

Understanding Queer Youth

To create LGBTQ-inclusive
environments.



**hi. I'm Fred.
I go by he/him
pronouns.**

I am the Executive Director for
Gay City: Seattle's LGBTQ Center.



**Hi. I'm Alyssa. I go
by she/her
pronouns.**

I am an HIV/STI Tester and the
Youth Tobacco Prevention lead at Gay
City: Seattle's LGBTQ Center.

Um. What's a pronoun and why does it matter?

A pronoun is a word that refers to either the people talking (like I or you) or someone or something that is being talked about (like she, it, them, and this). Gender pronouns (like he, hers, they) specifically refer to people that you are talking about.

Asking and correctly using someone's pronoun is one of the most basic ways to show your respect for their gender identity. When someone is referred to with the wrong pronoun, it can make them feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed, alienated, or dysphoric (or, often, all of the above.) It is a privilege to not have to worry about which pronoun someone is going to use for you based on how they perceive your gender. If you have this privilege, yet fail to respect someone else's gender identity, it is not only disrespectful and hurtful, but also oppressive.

Introduce yourself to the
people on both sides of you
and tell them your pronoun.

Ask them theirs.

Facts on LGBTQ Youth

- We have very bad data on LGBTQ youth in Washington. What we do know is that 10th graders bullied for being perceived as LGBT are THREE TIMES more likely to use tobacco and 50% more likely to use marijuana.
- LGBTQ youth account for 30% of all suicides each year.
- Greater than 50% of transgender youth attempt suicide each year.
- LGBTQ youth are twice as likely to abuse alcohol and eight times more likely to use cocaine/crack than non-LGBTQ youth.
- **Transgender youth whose parents reject their gender identity are thirteen times more likely to attempt suicide than transgender youth who are supported by their parents.**

Youth

- 74% of transgender youth report sexual harassment at school based on their gender identity and expression.
- 84% of LGBTQ youth report verbal harassment at school of because of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.
- 55% of transgender youth report physical attacks based on their gender identity and/or expression.
- 28% of LGBTQ youth drop out of school due to this harassment.
- 35% of LGBTQ youth report suffering physical violence from their parents as a result of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- 26% of LGBTQ are forced to leave home because of conflicts with family over sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- 40% of homeless youth are LGBTQ

Transgender Youth with strong support were 82% less likely to attempt suicide

When Transgender & Gender Non-Conforming Youth are treated the same as Cisgender (Non-Transgender) Youth, the risk of suicide becomes no different than for anyone else.

On Culture & Religion

If we are truly working for the youth, we will keep their dignity in mind. That is not imposing on anyone's religious beliefs or culture.

Not asking anyone to compromise or give up their religious beliefs.

Prejudice is usually based on lack of knowledge

Familiarize ourselves with diversity.

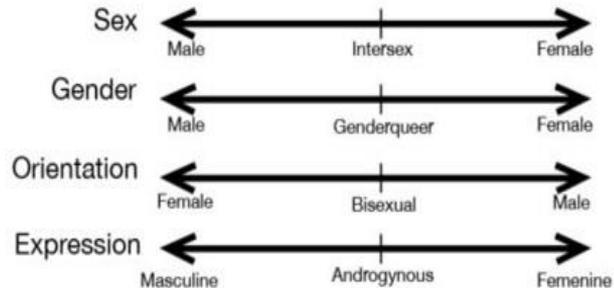
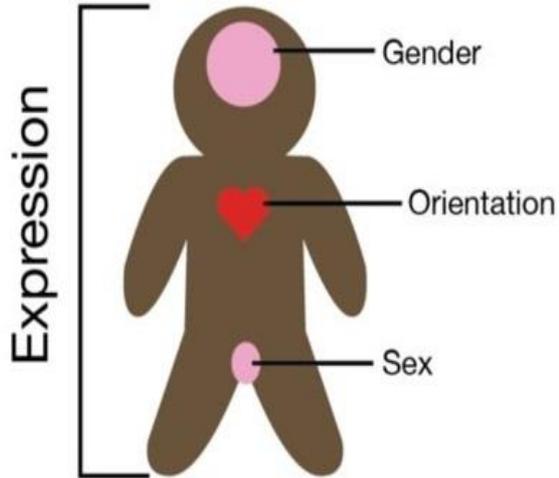
Common respect can only occur with mutual understanding and information.

If those who work with youth can promote an inclusive approach, there is a chance we can actually fight discrimination instead of contributing by silence.

A Basic Understanding of Queer Language...

Understanding language used in Queer Communities is helpful to keep Queer Youth from feeling invisible, isolated, ignored and excluded.

Genderbread Person



Sex: includes physical attributes such as external genitalia, sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, and internal reproductive structures. At birth, it is used to assign sex, that is, to identify individuals as male or female.

Gender Identity: the internal perception of one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Common identity labels include man, woman, genderqueer, trans, and more.

Orientation: the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one feels for others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people in which they are attracted

Expression: the external display of one's gender, through a combination of dress, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally measured on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as "gender presentation."

Alyssa

Sex: Alyssa was assigned female at birth.

Gender: Alyssa identifies as female.

Orientation: Alyssa identifies as bisexual. Another word for this is pansexual.

Expression: Alyssa usually presents herself as something in the middle.

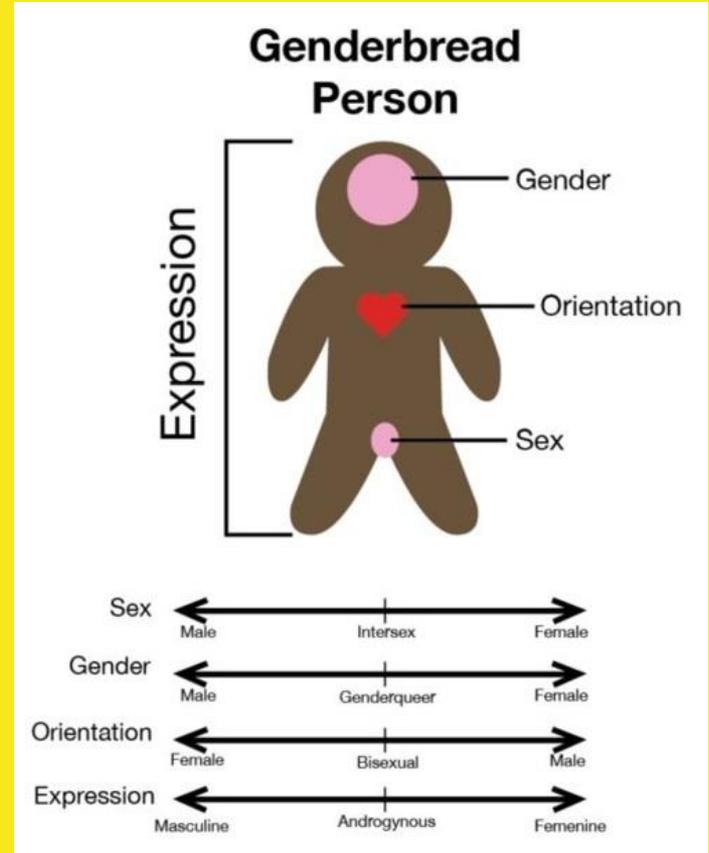
Fred

Sex: Fred was assigned male at birth.

Gender: Fred identifies as male.

Orientation: Fred identifies as gay. This was not always the case.

Expression: Fred presents himself as masculine in appearance.



**Gender Identity, Sexual
Orientation & Gender
Expression are different.**

Why is this important?

LANGUAGE THAT IS NOT
INCLUSIVE OF LGBTQ
YOUTH KEEPS THEM
INVISIBLE, ISOLATED,
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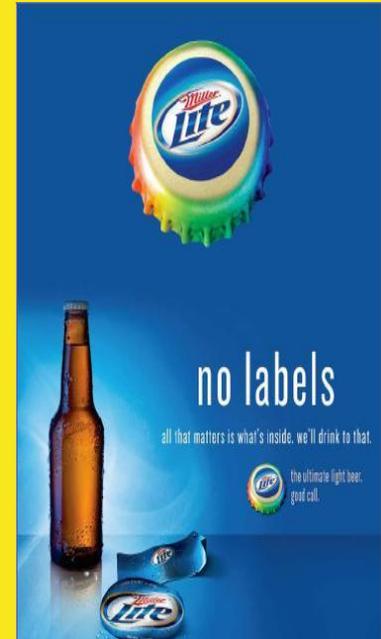
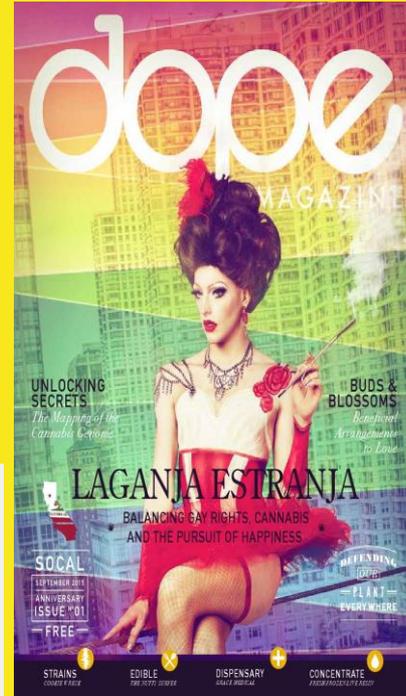
The youth in our community are
not being accounted for and are
being invisibilized.

THE HEALTHY YOUTH SURVEY LEAVES
THE QUESTION ABOUT SEXUAL
ORIENTATION OPTIONAL AND DOES NOT
ASK ABOUT IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION.

YOUTH HAVE A DIVERSE
UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER THAT HAS
GONE UNRECOGNIZED BY ADULTS AND
THE INSTITUTIONS THAT SERVE THEM.

YOUTH EXPERIENCE GENDER LIMITING
LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY IN THEIR
HOMES, SCHOOLS, COMMUNITIES,
SHELTERS, AND IN THE MEDIA.

BECAUSE LGBTQ IS ONLY RECOGNIZED AS AN ADULT IDENTITY, WE ARE ONLY SHOWN THESE IMAGES...



What Can We

Do?

Avoid using gendered language.

Examples: “Ladies & Gentlemen”, assuming pronouns and titles, making assumptions about partners or romantic interests, overly feminizing stereotypes: “girls like pink”, overly masculinizing stereotypes: “boys get dirty”.

- **Realizing that just because we’ve made assumptions of what gender someone appears to be, does not mean they are.**
- **Becoming aware of Gender Variant language, identities and pronouns**
Examples of identities: non-binary, two-spirit, neutral, agender, genderqueer, gender fluid.
Examples of pronouns: they/them/theirs (most common), ze/zir/zirs
Examples of language: Mother or Father = parent, Chairman = Chairperson
- **LGBTQ Youth are often homeless, without parents or adult support, are not in school and their goals are often to meet basic survival needs.**
- **Understanding that LGBTQ Youth substance use (specifically marijuana) is often for health needs like anxiety, stress and physical pain because they are used to avoiding health care due to oppressive structures and procedures.**

Questions?
