



SUPPORTING TRANSGENDER & GENDER EXPANSIVE STUDENTS



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Objectives

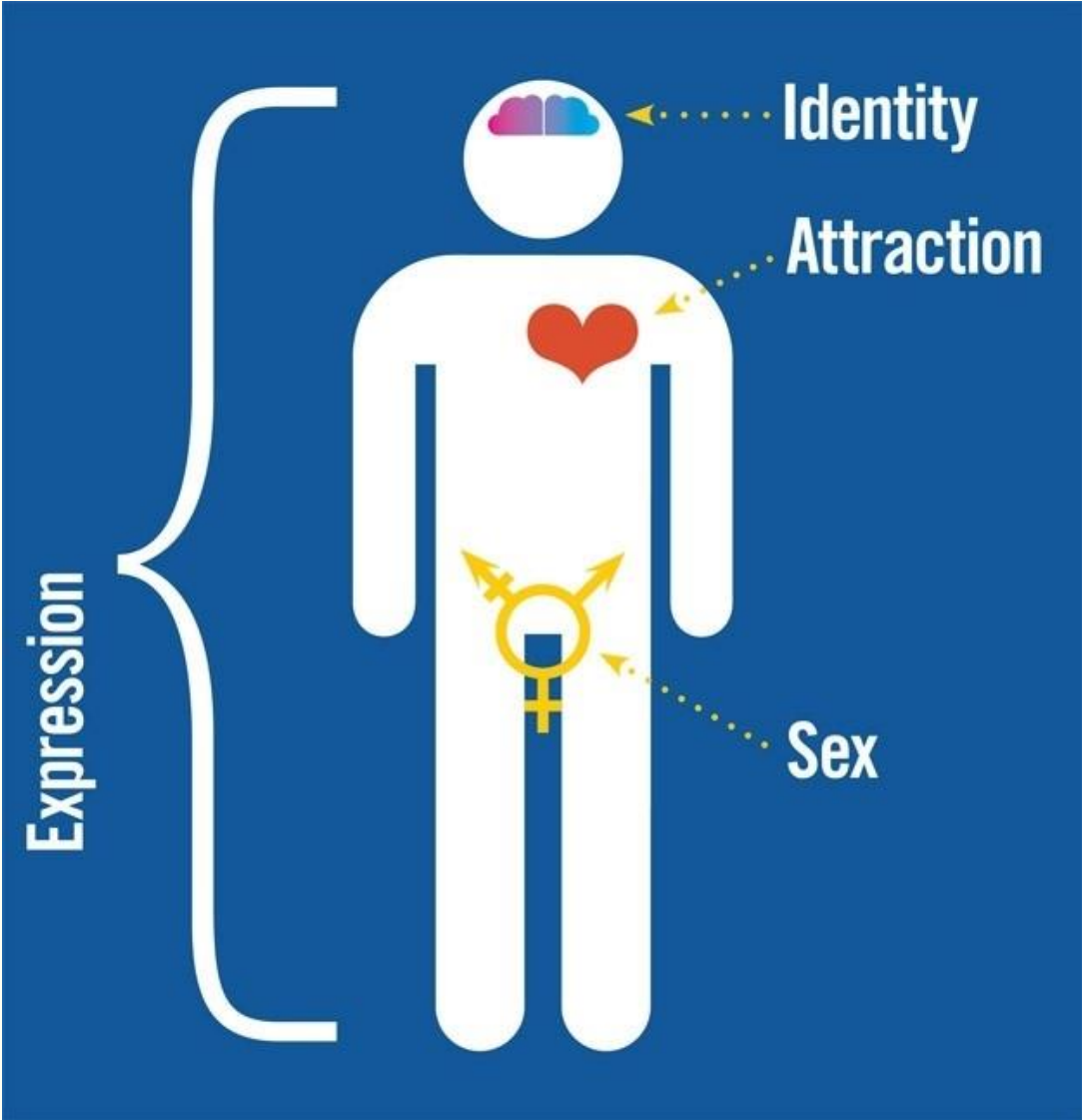
Participants will...

- Learn important terminology as well as related concepts regarding gender identity and sexuality.
- Understand the ways that schools are supporting transgender and gender expansive students
- Understand how school counselors, school social workers and other staff members can advocate for and support transgender and gender expansive students.
- Understand the changing political climate regarding transgender issues as they relate to education.
- Gain resources to utilize as they work with their own students and school districts to support and advocate for transgender and gender expansive students.

Terminology

- Refer to handout for additional terminology
- **Transgender** - an encompassing term of many gender identities who do not identify, or exclusively identify, with their sex assigned at birth.
- **Cisgender** - a term for people who identify with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- Transgender is an ADJECTIVE! Not a noun or verb. Do not use terms such as “the transgenders”, or “they are transgendered”.
- Gender Dysphoria is codified in the DSM V as it refers to the **severe and unremitting emotional pain resulting from gender incongruity**. Gender Dysphoria was previously referred to as “Gender Identity Disorder”. The diagnosis was changed in order to focus on the dysphoria as the clinical problem rather than identity.

Gender Identity, Attraction, Sex, and Expression



Risk Factors

- 41% of transgender people have attempted suicide sometime in their lives
 - Compare to 1.6% of general US population, and 10-20% of LGB adult population
- Factors that increase risk:
 - Family chose not to speak/spend time with them: 57%
 - Harassed or bullied at school (any level): 50-54%
 - Suffered physical or sexual violence at school (any level): 63-78%

*National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 2014

Increasing School Safety and Support

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) - students in schools with a GSA are less likely to hear homophobic/transphobic slurs, less likely to feel unsafe, experience lower levels of victimization related to sexuality or gender expression, and feel more connected to their school.

Inclusive Curriculum - in addition to everything above, teaching positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, or events improves attendance, future planning, and feelings of acceptance from peers.

Supportive Educators - in addition to everything above, students with supportive educators have higher GPAs.

Comprehensive Bullying/Harassment Policies - “Comprehensive” means that it specifically covers bullying/harassment of LGBTQ+ people. In addition to the above, students are more likely to report incidents to school staff, and are more likely to rate the school’s staff response as effective.

*GLSEN 2015 National School Climate Survey

DGS Illinois Youth Survey Results

Q20. Which of the following descriptors accurately represents your gender identity?

		Grade							
		9th		10th		11th		12th	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
q20	Assigned female at birth and identify as female	245	50%	244	50%	238	51%	242	54%
	Assigned male at birth and identify as male	212	44%	215	44%	203	43%	187	41%
	Transgender male	4	1%	6	1%	7	1%	5	1%
	Transgender female	1	0%	4	1%	1	0%	3	1%
	Questioning	5	1%	8	2%	6	1%	2	0%
	Intersex (anatomy doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male.)	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%	0	0%
	Gender fluid (identify as male, female, neutral or a combination)	8	2%	6	1%	7	1%	8	2%
	Other/unsure	11	2%	3	1%	7	1%	4	1%

Q21. If you answered a or b for question 20, skip this question. If you answered c, d, e, f, g, or h for question 20, which of the following have you experienced in the last twelve months (select all that apply)?

	Grade							
	9th		10th		11th		12th	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Drug or alcohol use	26	42%	36	56%	41	59%	28	55%
Bias or discrimination based on gender identity	20	32%	15	23%	14	20%	12	24%
Bullying in the form of hitting, kicking, pushing or otherwise harming you physically	10	16%	8	13%	8	12%	6	12%
Bullying in the form of verbally threatening or name calling	9	15%	12	19%	11	16%	4	8%
Bullying in the form of others harassing or spreading rumors about you on the internet or through text messages (cyber bullying)	8	13%	7	11%	6	9%	1	2%
Depression, thoughts of suicide, or selfharm	13	21%	13	20%	12	17%	4	8%
I identify as transgender, gender fluid, questioning or intersex, and I have not experienced any of the above.	10	16%	7	11%	1	1%	2	4%

Benefits of these add-on questions:

- Provided evidence regarding numbers of students
 - helps to advocate for procedural changes and professional development needs within your school
- Provided data regarding these students' social/emotional needs
- Students reported that they felt more safe and supported at our school as a result of these questions being asked

Pronouns

- YES, THEY MATTER! Be gender-affirming.
- No such thing as “male” or “female” pronouns.
 - He/him/his pronouns; She/her/hers pronouns; They/them/their pronouns
 - Other forms exist as well: Ze/Sie/Hir pronouns; Ze/hir/hirs pronouns; Xe/Xem pronouns; some individuals do not use pronouns, just a chosen name
- When an individual comes out to you and tells you their name and pronouns, start using them IMMEDIATELY! And, if possible, in all forms of communication (i.e. when speaking to that individual, when speaking to others about that individual, in writing/case notes, in e-mail communications about that individual, etc.)
- **Misgendering** negatively impacts the student’s safety and ability to learn.

Formal vs. Informal Name/Pronoun Changes

- Formal changes - Require parent permission unless student is 18 (can also be done to amend student records after a student turns 18)
 - transcripts, computer records, cumulative files, computer generated attendance rosters, standardized testing
- Informal changes - Occur without parent permission because we are creating a safe environment for students to maximize their learning.
 - verbal communication, emails, hand-written records (including attendance and class rosters), yearbook, email addresses, Google accounts.

School Records: FERPA

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) - federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records.
 - Parents/guardians have the rights for students under 18.
 - Rights transfer to the student when they reach the age of 18 or attend a school beyond the high school level.
- Current or former students have a right to seek to amend their school records if said records are **“inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s rights of privacy.”**
- Transgender students wishing to change their name and gender marker on their educational records can seek such an amendment under this federal law.
- Students under 18 need parental consent.
- Change can be made after graduation to ensure that anyone who requests school records (for example, college admissions offices or potential employers) see only the correct name and gender marker on the transcript.

Sensitive Communication Strategies

- Be sensitive to initiating vs. responding to students around these topics.
- Avoid assumptions based on gender expression
- If the topic comes up, simply ask in a respectful manner:
 - How do you identify?
 - What pronouns do you use?
- Emphasis on confidentiality, with student and when talking with others about the student. Do not out students without their prior consent.
- Create a safe space for students to express themselves.



Considerations For Transitioning In School

- Communicating with teachers
- Name/pronouns
- Gendered spaces/systems in school (bathrooms, locker rooms, overnight field trips, PE classes, athletics, Homecoming/Prom court)
- Supporting peers
- Training staff
- Confidentiality of individual students
- Schools/agencies should not delay a student's transition based on their own lack of preparedness. The child's well-being must remain the main focus.
- Decisions around all of these steps should be made in conjunction with the student and parents (if possible).
 - See
 - [Gender Spectrum Student Gender Support Plan](#)
 - [Gender Spectrum Student Gender Transition Plan](#)
 - [DGS Student Gender Support Plan](#)

Potential “Stumbling Blocks” At School

- Substitute teacher calling birth name during roll call
- After-school programs with staff who do not know the student
- School photos/yearbooks
- Outside professionals providing service on campus
- ID/library/lunch cards
- Posted lists
- Standardized tests
- Textbook/supply distribution
- PBIS reward system
- What are the potential stumbling blocks at your school? How will you work through them to support the student?

Political and Legal Considerations

- May 4, 2016 - Parents for Privacy file lawsuit against US Dept. of Education, US Dept. of Justice and District 211
- May 13, 2016 - Obama administration sends out federal guidance letter directing public school districts to allow transgender students to use facilities that align with their gender identities - some states file lawsuits alleging federal overreach in months that follow
- February 22, 2017 - President Trump repeals federal guidance protecting transgender students
- March 6, 2017 - Supreme Court decides that it will not hear Gavin Grimm case
- Office of Civil Rights will no longer investigate allegations of discrimination against transgender students under Trump Administration
- IL Human Rights Act protects transgender individuals in IL from discrimination

▪ <http://www.equalityillinois.us/issue/transgender/>

Possible Professional Development Proposals

- Call Illinois Safe Schools Alliance.
- Incorporate students' experiences (keeping students' identities confidential). Highlight what students' wish their teachers knew and understood.
- Provide facts regarding political backdrop and changing political climate. Highlight the reasons that staff needs to use students' chosen name and correct pronouns even when parents are not supportive *in order to create a safe learning environment for the child*.
- Provide accurate terminology.
- Share the gender support plan for your building.
- Explain a teacher's role in sharing with the counselor when a student comes out, whether directly or indirectly by overhearing peers using chosen name or preferred pronouns. Teachers are not bound by confidentiality.
- Create awareness of using gendered terms when interacting with unknown students. Instead of "Excuse me, miss" or "sir", teach staff to use objective descriptions, such as "Excuse me, student in the blue sweatshirt".

Example: Berwyn School District 100

- Illinois Safe Schools Alliance Ally of the Year 2015
- “Districts that care about the safety and dignity of their transgender students make it clear up front that gender-appropriate restrooms and locker rooms are available, rather than putting the burden on transgender students to fight for what the law requires.” -John Knight, Director, LGBT and HIV Project at the ACLU

Resources for Struggling Youth

- [Trans Lifeline](#) - (877)565-8860
- [The Trevor Project](#) - (866)488-7386
- [The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) - (800)273-8255

Resources

Parent Resources

- Books - [The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals](#) by Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper
- PBS Documentary - [Growing Up Trans](#)
- Parent Support Groups =
 - [Thrive at Youth Outlook](#)
 - [Pinwheels](#)
 - [PFLAG](#)
- [Lurie Children's' Hospital Gender Clinic](#), Jennifer Leininger 773-303-6056

Local Therapist/Support Group Referrals

- [Joy Lockette](#), LPC 1010 Jorie Blvd, Ste. 244, Oak Brook 847-868-3435
- [Sandra Conti](#), LCPC, Guided Path Psychological Svcs. 15 Spinning Wheel Rd. Ste. 419, Hinsdale 847-448-0119
- [Cindy Baleskie](#), LCPC, Fox Valley Institute, 640 North River Rd., Ste. 108, Naperville 630-718-0717
- [Deb Brozewski](#), LCPC, CADC, Edgewood Clinical Services, 2948 Artesian Rd., Ste. 112, Naperville 630-428-7890
- [360 Youth Services](#), 1548 Bond St., Ste. 114, Naperville 630-717-9408 ex. 1180
- [Youth Outlook Center](#) – Drop-In and Group Services in Naperville, Palatine, Sterling, DeKalb, and Geneva

Resources (continued)

- [Schools in Transition: A guide for supporting transgender students in K-12 schools](#)
- [Illinois Safe Schools Alliance](#)
 - Provide staff and community training and education
 - Friendly people to call with any kind of question that arises!
- [GLSEN](#)
 - Research, resources, advocacy
- [PFLAG](#)
 - Find your local chapter to get support locally
- [GLAAD](#)
 - Research, resources, advocacy
- For more stats and info:
 - [World Professional Association for Transgender Health \(WPATH\)](#)
 - [Lambda Legal](#)
 - [Equality Federation](#)

Handouts

- [LGBTQ Terminology](#)
- [Gender Spectrum Student Gender Support Plan](#)
- [Gender Spectrum Student Gender Transition Plan](#)
- [DGS Student Gender Support Plan](#)
- [Responding to Concerns: Supporting Transgender Students](#)