

Beyond Binary: Gender in Schools

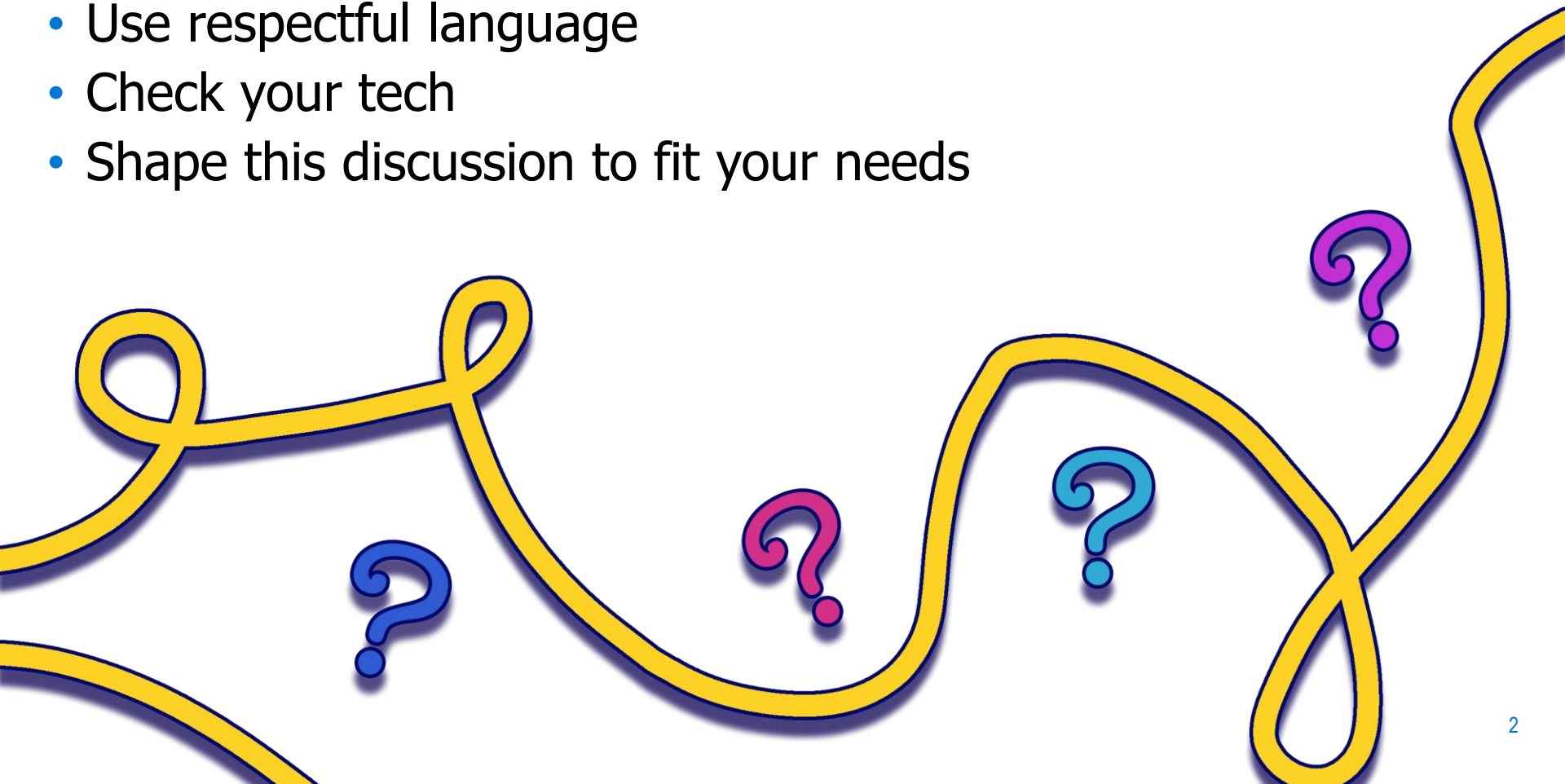
The Potocsnak Family Division
of Adolescent & Young Adult
Medicine

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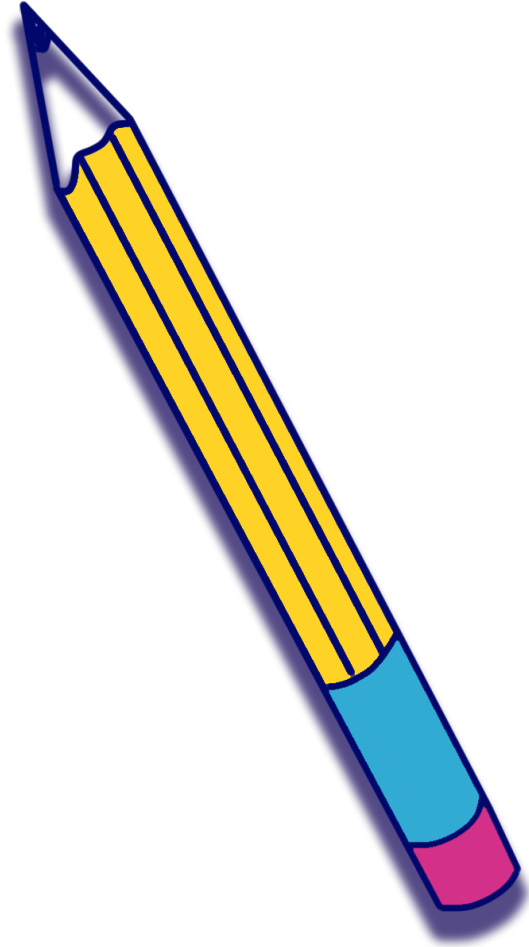
Guidelines

- No right or wrong questions
- Confidential
- Use respectful language
- Check your tech
- Shape this discussion to fit your needs



Objectives

- Provide an overview of key terms and concepts related to gender
- Outline characteristics of gender inclusive schools and tactics to personally implement inclusivity
- Discuss how to talk about gender diversity with students, parents, and the school community



- Why are staff from Lurie Children's Hospital facilitating this discussion?
- Why is our goal to be an affirming institution?



Gender & You

- What does it mean to be **female** or **male**?
- What is your gender? How do you know?
- How would you describe your gender without discussing how you look?
- Have there been times when limits or expectations have been placed on you based on your gender or perceived gender?
- How do these experiences impact your ability to do your best work?



Key Concepts



Key Concepts

Sex Assigned at Birth

Intersex

Gender Identity

- *Raise your hand if you have a gender identity*

Gender Expression

Key Concepts

Gender Expansive (Nonconforming/Creative)

- Long-standing occurrence – not a fleeting curiosity or interest
- Gender nonconformity is a normative variation of human diversity

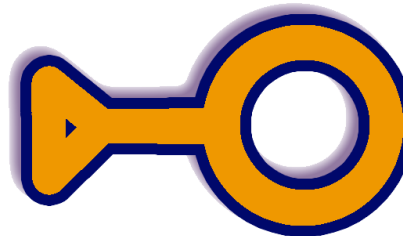


Key Concepts

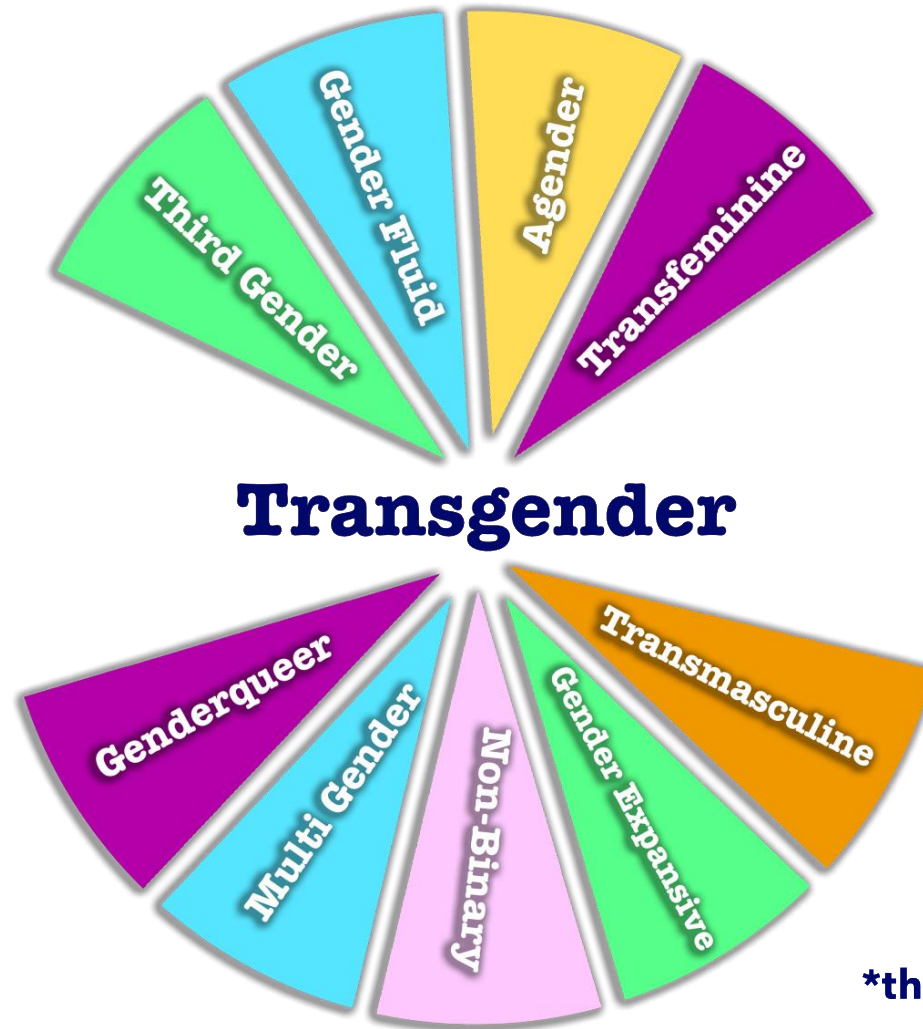
Cisgender (Cis)

Transgender (Trans)

Non-Binary Gender



Transgender Umbrella



***this is not exhaustive**

International Gender Diversity



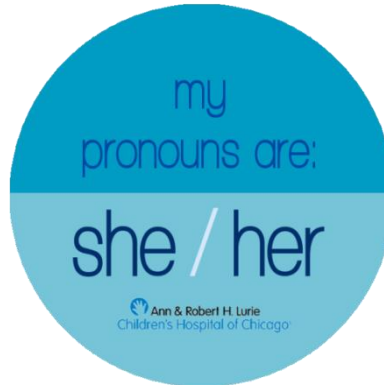
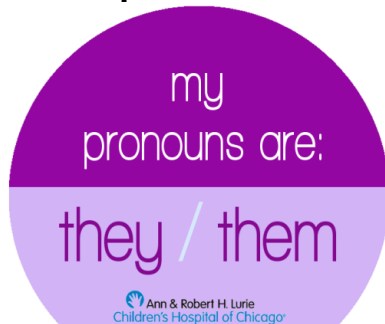
Source: PBS Independent Lens

***this is not exhaustive**

Key Concepts

Pronouns

- It's okay to ask people what pronouns they use
 - they/them/theirs
 - she/her/hers
 - he/him/his
 - other pronouns



Quick Activity!

Turn to your neighbor and discuss what you did over the weekend without using any gendered language.

Key Concepts

Misgender/Deadname

What if I make a mistake?

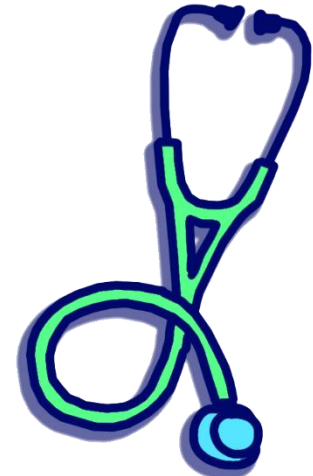
1. Apologize
2. Correct yourself
3. Move on
4. Practice!

Key Concepts

Transition

- Process by which an individual begins living in their affirmed gender
 - Social
 - Legal
 - Medical
 - May or may not include hormonal and/or surgical treatment

No one way to be trans; therefore, no one way to transition



Key Concepts

Sexual Orientation

Sexuality

(who you are
attracted to)

**Gender
Identity**

(who you are)

Transphobia/Cissexism

- Physical Violence
 - One in ten trans people reported being physically attacked within the past year due to being transgender
- Microaggressions
- Systemic Discrimination
 - One in six trans people report having lost a job due to their gender identity; one-quarter report having experienced housing discrimination
- Intersectionality
 - Risk factors are exacerbated when people carry multiple marginalized identities

Try it out!

This is Jai. Jai is non-binary.
Jai uses they/them pronouns.

Turn to your neighbor and describe
Jai and what Jai is doing using the
correct pronouns. Remember, if you
make a mistake:

1. Apologize
2. Correct yourself
3. Move on
4. Practice



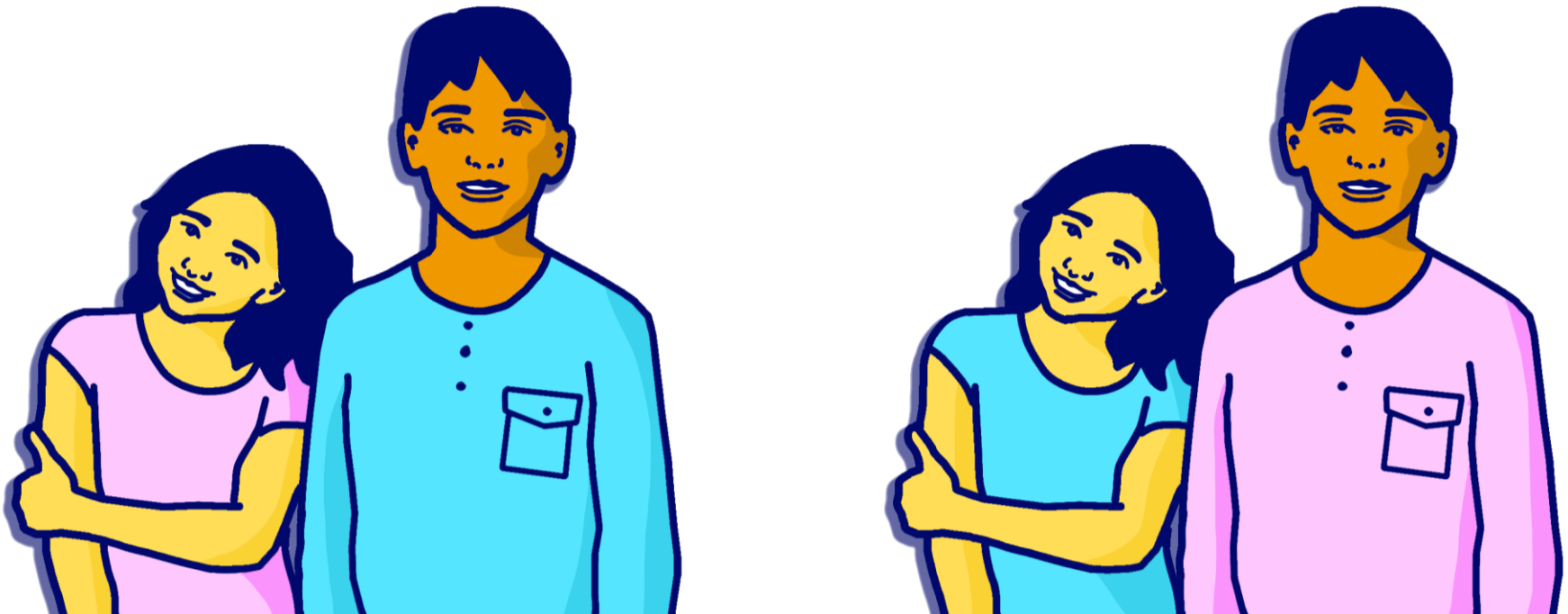
The Impact of Gender





“The generally accepted rule is pink for boys, and blue for the girls. The reason is that pink, being a more decided and stronger color, is more suitable for the boy, while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl.”

-1918 article Earnshaw's Infants' Department trade publication

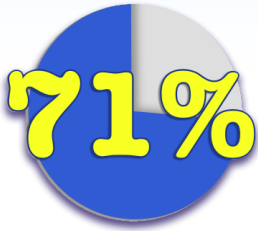


Gender Impacts Everyone

- 50% of elementary bullying is based on gender and/or sexual orientation slurs
- More than 50% report school as an unsafe environment for “not being as masculine as other guys or as feminine as other girls”
- In what ways are you seeing this in your school community?

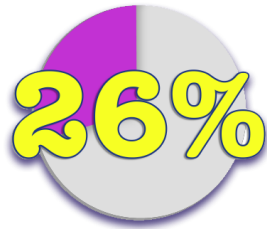
Supporting transgender and gender expansive students



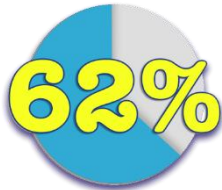


of school mental health professionals described their school's teachers as 'very' or 'somewhat' supportive of LGBTQ students.

But when LGBTQ students were asked....



reported "always feeling safe in the classroom."



reported experiencing LGBTQ-related discriminatory policies or practices at school



heard negative remarks about sexual orientation or gender expression from teachers or school staff

When LGBTQ-related harassment/assault did occur:



55%

of students did not
report the incident

60%

of students who did
report said staff
"did nothing" or
"told the student to
ignore it."

LGBTQ students in schools with higher levels of victimization:

- Were almost three times as likely to miss school (**63%** vs **21%** in the past month)
- Had lower average GPAs (**3.0** vs **3.3**)
- Were nearly twice as likely to report having “no plans to pursue post-secondary education” (**9.5%** vs **5.0%**)
- Also had measurable impacts on **self-esteem, levels of depression,** and **sense of school belonging**

Parental Impact

■ = transgender youth with family support

Having **one** supportive adult cuts the chance an LGBTQ+ youth will attempt suicide by **40%.**

(Trevor Project, 2019)



Professional Organizations with Affirming Transgender Policy Statements

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



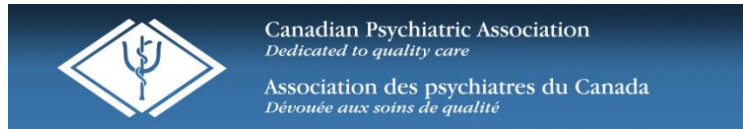
 AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



National Council of
Teachers of English



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
CHILD & ADOLESCENT
PSYCHIATRY
WWW.AACAP.ORG



Supporting Students Coming Out



If a Student Comes Out to You

- Ask what the student needs
 - Have you shared this with anyone else?
 - Do you want anyone else to know?



If a Student Comes Out to You

- Take the student's identity and expression seriously
- Respect the student's name/pronoun
- Do not disclose someone's identity without their consent.
 - Including to parents/caretakers and school staff
- Counselors are allowed up to 8, 90-minute sessions with students age 12+ without parental notification



If a Student Comes Out to Class

- Keep language simple and affirming
- Remind youth that it's OK to be curious, but it's not OK to ask overly personal questions
- Know how to respond if someone calls the student by the wrong name
- Remind parents it's not OK to ask about other people's children
- Don't be afraid of questions!



Institutional Inclusion



Institutional Inclusion

- Avoid gender segregation
- Restroom and locker room access
- Inclusive dress code
- Participation in activities/events (incl. IESA/IHSA athletics)
- School signage
- Avoid making assumptions about family structures
- Support your school's GSA (The Genders & Sexualities Alliance)





Institutional Inclusion

- Respect privacy and confidentiality
- Explicitly include gender identity in nondiscriminatory policies, diversity statements, and anti-bullying policies – and have explicit bathroom/locker room policies inclusive of all genders
- Inclusive forms
- Ensure that resources and support are easy for students and parents to locate
- Inclusive identification materials
- Regular staff trainings

Gender Support Plans

- Districts/schools should have model support plans available for transitioning students
- Support plans are optional, based on student's wishes
- Topics include: confidentiality, parent/guardian involvement, safety plan, plan for changing name and pronouns, etc.



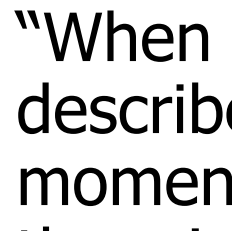
Responding to Objections

“I don’t think that it’s OK to be gay or trans and I don’t want my child to think that it’s an OK option for them.”

“Talking about gay and transgender people in school isn’t appropriate.”

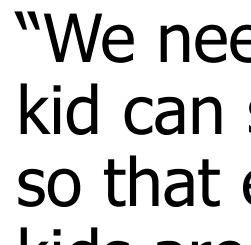
Curricular Inclusion





"When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in the mirror and saw nothing."

– *Adrienne Rich, poet*



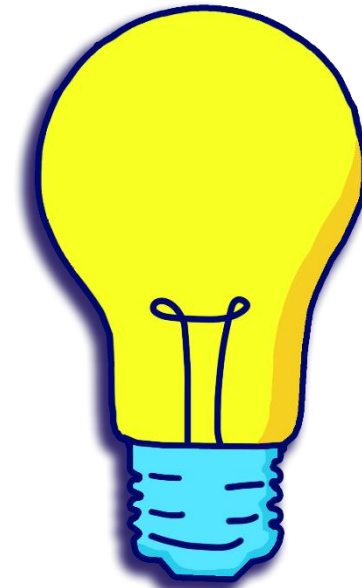
"We need diverse representation not only so every kid can see themselves as the hero of the story, but so that every kid can understand that *other* kinds of kids are *a/so* the heroes of the story."

– *Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg*



Ideas to Get Started

- Media (Books, Movies, Music, etc.)
- Historical figures & public figures (writers, artists, athletes)
-- recognizing their LGBTQ+ identities
- Incorporate nonbinary people and nontraditional families into scenarios, word problems, etc.
- Historical events
- Inclusive health curriculum



Scenarios



Scenarios

1. Carlos is a male student who uses he/him pronouns. He has long hair, often wears dresses, and is sometimes mistaken for a girl, though he is cisgender.

When Carlos goes to use the boy's restroom a custodial staff member stops him from entering and tells him he belongs in the girls' bathroom and should "stop playing around."

2. A parent of a cisgender student calls you to ask about their child's transgender classmate. This parent states, "I don't want my daughter using the restroom with a boy. I believe that this is inappropriate and unsafe."

Scenarios

3. Emma, a female student, wants to wear a suit to her upcoming school dance and bring her girlfriend, who attends another school. Some other students and parents hear of her plan and protest, saying it shouldn't be allowed.
4. A student is overheard calling another student a homophobic slur.
5. Students are going on an overnight trip. Jacinta, a transgender female student, would like to share a room with her peers.
6. "I was in a meeting and a guest kept addressing me and my coworker as ladies, but my coworker is nonbinary."

Reflection



1. Reflect on your experiences and feelings about gender.
2. What systems are in place for gender diverse youth at my school?
3. Is there LGBTQ curriculum inclusion at my school?
4. Do I communicate a non-binary understanding of gender to my students through the visuals on my classroom walls, the books on the shelves and the language I use?
5. How do I ensure the safety of gender expansive students?



Questions?

Thank you!

The Potocsnak Family Division of Adolescent and
Young Adult Medicine

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