

The LGBTQ+ Advocacy Challenge

- Start by inviting two or more friends to do the challenge with you.
- Race each other to the finish, posting as many of these steps as you can, each day!

LEVEL ONE:

1. What was your last gender-segregated social or social media situation. Was it connected to romance or intimacy?
2. What was the last time someone asked for your gender? What did they really want to know? (identity, bodies, perception, roles?)
3. Add preferred name and pronouns to your email signature .
4. Share the definition of a new-to-you letter in the LGBTQQIPA+ alphabet. Find a role model for that identity.
5. What are the nearest resources for (1) LGBTQ+ youth, (2) trans social support, (3) LGBTQ+ health care?
6. Link to a blog from someone living at a queer intersection, such as gay immigration or queer black women.
7. List your straight/cis and/or "passing" privileges (related to people assuming you are straight or male or female).

LEVEL TWO:

1. Make a name badge or sticker that says, "I'm doing the Advocacy Challenge." This will help with the items below.
2. Start introducing yourself, saying something like "I go by name, and prefer she/her/hers pronouns" (or they/them/theirs or ze/zir/zirs, etc.). Then ask, "How about you?"
3. Spend a day without gendered language (she, him, women, Mr. etc.). Make mistakes. Just say "Oops," correct yourself, and keep going.
4. Flip the presumption game: Spend a day assuming everyone is in a marginalized group unless they tell you otherwise. (Then spend your life without making such guesses.)
5. Ask other people to use inclusive language with regard to romance, intimacy and gender. (Add other types of marginalization as you gain skills.) Speak up when you hear bias. Just say, "Ouch!" to get started.
6. Ask for inclusivity in your organization or government: Gender neutral bathrooms, LGBTQ+ services, health care/insurance equality, anti-harassment and non-discrimination policies, safe spaces for learning, etc. Report.
7. Do something with your challenge-mates to celebrate finishing: Attend an event, take a colleague to lunch, or host something simple such as a discussion topic, a letter-writing campaign, an ally social, a new working group, or local speaker. **Finally, challenge three 3 friends to play.**





LGBTQIA SAFE:

Safe Zone is a voluntary network of faculty, staff and students who believe that every member of the university community should have an equal opportunity to grow and learn in a safe and open environment.

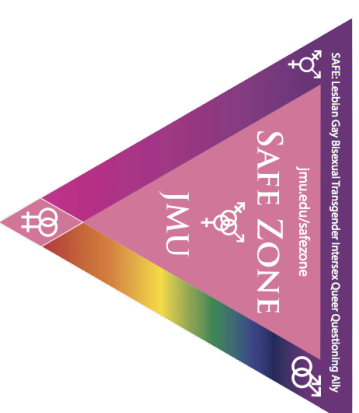
When you see the JMU Safe Zone triangle, you are entering a safe learning environment.

We educate JMU faculty, staff, and students about issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and questioning individuals and their loved ones.

Every Safe Zone member has demonstrated considerable commitment to our mission by attending a workshop before displaying the triangle. We also pledge LGBTQIA confidentiality and agree to be visible resources for the JMU community by displaying the sticker and being listed on the Safe Zone Workshop.

Visit our web site to view a list of safe spaces or to register for a workshop (dates posted each semester) to join Safe Zone and be part of the change!

www.jmu.edu/safezone



LGBTQIA SAFE:

Safe Zone is a voluntary network of faculty, staff and students who believe that every member of the university community should have an equal opportunity to grow and learn in a safe and open environment.

When you see the JMU Safe Zone triangle, you are entering a safe learning environment.

We educate JMU faculty, staff, and students about issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and questioning individuals and their loved ones.

Every Safe Zone member has demonstrated considerable commitment to our mission by attending a workshop before displaying the triangle. We also pledge LGBTQIA confidentiality and agree to be visible resources for the JMU community by displaying the sticker and being listed on the Safe Zone Workshop.

Visit our web site to view a list of safe spaces or to register for a workshop (dates posted each semester) to join Safe Zone and be part of the change!

www.jmu.edu/safezone

Standard gender theory principle added by B.P. Bryson. See, for example, Kate Bornstein's My Gender Workbook.



Gender Attribution / Perception

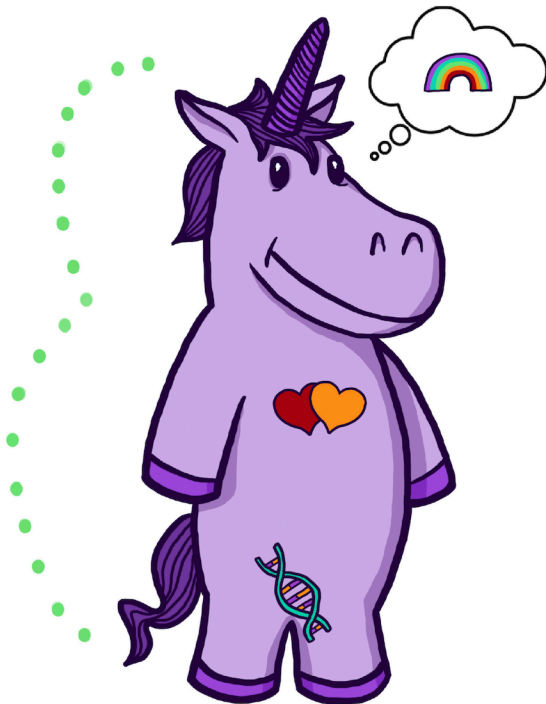


Female/Woman/Girl
Male/Man/Boy
Other Gender(s)

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:

TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



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

What's in a Word?

Sexuality & Gender Definitions Worksheet

Fit the following words into the definitions below:

Crossdresser Lifestyle/Choice FTM and MTF	Intersex Gender Affirmation Trans/gender	Transsexual Homosexual Sexual Orientation	Gender Expression Tranny Genderqueer	"T"	Drag Queen Gender Attribution Gender Identity
---	--	---	--	-----	---

- _____ describes who people fall in love with and/or are sexually attracted to, while...
- _____ describes a person's internal sense of being male, female, or something else.
- _____ refers to how one chooses to present one's gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice, body characteristics, etc.
- _____ is how a person's gender is perceived by others. It's extremely important for real bathroom access, and rarely or never mentioned in anti-trans bathroom legislation.
- This pair of terms indicate an adversarial relationship to LGBTQ+ people: _____.
- _____ is an *umbrella* term for people who live differently than society expects them to in terms of gender presentation and roles. These days the root form of this word is preferred.
- _____ is a term for a person who seeks to live in a gender different from the one designated for them at birth and who usually seek or want medical intervention (through hormones and/or surgery) to make it match their gender identity. They often live full time as a different gender than the one they were assigned at birth. (Though still in widespread use, this term is in decline and not recommended for allies. Instead use the term in #6.)
- This synonym for gay or lesbian is widely considered derogatory because of its clinical connotation and it's over-emphasis on sexual behavior: _____.
- _____ people have physical characteristics that do not match the typical understanding of male and female. Previously called hermaphrodites, some of these individuals identify as transgender, while others do not. Some of these conditions are anatomical and may be visible at birth, while others are chromosomal and may not be identified until later in life.
- Although some (many?) trans people love and identify with this word; it's off limits for others: _____.
- This term has a long history and refers to people who choose to wear the clothing associated with a gender different from the one they were assigned at birth. They were also once called transvestites, now a mostly derogatory term. _____ is about more than sexuality and sexual fantasies, it is a way that a person expresses all of who they are, both masculine and feminine. Do not apply this term to others unless someone tells you that's how they identify.
- A more supportive term for the now out of date SRS or "sex reassignment surgery" is _____ surgery.
- _____/_____ are binary abbreviations used by many female-to-male transgender persons (also known as trans men) and male-to-female transgender persons (also known as trans women). The first letter refers to the gender assigned at birth, the T stands for "to", and the last letter is how the person identifies now. Sometimes the number 2 is substituted for the T.
- _____ is a term historically used by gay men who dress in the clothing usually associated with women for the purpose of entertainment or personal fulfillment. There are also drag kings, who are assigned female at birth and dress as men.
- _____ refers to identities outside of the gender binary of male or female. These individuals have proposed other non-binary models of gender including the gender spectrum, gender as a circle, or something that occupies 3-dimensional space, such as a constellation.
- This letter stands for "testosterone," and trans men often celebrate the anniversary of beginning testosterone therapy in place of their original birthdays with a "_____ Party." It's common for LGB(T)Q+ to make the mistake of hosting events involving a hot beverage, demonstrating a lack of awareness about the T in their acronym.

CRISIS INTERVENTION

TYPES OF HELP + RESOURCES

IN PERSON



- **JMU Counseling Center**
- **LGBTQ+ & Ally Education Program**
jmulgbta@gmail.com
- **Equality Virginia**
(804) 643-4816
info@equalityvirginia.org
www.equalityvirginia.org

M-F 8-5
No after-hours support
Emergencies are referred to
JMU 911 & the hospital

CALL



- **LGBT Hotline**
1 (800) 246 PRIDE
- **Trevor Lifeline**
866-488-7386
- **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

♥ <http://www.thetrevorproject.org>
LGBTQ+ Crisis Support for young people.
Includes chat & text, plus...

MESSAGE



- **TrevorSpace**
- **Youthline.ca**

...discussion groups at
<http://www.trevorspace.org>

WHO? WHY?

- The rate for suicide attempts is **4 times** greater for LGB youth and **2 times** greater for questioning youth than of straight youth.
- **Nearly half** of young transgender people have seriously thought about taking their lives, and **one quarter** report having made a suicide attempt.
- LGB youth who come from highly rejecting families are **8.4 times as likely** to have attempted suicide as LGB peers who reported no or low levels of family rejection.

RISK FACTORS FROM YOUR ENVIRONMENT

- Barriers to mental health services
- Lack of community support
- Homelessness
- A death or relationship breakup
- A job loss or change in financial security
- Feeling unsafe
- Family history of suicide
- High stress family environment or dynamic
- Academic or family crisis
- Easy access to lethal materials

How to directly help someone from a vulnerable community in our post-election world

The contents of this list was contributed by 20 different people of color / LGBTQ / immigrants in Portland, OR, as a way to communicate their needs to friends and loved ones on how they can help in this time of instability and fear.

To people of color / LGBTQ / immigrants: Please feel free to check off what you need support in and distribute as you see fit. If you are viewing this document in a PDF viewer, click the interactive check boxes and print the result.

To the helpers: When given this list, know that you have been trusted by an individual who is particularly vulnerable in this post election world. Do what you can.

Safety

 *"I fear for my safety."*

- ☐ Volunteer to drive me at night.
- ☐ Walk me to my car after we hang out.
- ☐ Volunteer to drive me to work/back home.
- ☐ Offer to pay for a cab / bus fare / uber / Lyft ride.
- ☐ Escort or drive me to/from a rally or event.
- ☐ Watch out for potential situations of harassment and have a plan for interrupting it.
- ☐ Teach me self-defense or how to use equipment like a taser or pepper spray.
- ☐ Help me find a healthcare provider or therapist known for non-discrimination.

Emotional and Social Support

 *"I'm emotionally exhausted."*

- ☐ Back me up on social media when someone is knocking me down.
- ☐ Help to defend my experience as real and valid when others say I'm overreacting.
- ☐ Block or call out discrimination against me.
- ☐ Let me know of free or low-cost counseling services in my area.

Isolation

 *"I feel so alone."*

- ☐ Share coffee or a meal with me.
- ☐ Take me out for a comforting meal.
- ☐ Cook a meal for me, or for us to share.
- ☐ Help me alleviate my gender dysphoria by taking me shopping or teaching me makeup.
- ☐ Go with me to a food bank.

Food and Living Expenses

 *"I struggle to afford my cost of living."*

- ☐ Help me pick up some groceries.
- ☐ Help me pick up food for my pets.
- ☐ Have a meal delivered to me.
- ☐ Help give me a haircut.
- ☐ Send me money.
- ☐ Help me with childcare.
- ☐ Help me cook bulk meals for a week.
- ☐ Help me with my medical fees and medications costs.

Recreation

- ☐ Walk with me in nature.
- ☐ Go for a drive with me.
- ☐ Go with me to a movie.
- ☐ Take a spa day with me.
- ☐ Trade skills with me.
- ☐ Sing Karaoke with me.
- ☐ Netflix
- ☐ Get physically active with me.
- ☐ Give me a book.
- ☐ Take me camping.
- ☐ Create something with me.

Home and Work Help

- ☐ Help me clean my house.
- ☐ Help me with household chores.
- ☐ Hang out with me while I work.
- ☐ Help me organize my home.
- ☐ Back me up when I confront my landlord, boss, or others with difficult conversations.
- ☐ Help me photocopy flyers.
- ☐ Help me file my taxes.
- ☐ Help me navigate social and support services.
- ☐ Make small repairs to my home or car.
- ☐ Help me market myself, my skills, or my business.
- ☐ Come with me to the DMV, a Tax Office or Social Services.
- ☐ Purchase my work.

**INVISIBLE
SPECTRUM
STORIES**

Invisible Spectrum Stories supports vulnerable groups communicating their needs to their friends/loved ones/helpers by providing the template you see here. This is an open source document which can be modified by contributors.

Trans Respect/Etiquette/Support 101

by Micah Bazant (updated from from *TimTum: A Trans Jew Zine*)

*Please use widely ● Add and subtract from this document as needed ● Please acknowledge this source
Please send suggestions, feedback, etc to: info@timum.org.*

I am using the word 'trans' in the broadest sense, to include labels like genderqueer, transgender and transsexual. This was originally written from my own experience as a white transperson/ftm who is perceived as both female and male. Of course, every trans person is different, and would write this list differently. Also, some things, which are totally inappropriate with strangers or acquaintances, may be fine or welcomed in the context of a trusting relationship. I'm sad to say that I've done most of the things on this list at some point in my life, and had most of them done to me even by other trans people. As with other forms of oppression, they are socialized into us from birth. We are all taught to be transphobic, and unlearning it is a process and a responsibility.

Pronouns & Self-Identification

Respect everyone's self-identification. Call everyone by their preferred name/s and pronoun/s. Use language and behavior that is appropriate to their gender self-identification. Do this for everyone, all the time, no matter how much you think they deviate from what a "real man" or "real woman" should be.

What we truly know ourselves to be should be the only determinant of our gender in society. Set aside your doubts, start educating yourself and respect that we are who we say we are. By doing this you are saying: "I see you, I support you, I respect you." By not doing this, you let trans people know: "I don't understand you and I'm not trying to. What you tell me about yourself is not important, all that's important is how I think of you. I am not your ally. You are not safe with me." Being referred to or treated as the wrong gender feels painful and disrespectful to us.

It's hard and dangerous to change your name and pronoun. Know that it has taken a lot of courage for this person to let you know who they really are; they are sharing something very precious. It may seem hard or silly to you at first, but it can be a matter of life and death for us.

If you don't know what pronouns or gender-labels someone prefers (and there's no mutual friend around to clue you in), just ask them. Politely. And respectfully. For example: "What pronoun do you prefer?" or "How do you like to be referred to, in terms of gender?" **This is smoothest if you always ask everyone this question. It's standard practice in elite liberal arts colleges and queer-friendly places.**

Usually when people can't immediately determine someone's gender, they become afraid and hostile. If you misrecognize someone's gender, it's okay, don't freak out. Apologize once and get it right the next time. Misidentifying or being unable to classify someone's gender does not have to be an awkward or shameful experience. By asking someone in the right way, you can indirectly communicate: 'I want to be respectful of you and I don't want to make any assumptions. I see your gender ambiguity and/or fluid gender expression as a positive, fabulous, creative and honest (need I go on?) thing.'

Some transpeople are bravely making more space for gender diversity by using language creatively. Respect these efforts and don't dismiss them as silly, funny, weird or too difficult. (Remember Mahatma Gandhi's words: "First they ignored us, then they laughed at us, then they tried to fight us, then we won.")

For example, some people prefer to be referred to as 'they', or as both 'he' and 'she' interchangeably. Some people prefer to be referred to only by their name. Some people use non-binary pronouns like 'ze' and 'hir'.

Invasive Questions

Medical Information

You do NOT have the right to know any medical or anatomical information about anyone else's body, unless they decide to share it with you. This means: don't ask about their genitals, their surgeries, the effects of their hormones, etc. This is private! The first question usually asked to transpeople is, "Do you have a penis?" or "Do you have a vagina?" Would you ask a non-trans person about their genitals? To do so is incredibly invasive and disrespectful. It reduces us to one body part, as if all the rest of our minds, hearts, bodies, contributions and personalities are not important. Our bodies are not a community forum, or a tool to educate you!

Also, don't ask us about our surgeries, medications, etc. If we want you to know about something, we'll bring it up. For example, just because your friend-of-a friend-of-a-transperson told you that someone is having surgery, doesn't mean you have a right to come up and ask them about it (especially in front of other people).

Don't ask us if we've had a "sex change operation." Gender transition doesn't happen through one magic operation. And the operation you're thinking of probably involves transforming our genitals, which, again, is reductive and disrespectful. Some of us never want to have any surgeries. Some of us desperately want surgery and can't afford it or don't have access to it. For a lot of female-to-male transpeople the surgeries they would want don't exist.

Even if you're curious, don't interrogate us. It's not our job to educate you and we may not feel like answering your incredibly personal questions right now. Unless we bring it up, don't ask us how our gender is affecting our personal relationships. For example, if you just met me, **don't ask me how my family is taking it.**

If you want to find out more about trans bodies or our families, educate yourself through books, websites, films, etc.

'Out'ing

Trans people have a huge range of ways that we navigate the world, based on preference and necessity. Transphobia functions very differently than homophobia; being 'out' is not necessarily desirable or possible for us. Being a trans ally means supporting people in being more safe and healthy – which may mean anything between letting everyone they meet know they are trans, to keeping their gender history entirely confidential. It's crucial to support people in being as 'out', *or not*, as they need to be.

There are many situations in which being 'out' could have serious negative repercussions; transpeople are killed every year just because other people find out they are trans. Revealing someone's trans status could cost them a job, a relationship, or their physical safety.

Many transpeople are perceived 100% of the time as their preferred gender, and no one would ever suspect they had been through a gender transition at some point. Some of these folks prefer never to be 'out' as trans and, in fact, may not even consider themselves 'trans.' This is a completely valid choice

among the huge spectrum of gender diversity. If you know someone who's trans experience is completely private, respect them by honoring that privacy.

Some of us are most comfortable being 'out' as trans all the time, some of us may never reveal our trans status to anyone.

Do not assume that just because you know us in one way, that we are able to, or choose to, live that way in every other part of our lives. Some of us express our gender in different ways in different parts of our lives. For example, we may not be able to find work as the gender we truly are. Or we may only find peace by living some of the time in a more masculine gender and some of the time as more feminine.

For myself, even though I hate being called "she," if someone refers to me that way, I might or might not correct them depending on many variables: whether I'm going to have to see them again, how confident I feel, who I'm with, how much backup I have, etc.

Think about when and why you 'out' someone as trans. Are you talking about your 'trans friend' just to prove how open and hip you are? Is it necessary to out this person, or are you doing it for your own personal reasons?

Names

Names are very powerful things. For a lot of trans people, the names given to us by our parents represent a gender identity which was wrong, humiliating and forced. Changing our names carries a lot more weight than it does for non-trans people. Don't ask someone what their old name was. And don't ask if our current names are our 'given names', or worse yet, 'real names.' If someone wants you to know, they will tell you. If you know someone's old name, don't share it with other people.

Some transpeople go by multiple names, because they are in transition, or because they prefer it that way. Again, don't trip about it. Just ask them what they prefer to be called and then call them that, every time. It may seem strange to you, but it's completely normal for us.

Also, don't make comments about the gender associations of trans people's names. This is especially annoying in a cross-cultural context. A name that means (or sounds like) 'Badass warrior king' in one language, might mean (or sound like) 'Nellie flower picker' in another. Don't assume that you know what meanings or gender implications our names have.

Transition

Don't assume that our gender transitions are linear, one-way, or start or end at a fixed point. For example, some intersex people¹ (who aren't "born male" or "born female") have trans experiences, and may also identify as trans. Some transpeople, for example, may express themselves as masculine, feminine and then back to masculine. In an ideal world this would be no different than having long hair, then short hair, then long again.

There are infinite ways to transition. Things like binding, packing, tucking, electrolysis, hormones, surgery, or changing our name, legal 'sex' and pronoun, are some of the possible steps of a gender transition. **Trans people have the right to make all, some or none of these changes, and in any order.**

¹ For more information about intersex issues, visit www.isna.org, the website of The Intersex Society of North America.

Do not ask us if we are sure, or remind us that our transition is irreversible and that we may regret our changes. Do not tell us we are coming out as trans just to be 'trendy'. We have usually been thinking about and dealing with our gender issues for a long time, although we may not have shared our years of internal torment with you. We are aware of, and probably very excited about, the consequences of our decisions.

Do not tell us how you liked us (or certain things about us) better before we transitioned. There is a normal and healthy grieving process that people go through around *any* major change, including gender changes by people in our lives. It's important to acknowledge and deal with your feelings, but not with us. We are going through enough stress, and we really just need your support.

Do not tell us how hard this is for you or how uncomfortable we make you. However challenging it may feel to you, it's much harder to live as a transperson. Many many people become amazing trans allies and effortlessly call all their trans friends by the right names and pronouns. You can too, its really not that hard - its just a different way of thinking about gender. If you are uncomfortable with someone's gender, find ways to work on it yourself or with other, knowledgeable non-trans friends.

Passing² and being passed

Don't judge our ability to be seen as male or female. For example, don't say: "Maybe if you did_____, or didn't do _____, you'd pass better, and we would be able to accept your gender better." Also, it is not always appropriate to compliment people on how well they pass. Whether or not we are passed as the gender we prefer is often a matter of money and genetics, not desire or determination. We are not all seeking to pass in the same ways, for the same reasons, or at all! These comments are divisive to trans communities. They reinforce straight, binary gender standards by labeling certain traits (and people) as 'good' and 'real'.

Fetishization/Tokenization

Yes, it's true, trans people are all incredibly sexy in our own unique individual ways, but don't fetishize and tokenize us. Don't tell us how you love FtMs because we were socialized female and therefore we aren't like 'real men.' While this may be true for some individuals, FtMs are just as diverse as any other group. Many transmen identify as 'real men' who are just as (or more) masculine than people assigned 'male' at birth. Don't tell us how MtFs are the ideal sex partners because they are 'chicks with dicks.'

Don't expect any one of us to speak for all trans people. Don't assume that you know about trans issues because you once knew a trans person. If we are offended by something you do, listen, apologize and reflect – don't excuse your bad behavior by saying that your other trans friend didn't mind. Don't

² In this context, 'passing' refers to trans people being perceived as non-trans members of their correct gender category. While this is a goal for most trans people, I think its important to stay aware of the systemic power imbalance that is implicit in this term. I prefer the term 'being passed,' because it emphasizes the fact that trans people do not have total control over how we are perceived, and that the power in the equation of passing lies completely with the non-trans person who 'passes' us. It is something done to us, not something we are able to control.

showcase us as tokens of diversity in your social circle or annual report, without being a real friend or truly integrating transpeople into your organization.

Transphobia + sexism + racism + classism = a big slimy mess

It is a stereotype that all trans people are sexist: that all MtFs are still “really men” and still have male privilege, and that all FtMs are becoming men because of their internalized sexism. Trans people can be sexist towards ourselves and others, but we are not any more or less sexist than non-trans people. It is not inherently sexist to be trans.

Similarly and unfortunately, trans communities are just as racist, classist, etc. as the rest of the world, but not more so. And these dynamics play out in particular ways among transpeople. Just like some people will tell you all gay people are white, some people believe that all trans people are white, and that being trans is just a privilege of white people. Of course it is easier to be trans (or anything actually) if you are white and have money, but most gender-variant and trans people are working-class and poor people of color, because most people in the world are poor and working-class people of color. Being trans is not inherently racist or classist.

Age

Don't be surprised if you or others radically misread a trans person's age. It may be amazing to you, but we are used to it, and probably over it.

A lot of trans people on the FtM spectrum look much younger than they are, especially if they are not on hormones, are on a low dose of hormones, or are just starting hormones. Because of this, we may experience some of the lovely effects of adultism, such as not being taken seriously, getting carded all the time, and being condescended to. A lot of people on the MtF spectrum look older than they are, and experience the delightful effects of sexism, like being treated as less important because they aren't seen as young and pretty.

Fascinating trans films/ politics/TV shows/etc etc...

It is really important for people to educate themselves about different experiences of oppression, however, someone who has had to deal with that oppression all the time may not want to hear about it, or process how hard it was for you, as someone not directly affected by it. For example, when the movie “Boys Don't Cry” came out, many many people every day took it upon themselves to try and discuss it with me, ask me if I've seen it, explain how tragic it was and how hard it was for them to watch as a non-trans person. We have to deal with transphobia **all the time** and so we don't always want to talk about it. Check yourself before you bring up the ten latest, most horrifying transphobic things you heard yesterday - your trans friend may actually not want to re-experience them with you. If you want to discuss a movie, book, current event or experience that relates to trans issues, bring it up with another non-trans person. If a trans person wants to discuss it with you, they'll bring it up.

“Extra letter” Syndrome

Gay and lesbian organizations all over the country have added a token 'T' to their names, without doing anything to include trans people or issues in their organizations. Although queer issues and trans struggles are interlinked (don't forget who rioted at Stonewall), they are very different. For example, access to transition-related medical care (such as hormones and surgery), and issues of legal

identification (such as changing our names and 'sex') are huge struggles faced by transpeople, but are non-issues for gay and lesbian people. As mentioned above, being 'out.' which is desirable in many GLQ spaces (especially white, middle-class ones), is not a goal of many transpeople. The world of issues around sexual orientation is fundamentally different than the world of gender, so don't assume you are serving us at all by just adding a "T" on the end of your acronym.

Recognize your own gender uniqueness and how transphobia affects you, but don't speak for trans people. Also recognize that within trans communities, not only is each individual's experience different, but each group of individuals' experience is different from other groups. Just as you probably wouldn't (or shouldn't) ask a gay man to explain lesbian issues, you shouldn't lump all trans people together, because we all have unique experiences and perspectives. For example, African-American transsexual issues are different from disabled genderqueer issues, which are different from drag king issues, and so on. Also, most indigenous cultures have non-binary gender systems, and many of us identify with our ethnically-specific gender identities (such as two-spirit, hijra, timtum, fa'afafine, etc.) that may overlap with, but are distinct from being 'trans.'

GOOD THINGS!

There are so many positive things you can do to be a supporter of trans people, even if you do not have much experience with trans communities.

Start with being honest about how much you know, or don't know. It is refreshingly wonderful to hear someone say: "Actually, I don't know anything about trans people. I want to support you and respect you, so please forgive my ignorance. I'm going to start educating myself." Almost all of us started out ignorant of trans issues – even trans people! The important thing is to pro-actively learn more once you become aware.

Educate yourself and take action!

- Look at books, websites, films.
- Talk to other non-trans people who know more than you do.
- Start an unlearning transphobia group with other non-trans friends.
- Help write a non-discrimination policy for your school or workplace that protects gender identity and expression.
- Pay some trans folks to do an educational presentation for your group or organization.
- Especially if you work in a school, faith-based organization, governmental agency, or a social justice, social services or healthcare organization, try to integrate trans-inclusive policies and services.
- Work to create bathrooms that are accessible for all genders (for example, single-stall gender-neutral bathrooms)
- Think critically about your own gender and your participation in the binary gender system.
- Reflect on how you can be a better ally to trans people.

Once you have educated yourself, educate other non-trans people about gender issues. This is so needed and appreciated!! There have been so many times when people said offensive things to me when I wished I had a non-trans ally to refer them to. Trans people shouldn't have to do all the work. Besides, even though there are way more of us than you think, there aren't enough of us to educate all the hordes and hordes of non-trans people in the world. Also, it's a lot harder for us to do this work, because we are more vulnerable. Helping someone unlearn transphobia usually involves hearing and sorting through a lot of hurtful crud while people sort out their feelings about gender.

Interrupt transphobic behavior. This is also usually easier for a non-trans person to do, because they are not making themselves as personally vulnerable or a target for retaliation.

For example, correcting other people when they refer to someone by the wrong pronoun is very important. When introducing people, it is good etiquette to clue them in beforehand about the language preferred by any trans people who are present. By this I don't mean outing any trans people who would prefer not to be out, but letting people know how to refer to anyone who might not 'pass.' Simply saying things like, "I'm a lady, he's a guy," or "that's none of your business," or "actually, his voice/body/manner is just great the way it is, and I don't want to hear another comment about it," can save the day.

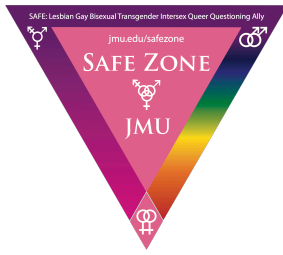
Above all, talk to your trans friends, listen and educate yourself. If you are not sure how to best support someone, ask them. If you are not ready to support someone in the way that they need, don't pretend that you are, just figure out what you need to do to get there. Advocacy and alliance don't require you to be an expert, just be honest with yourself and take some risks.

Remember:

gender is a universe and we are all stars.

Transphobia limits and oppresses all of us.

By becoming an ally, you'll not only have the satisfaction of doing the right thing, you'll get to experience your true starry brilliance.



Safe Zone Contract & Website Information Form

JMU email address: _____

Name as you want it to appear on the web site:

First Name: _____ (optional)

Last Name: _____

Title: Gender-free: ☐ none ☐ Dr. ☐ Professor

Gender-neutral: ☐ M. ☐ Mx. ☐ Ind(ividual)

Gendered: ☐ Ms. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ Mr.

More options: _____ (e.g., Dean or Judge)

Pronouns for the website:

Gender-free: ☐ None. Just use my name. ☐ no preference (blank on website)


☐ I don't know. Do I have to decide right now? (blank on website)

Gender-neutral: ☐ they/them ☐ xe/xem ☐ ze/hir


Gendered: ☐ she/her ☐ he/him

Freestyle: _____

Your primary department, unit, or office: _____

 Should the website indicate that you have a professional specialty in LGBTQ+ topics?

☐ yes ☐ no If yes, optionally add any detail you want to be included: _____

 Should the website indicate that you have a professional specialty in other inclusion topics?

☐ yes ☐ no If yes, optionally add any detail you want to be included: _____

Other affiliation(s) you want listed on the website including websites, if applicable: _____

CONFIDENTIALITY: *I agree to honor the confidentiality entrusted to me regarding the sexual/romantic orientation and gender of all people.*

signature

date



Safe Zone Workshop Evaluation Form

Date _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation

Your responses will help make the Safe Zone program at JMU a success

1. My level of knowledge about working with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and questioning students or faculty members **prior** to this workshop was:
☐ high ☐ moderately high ☐ moderately low ☐ low
2. **After** this workshop, my level of knowledge relating to these same issues is:
☐ high ☐ moderately high ☐ moderately low ☐ low
3. I feel I better understand what it means to be a *Safe Zone* member of the JMU community.
☐ yes ☐ no
4. I feel that this workshop offered ample information to prepare me to create an environment of support, understanding and resources for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer students and faculty members.
☐ yes ☐ no (*if no, please explain what else could be added*)
