



Creating LGBTQIA2S+ Affirming and Equitable Spaces



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Agenda

- Foundations
 - Break
- Systems of Inequality
 - Break
- Creating Affirming Spaces
- Building Towards Equity
- Wrap Up



About New Avenues

Supporting Youth Since 1997

New Avenues' programs and services have impacted more than 30,000 young people as they work to overcome barriers, pursue their goals, and realize their potential. From supporting basic needs like meals and counseling to providing opportunities for education, job training, employment, and housing, we meet youth where they are and help them get where they want to go.



New Avenues Programs

Wraparound services for youth experiencing housing instability



Transitional Housing

Many types of support, including org-owned transitional housing + vouchers for scattered site, and case management



PAVE Career Pathways & GED Support

Education and testing/credentialing support, and worksystems internships, B&J/INK



New Day

Support for survivors of sex trafficking and youth engaging in sex work



PDX Connect/New Meadows

Housing and case management for youth aging out of foster care



Alba Collaborative

Emergency housing and family mediation for runaway youth ages 9-17



Day Services

Three meals a day, showers/laundry, access to case management

LGBTQIA2S+ Programs at New Avenues for Youth

>50% of houseless youth in Multnomah County identify as LGBTQIA2S+



SMYRC

*Downtown Portland
Community Space*



The Living Room

*Clackamas County pop-up
community spaces*



Bridge 13

*DEI Trainings for
professionals*

Our Shared Values

Please share out:

- Your name
- Your pronouns
- What are 2-3 values that you bring into the work that you do?



Community Agreements



- No one knows everything, **together we know a lot**
- What's shared here, stays here; what's learned here, leaves here
- Bring **curiosity**; leave space for **learning**
- **Center LGBTQIA2S+ youth**
- Assume best **intentions**; be aware of your **impact**
- One diva one mic
- **Respect** each other and ourselves
- Expect and respect a lack of closure
- No community is a monolith
- **ELMO**: enough, let's move on
- Anything to add?



Foundations

Acknowledgement of Pre-Colonial Gender Systems

We want to **acknowledge** that we would not be able to do this work without the knowledge passed down from those that came before us. Our understanding of gender and sexuality is always **changing** and is **rooted** in a long history of **reverence, joy, and survival**.

“Prior to European invasion, many Indigenous nations venerated Two-Spirit people, as they often held sacred roles in healing, spiritual, and ceremonial traditions in their communities. Unfortunately, as a result of colonization, forced assimilation, and erasure of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer people at the hands of the government, many communities have lost that knowledge.”

- At These Powwows, Two-Spirit People Are Always Revered: *them.us*



A note about language

- **Gender-Binary** - A system of gender classification in which society categorizes people as either female or male
- **Cisgender** - an adjective describing the gender of a person that identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth
- **Heteronormative** - the concept that heterosexuality is the preferred or “normal” mode of sexual orientation
- **Cisnormative** - the concept that being cisgender is the “normal” mode of gender identity
- **Misgender** - to refer to someone using pronouns or gendered language that does not reflect the gender they identify with/told you to use
- **Dysphoria** - a mental/emotional disconnect between someone’s body and the way it is perceived, and the version of their body that would be most gender-affirming
- **Multi-Marginalized** - an adjective describing people experiencing many different points of discrimination due to the intersection of their identities

LGBTQIA2S+



LGBTQ

Lesbian



Gay



Bisexual



Transgender/Non binary

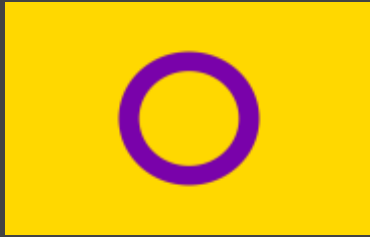


Queer



IA2S+

Intersex



Asexual



Aromantic



Two Spirit



Plus





BEST

/BESE

EXPLAINS/

TWO SPIRIT



Intersex



What are you excited to learn more about?

How are these identities represented in the media?

How does the dominant culture affect folks in marginalized communities?

Gender and Sexuality Overview

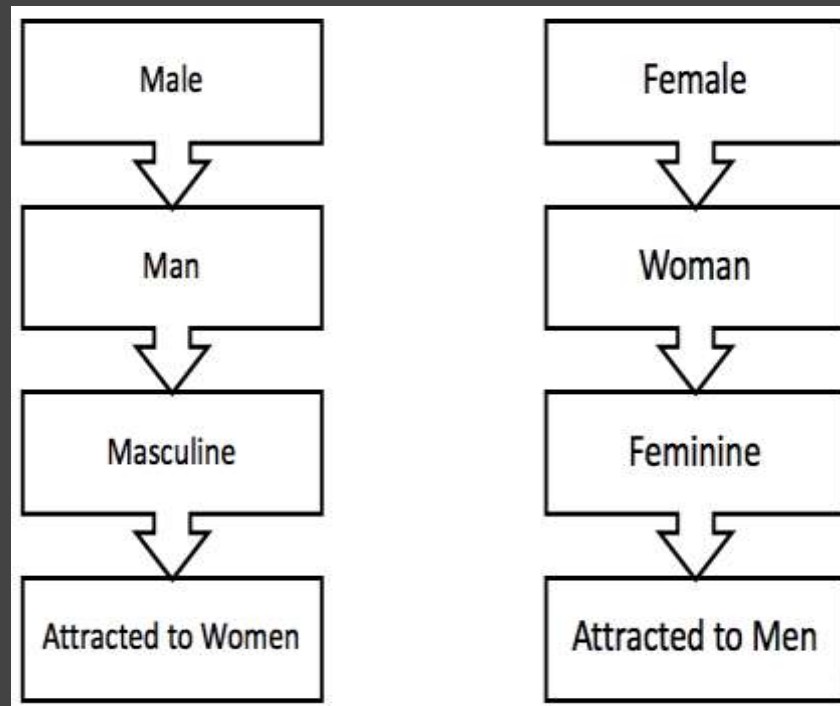


Gender Binary

A **culturally defined code** of socially acceptable and expected identities and behaviors, which teaches that there are men and women, who are masculine and feminine, and are heterosexual. The code **presumes and naturalizes the idea that there are no people who fall outside of this system**. Most discussions on gender assume a binary gender system.

The gender binary claims that...

- You must be on one side or the other; not neither, not both.
- You can not choose what side you are on.
- All traits are locked together.



Nonamey,
Ojibwe



Miss Major



Lucy Hicks
Anderson



We-wha, Zuni

Genders and sexualities
have been varied and
culturally specific since,
and especially before,
colonization.



Hinaleimoana
Wong-Kalu



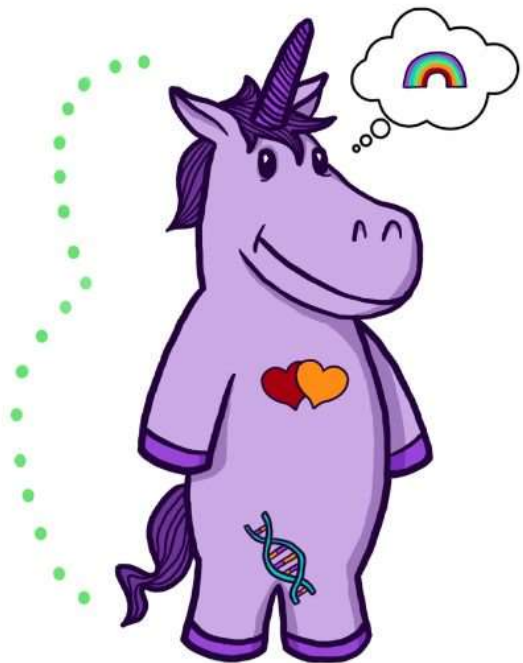
the muxe people,
Zapotec

The Gender Unicorn



The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



 Sex Assigned at Birth

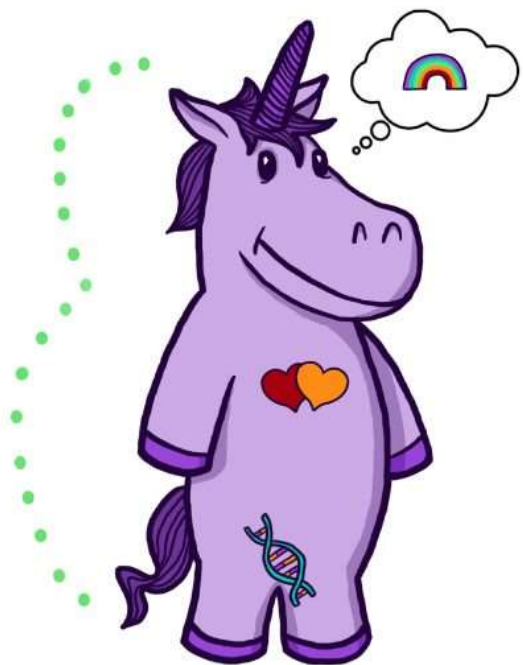
Female	Male	Other/Intersex
		

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

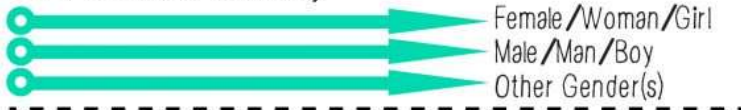
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The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



 Gender Identity



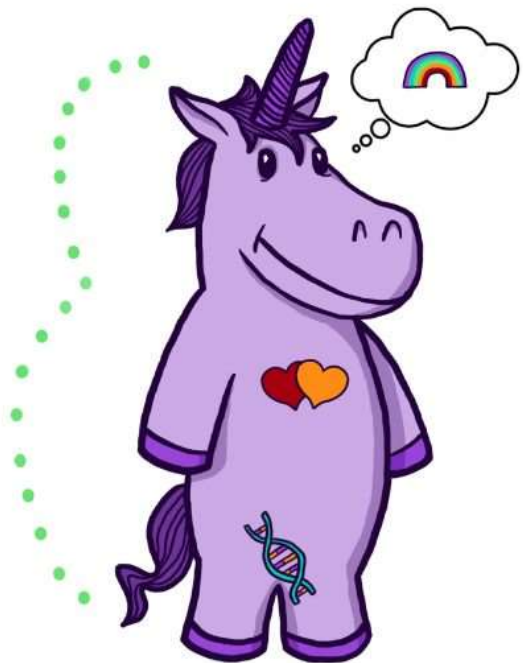
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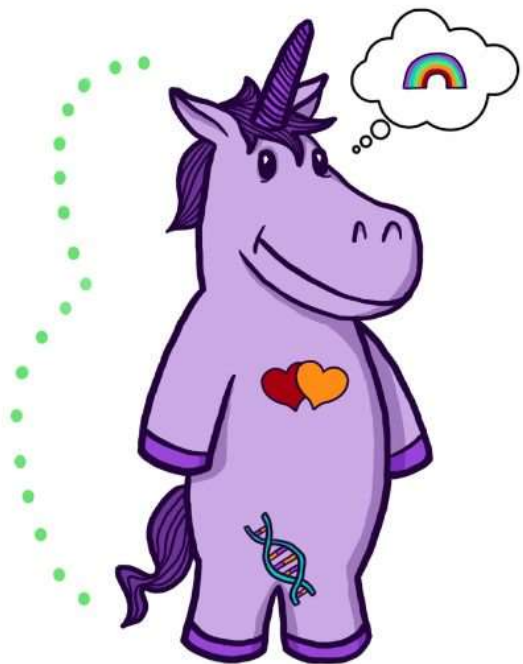


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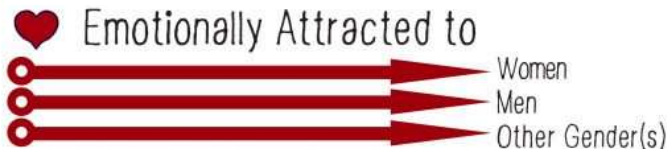
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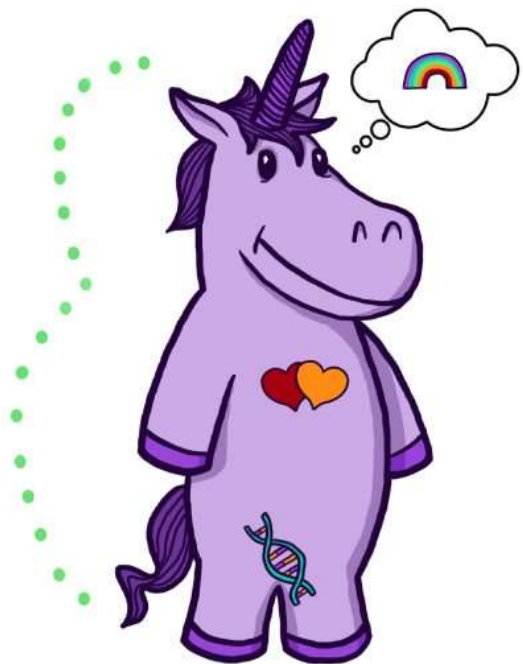
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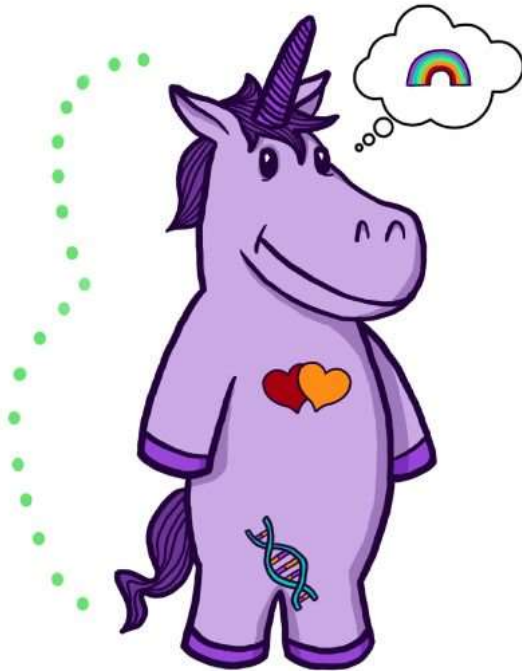


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Gender Identity



Female/Woman/Girl

Male/Man/Boy

Other Gender(s)



Gender Expression



Feminine

Masculine

Other



Sex Assigned at Birth

Female

Male

Other/Intersex



Physically Attracted to



Women

Men

Other Gender(s)



Emotionally Attracted to



Women

Men

Other Gender(s)

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

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

With the group, discuss the ways in which you are affected by the existence and enforcement of the gender binary.

How does it affect you? Who enforces it? Who benefits from it?

What is Gender? Gender is a Spectrum!



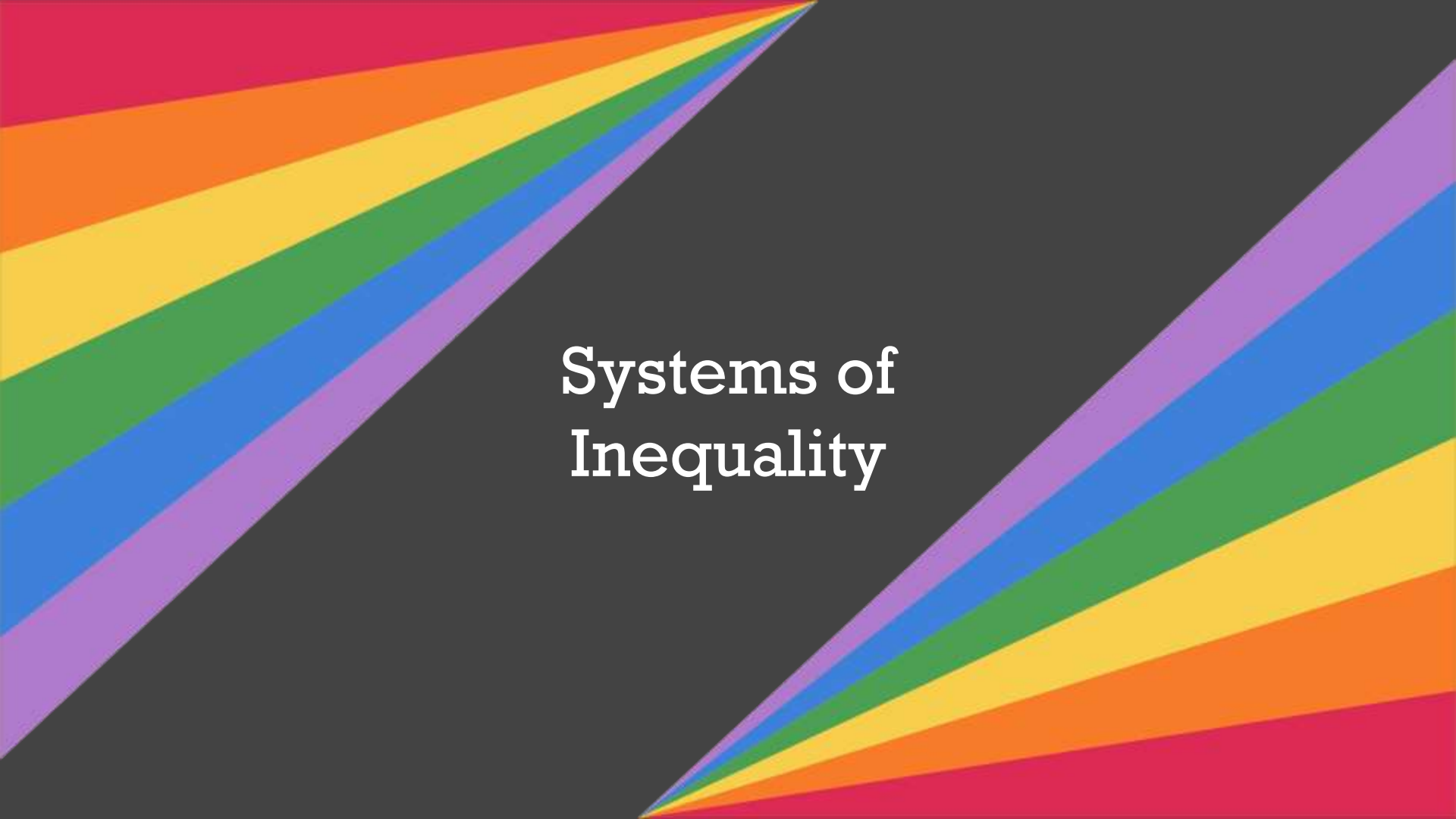
Encouraging youth to live in their truth and think critically for themselves prepares them to lead



Break Time!
5 Minutes





A vibrant rainbow graphic composed of multiple parallel diagonal bands of color, including red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, set against a dark grey background. The bands are arranged in a fan-like shape, pointing towards the top right and bottom right corners.

Systems of Inequality

Before we dive in...

There is no LGBTQIA2S+ justice without racial justice

Multi-marginalized people are oppressed within these systems, not just for being trans, but also their race, the way they present, if they're disabled, etc.

Multi-marginalized people experience the fullness of their oppression at all times, not just a single segment at a time

“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not live single-issue lives.” –Audre Lorde

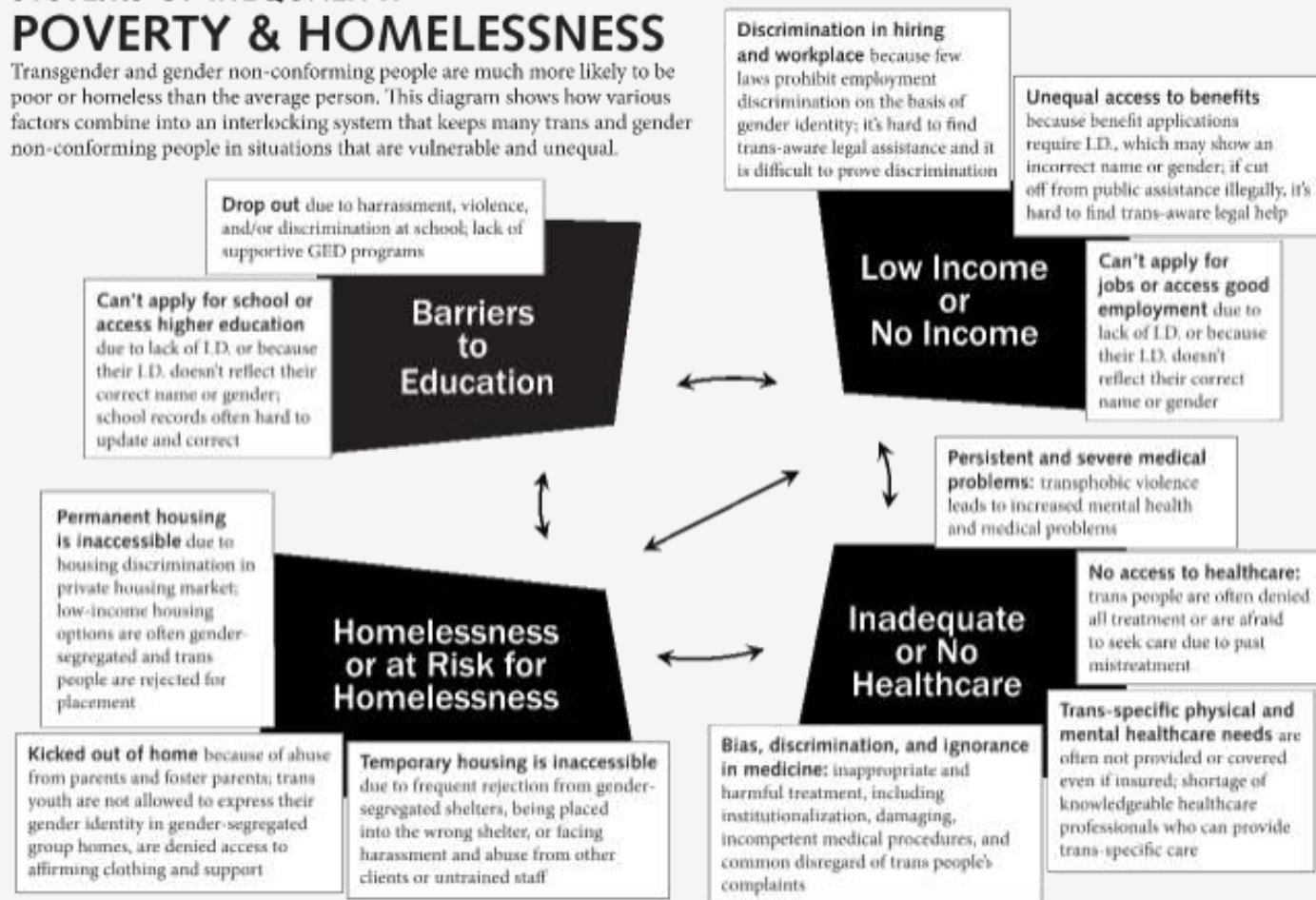
Systems of Inequality - Poverty and Houselessness

Transgender and gender non-conforming people are much more likely to be poor or houseless than the average person. This diagram shows how various factors combine into an interlocking system that keeps many trans and gender non-conforming people in situations that are vulnerable and unequal.

Source: [Sylvia Rivera Law Project](#)

SYSTEMS OF INEQUALITY: POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS

Transgender and gender non-conforming people are much more likely to be poor or homeless than the average person. This diagram shows how various factors combine into an interlocking system that keeps many trans and gender non-conforming people in situations that are vulnerable and unequal.



Case Studies - Systems of Inequality

In small groups, discuss your case study. Choose one person for each role:

- Read the worksheet out loud, especially the scenario
- Take notes and be prepared to have a discussion about the scenario

Quality over quantity! You do not need to finish every single question, but please try to discuss as many of the questions as you can without rushing through.

10 minutes

What barriers did you notice and how did that impact the person's access to these systems? How did each situation affect the person's experience with other systems?

How do these systems affect people from other marginalized communities? People who are multi-marginalized?

How can your work interrupt these cycles/barriers on an individual level?

Systems of Inequality Takeaways

- Although trans folks are at a high risk for discrimination within the system, **given the right support from community and their support system, their risks are significantly lowered**
- Listen to your youth/clients about their experiences with these systems
 - **Validate their experience**
- Continue to further your education
 - Look up organizations that directly help people in the various systems
 - Reflect on how your work can directly impact your youth/clients
- When you see oppression happening, **speak up and support those being discriminated against**

Interrupting Oppression



What are our goals in interrupting oppression?

Interrupting comments that are homophobic, transphobic, racist, classist, ableist, etc. in **an immediate and safe manner** is essential for creating equitable spaces!

We aim to keep several foundational principles in mind when intervening:

- Interruption is fundamentally about **making a space as safe as possible**; protecting harmed community members should outweigh other considerations.
- Some situations allow for a **learning opportunity for the offending party**, but this education is secondary to the primary goal of group safety.
- Interruption is NOT an opportunity to show off your own knowledge or ally bonafides; **decenter yourself as much as possible**.

Interruption: Before the Incident

Plan

Respect

Practice

Interrupting bias incidents requires **consideration of the needs of multiple parties** and is far more effective in environments of **mutual trust and respect**. These steps can be taken to set up our communities for future success.

Interruption: During the Incident

Respond

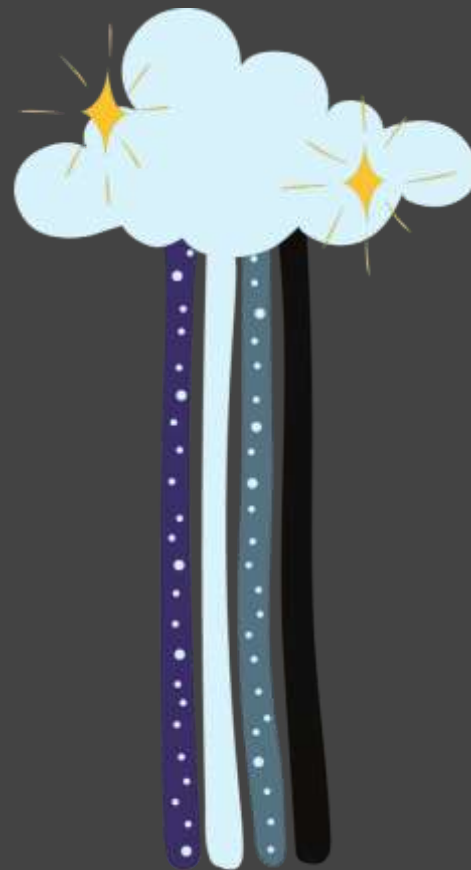
Remove

De-Escalate

The actual process of interrupting a bias incident can take on many forms, but we aim to keep several key points in mind in all situations.

Methods of Interruption

- **Feigning ignorance**
 - “What do you mean by a ‘gay’ shirt?”
- **Personalize**
 - “Hey, my aunt is gay and she’s amazing.”
- **Humor**
 - “That shirt is gay? I didn’t know shirts have a sexual orientation!”
- **Questioning**
 - “Did you mean to use ‘gay’ as an insult? Why?”



Methods of Interruption, cont.



- **Assume the best**
 - “I know that you’re a good person, and you’d never intentionally hurt someone, but what you just said is harmful.”
- **Fall back on rules or policy**
 - “It is unacceptable to use language like that here.”
- **Be direct**
 - “That’s an outdated term and what you said is really hurtful.”

Interruption: After the Incident

Acknowledge

Repair

Bias incidents are disruptive and damaging to the safety of any space. After initially interrupting an incident, it is important to engage in follow-up work with the group to repair relationships and re-establish group safety.

Case Studies: Responding to Oppression



Case Studies: Responding to Oppression

In your work groups, please discuss the scenario as a group, and make sure to fill out the worksheet together.

Remember to choose one person for each role:

- Read the worksheet out loud, especially the scenario
- Take notes and be prepared to have a discussion about the scenario

15 minutes



What was coming up for you? Anything to share?

What styles already work for you? Given all of these options, what method/s feels the best for you?

How are you going to hold yourself and others accountable to interrupting harmful language when it's safe to do so?

Key Points

The most important thing is to stop the problematic language in hopes of returning safety to the environment

- Take time to think about which method/s feel the most authentic to you
- Write out responses and create flexible scripts, practice until it's second nature
- Be intentional
 - Consider time, place, confidentiality, safety, and your capacity
- You will not always be able to change a person's mind in the moment, and that's ok



Break Time!
5 Minutes





A vibrant rainbow graphic composed of diagonal stripes in red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, forming a shape that resembles a stylized 'V' or a pair of wings. The background is a solid dark grey.

Creating Affirming Spaces

Names/Pronouns



Pronouns - 3rd person/replacing a name



Commonly Used Pronouns

- She/Her/Hers/Ella
- He/Him/His/Él
- They/Them/Theirs/Elle
- Combinations like she/he/they

Pronouns are

- How we refer to people
- Not a preference
- Required once shared
- Important



Pronouns aren't

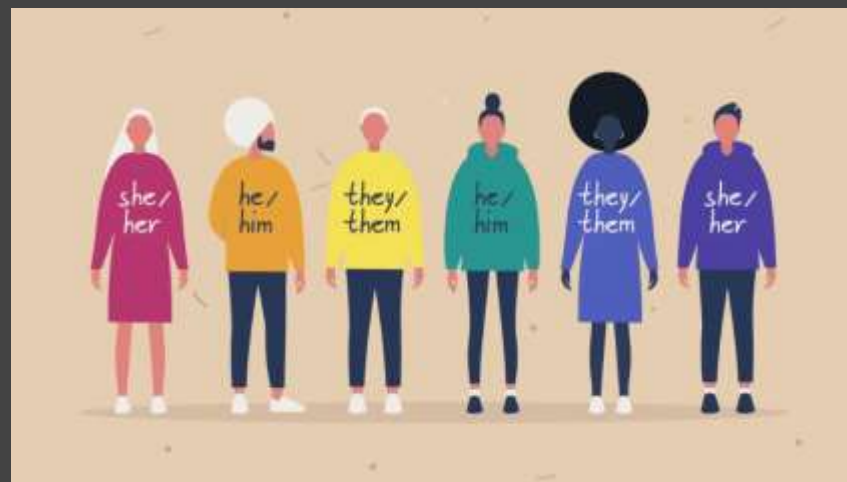
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Sexual history/activity
- Anatomy



Importance

Using correct pronouns

- Shows respect
- Reduces misgendering
- Maintains a feeling of safety/inclusion
- Shows you're supportive
- Can create feelings of joy



Using They/Them

- Grammatically correct to use they as a singular pronoun
- Follow grammatical rules for plurals
- How do you use they/them already?
 - “Can I bring a friend to lunch?” “Sure, can’t wait to meet them!”
- Be intentional



Neo Pronouns - replacing gendered pronouns



- Take gender out of the conversation by using words that are free from gendered association
- Are **used by anyone who wants to use them/feels more comfortable** using them
- Have existed for centuries in various forms to solve the problem of communicating about people in non-gendered ways

Best Practices for Respecting Pronouns

- **Don't assume** pronouns
- **Share** your pronouns
- **Check In** about language at appropriate time
 - What pronouns/name should I use?
 - When/where can I use this name/pronouns?
 - How can I show up for you if you're being misgendered?
- **Listen** to others/use neutral pronouns/their name
- **Create reminders**
- **Allow space** and time for change



Be Consistent!



- Put your pronouns in your **email signature**
 - Check for others' and utilize that info!!
- Put your pronouns in your **video call name**
 - Check for others' and utilize that info!!
- Add optional pronoun sharing to your meeting **introductions/check ins**
 - Create space for sharing without requirement
 - AND remind the group to consider how they **show up** for trans people

What if I use incorrect pronouns?

- Apologize briefly and/or **thank them** for letting you know
 - Restate your sentence correctly
 - Then, move on
- Correct yourself and others every time it's safe to
 - Restate, move on
- **Respect their feelings** about being misgendered
 - Misgendering hurts are cumulative!
- Remember intention is not impact
 - AND be kind to yourself



Pronouns Practice!

With your partner, please have a short conversation about each of these folks, using their correct pronouns



Leigh, she/her
You're meeting Leigh for lunch, but
running late



Adam, they/them
Adam runs a flower business and you're
going to buy a bouquet

Pronouns Practice!

With your partner, please have a short conversation about each of these folks, using their correct pronouns



Tommy, they/them
Tommy is an old friend who just got married



Ember, he/him
You have a business meeting with Ember to discuss a potential partnership



"Misgendering someone is starving them of their need to be seen."

-SMYRC Youth

A vibrant rainbow graphic composed of diagonal stripes in red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, forming a large 'V' shape that frames the central text. The background is a solid dark grey.

Building Towards Equity

Individual Attitudes

Institutional
Attitudes

Structural
Factors



Individual Attitudes



Individual Attitudes



- Foster positive self-esteem without gender bias
- Celebrate difference and diversity
- Be mindful of culturally specific language
- Don't sort by gender
- Continue your education constantly; **allyship is a continuous practice that we enact**, not a finite goal with an end date.

Identity is Mutable

- Many youth in our spaces are actively exploring their many identities, and this includes gender and sexuality
- Often, youth will change their identities during the course of your time with them! This can include changing:
 - Name
 - Pronouns
 - Sexual identity
 - Physical appearance
 - A completely invisible internal change

How to best respond?

- Do your best to remember!
- If you're not sure, and you have a relationship, ask!!!
- If you reference the youth using outdated information, use the same advice as above for pronoun use
 - Oops, I meant _____
 - Can you remind me of your current pronouns/name?
- Asking for a reminder is a sign of respect and care, and is much better than avoiding the subject



Tips for Identity Navigation

- Actively listen
- Validate the big feelings
- Don't dump your worries on them
- Decenter yourself and respect their identities as they're figuring that out
- Question your own preconceived notions about identity formation and expression
- Reiterate that they are the experts of their own experience
- Assure them it's okay to not have all the answers today
- Affirm that they will have many identities over the course of their lifetime, they are allowed to redefine themselves at any time



Institutional Attitudes



Institutional Attitudes

- Be mindful of the impact of the political climate; **if you serve any queer clients or have any queer staff, you are a queer-serving organization!**
- Take all red flags seriously
- Be aware of safety "hot spots", such as bathrooms
- Give numerous opportunities for staff and client feedback on current equity initiatives



Structural Factors



Forms and Data Collection

- Data collection and ID forms often times are the first structural barrier clients face when interacting with systems.
- As much as possible, prioritize client safety and equity over simplifying data collection; **where possible, leave fill-in spaces rather than drop-down menus or checkboxes.**
- When checkboxes or other discrete options must be used, **give clients the option to select multiple or no option.**
- Give opportunities for client feedback on data collection practices
- When you see oppression happening, **speak up and support those being discriminated against**

Bathroom Justice - Safe Bathroom Access for All

Facilities

- All user bathrooms & facilities available
- Trash cans and menstrual products in all stalls

Safety

- No logistical/administrative barriers
 - No key
 - No permission required
- **Always** respect choices in bathroom use



Bathroom Justice - Safe Bathroom Access for All

Signage

- Inclusive signage
- What's in the bathrooms?
 - Urinals
 - Stalls
 - Baby changing booths
 - Accessible size/supports



Focus on what's in the restroom rather than the people using it

Discuss:

- What actions are you and/or your workplace already doing to be more equitable and affirming?
- What actions would you like to see happen to create a more equitable and affirming environment?



Wrap Up!

Ally is a **verb**!

- What are actions you are already taking to be an ally?
- What are actions you can take to be an ally to those around you?
- How can you utilize the values you shared earlier to be a stronger ally?



Remember Remember

- Meet folks where they're at
- No community is a monolith
- De-center yourself/center LGBTQIA2S+ folks
- Don't assume pronouns or gender
- Interrupt oppressive comments in an immediate and safe manner
- Focus on what's in the restroom rather than the people using it
- Put rainbows on as many things as possible (other flags too)

Questions?

Survey!



Thank you!

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