Generation Q: Youth and the Exploration of Sexual and Gender Diversities

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Center
Office for Diversity and Inclusion

OHIO SafeZone
A project of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Programs Center
www.ohio.edu/lgbt
What is SafeZone?

The purpose of the SafeZone training is to reduce homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexism, cisgenderism, and other “isms” connected to gender and sexuality. SafeZone provides training on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Intersex, Queer, and/or Transgender identities and explores ways to support anyone who is dealing with issues pertaining to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and/or gender expression.

SafeZone is a scratching of the surface...It's not about being an expert, it's about being an “ask-able” person.
Intersectionality ~ making conceptual and strategic connections across issues and identities

Social work ~ person in environment and systems theory
- The individual impacts the systems around them and those systems impact the individual
- How does the environment impact the individual and how the individual impacts the environment?

Latinx Communities ~ la frontera (borderland)

Student Development World ~ model of multiple dimensions of identity
- Who am I? ~ Fluid and contextual ... recognize otherness in ourselves and in others
- Multiple social identities ~ coexist and conflict

Trauma Informed Care ~ “Trauma Informed Care is a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.” (Village Family Services)

Queer Theory ~ Identities as social construction and fluid; Queer Theory ~ “critically analyzes the meaning of identity, focusing on intersections of identities and resisting oppressive social constructions of sexual orientation and gender”
**Who are we?**

**Gender Pronouns:**

- He/Him/His/His/Himself
- She/Her/Her/Hers/HerSelf
- They/Them/Their/Theirs/TheMself
- Zie/Zim/Zir/Zirs/Zirself
- Xe/Xem//Xyr/Xyrs/XeMself
- Ey/Em/Eir/Eirs/Emself
- Per/Per/Pers/Pers/PerSelf
- Sie/Sir/Hir/Hirs/HirSelf
- Ve/Ver/Vis/Vers/VerSelf
- Ne/Nem/Nir/Nirs/NemSelf

Your name

Pronoun...he, she, they/them, ze, per, etc.

Volunteer: share a story without using gendered language
Why this conversation matters
Sex ≠ Sexual Orientation ≠ Gender Identity

**Sex** ~ medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances.
- Male and Female
- Intersex (Disorders / Variations in Sex Development)

**Sexual Orientation** ~ romantic, emotional, and/or sexual attraction
- Heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, asexual.

**Gender** ~ how a person understands themselves to be male, female, masculine, feminine, both, none, or another identity entirely.
- Identity vs. Expression
- Transgender
- Cisgender

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To learn more go to: [www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)
Design by Landyn Pan
Gender and Sexuality Spectrums

Sex designated at birth (combination of chromosomes, genitals, hormones, and secondary sex characteristics)

- male
- intersex
- female
- trans/gender expansive
- female

Gender Identity (internal sense of who I am as male, female, both, neither, beyond binary)

- male
- intersex
- feminine
- trans/gender expansive
- feminine

Gender Expression (how I present/reflect my understanding of femininity, masculinity, both, neither...behaviors grounded in my cultural context)

- masculine
- androgyrous
- feminine

Attraction based on Gender Expression

- Male : Male
- Male : Female
- Female : Male
- Female : Female

Sexual Attraction (yearning of your loins)

- Male : Male
- Male : Female
- Female : Male
- Female : Female

Romantic / Emotional Attraction (who you seek to be in relationship with)

- Male : Male
- Male : Female
- Female : Male
- Female : Female

How I view myself in terms of being out to myself

- don't think about it
- wrestling with questions
- embracing me

How I view myself in terms of being out to others

- not out to others but out to myself
- out to some
- out to everyone
Coming Out and Transitioning Intersectionally

Life long journeys of coming into oneself

- Coming out to self vs. Coming out to others
- Transition/Affirmation ~ Personal vs. Social vs. Medical (impact of mental health diagnosis)
- Dynamics of family/community

What does it mean to be out?

- Immediate results vs. Process and journey

Coming out and transitioning do not happen in isolation

- How do identities intersect and interact?
- Conflict can be challenging AND a sign of resilience
- What does it mean to be both/and?
How do sexuality and gender impact me?
Now breathe

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2zyjbH9zzA
Realities of LGBTQ+ People

Coming out younger and younger
- Family Acceptance Project found that adolescents self-identified as LGB between ages 7 and 12
- 2011 study showed that trans and gender-nonconforming youth became aware of their gender at age 3

LGBTQ youth are at increased risk of homelessness, dropping out of school, being victims of abuse, mental health issues, substance abuse issues, and suicide
- 50% of kids in elementary and middle school report being bullied based on perceived gender/orientation
- LGBT youth are 4-5 times more likely to consider and/or attempt suicide

In addition to typical challenges faced by all of us...
- No state or federal protections for housing, employment, and public accommodation
- Ohio’s hate crime law does not include sexual orientation, gender identity, expression
Trans realities

Key issues...

* Sex-segregated facilities – Bathroom Bills
* Transphobia at all levels of society
* Lack of access to services
* Dealing with “diagnosis stigma” in order to be who you are
* To “pass” or not to “pass”

National Center for Transgender Equality and the Taskforce issued a study … “Injustice at Every Turn”

* Higher rates of unemployment, harassment, homelessness, denial of medical services, loss of family, and suicide
* About 6500 people interviewed: 63% of participants had experienced a serious act of discrimination.

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Transgender Statistics

- **65%** reported discrimination in one or more public accommodation settings
- **20%** postponed or did not seek health care because of prior mistreatment
- **41%** have attempted suicide
- **62%** report depression
- **14%** are unemployed (vs. 7% of the general population at the survey time)
- **15%** live in poverty (vs. 4% of the general population)

Source: fenwayfocus.org, hrc.org
Traumas for LGBTQ+ Communities

What is trauma?

- Prepping body for fight, flight, or freeze
- Goes beyond our ability to cope and adapt

Presenting problem is a scratching of the surface ~ research on connection between trauma, mental health and co-occurring disorders substance abuse, eating disorders, HIV/AIDS and further violence

- Rates of homelessness
- Suicide
- Sex work to survive
- Failure to feel safe in school often contributes to poor academic and social performance

Pervasive violence in many forms

- Bullying and violence (threatened and actual) - physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual, etc.
- Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia
- Internalized Homonegativity
- HIV / AIDS
- Everyday reminders that we are not equal / second class citizens
- Lack of visibility = feelings of invisibility and lack of worth
- Rejection ~ Where do I belong? ~ Grief and loss
“Every single American—gay, straight, lesbian, bisexual, transgender—every single American deserves to be treated equally in the eyes of the law and in the eyes of our society.”

- President Obama

“No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, and family... They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right.”

- Justice Kennedy, Obergefell v. Hodges

Victory at the Supreme Court
Freedom to marry nationwide!
10 Transgender Women have been murdered so far in 2015. Invest in jobs, housing, and education to keep us safe.

#BLACKTRANSLIVESMATTER #MAKEPENNYProud

www.youthbreakout.org BREAK*OUT

Jan. 22: **Monica Loere** (43) – Jan. 22: **Jasmine Sierra** (52) –
Feb. 4: **Kayden Clarke** (24) – Feb. 19: **Veronica Banks Cano** (mid-30s)
– Feb. 21: **Maya Young** (25) – Feb. 27: **Demarkis Stansberry** (30) –
Mar. 2: **Kedarie/Kandicee Johnson** (16) –
Mar. 23: **Quartney Davia Dawsonn-Yochum** (32) –
Apr. 10: **Shante Isaac** (34) – Apr. 16: **Keyonna Blakeney** (22) –
May 1: **Tyreece Walker** (32) – May 15: **Mercedes Successful** (32) –
May 25: **Amos Beede** (38) – Jun. 5: **Goddess Diamond** (20) –
Jul. 13: **Deeniquia Dodds** (22) – Jul. 23: **Dee Whigam** (25) –
Jul. 30: **Skye Mockabee** (26) – Aug. 8: **Erykah Tijerina** (36) –
Aug. 10: **Rae’Lynn Thomas** (28) – Sep. 6: **Lexxi Sironen** (43) –
Sep. 11: **T.T. Saffore** (mid-20s) – Sep. 16: **Crystal Edmonds** (32) –
Oct. 22: **Simon (Sierra) Bush** (18) – Nov. 5: **Noony Norwood** (30) –
What are my privileges?

“Privilege is when you think something is not a problem because it’s not a problem to you personally.”

Becoming aware of privilege should not be viewed as a burden or source of guilt, but rather, an opportunity to learn and be responsible so that we may work toward a more just and inclusive world.

Privilege is an invisible, weightless backpack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks.

--Peggy McIntosh

As a white cisgendered able-bodied straight male, my opinions on your identity are very important.
Internalized resilience

Reconciling challenges and strengths ~ not only survival but thriving

“Resiliency is the capability of individuals to cope successfully in the face of significant change, adversity, or risk.” (Greene and Conrad, 2002)

Resilience as a trait ~ “Resilient survivors continue therefore, to grow and even thrive in spite of and quite often because of their history.” (Armour, 2007)

Post Traumatic Growth ~ “Survivors of trauma who strengthen their abilities and find wisdom that allow them emotional growth...”

- Strengthening of relationships / sense of connection
- Increased sense of personal strengths
- Awareness of increased possibilities
- Healing on OUR terms – we are the expert in our lives and situations
Holding challenges and resiliencies together

We are having this training

- Conversations on sexual and gender diversities becoming more common throughout all levels and sectors of society

Increased presence in the media

- Television Shows
- Films
- Advertisements
- Children’s Media

Repeal of discriminatory practices locally and nationally and internationally

- Examples: Repeal of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell and SCOTUS Marriage Equality Decision

"For me, personally and politically, there's no separating my womanness, my blackness, my transness from my me-ness."

Janet Mock
Writer and Trans Activist
Transforming “punchable moments” into “teachable moments”

Key themes:

* Safety
* Trustworthiness and transparency
* Peer support
* Collaboration and mutuality
* Empowerment, voice and choice
* Cultural, historical, and gender Issues ~ Understanding how trauma affects the life of an individual

Intersectionality and Trauma Informed Solidarity ... we are more than just LGBTQIA

* How does sexuality and gender impact other aspects of who I am and how do these other aspects impact my sexuality and gender?
* Star Handout – recognizing multiple resources and opportunity to think outside the box

Transformative power of Privilege ~ Confront homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and anti-LGBT jokes/comments.
Allyship To Do’s

Listen and ask sensitive questions
- Language cues from the individual (respect their terminology)
- Respecting a person’s identities (even if you don’t fully understand it)

Mindfulness around mental health and suicide (also the impact of the media on mental health)

Keep it confidential…it is their story to share

Intersectionality … we are more than just LGBTQIA
- We all express gender and sexuality differently … don’t assume someone’s identity based on stereotypes

Do your own education on identities and on resources
- It’s okay to refer/connect person to another person / resource

Confront homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist, and anti-LGBT jokes/comments.

“I don’t want an ally, I want an accomplice”
-- Darnell Moore

CHANGE ATTITUDES.
CHANGE BEHAVIORS.
CHANGE DIRECTIONS.
CHANGE LIVES.
CHANGE POLICIES.
CHANGE VOICES.
BE AN ALLY.
BE THE CHANGE.
The Etiquette of Trans Allyship

Bloopers will happen...learn from them

Be mindful of body questions ~ are they appropriate to context and service being provided

Transitioning is unique to the individual and to their situation.

- Remember that gender expression varies and we cannot police what is appropriate
- Recognize that not all trans people or genderqueer folks are out there trying to smash the gender binary (but some of us are and affirm/celebrate us)
- How a person identifies today may be different tomorrow

Do your own homework and research, the trans people you know are not trans-wikis and don’t represent all trans people

- Our understanding of identity and language and expression is constantly evolving

IF YOU’RE OUT IN PUBLIC AND YOU CAN’T FIGURE OUT A STRANGER’S GENDER, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. DON’T WORRY ABOUT IT.

I DON’T HAVE “PREFERRED PRONOUNS”
I HAVE PRONOUNS

I’M TRANSGENDER
MY GENDER IS AS VALID AS YOURS
Language for sexual and gender diversities is constantly changing and evolving

What are our starting points for understanding ourselves and being in solidarity with others?

What if there are no words to reflect a piece of who you are?

How do we express complex understandings of who we are with limited language?

How does language create, define, re-define, re-re-define, reclaim words for complex identities.

Challenging ourselves and others to move beyond binaries into realities that are messy and colorful.
Language Evolution

Dynamics of the word "Queer"
- Identity
- Political

Labels...Belonging to a group vs. Being defined / limited
- Resisting and redefining categories and labels

Evolving understanding of gender and sexuality
- Personal understandings vs. Social understandings
- Bisexual vs. Pansexual
- Transgender vs. Genderqueer/fluid/expansive/creative
- Latinx vs. Latino/a vs. Latin@

Pronouns ~ What are they and how do we use them?

This will make tutoring so much fun!

Why would anyone choose this vs. Why not be LGBTQ?

Challenges and Strengths? ... “I call myself queer...I’m not going to fight with [people] about who I am. I know what I am! Either they accept it or they don’t. But that is their problem, not mine!”
Paperwork:
* Can a person share their pronouns?
* Can a person share the name they want to be called?
* Are there spaces for sexual orientation/identity and gender identity?

Intersectional Physical Spaces:
* Gender Neutral Bathrooms / Single-User Restrooms (#peequality ... #sothatallmaysafelypoop)
* Locker Rooms and changing spaces
* Athletics and teams
* Residence Halls and Living spaces
* What do we mean by “male space” and “female space” when it comes to programming

Demonstrate institutional commitment to affirming LGBTQ+ people
What would you do?
What can you do?
What can we do?
“I don’t have a problem with gay people as long as they act ‘normal’.”

“Why isn’t there a straight pride?”

“I accept gay people but that ‘trans’ stuff is just too radical for me.”

“You’re not a person of color / queer person / woman. Why should I listen to you when you say that something I’m doing is racist / homophobic / biphobic / sexist / transphobic?”

“I can’t be ____ist/phobic. I have ____ friends!”

“It’s just my opinion. Can’t you respect that? Free speech!”

“Why do we have to worry about every little identity? If it suits most of us, shouldn’t it be enough?”
Resources to continue the conversation

National resources:
- Human Rights Campaign
- GLAAD
- National LGBTQ Taskforce
- Trevor Lifeline (also offers chat and text)
- Trans Lifeline
- Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
- COLAGE
- GLSEN
- GSA Network
- It Gets Better Project
- National Center for Trans Equality
- Sylvia Rivera Law Project
- Southerners On New Ground

Ohio resources:
- Appalachian Peace and Justice Network (Athens)
- Equality Ohio
- TransOhio
- Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization (BRAVO)
- Kaleidoscope Youth Center
- Equitas Health
- People’s Justice League
We serve all bobcats and non-bobcats!

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Rainbow Room ~ Podcast
Query A Queer ~ bi-weekly column in The Post