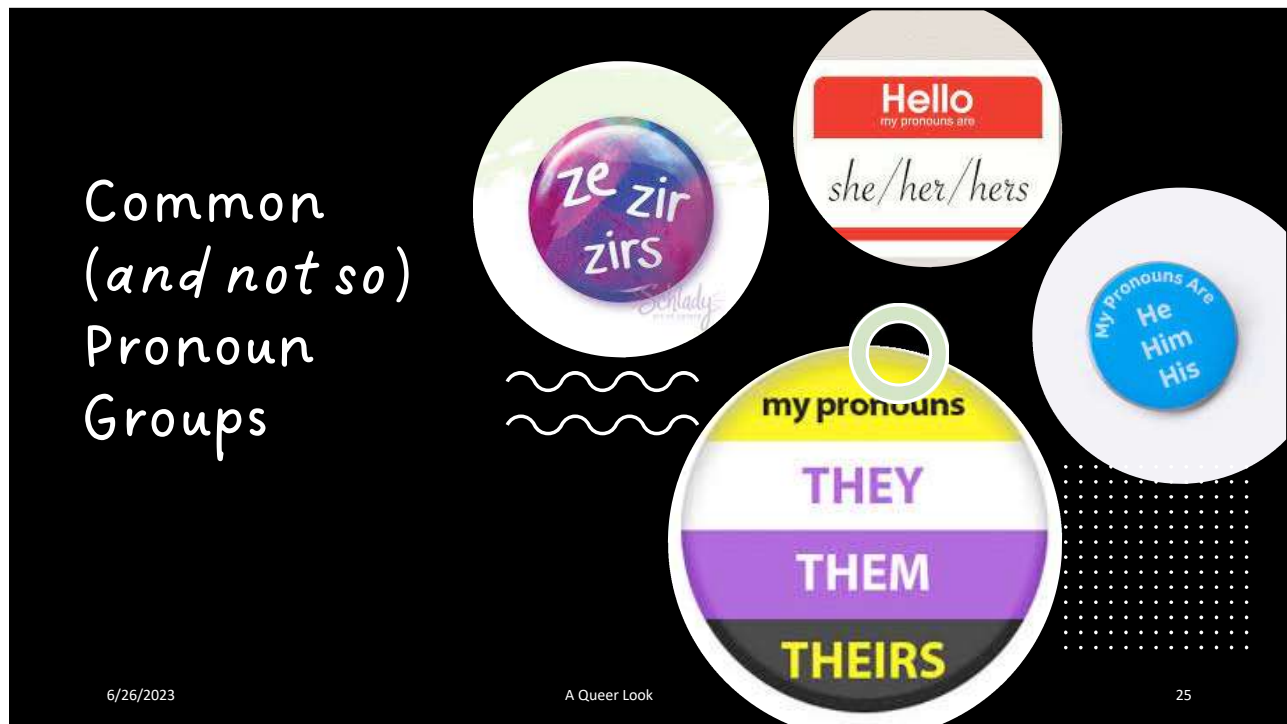
Using correct pronouns and the youth's chosen name is the single most effective way to support these youth - it is affirming their identity each and every time.

- ✓ Gender affirming behavior and language of parents and other adults (teachers, MH professionals, grandparents, etc) is directly correlated to improving mental health and well being in queer youth.
  - ✓ 7.6x more likely to attempt suicide (HRC, 2019)
- ✓ Dismissing as a phase is harmful - think of this as a journey.



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## How do I know WHICH pronoun to use?

- ✓ ASK. It's a sign of respect and affirmation of your openness
- ✓ Sometimes easiest way is to use it in your introduction
- ✓ Never assume
- ✓ Always can just use the person's chosen name
  - ✓ **Chosen Name:** A name selected by an individual that differs from the name they were given at birth. A chosen name often helps to affirm an individual's gender identity and/or gender expression
  - ✓ **Dead Name:** A term used for the former name of a transgender, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming person.
- ✓ If you use the wrong one, apologize, correct yourself, move on. (just as you would if you pronounced someone's name wrong)
- ✓ You already do this! Think about....

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## Additional Ways We Can Support Our Youth



- ✓ Kindness
- ✓ Patience
- ✓ Safe spaces
- ✓ Speaking up when we see ignorance
- ✓ Education/keep current

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