Working with the LGBTQ Community

In-Service Curriculum

Trainer Guide

Office of Child Welfare

3/1/2019
Working with the LGBTQ Community

Time:
3 hours

Module
Overview:
Slide 0.1 – 0.2
This course is designed to enhance understanding of youth who identify as LGBTQ, common stereotypes about them, and some of the challenges and obstacles they face. It will also focus on how to interact with youth who identify as LGBTQ in ways that are both courteous and supportive.

Agenda:
Slide 0.3

Unit 1: Acronyms, Terms, and Definitions (TG: 2, PG: 2)
Unit 2: Basic Gender Concepts (TG: 8, PG: 6)
Unit 3: LGBTQ Facts and Statistics (TG: 15, PG: 12)
Unit 4: LGBTQ Issues (TG: 21, PG: 16)
Unit 5: Supporting Youth Who Identify as LGBTQ (TG: 25, PG: 18)

Materials:
- Trainer’s Guide (TG)
- Participant’s Guide (PG)
- PowerPoint slide deck
- Flip chart paper / markers

Activities:

Unit 1
No Activities

Unit 2
Activity A: SOGIE Faces (TG: 13, PG: 9)

Unit 3
Activity B: “Rites of Passage” (TG: 19, PG: 15)

Unit 4
No Activities

Unit 5
Activity C: Non-Gender Specific Dating Conversation (TG: 30, PG: 22)
Activity D: Imagine This (TG: 34, PG: 24)
Unit 1:
Acronyms, Terms, and Definitions

Unit Overview:
Slide 1.1
This unit explores various terms, definitions, and acronyms associated with the LGBTQ community.

Learning Objectives:
Slide 1.2
1. Define the acronym LGBTQ.
2. Define the terms gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender.
3. Define the acronym SOGIE.
4. Define the terms sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
Introduction

Youth who become involved with the Child Welfare System come from all sorts of diverse backgrounds. We have an obligation to treat all youth equally, therefore, it is important to understand the youth that are a part of the LGBTQ community. They often face all sorts of difficult issues in society – harassment, isolation, hate, and violence.

**Trainer Note:** Refer participants to the Common Terms and Definitions at the end of the Participant Guide for use throughout the training. If participants have previously completed the LGBTQ Basics online tutorial, the next section can be used as a review.

LGBTQ

LGBTQ is an acronym that is used to be inclusive of all individuals and communities. The acronym has changed over time. Historically, it began as LGBT, then changed to LGBTQ. More recently, the letters “I” and “A” have been included as well. We will discuss what all of the letters stand for, however, for the purpose of this training, we will refer to it as LGBTQ.

- **L** stands for **Lesbian** and refers to a woman who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to other women.

- **G** stands for **Gay** and refers to a person who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to the same gender. Sometimes, the term is used to only identify gay men. The word “gay” is preferred over the word “homosexual”, although the definition is the same. The opposite of homosexual is heterosexual, which means someone who is sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex.

- **B** stands for **Bisexual** and refers to a person who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to both genders. Sometimes the attraction to each gender is equal or there may be a preference for one gender over the other.
• **T** stands for **Transgender** and refers to a person whose gender identity does not match the sex assigned to them at birth. One's inner sense of being male or female differs from the sex assigned to them at birth. They feel like they are the opposite gender of their biological sex. The opposite of the term transgender is cisgender, which means someone who feels like they are the same gender as their biological sex.

• **Q** stands for **Questioning** and refers to a person, often an adolescent, who is unsure about or is exploring their own sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Sometimes, **Q** also refers to **Queer** which is an umbrella term used to refer to all people who identify as LGBTQ. For some, “queer” has a negative connotation, but many people who identify as LGBTQ have reclaimed the word and use it in a positive light. Many people use the term “queer” because other terms do not accurately describe them.

• **I** stands for **Intersex** and describes a set of medical conditions that feature congenital anomaly of the reproductive and sexual system. Intersex refers to people are born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia, or internal reproductive systems that are not considered “typical” for either male or females.

• **A** stands for **Asexual** and refers to a person who experiences little to no sexual attraction. Sometimes, **A** also refers to **Ally** and describes a person who confronts or challenges heterosexism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexual privilege in themselves and others.

Approximately 5-10% of the general population identify as LGBTQ. Adolescents who identify as LGBTQ are estimated to make up a higher, disproportionate share of the foster care and delinquency pools.
SOGIE is an acronym for the factors that determine membership in the LGBTQ community.

- **SO** stands for **Sexual Orientation**, which refers to a person's emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to others. Everyone has a sexual orientation, whether to members of the same gender, the opposite gender, or both genders. Usually, by about the age of ten, people have already shaped an attraction to others.

- **GI** stands for **Gender Identity**, which refers to a person's internal and psychological sense of being male, female, in between, or neither. Gender identity is not necessarily the same as assigned or presumed sex at birth.

- **E** stands for **Expression** as in Gender Expression and refers to how a person outwardly expresses their gender, by things like name, pronoun choice, style of dress, grooming habits, mannerisms, voice modulation, and other characteristics or social cues.
• The concepts that make up SOGIE are important pieces of every person’s identity, and they can determine and shape many of our needs and experiences, especially our interactions with other people. It is the very fact that these concepts are important to many people that drives much of the discrimination that people who identify as LGBTQ face.

**Sexual Orientation vs Gender Identity**

Earlier, we noted that sexuality and gender were the two main factors that determine membership in the LGBTQ community, but it is important to understand that these factors are completely independent of one another. Gender identity and sexual orientation are two different things. A person’s gender identity has no inherent relationship to their sexual orientation.

**Gender Identity vs Gender Expression**

As we touched on with SOGIE, gender identity is a person’s internal sense of being a man, woman, both, or neither. It refers to how people see and identify themselves, rather than their sex assigned at birth.

• People express gender in many different ways, from the length of their hair to the way they speak, whether they wear make-up or shave, the way they carry themselves, even down to the way they walk. Just as a person’s gender identity may not match their sex assigned at birth, a person’s gender expression may not match their gender identity.

• Like gender itself, gender expression is not a binary. People can express one gender, a mix of genders, or try to express no gender at all. Although most people’s gender expression broadly matches their gender identity, it is not uncommon for people to express a gender contrary to their identity in some way.
The term **gender nonconforming** refers to a person who does not follow social ideas or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on their sex or gender identity. Similar terms include gender creative, gender fluid, gender variant, gender queer, pangender, or non-binary.

The term **gender questioning** refers to a person who is questioning their gender identity or experimenting with different genders.

**Unit Summary:**
This unit provided basic definitions, terms, and acronyms associated with the LGBTQ community. The next unit will explain further information about sex and gender.
# Unit 2: Basic Gender Concepts

## Unit Overview:

*Slide 2.1*

The concepts of sex and gender will be discussed in this unit.

## Learning Objectives:

*Slide 2.2*

1. Define the terms sex and gender.
2. Identify the difference between cisgender and transgender.
Sex

A person’s sex is determined by biological traits associated with being either male or female, such as sexual organs, genetic makeup, hormone production, and the like.

- Sex is usually, although not always, a strict binary. Biologically speaking, the vast majority of people are either female or male.

Sex Assigned at Birth

The phrase “sex assigned at birth” is designed to be inclusive of all natural human variation. Most people are born with a single set of sexual organs and are “assigned” to the corresponding sex when they are born.

- As discussed earlier, some people are born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia, or internal reproductive systems that are not considered “typical” and are considered intersex (the older term, hermaphrodite, is now considered offensive to some).
- In such cases, doctors, often in consultation with the parents, usually assign a single sex to that person at the time of birth.
  - This process may or may not include surgery to remove the other set of sexual organs. Performing this surgery on children, before they are old enough to be part of the decision process, is seen as controversial now and has gained a lot of criticism due to the presumptions being made by doctors and/or parents. In 2018 the California legislature passed a resolution demanding the medical community halt nonconsensual medical procedures that try to cosmetically "normalize" variations in intersex children's sex characteristics.
Gender

Gender refers to the collection of roles, behaviors, activities, attributes, attitudes, and prohibitions that a society considers normal and appropriate for men and women. A person’s gender is determined by how they choose to interact with those societal expectations.

- While sex is binary, gender is more of a spectrum, and all individuals express and identify with aspects of both femininity and masculinity to varying degrees. The terms “masculine” and “feminine” are used to identify and assign gender and also to reinforce society’s gender norms. Some may identify as non-binary meaning that they do not express gender as masculine or feminine.

- Gender is not based on biology, but on social roles and expectations. Hair length is a good example. In our culture, long hair is generally considered feminine and short hair is considered masculine, but it is not that uncommon to find men with long hair or women with short hair. Nevertheless, sometimes men with long hair are mistaken for women when seen from behind, because it is seen as a marker of gender. The fact that men are capable of growing their hair long is proof that long hair is not a biologically female trait; it is entirely a social construct. These individuals are expressing an aspect of their gender – a very minor aspect – that is the opposite of their sex.

- Children are not born knowing what it means to be a girl or a boy. They learn it from their parents, other children, and the society around them. This learning process begins early, and is continuously reinforced at all levels of society and across all institutions.

- Cultural traditions like “blue for boys, pink for girls” or telling girls they’re pretty and boys they’re strong are so universal and are heard so often that by the time a child can talk, they already know them by heart. It continues into puberty and adulthood, where social expectations of masculine and feminine expression and behavior often become more rigid. Gender expectations...
are so pervasive that it can be hard not to see them as a biological fact; nevertheless, they are not fundamentally biological in nature and are socially constructed.

Cisgender and Transgender

As mentioned previously, cisgender refers to someone whose gender identity and biological sex assigned at birth align, i.e., someone who feels like they are the same gender as their biological sex.

- A simple way to think about this is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender.

- “Cis” is a Latin prefix meaning “on the same side as” or “on this side of”.

- Transgender refers to a person whose gender identity – whether they see themselves as a man, woman, or other – does not match the sex assigned to them at birth. It refers to gender identity and gender expression rather than to sexual orientation or physical sexual characteristics. Someone who was assigned the male sex at birth, but who identifies as a woman is a transgender woman; likewise, someone assigned the female sex at birth who identifies as man is a transgender man. Some people who fit this definition of transgender do not identify themselves as such and simply call themselves men or women, consistent with their gender identity.

- Some people who identify as transgender are eligible for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria involves a conflict between a person’s physical or assigned sex and the gender with which they identify.

- In order to meet the diagnostic criteria in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)-V*, an individual must show evidence of a strong and persistent cross-gender identification, a persistent discomfort about one’s sex assigned at birth, and clinically significant distress or impairment in important areas of functioning. Not all people who identify as transgender experience this, but some do and it can occur at any time in life.
- The DSM-V distinguishes between Gender Dysphoria in Childhood for those who experience it before puberty and Gender Dysphoria in Adolescents and Adults, which can occur at any age after puberty.

- Treatment of gender dysphoria is focused on providing support, not changing a person's gender identity. It may include services like individual and family counseling and other medical services.

- Some people who identify as transgender choose to transition from living as their assigned sex to living as their identified sex, which may or may not include medical procedures, such as hormone therapy or gender confirmation surgery.

- Medical standards in the United States prohibit performing gender confirmation surgery on anyone under the age of 18; however, in some cases youth who identify as transgender may receive hormone therapy. Not all people will follow the same pattern or identify in the same way, but they are all entitled to the same consideration and should all be treated with dignity and respect.
### Activity A: SOGIE Faces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>15 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose:</td>
<td>To demonstrate the different ways people identify themselves using the SOGIE Scale.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Materials:    | - **PG: 9-11**, SOGIE Faces worksheet  
    - **PG: 4**, SOGIE Scale  
    - Slides 2.7 - 2.12 |
| Trainer Instructions: | - Refer participants to the SOGIE Scale in the Participant Guide while looking at the PowerPoint slides associated with this activity.  
    - Ask participants to tell you what they know about each individual celebrity in reference to SOGIE. Ask them to guess/point out the sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation of each celebrity. Some answers may be available and some may not because participants may not know about the celebrity’s personal life. |
| Participant Instructions: | 1. While looking at the SOGIE Scale in the Participant Guide, guess/point out the sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation of each celebrity.  
  2. Discuss your observations with the class. |

#### SOGIE Faces Trainer Version

1. **George Clooney:**  
   - Sex – Male  
   - Sexual Orientation – Attracted to women  
   - Gender Identity – Man  
   - Gender Expression – Masculine

2. **Ellen DeGeneres:**  
   - Sex – Female  
   - Sexual Orientation – Attracted to women; she is a self-proclaimed lesbian.  
   - Gender Identity – Woman  
   - Gender Expression – Masculine; she has short hair and more masculine clothing.
3. RuPaul: RuPaul is a drag queen and TV personality who hosts the reality competition series *RuPaul’s Drag Race*.
   - Sex – Male
   - Sexual Orientation – Attracted to men
   - Gender Identity – Man/Woman
   - Gender Expression – Feminine most of the time, especially when working with long hair, women’s clothing, and feminine mannerisms.

4. Jazz Jennings: She is the subject of the TLC show entitled *I Am Jazz*.
   - Sex – Male/Female (born male, but transitioned to female through gender confirmation surgery)
   - Sexual Orientation – Attracted to men
   - Gender Identity – Woman
   - Gender Expression – Feminine; she expresses her gender identity through her long hair, clothing, and mannerisms.

5. Michael Sam: He is the first publicly gay player to be drafted in the NFL. There was a great deal of media coverage and controversy over him playing in the league and many teams/people labeled him as a ‘distraction’. Many of his prospective teammates openly admitted that they were uncomfortable sharing a locker room with him. It’s hard to say if the reactions of people toward his sexual orientation played a role in his short professional football career, but one has to wonder.
   - Sex – Male
   - Sexual Orientation – Attracted to men
   - Gender Identity – Man
   - Gender Expression – Masculine

One way to help remember some of these:

- Gender is between the ears.
- Attraction is between the hearts.
- Sex is between the legs.

**Activity STOP**

**Unit Summary:** In this unit, the terms sex and gender were defined and the differences between cisgender and transgender were identified. Unit 3 focuses on LGBTQ facts and statistics.
Unit 3:
LGBTQ Facts and Statistics

Unit Overview:
Slide 3.1
A variety of facts and statistics will be discussed to further understand the LGBTQ community.

Learning Objective:
Slide 3.2
PG: 12
1. Employ statistics to show how LGBTQ youth are overrepresented in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems.
In 2014, the Center for Disease Control released the results of the first large-scale government survey designed to measure Americans’ sexual orientation. The survey found that 1.6 percent of adults identified as gay or lesbian and 0.7 percent identified as bisexual (an additional 1.1 percent responded “something else,” “I don’t know,” or did not answer the question about sexual orientation). Based on the population of the U.S., this means there are more than 7.3 million gay and bisexual Americans. Studies from other nations over a number of years have found that between 1.2 and 6.8 percent of adults identify as LGBTQ.

- Florida does not currently track the number of children in the Child Welfare System who identify as LGBTQ, but various research studies have found that youth who identify as LGBTQ are overrepresented in the Child Welfare System.
  - One of these studies, conducted by the Williams Institute at the University of California - Los Angeles School of Law, found that 19% of foster youth aged 12-21 in Los Angeles County identify as LGBTQ.

- Often youth who identify as LGBTQ enter the Child Welfare System for the same reasons as other youth, such as their families are unable to provide a safe, stable, and nurturing home for them due to a parent’s incarceration, drug or alcohol abuse, mental illness, etc. Others are rejected, neglected, and/or abused by their families when they learn that the youth identifies as LGBTQ.

- Half of a sampling of gay and lesbian young people in out-of-home care reported having been homeless at some point in the past. When compared to heterosexual homeless youth, LGBTQ homeless youth:
  - Are physically or sexually victimized by an average of seven more people
  - Leave home an average of 12 times as compared to seven times for non-LGBTQ youth
  - Have had nearly twice as many sexual partners
  - Have used dangerous substances more frequently
• Youth who identify as LGBTQ are also overrepresented in the juvenile justice system. In 2011, youth who identify as LGBTQ represented at least 13% of the total population detained in the juvenile justice system nationwide.

• Youth who identify as LGBTQ suffer physical, sexual, and emotional abuse in facilities at a much higher rate than youth who do not identify as LGBTQ.


Transgender Facts and Statistics

The transgender population is less well-studied. In fact, we still do not know for sure how many Americans identify as transgender; the U.S. Census only provides two boxes for gender: male and female. The best estimates we currently have come from the Williams Institute at the University of California - Los Angeles School of Law, whose research indicates that 0.3 percent of American adults identify as transgender. That is approximately 700,000 people.

• Organizations, such as the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, provide some additional statistics regarding the transgender community. For example, one study from 2011 found that:
  - 41% of transgender people surveyed said they had attempted suicide (compared with 1.6% of the general population).
  - The suicide risk increased for transgender people who reported bullying, sexual assault, and job loss.

• Research also shows that youth who identify as transgender are significantly overrepresented in both social services and juvenile
justice settings, and that they face additional challenges because of their gender identity.

• 19% of all people who identify as transgender have been homeless at some point in their lives. 55% of those who tried to access a shelter were harassed by staff or residents and 29% were turned away altogether. Of those who were able to access a shelter, 22% were sexually assaulted by residents or staff.

• There are much more comprehensive statistics for adults who identify as transgender in the prison population than there are for youth who identify as transgender in juvenile justice detention populations.

• In 2011-12, the Federal Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reported that there were over 3,200 people who identify as transgender in U.S. prisons nationwide, and 39.9% of them had reported sexual assault or abuse in the last year either by another prisoner or by prison staff. Those figures indicate that transgender prisoners are victimized at nearly ten times the rate of cisgender prisoners (4% of whom reported such abuse in prisons and 3.2% in jails). Even more disturbing, a California study found that 59% of transgender women held in men’s prisons had been sexually assaulted by another prisoner.


Activity B: “Rites of Passage”

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Time:</th>
<th>10 minutes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose:</td>
<td>This is a visual exercise to have participants think about different life experiences when a person identifies as LGBTQ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Source:</strong> University of Southern California’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center and John-Paul J. Pelletier-Lubarsky for the University of Delaware’s HAVEN organization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Materials:    | • PG: 15, *Rites of Passage worksheet*  
                 • Paper and tape  
                 Slide 3.5 |
| Trainer       | • Divide a wall into three sections entitled Childhood, Adolescence, and Adulthood. |
| Instructions: | • Depending on the size of the class, divide participants into three corresponding groups. |
|               | • Assign each group to think about rites of passages that everyone or almost everyone goes through in their life during these three stages: Childhood, Adolescence, and Adulthood. Some examples include:  
                 - Childhood: first step, first day of school, etc.  
                 - Adolescence: first kiss, senior prom, graduation, etc.  
                 - Adulthood: marriage, paying taxes, etc.  
               | When the groups are finished, have them tape their examples on the wall under their section. |
|               | Go through the answers explaining that these are rites of passage that everyone goes through from childhood to adulthood. |
|               | After going through the answers, go back and ask the group to identify how each answer may be different if a person identifies as LGBTQ. If a rite is identified that it would be different for a person who identifies as LGBTQ, remove it from the wall, turn it upside down, and put it back on the wall. |
### Participant Instructions:

- **When complete, ask the group to look at the wall and imagine how the life of a person who identifies as LGBTQ can be turned upside down.**

#### Part I:

1. In your assigned group, think about rites of passages that everyone or almost everyone goes through during that stage of life.
2. After you have finished brainstorming with your group, tape your examples on the wall under the corresponding section.

#### Part II:

3. Discuss with the whole class and then go back and identify how each answer may be different if a person identifies as LGBTQ.
4. If a rite is identified that would be different for a person who identifies as LGBTQ, remove it from the wall, turn it upside down, and put it back on the wall.

### Activity STOP

### Unit Summary:

This unit provided facts and statistics regarding the LGBTQ community. The next unit identifies the ways that stereotypes and misconceptions contribute to discrimination of the LGBTQ community.
Unit 4:
LGBTQ Issues

Unit Overview:
Slide 4.1
This unit discusses different stereotypes and misconceptions about the LGBTQ community.

Learning Objective:
Slide 4.2
1. Identify common stereotypes about people who identify as LGBTQ and the discrimination they face.
Stereotypes and Misconceptions

People who identify as LGBTQ are found in every social, economic, racial, ethnic, and religious group. They are our teachers, colleagues, friends, parents, and children.

- Everyone has perceptions or preconceived ideas about what it means to be LGBTQ. There are many different stereotypes and assumptions that the LGBTQ community faces. Many misconceptions can easily occur and popular media tends to perpetuate common stereotypes.

- Often, people assume that individuals who identify as LGBTQ have specific political views, religious beliefs, etc. and are more open to discussing sex and medical issues.

- People tend to make comments about whether or not an individual looks gay, transgender, etc. It is not appropriate to ask a person who identifies as LGBTQ if they think someone else is LGBTQ or say they do not look gay, transgender, etc.

- It is also incorrect to assume that all people who identify as LGBTQ have been traumatized or abused, or that coming out as LGBTQ is a form of acting out behavior.

- There was a time in this country when homosexuality was considered a mental illness. Now, mental health professions do not regard homosexuality as a mental or physical disorder and do not regard a same-sex orientation as harmful, undesirable, or requiring intervention or prevention. It is a core part of a person's identity, just as a heterosexual orientation is for a heterosexual person.

- It is important to understand that an individual’s SOGIE is only a small part of who they are. You cannot make assumptions about a person’s gender identity and/or expression based on their sexual orientation and vice. For example, not all gay men love fashion, are stylish, like theater and musicals, etc. and not all lesbians have short hair, love sports, ride motorcycles, etc.
Intersectionality is the focus on the intersection of different forms or discrimination or oppression. There are many aspects of identity that people discriminate against on a regular basis. These include, but are not limited to:

- Race/ethnicity
- Socioeconomic status
- Physical ability and/or appearance
- Cognitive and/or learning disabilities
- Religion
- Nationality
- Immigration status
- Language

Although we may examine different types of prejudice independently, people do not experience them independently. A transgender Latina does not experience these aspects of her life separately. She is all of these things all of the time and her experience may be powerfully shaped by the intersection of different forms and expressions of bias.

According to the 2017 National School Climate Survey, approximately 60% of students who identify as LGBTQ reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation and approximately 45% felt unsafe due to their gender expression.

Approximately 70% said they had been verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation in the past year and 59% because of their gender expression.

Approximately 29% had been physically harassed in the past year because of their sexual orientation and 25% because of their gender expression.

Approximately 12% had been assaulted because of sexual orientation and 11% because of gender expression.
• 55% of students who had experienced harassment or assault did not report it to school staff. Of those that did, approximately 60% said no action was taken by staff.

• Nearly 35% of LGBTQ students reported missing at least one full day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.


**Unit Summary:** This unit described common stereotypes about people who identify as LGBTQ and explored the discrimination and harassment they face. The next unit explores ways to support LGBTQ youth.
Unit 5:
Supporting Youth Who Identify as LGBTQ

Unit Overview:
Slide 5.1
This unit identifies ways to support youth who identify as LGBTQ and provides helpful resources.

Learning Objectives:
Slide 5.2
PG: 18
1. Identify the importance of being sensitive to youth who identify as LGBTQ.
2. Identify local resources for youth who identify as LGBTQ.
Education

Slide 5.3

Education about key issues that people who identify as LGBTQ face is paramount in assisting the LGBTQ community in a meaningful way. It is helpful to continually learn about these issues because they are constantly changing.

- You do not have to be an expert in order to support people who identify as LGBTQ, but it is important to seek out the support and information you need to feel comfortable engaging in discussions about SOGIE.

- One of the first topics to learn about is bias or prejudice.

Personal Bias and Prejudice

You should not assume that all of the young people you work with are heterosexual. Many young people who identify as LGBTQ fear negative reactions and carefully hide that they are LGBTQ.

- Regardless of your own beliefs and biases, you must be professional and not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

- It is important to treat youth who identify as LGBTQ with the same dignity as anyone else. Do not try to change them or convert them. Also, it is important not to stereotype or assume that all people who identify as LGBTQ are the same.

- Be aware of implicit biases which reside deep in the subconscious causing people to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, and appearance. These associations develop over the course of a lifetime, beginning at a very early age, through exposure to direct and indirect messages. Just knowing our own biases can make us more likely to address them.
Bias and Prejudice in Others

When adults demonstrate bias or prejudice, young people will notice how other adults respond. This can greatly affect their relationship with young people, especially when the adult is supposed to be protecting the young person.

- Some people may be subjected to multiple forms of bias or prejudice on the basis of distinct aspects of their identity. Forms of prejudice, such as homophobia, transphobia, sexism, classism, and racism, do not act independently.

- Here are some ways to respond to other people demonstrating bias:
  - Don’t laugh
  - Speak up
  - Challenge bystanders
  - Do not “get even”
  - Be supportive
  - Be non-judgmental
  - Be inclusive
  - Formally object
  - Educate yourself and others

Non-Discrimination

Let youth who identify as LGBTQ know you are willing to listen and talk about anything. Support their freedom of expression, how they personally identify, and show respect for their choices.

- Create a positive environment and be aware that youth who identify as LGBTQ are at a significantly higher risk of harassment and violence. Do not put them in places that are unsafe or discriminatory.

- Never assume someone’s gender or insist that a youth must use their “official” name. If a transgender or gender non-conforming young person prefers a name that is different than that in their official record, it is often because the chosen name
better reflects their identity. Insisting on using the “official” name can be offensive and signals disapproval and disrespect.

- SOGIE can be fluid and a youth may identify differently along the various SOGIE scales at different times. This is especially true for youth who identify as questioning. Assuming that this means that SOGIE identifications are a choice, or that a youth's identification should not be taken seriously as it fluctuates, is harmful to relationship-building and indicative of bias and a lack of understanding.

- Above all, if you make a mistake, apologize and move on.

Use of Language

Slide 5.7

Be aware of your language, body language, and other non-verbal communication. Language/communication is the first step to building trust. If a young person is hesitant to trust us, we may not be able to work on developing positive and healthy outcomes together.

- Body language is extremely important. People may signal disapproval without even knowing it.

- It is helpful to learn about the terms youth who identify as LGBTQ use to identify themselves. A few guidelines include:
  - Allow the youth to self-identify when ready
  - Mirror their language and/or use gender neutral language
  - Ask questions in a respectful way
  - Adjust if and when their identity and/or expression shifts
  - Don’t use any slurs or jokes.

- A simple example of the use of language is:
  - Instead of asking, “Do you have a girlfriend/boyfriend?” try asking, “Are you dating anyone?”

Slide 5.8

- There are a few word choices that may be considered offensive and should be avoided. These include:
- **Lifestyle**
  - Being LGBTQ is not a “lifestyle” – it is a core identity.

- **Choice**
  - Sexual orientation and gender identity are not choices for people who identify as LGBTQ, just as they are not for heterosexual and gender-conforming people.

- **Friend (when referring to someone’s romantic partner)**
  - This signals disapproval and/or discomfort in acknowledging that someone is in a same-sex relationship. It minimizes the relationship and does not acknowledge it as equivalent to a romantic relationship between a man and a woman.

- **Homosexual**
  - Many consider this to be a clinical term not related to real people. Using gay, lesbian, bisexual, or some other word to refer to a particular sexual orientation is safer. If you know it, using the word(s) the youth identifies with is always best.

- **Incorrect names and pronouns**
  - We have previously discussed names, but pronouns can be very important as well, but not always intuitive for interviewers. We are not expected to be experts or mind-readers, but we can pay attention to the pronouns youth use to refer to themselves and mirror those accordingly.
  - When a youth is not clear or has not yet given you enough information to go on, remember to make no assumptions. We can always ask what pronoun the youth prefers.
  - Additionally, do not call someone by the terms “it”, “he-she”, “him-her”, or “s/him,” as these are derogatory.

**Trainer Note:** The next two activities are similar, so you can use one or the other, or both, as needed.
## Activity C: Non-Gender Specific Dating Conversation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>10 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose:</td>
<td>Participants will gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by those who identify as LGBTQ when discussing dating, partners, or significant others amongst people who they do not feel comfortable sharing their sexual orientation with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source:</td>
<td>University of Southern California’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center and John-Paul J. Pelletier-Lubarsky for the University of Delaware’s HAVEN organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials:</td>
<td>• PG: 22, Non-Gender Specific Dating Conversation worksheet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Trainer Instructions: | • Have each participant partner with another participant in the room to discuss the last date they had with a significant other or friend using non-gender specific language.  
• The following words are not allowed to be used: He, she, his, her, boy, girl, man, woman.  
• Have the group discuss the difficulties they experienced while talking about their last date without using the specific words. |
| Participant Instructions: | 1. With a partner, discuss the last date you had with a significant other or friend using non-gender specific language.  
2. Do not use the following words in the discussion: He, she, his, her, boy, girl, man, woman.  
3. Discuss the difficulties you experienced while talking about your last date without using the specific words with the group. |

**Activity STOP**
Confidentiality

Slide 5.10
Child Welfare Professionals have a legal responsibility to protect confidential information regarding youth in their care. This includes information about a youth’s gender identity. At times, disclosure to foster parents, school faculty, or other Child Welfare Professionals may be necessary, such as when making decisions about a youth’s housing, bathroom use, showering, or health and mental health services.

One particular confidentiality concern deals with the act of coming out.

- Coming out is the process of disclosing one's sexual orientation or gender identity to others. It is a personal choice and an ongoing process.

- Young people may be unaware or unsure of their SOGIE. Identity formation is a process unique to each individual, and each person develops an understanding of their SOGIE at their own rate. Some youth may be exploring or questioning their identity, while others may know they are LGBTQ, but fear the negative reactions.

- Youth who identify as LGBTQ experience many different feelings, such as relief, freedom, happiness, fear, rejection, sadness, discomfort, and/or anger, when they come out or anticipate coming out. They may be happy to be able to openly date people they are attracted to and to be able to express their true identity. On the contrary, they may fear rejection, gossip, loss of relationships, being kicked out of the house, or not having financial support.

- The reactions of others can have a profound effect. People who identify as LGBTQ never know how their friends, family, or community will react. When they do come out, some of the reactions of others may include happiness, joy, pride, shock, disbelief, discomfort, confusion, disgust, or anger.

- There are different levels of outness, which makes it a complicated process. People usually cannot come out to
everyone that they know at once so they are often coming out to multiple groups throughout the process. Some may prefer to stay in the closet, some are partially out, and some are completely out. They may be out to select people, such as close friends, but not to family or other peers.

- The degree of openness relates to how comfortable or trusting the person is with other people or groups of people. It may be safe to be out in some circles, but not in others.

- It is important to remember that if someone comes out to you, keep it confidential for them. It is okay, and even recommended, to ask who else they have come out to after they tell you.

- If a young person comes out as LGBTQ, it is important to recognize that the decision to do so took great courage – even if outwardly it may not appear that way. It took a high level of emotional integrity to be honest and truthful about who they are.

- If they disclose to you, use it as an opportunity to show unconditional support. Be willing to have an in-depth discussion and allow your client to process their feelings. The goal is to create a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment.

- Above all, attempting to force youth to come out before they are ready to acknowledge or accept their SOGIE can damage rapport or create conflict. They should be allowed to identify their SOGIE for themselves when they are ready.

- Assist young people who identify as LGBTQ in deciding to whom, where, when, and how to come out in order to ensure safety while maintaining privacy.

- Child Welfare Professionals should respect the privacy of a youth’s SOGIE.

- Any disclosure of information should be limited to information necessary to achieve a specific beneficial purpose for that youth. In these circumstances, the information should only be disclosed...
to individuals who have a need to know.

- A youth’s SOGIE should never be a topic of gossip or idle conversation. If there is not a legitimate purpose for sharing this information, a youth’s SOGIE should not be a topic of conversation.
### Activity D: Imagine This

| Time: | 10 minutes |
| Purpose: | This activity allows participants to think about what life is like every day for someone who identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. |
| Source: | University of Southern California’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center |
| Materials: | Slide 5.15 - PG: 24, Imagine This worksheet |
| Trainer Instructions: | - Read the following scenarios out loud to the group and ask the associated questions:  
  - Close your eyes. Imagine, if you will, that you have met the perfect person... a soul mate. You love spending time with them. They make you laugh. They make you feel complete. You ache when you are away from this person for an extended period of time. You are totally and completely contented and happy, and could think of nothing better than spending the rest of your life with this person... telling and proclaiming to the whole world your love for this one special someone. There is only one catch though - you can’t tell ANYONE!! You can’t bring this person home to meet your parents and family, and you can’t tell any of your other friends about this person. How would this make you feel?  
  - Now imagine that you are sitting alone in your residence hall room, and you are cuddling with this special person. A group of your “friends” from down the hall come knocking at the door. You and that special someone jump to opposite sides of the couch before telling them to come in. They are so excited. They know that you never really “go out” and they say they have found a wonderful “date” for you. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Instructions:</th>
<th>▪ How would this make you feel? How would this make your “special someone” feel? What do you do – do you go or not go?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Listen to the scenarios and answer the associated questions as a group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity STOP**
Psycho-Social Needs

Family and Friends

Youth tend to try different things in an attempt to fit in with friends or establish a sense of who they are in a particular peer group. It may take some time to develop one’s particular personal identity.

- During this time, youth are extremely sensitive to what they perceive to be criticism of who they are, their appearance, their friends, or their opinions. Adolescents tend to be fiercely loyal to friends and family as part of this need to belong to a group – even those that may not treat them well or have rejected them in the past.

- Adults working with youth can help to minimize feelings of rejection by recognizing the importance peers and family have in a young person’s life (even when they exert a negative influence). Discussing the impact others may be having on a situation – rather than dismissing them outright as “bad influences” – can help young people work through their relationships more appropriately.

- It is not uncommon for youth to mistrust adults and expect them to be judgmental. Mistrust may be particularly common for youth who have already lost trust in the people closest to them, like their parents.

School and Activities

School can be a difficult place to navigate for a youth who identifies as LGBTQ. Many face pervasive harassment and violence from peers, teachers, and administrators within schools.

- There is a major correlation between harassment and unsafe schools in school dropout, truancy charges, and other school-related offenses.

- Nearly one-third of students who identify as LGBTQ who drop out of high school do so to escape harassment. If a young person is skipping school because they are being bullied or
harassed, then they might not care about the consequences if skipping school means avoiding the bullying.

- In some instances, youth who identify as LGBTQ fight back to defend themselves at school, and the system responds by charging them.

- Involvement in positive peer groups and in the LGBTQ community can help youth who identify as LGBTQ have a sense of personal empowerment, positive self-identity, and meaningful connections.

- School-based resources, such as clubs that address LGBTQ student issues (commonly known as Gay-Straight Alliances or GSAs) have a positive impact on school climate. They are student-led, school-based clubs open to all members of the student body. They often advocate for improved school climate, educate the larger school community about LGBTQ issues, and support students who identify as LBTQ.


### Physical Needs

#### Medical Care

It is important to provide developmentally appropriate information and resources about sexuality and sexual health, including about LGBTQ issues.

- The World Professional Association for Transgender Health has developed internationally recognized protocols for diagnosing and treating youth and adults with gender dysphoria. These protocols recommend that transgender young people gain real-life experience through dressing in the clothes and using names and pronouns associated with their gender identity.
• Young people age 16 years and older with gender dysphoria are seen as candidates for an individualized assessment for medical treatment to enable them to begin their physiological transition.

Risk Factors

A 2013 study by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) that surveyed both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ youth (ages 13-17) from around the country found some stark differences in the challenges they face.

• When asked to describe one thing in their lives they would change right now, the LGBTQ youth came up with completely different responses than the non-LGBTQ youth.
  
  - Top three responses for non-LGBTQ youth:
    1. Money/debt/finances
    2. Appearance/weight
    3. Improved mental health
  
  - Top three responses for LGBTQ youth:
    1. Understanding/tolerance/hate
    2. My parents/family situation
    3. Where I live/who I live with

• When asked to describe the most important problem they faced right now, the LGBTQ youth came up with completely different responses than the non-LGBTQ youth.

  - Top three responses for non-LGBTQ youth:
    1. Classes/exams/grades
    2. College/career
    3. Financial pressures

  - Top three responses for LGBTQ youth:
    1. Non-accepting families
    2. School problems/bullying
    3. Fear of being out or open

• This data illustrates the type of stigma regularly directed at youth who identify as LGBTQ and these issues help highlight the negative effects on their health and well-being.
Family Supports

Approximately one in every four families in the U.S. has a family member who identifies as LGBTQ.

- For some birth, foster, or adoptive parents, learning that a child is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning can be a very difficult juncture. For others, this information is welcomed and recognized as a sign of trust. How a parent responds to their child will have an enormous impact on the child’s development and on the quality of the parent-child relationship.

- Family rejection is the greatest risk factor for youth who identify as LGBTQ and it has an enormous impact on increasing the likelihood of engaging in risky behavior. There are clear links in the research between family acceptance during adolescence and positive health status in young adulthood.

- Young adults who report high levels of family acceptance score higher on three measures of positive adjustment and health: self-esteem, social support, and general health.

- The graphic below shows the difference between accepting and non-accepting parents:
Family rejection may be due to shame, religion, internalized homophobia or transphobia, unresolved issues about sexuality, fear, protectiveness, and even love coupled with misunderstanding.

Does anyone have an example of family rejection and how that affected the youth they were working with?

Endorse all answers.

Rejection can be expressed in many different ways:
- Some may hit or abuse a child because of their LGBTQ identity.
- Some may verbally harass or call the child names.
- Some may pressure the child to change.
- Some may tell them that God is going to punish them.
- They may tell the child that they are ashamed.
- Some families may have different rules for youth who identify as LGBTQ than other youth in the house.
- Some parents may even support inappropriate charges of sex offenses against their child.

- Family rejection has serious negative physical and mental health outcomes for youth who identify as LGBTQ. Some possible consequences include homelessness, survival crimes, and lack of support. Homelessness may be a result of the youth running away from home or being kicked out. With no support from their family, these youth may resort to survival crimes, such as shoplifting, theft, trespassing, or drug sales. They are also at increased risk for being commercially sexually exploited in prostitution or other venues of commercial sex.

• It is important for Child Welfare Professionals to involve families and provide support and guidance to parents and caregivers to help them adjust to their child's SOGIE and to educate families on the positive impacts of family acceptance as well as the negative impacts of family rejection.

• A great resource is Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). They offer a volunteer-based network of peer support chapters around the country.

Placement and Foster Care

All youth in care need nurturing homes that provide them with a safe place to process their feelings of grief and loss, freedom to express who they are, and structure to support them in becoming responsible, healthy adults. Creating a welcoming home for youth who identify as LGBTQ is not much different from creating a safe and supportive home for any youth.

https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/LGBTQyouth.pdf

• Unsupportive or biased foster care settings may cause risk factors. Lack of support in these systems may contribute to their eventual entry into delinquency court. It is important to remember that involvement in one system may impact the
youth in another.

- Out-of-home placements can often be unsupportive and lead to negative outcomes, such as running away.

- Also, once in foster care, bias against youth who identify as LGBTQ may make it harder to find permanent placements for them, prolonging their stay in the Child Welfare System.

- Many LGBTQ youth experience multiple disrupted placements, compounding the trauma associated with leaving their families of origin and increasing the chances of homelessness. For example, 78 percent of LGBTQ youth in one study were removed or ran away from foster placements because of the caregiver’s hostility toward their sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Youth who are rejected by their families (biological, foster, or adoptive), may experience greater risks than other youth in care. Studies show that these youth have lower self-esteem and a much greater chance of health and mental health problems as adults.

- Prior to placing a youth who identifies as LGBTQ, Child Welfare Professionals should consider if the personal beliefs of a prospective caregiver or foster or adoptive family are not in the child’s best interests. Foster families may need guidance to understand the line between their obligations as caregivers and their personal beliefs.

- Child Welfare Professionals and foster parents should acknowledge and examine any anti-LGBTQ biases they might have.

- If these personal beliefs might prevent offering nonjudgmental care to youth who identify as LGBTQ, the Child Welfare Professional and/or foster parent should seek outside support and make alternative care arrangements. They must put the needs of young people above their own personal beliefs.

- It is imperative that foster parents and other Child Welfare Professionals not impose their personal beliefs on children in
their care. Young people who identify as LGBTQ often feel forced to hide their identities from their foster parents and caregivers and to join religious organizations that condemn homosexuality.

**After placement, how can Child Welfare Professionals assess if a placement is supportive of the youth’s SOGIE?**

**Endorse all answers.**

- Young people in foster care should never feel as though they must choose between being open and supported in their sexual orientation or gender identity and feeling welcome in a particular placement.

- Where there are strong personal beliefs against people who identify as LGBTQ, Child Welfare Professionals should assess if conflicts may arise as a result, and if the physical or emotional safety of the young person may be jeopardized in that home.

- A high percentage of youth who identify as LGBTQ who are in foster care experience further verbal harassment and even physical violence after they are placed in out-of-home care. This can cause multiple disrupted placements and even homelessness.


Community Resources

A sense of belonging is essential to human development. Community isolation is another risk factor for youth who identify as LGBTQ.

- A lack of positive community ties can lead to low self-esteem, depression, and substance abuse.
- Alternatively, positive community programs and feeling connected to community can have the opposite effect.
- Positive community ties, socialization opportunities, and access to community resources for youth who identify as LGBTQ can make a world of difference.
- Here is a list of resources for youth who identify as LGBTQ by state: https://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/fs_resources-for-lgbtq-youth-by-state_1.pdf

Module Review:

Now that you have completed this in-service training on working with the LGBTQ community, you should be familiar with the acronyms LGBTQ and SOGIE, common stereotypes about people who identify as LGBTQ, and the importance of being sensitive to youth who identify as LGBTQ.
Common Terms and Definitions

**Ally**: Describes a person who confronts and challenges heterosexism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexual privilege in herself or himself and others.

**Asexual**: Describes a person who experiences little to no sexual attraction.

**Bias**: Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

**Biphobia**: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexual people.

**Bisexual**: Describes a person who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to both genders.

**Cisgender**: Describes a person whose gender identity matches his or her sex assigned at birth.

**Coming Out**: Describes the act or process of voluntarily disclosing one’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Drag**: The act of cross-dressing as a part of a performance. Drag performance does not define a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Gay**: Refers to a person who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to the same gender.

**Gender**: A social construct used to classify a person as a man, woman, or some other identity. Fundamentally different from the sex assigned at birth, it is often closely related to the role that a person plays or is expected to play in society.

**Gender Creative**: See Gender Nonconforming

**Gender Expression**: Refers to how a person outwardly expresses their gender, by things like name, pronoun choice, style of dress, grooming habits, mannerism, voice modulation, and other characteristics or social cues.

**Gender Fluid**: See Gender Nonconforming.
**Gender Identity:** Refers to a person’s internal and psychological sense of being male, female, in between, or neither.

**Gender Nonconforming (GNC):** Refers to a person who does not follow social ideas or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on their sex or gender identity. Similar terms include gender creative, gender fluid, gender variant, gender queer, and pangender. One example would be a girl or woman who, in the past, may have been referred to as a “tomboy.”

**Gender Queer:** See Gender Nonconforming.

**Gender Questioning:** Refers to a person who is questioning their gender identity or experimenting with different genders.

**Gender Transition:** The experience by which a person goes from living and identifying as one gender to living and identifying as another.

**Gender Variant:** See Gender Nonconforming.

**Hermaphrodite:** An outdated medical term used to refers to someone having both male and female sex organs or other sexual characteristics. See Intersex.

**Heteronormative:** The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality.

**Heterosexism:** The belief that all people are heterosexual, the assumption and/or belief that heterosexual relationships and behavior are superior, and the actions based on this assumption.

**Heterosexuality:** Describes a sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to individuals of the opposite sex.

**Homophobia:** The irrational hatred and fear of lesbian or gay people, or disapproval of other sexual orientations, regardless of motive. Homophobia includes prejudice, intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and acts of violence against people on the basis of their gay or lesbian identity. It occurs on personal, institutional, and societal levels and is closely linked with transphobia and biphobia. Internalized homophobia is the fear and self-hate of one’s own gay or lesbian identity, which can occur for individuals who have been conditioned throughout childhood with negative ideas about sexual orientations other than heterosexuality.

**Homosexuality:** Considered an outdated clinical term that describes a sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to individuals of the same sex.
“Gay” and “lesbian” are more commonly accepted terms.

Implicit bias: Bias that is activated involuntarily and without awareness or intentional control. It resides deep within the subconscious and can alter our feelings or attitudes toward others.

- Everyone has personal values and beliefs, and therefore, everyone has implicit biases about race, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, etc.

“In the Closet”: Refers to a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex person who chooses not to disclose their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity to friends, family, co-workers, or society. There are varying degrees of being “in the closet.” For example, a person can be “out” in their social life but “in the closet” at work or with family. Also known as “on the down-low” or “D/L”.

Internal bias: Having private views about someone’s identity, but not necessarily talking about those views (e.g., internally believing that being gay is morally wrong, but not sharing those feelings with others).

Intersectionality: The study of the intersection of different forms of discrimination or oppression

Intersex: Describes a set of medical conditions that feature congenital anomaly of the reproductive and sexual system. Intersex people are born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia, or internal reproductive systems that are not considered “typical” for either males or females.

Lesbian: Refers to a woman who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to other women.

Outing: The act of publicly declaring someone’s sexual orientation or gender identity without that person’s consent.

Overt bias: Unconcealed, open preference that can come off as hostile to those who are not included in the preference (e.g., using homophobic or transphobic language openly, bullying, put-downs).

Pangender: See Gender Nonconforming.

Pansexual: A person who is sexually, romantically, and emotionally attracted to members of all gender identities and expressions.
**Queer**: An umbrella term used to refer to all LGBTQ people; the term can be a political statement as well as an identity, seeking to expand upon limited sexual and gender-based categories. For some, “queer” has a negative connotation, given its historical use as a negative term. Many LGBTQ people, however, have reclaimed the word and now use it in a positive light. Many people use the term “queer” because other terms do not accurately describe them.

**Questioning**: Refers to a person, often an adolescent, who is unsure about or is exploring their own sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

**Sexual Orientation**: Refers to a person’s emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to others.

**Transgender**: Refers to a person whose gender identity does not match the gender assigned to them at birth.

**Transphobia**: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of transgender people, the transgender community, or gender ambiguity.

**Transvestite**: This is an outdated term that is offensive to many. Historically, this term referred to a person who adopts the dress and behavior typical of the opposite sex.

**Two Spirit**: A term used in some Native American communities for people who identify with gender roles of both men and women and/or are considered a separate or third gender.