

# **The Bridge 13 LGBTQIA2S+ Affirming Spaces Resource Book**



# Online Resources

This workbook is also available online as a PDF with clickable links. To access the online material, navigate to <https://newavenues.org/b13workbooks/> in your web browser.

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>15 Ways to Show up for LGBTQIA2S+ Folks</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Names and Pronouns</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Tips for Showing up for Trans Folks</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Interrupting Oppression</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Online Resources</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Gender Unicorn</b>	<b>17</b>

# Introduction

Bridge 13 began in roughly 1995/96, approximately 20 years before the Tilikum Crossing: Bridge of the People became the 13th brick and mortar structure to span the Willamette River. At the time, we believed our work as an educational program functioned as the “13th Bridge” connecting multiple communities in Portland. Along with bell hooks, we believe that “education is the practice of freedom” and we work to center the lives and resiliency of the LGBTQIA2S+ youth with whom we work in order to imagine a different future for us all.

In addition to hosting Bridge 13, the New Avenues LGBTQIA2S+ department also includes the Sexual and Gender Minority Youth Resource Center (SMYRC) and The Living Room. These programs offer drop in services, support groups, gender-affirming and harm reduction gear and social spaces for LGBTQIA2S+ youth ages 13-24 in Multnomah and Clackamas County respectively.

We do not video record our workshops and respectfully request that you not disseminate these materials without checking in with your trainer.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher. For permission requests, please write to [bridge13@newavenues.org](mailto:bridge13@newavenues.org).



# 15 Ways to Create Safer Spaces For LGBTQIA2S+ Folks

## **Use intentional advertising.**

Posters, stickers, and brochures on your walls or office materials can passively communicate that your office/school/practice is a safe space for LGBTQIA2S+ people.

## **Do not make assumptions regarding your student's, client's, or friend's sexual orientation or gender identity.**

There is no one way to look or act like a given identity.

## **Do your own homework.**

Educate yourself about risk factors that LGBTQIA2S+ people face, LGBTQIA2S+ and LGBTQIA2S+ - friendly resources in the community, and ways that you can continue to work on being an ally. Don't depend on your LGBTQIA2S+ friends/clients/students to do the work for you. Being an ally is a continual process, not something that you ever complete and hold the title of permanently.

## **Encourage your schools and offices to create gender inclusive bathroom options.**

Gender inclusive bathrooms can be single- or multi-stalled and are bathrooms that anyone of any gender can enter. Gender specific bathrooms can often be uncomfortable, intimidating and/or unsafe for trans and gender nonconforming people to access. Lack of access to a bathroom can lead to health consequences.

## **Ask yourself, "Why do I need to know?"**

Before asking an LGBTQIA2S+ person a question about or related to their LGBTQIA2S+ identity or experience, ask yourself if the answer is necessary to know for the work you are doing with them or the relationship you have with them. This practice can help you reflect on the appropriateness of your curiosity and keep you from crossing people's boundaries.

# 15 Ways to Create Safer Spaces For LGBTQIA2S+ Folks

## **Be understanding as people process their gender identities and sexual orientations at their own pace.**

A person's pronouns and name may change a number of times. Additionally, a person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity may shift between a number of identities. Work on understanding that there is flexibility in identity, even if it is confusing to you.

## **Listen to LGBTQIA2S+ voices.**

Become familiar with LGBTQIA2S+ experiences, histories, and cultures through movies, books, conferences, or going to see a speaker. Identities and experiences within the LGBTQIA2S+ community are diverse and intersecting; seek out various stories from different perspectives.

## **Do not "out" people, or talk about their LGBTQIA2S+ identity non-consensually.**

A person may "out" someone either through gossiping or because they think others have a "right to know." Outing someone could risk that person's safety and/or resources. It may be the case that a person uses different names and/or pronouns in different spaces and not respecting this could out them.

## **Be understanding as people come out at their own pace.**

Do not pressure a person to come out to people who they do not want to come out to. Additionally, do not pressure a person to come out sooner than they feel comfortable.

## **If someone comes out to you, help them identify other safe and unsafe people to come out to.**

This is about reviewing the person's resources and safety, not about scaring or shaming them during what is most likely a vulnerable time.

# 15 Ways to Create Safer Spaces For LGBTQIA2S+ Folks

## **Create inclusive intake forms that have room for LGBTQIA2S+ identities.**

For example, expand the “sex” or “gender” options on official forms beyond only male/female, or ask for preferred name and pronouns. Exclusive forms may require that clients/students come out before they know if it is safe or even if they would prefer not to. Additionally, an exclusive form may create a barrier to accessing the service.

## **Use intentional language.**

Use appropriate language through listening to your friend/student/client describe their sexual orientation and gender identity in their own words.

## **When referring an LGBTQIA2S+ person to a resource, do a “warm hand-off.”**

Call first to confirm the referral source is a safe space for those who identify as LGBTQIA2S+. Additionally, it may be relevant to find out if they have experience in serving LGBTQIA2S+ -identified people.

## **Avoid using heteronormative language.**

This is language that is rooted in the expectation or assumption that most (or all) people are heterosexual.

## **When it’s safe, interrupt problematic language using a strategy that works for you.**

Try to be as respectful and constructive as possible when interrupting. Remember: it’s about restoring safety to the space, not necessarily changing minds in the moment.



# Names and Pronouns

Respecting someone's asserted names and pronouns is one of the easiest ways we can show up for LGBTQIA2S+ folks. While this is as simple as reflecting back self-identifying language, there are still some practical considerations and steps we can take to show up as best we can.



## Pronouns

- Put your pronouns in your email signature or video call name.
  - Check for others' and utilize that info!!
- Add optional pronoun sharing to your meeting introductions/check ins
  - “Let’s introduce ourselves to the group. Please share your name and, if you are comfortable doing so, your asserted pronouns. I am [name] and I use [pronouns]”
  - It is important to emphasize that pronoun sharing is **OPTIONAL**- there are many reasons why someone might not want to disclose their asserted pronouns in a space and it is inappropriate to pressure them to share.
  - Remind the group to consider how they show up for trans people
- Use someone’s pronouns consistently.
- Create reminders when needed.
- Don’t assume pronouns of people you do not know.
- Allow the space and time for change as people figure out their identity.

# Practice

- Use tools like:
  - [Practice with Pronouns](#)
  - [The GLSEN Pronoun Guide](#)
- Use they/them when talking about strangers.
- Practice with a supportive person.
- Practice with yourself in quiet moments.
- Correct yourself every time.



# Names

- Always use someone's asserted name.
- Avoid "Deadnaming"
  - (Using the name that a transgender person was given at birth and no longer uses)
- Respect someone's privacy about their deadname.
  - If you require the legal name of an individual for paperwork, let them know the reason, ask politely and move on!
  - "This document requires your legal name, if your legal name is different than what you go by, can you please tell me so I can fill it in appropriately?"
- Using the name, a trans person chose for themselves is very affirming and can create a safe space. This also means, a trans person feels unsafe or unaccepted when someone uses their old name.



# What if I Make a Mistake?

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

# Tips for Showing Up for Trans Folks

## **Challenge yourself to not make assumptions about people's gender identities.**

There are many ways to be trans or have a trans experience (e.g. not all trans folks have access or want access to hormones) and it is important not to assume that you know if someone is or is not trans-identified. The way you perceive a person's gender may not align with the way they identify and misgendering a person can be disrespectful, invalidating, hurtful, and make a space or resource unsafe and/or inaccessible.

## **One way of being trans should not be privileged over another.**

For instance, a person who has transitioned with hormones and/or various gender confirmation surgeries is not and should not be understood as "more trans" than someone who identifies as trans and has not taken or does not want to take that path.

## **Respect people's pronouns.**

Do not assume what pronoun a person uses based on how you read their gender expression. In an appropriate setting, ask, "what pronouns do you use?" Offer yours to them, too! Do not only ask clients you read as gender nonconforming, but not others, for their pronouns. Check in periodically, as people's pronouns may change.

## **Use respectful language at all times, not just when you know (or think) there is a trans person present.**

This includes respectful use of pronouns or avoiding gender-specific language, using the words that a person uses to describe themselves when referring to them, and never using pejorative terms (unless they are used to self-identify).

## **Do not make assumptions about a trans person's sexual orientation.**

Gender identity and sexual orientation are distinct and separate identities. Trans people can be gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, straight, etc. just as cisgender people can.

# Tips for Showing Up for Trans Folks

## **Never “out” someone’s trans identity for them.**

Most likely, if someone has not “come out” in a certain space or to certain people, they have reasons. Whether you out someone because you think other people have a “right to know” or are casually gossiping about a person, outing someone as trans could have severe emotional, economic and/or safety repercussions.

## **Be understanding of people as they process their gender identities at their own pace.**

This might mean that identities, names, and pronouns shift and change. Meet people where they are at and follow their lead, even if it is confusing to you.

## **Do not police gender identity or expression in the bathroom.**

Trans and gender nonconforming people may not match the “skirt” or “pants” option on the bathroom door; this doesn’t mean that they should not access that particular bathroom. Gender policing ranges from intimidating looks and/or questioning whether someone is in the right bathroom, to verbal and/or physical abuse. Allow trans people to use the gender-specific bathroom that aligns with their gender identity, if one exists. Encourage businesses, schools, and workplaces to provide gender neutral bathroom options.

## **Ask yourself, “Why do I need to know?”**

Before asking a trans person a question about or related to their trans identity or experience, ask yourself if the answer is necessary to know for the work you are doing with them or the relationship you have with them. This practice can help you reflect on the appropriateness of your curiosity and keep you from crossing people’s boundaries.

# Tips for Showing Up for Trans Folks

## **Do not ask trans people personal questions about their bodies.**

Ask yourself the question, “Why do I need to know?” before asking a question to ensure it is not inappropriate or crossing personal boundaries. You do not have the “right to know,” about a trans person’s body or medical history.

## **Know your limits as an ally.**

Be willing to admit that you might not know everything and when you see the limits of your understanding, know of various resources to refer people to. Admitting your limits is better than giving incorrect or hurtful information.

## **Listen to trans voices.**

Trans people are the experts on their own lives. Additionally, not all trans people have the same experience or same voice. It is important to listen to a variety of trans voices, not just a single story from one perspective.

## **Do your own homework.**

All trans people do not always have the time, emotional capacity or desire to educate you. Find resources that can support your process of becoming an ally. If someone in your life comes out to you as trans, show that you recognize how difficult it may have been to come out by taking care of yourself and working on your own prejudices, questions and concerns about gender and trans identities.

# Interrupting Oppression

While interrupting bias incidents requires a great deal of in-the-moment discretion, we can proactively prepare ourselves and our communities to deal with them safely and effectively.



## Before the Incident

1. Offering effective support around bias incidents begins with genuine relationship-building: by investing in our personal and professional relationships with our coworkers and clients we gain understanding of their unique perspectives and build a base of trust.
2. While marginalized community members should not be expected to be the spokespeople for their demographics, proactively working with clients around what would feel supportive for them in bias incidents is important. Individual preferences will vary and it is important to respect client wishes as much as possible.
3. Establish clearly defined guidelines on acceptable discourse and behavior if you are facilitating a shared space.
4. Practice deploying interruption techniques with a supportive friend or colleague. Preparing and practicing is essential to interrupting effectively and without hesitation.



# During the Incident

1. Consider the power dynamics between all parties involved, including yourself!
2. Think about the severity of the situation- aggressive harassment requires a different response than a statement made from ignorance.
3. Act immediately! Interruption must happen in the moment to be effective.



# After the Incident

1. Hold reparative conversations with all parties involved: it is important to reassure affected community members that their safety is a priority as well as reassuring offending parties that they are still a valued member of the community deserving of care.
2. Reflect on your interruption techniques and identify areas where your response could be improved.



In non-work instances of interruption, please consider both your own personal capacity and safety; while interruption is absolutely MANDATORY in a professional context, we should use our discretion to maintain personal safety when responding to incidents in our public spaces.

# Online Resources

For clickable links to all included online resources, please check out the PDF version of this document available at <https://newavenues.org/b13workbooks>



## Youth Specific Resources

[Gender Spectrum](#)

[GLSEN Oregon](#)

[InterACT](#)

[Native American Youth And Family Center \(NAYA\)](#)

[Q Chat Space](#)

[SMYRC \(Sexual and Gender Minority Youth Resource Center\)](#)

[TransActive Gender Center](#)

[The Living Room \(Clackamas County\)](#)

[The Trevor Project \(online\)](#)

## Additional Resources (Not Youth Specific)

[Black and Beyond the Binary Collective](#)

[Brave Space](#)

[Cascade Aids Project \(CAP\)](#)

[Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde](#)

[Gender Unicorn](#)

[GLSEN Pronoun Guide](#)



# Online Resources



## **Additional Resources (Not Youth Specific):**

[Native Land Digital](#)

[Paths \(Re\)Membered Project](#)

[PFLAG](#)

[Portland Two Spirit Society](#)

[Practice with Pronouns](#)

[Q Center PDX](#)

[QTPoC Mental Health](#)

[SAGE Metro Portland](#)

[Sylvia Rivera Law Project](#)

[Trans Lifeline \(online\)](#)

[Transgender Genocide and Why it Affects Everyone](#)

## **Videos:**

[Intersex Video: Them Magazine](#)

[Two Spirit Video: Bese Explains](#)

[AroAce Video: JadenAnimations](#)

[The Healer Stones of Kapaemāhū](#)

## **Inclusive Forms and Data Collection:**

[Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies](#)

[University of British Columbia](#)

[Gender and Sexuality Resource Center](#)



# Glossary

LGBTQIA2S+ terminology and best practices are constantly evolving and therefore finding pithy and accurate definitions can be tough! With that said, here are some useful terms and definitions.

**Cisgender** - An adjective describing the gender of a person that identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Cisheterosexual** - An adjective describing the gender & sexual orientation of a person who identifies as cisgender and heterosexual.

**Heteronormative** - The concept that heterosexuality is the preferred or “normal” mode of sexual orientation.

**Cisnormative** - The concept that being cisgender is the “normal” mode of gender identity.

**Misgender** - To refer to someone using pronouns or gendered language that does not reflect the gender they identify with or told you to use.

**Deadname** - The name that a transgender person was given at birth and no longer uses.

**Multi-Marginalized** - An adjective describing people experiencing many different points of discrimination due to the intersection of their identities.

**Unconditional Positive Regard** - The complete and non-judgmental acceptance, caring and support of the service participant, regardless of what the participant does and who they are. It is the active acknowledgement of the client’s individuality of self in comparison to the service provider’s own needs.

**Self Determination** - commitment to letting clients make their own decisions with plenty of support and knowledge, rather than direction or control.

# Glossary:

## LGBTQIA2S+

### Identity



**Lesbian** – An adjective describing woman-identified people who experience romantic and/or sexual attraction towards woman-identified people.

**Gay** – 1) An adjective describing man-identified people who experience romantic and/or sexual attraction towards man-identified people.  
2) An umbrella term for non-heterosexual and/or non-cissexual individuals.

**Bisexual** – An adjective describing people who experience romantic and/or sexual attraction towards multiple genders.

**Transsexual** – An adjective describing an individual who does not identify with the gender they were assigned with at birth.

**Questioning** – An adjective describing an individual who is questioning their gender identity and/or their romantic and sexual interests.

**Queer** – An umbrella term for non-heterosexual and/or non-cissexual individuals.

**Intersex** – An adjective describing an individual with natural variations in their sex characteristics such as chromosomes, genitals, reproductive organs, or secondary sex traits.

**Asexual** – An adjective describing an individual who does not experience sexual attraction.

**Aromantic** – An adjective describing an individual who does not experience romantic attraction.

**2 Spirit** – An umbrella term that describes a variety of gender and sexual identities within indigenous communities and cultures.

# The Gender Unicorn

## The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Texas Student Educational Resources



To learn more go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

Design by Landyn Pan  
Illustration by Anna Moore

### Gender Identity

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

### Gender Expression

Feminine  
Masculine  
Other

### Sex Assigned at Birth

Female  Male  Other/Intersex

### Sexually Attracted To

Women  
Men  
Other Gender(s)

### Emotionally Attracted To

Women  
Men  
Other Gender(s)

# The Gender Unicorn



The Gender Unicorn is a great tool for conceptualizing sexual and gender identity. It can be particularly useful when discussing questions of identity with someone first beginning to explore those questions!

**Sex Assigned at Birth** – The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on anatomy at the time of birth. The vagueness of the popular definition of “sex” specifically enforces the social construct of gender. In reality, the human body is not sexually dimorphic. Meaning, there are no hard coded biological differences between a male and a female human body, aside from reproductive organs and there many circumstances that challenge this notion.

**Gender** – Refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. (WHO organization)

**Gender Identity** – One’s internal sense of being a man, woman, neither of these, both or another gender(s). Everyone has a gender identity, including you. For some people, this matches the Gender they were assigned at birth. For others, it does not.

# The Gender Unicorn

**Gender Expression** – The physical manifestation of one’s gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, demeanor, communication and their approach to life. The social construct of gender, imparts specific rules & guidelines to a multitude of expressions. For example, short hair for boys, long hair for girls. In reality, how we express our gender is deeply personal to us. Especially for LGBTQIA2S+ folks, how we express our gender has little to do with others. Gender Expression is not directly linked to our Gender Identity, but it can and often does inform each other.

**Physical Attraction** – Who we want to be physically intimate with, if at all.

**Romantic Attraction** – Who we want to be romantically and/or emotionally intimate with, if it all. It is important to note that physical and emotional attraction are separate forms of attraction and one does not require the other to flourish. Often, these two forms of attraction are conflated with each other.

Other forms of attraction include platonic and aesthetical.





[www.newavenues.org](http://www.newavenues.org)