

Hello!

Welcome to this resource packet. We know that people come from all different perspectives and walks of life, so we created this packet to be a foundation for accessing resources and information. While it is not comprehensive, we hope you find it valuable and supportive.

Within the LGBTQ+ community, there are a few main concepts that are important to know while navigating this packet. Here we outline the differences between sex assigned at birth, gender, gender identity, gender expression, pronouns, and sexual orientation. We hope that this brief outline helps prime you for the rest of the packet.

Sex assigned at birth is defined by a complex set of characteristics, including reproductive organs, hormonal makeup, secondary sex characteristics, chromosomes, etc. While sex is often seen as a binary between male and female, it is actually a spectrum. Intersex people are those whose sexual characteristics expand beyond what is commonly known as male or female. In the trans community, the terms AMAB (assigned male at birth) and AFAB (assigned female at birth) emphasize that sex is a social construct.

Like sex, **gender** is a social construct that exists on a spectrum. Gender has been created by humans over many years and can vary significantly across cultures. Gender is made up of ideas about how groups of people behave and should be treated. While gender is cultural, **gender identity** is how an individual sees themselves fit into these ideals. **Gender expression** is how someone chooses to communicate their identity through fashion, hair, and other visual cues. Everyone has a gender, gender identity, gender expression, and the pronouns they choose to use. There are a wide array of pronoun choices including they/them/theirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his, ze/zir/zim, and many more! Pronouns are how you refer to someone without using their name.

Transgender individuals are those who don't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Folks who identify with their gender assigned at birth are **cisgender**. Folks who are unsure of their gender are considered **questioning**.

Sexual orientation is the way someone experiences attraction to others. This can include romantic interest, sexual attraction, and individuals who don't experience these attractions (such as asexual and/or aromantic). For some people attraction is related to gender and for others it is not!

This packet is designed to support you while navigating this information. It contains a wide array of resources and is geared toward all audiences.

Because the LGBTQ+ community is always growing and evolving, we hope this packet is the beginning of a life long learning process. We hope you will seek out these voices and honor the contributions of Queer and Trans community members of the past, present, and future.

Download the complete guide with links to many resources here:

www.bolingbrookpride.org/resource-guide



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ally | A person who is not LGBTQ but shows support for LGBTQ people and promotes equality in a variety of ways.

Agender | Describes a person who identifies as having no gender.

Androgynous | Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine.

Asexual | The lack of a sexual attraction or desire for other people.

Biphobia | Prejudice, fear or hatred directed toward bisexual people.

Bisexual | A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.

Cisgender | A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Closeted | Describes an LGBTQ person who has not disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Coming Out | The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others.

Congruence | Gender congruence is the feeling of harmony in our gender

Gay | A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.

Gender Binary | A system that constructs gender according to two discrete and opposite categories: boy/man and girl/woman. It is important to recognize that both cisgender and Transgender people can have a gender identity that is binary.

Gender Dysphoria | Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify. According to the DSM, the term - which replaces Gender Identity Disorder - "is intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults."

Gender-Expansive | Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system.

Gender Expression | External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

Gender-Fluid | According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person having or expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

Gender Identity | One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Gender Non-Conforming | A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.

Genderqueer | Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.

Gender Transition | The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions.

Homophobia | The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex.

Intersex | An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, these traits are visible at birth, and in others, they are not apparent until puberty. Some chromosomal variations of this type may not be physically apparent at all.

Lesbian | A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women.

LGBTQ | An acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer.”

Living Openly | A state in which LGBTQ people are comfortably out about their sexual orientation or gender identity – where and when it feels appropriate to them.

Non-Binary | An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Both cisgender and Transgender people can have a gender identity that is non-binary.

Outing | Exposing someone’s lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.

Pansexual | Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.

Queer | A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with “LGBTQ.”

Questioning | A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sex Assigned at Birth | The sex (male or female) given to a child at birth, most often based on the child’s external anatomy. This is also referred to as “assigned sex at birth.”

Sexual Orientation | An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

Transfeminine | Describes a person who was assigned male sex at birth, but who identifies with femininity to a greater extent than with masculinity.

Transmasculine | Describes a person who was assigned female sex at birth, but who identifies with masculinity to a greater extent than with femininity.

Transgender | An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Transphobia | The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people.

Two-Spirit | Describes a person who embodies both a masculine and a feminine spirit. This is a culture-specific term used among Native American and American Indian people.



DO'S & DON'TS FOR THE TRANSGENDER ALLY

When interacting with transgender/gender non-conforming/gender queer people in any setting, the most important thing to remember is to respect each person and their identity and experience. The important thing is how they feel inside - not how they look outside - just as we all hope that people will treat us according to who we are and not how we appear.

ASKING QUESTIONS

- Transgender people understand that gender can be complicated and confusing and that most people do not know very much about these issues. The important thing is that people be respectful, and it is generally appreciated when people want to learn. There are ways to ask questions that are respectful and other ways that are not.
- The first question to ask yourself about someone else's gender is: "Do I really need to know?"

In most situations, it is not necessary (or appropriate to ask) what a person's gender status or situation is. For example, if someone walks into your workplace and their gender is unclear, there is almost certainly no reason to ask or comment in any way. The person is there to work and to be among community. They can be welcomed without knowing what their gender identity is.

- There may be times when you decide that you need to know or understand something about someone else's gender. Most people are welcoming of respectful and appropriate questions. This is often better than making assumptions that may not be true. If the person doesn't want to answer, then they will choose not to.

- What is a respectful question? The most important guideline is this: If you would not wish to be asked a given question, it is probably not respectful to ask it of someone else.
- Instead of asking, "What are you?" or "Are you a man or a woman?" try: "What is the respectful pronoun to use for you?" or "I'm interested in hearing about your gender identity if you are comfortable telling me" or "Is there anything I/we/the community can do to make this a more comfortable place?"
- Remember that not all transgender people are the same. Like everyone else, different transgender people have different identities, experiences, needs, and interests.
- Act as an ally with others in the community. If you notice non-inclusive language, suggest to the appropriate person that it be corrected. If you know that someone prefers a particular pronoun, it is appropriate to gently inform or remind someone else who is not using that correct pronoun.
- Remember that you may be interacting with a transgender person and not know.
- Seek out information on your own. Transgender community members will be very appreciative of your efforts to learn about the experience of transgender people.

LANGUAGE

Language is where care becomes visible. People pick up on small cues, and small shifts often decide whether a transgender person walks into your community and whether they choose to stay.

- On flyers, in newsletters, and in event announcements: instead of “men and women welcome” or “for both men and women,” try “all genders welcome” or “for all genders.”
- In articles, emails, and essays: rather than “both genders” or “men and women,” refer to “all genders” or “people of any gender.”
- Talk about “the pronouns someone uses,” not “preferred pronouns,” since respect is not a preference. Offer your own when you introduce yourself, and keep the sharing invitational, never required, so no one is pressured to out themselves.
- Use the name a person goes by, and reserve “legal name” for the rare form that truly requires it. If you slip on a name or pronoun, correct yourself briefly and move on; a short “sorry, she” serves the person better than a long apology that centers your own feelings.
- If an event, group, or program is billed as “gay and lesbian,” ask whether it truly excludes bisexual, transgender, and nonbinary people. If it does not, say “LGBTQ+,” and let the language match the welcome.

FACILITIES

- Where you can, provide an all-gender restroom. For many people, a public restroom is a place of real fear, and a single all-gender option often decides where they feel safe enough to go. Single-user restrooms are the easiest to convert.
- Keep the change simple. Ask whether every restroom must be gender-specific, or whether one can be opened to everyone. Covering a “Men” or “Women” sign with “All-Gender Restroom” is enough, and the same goes for temporary, shared, and rented spaces.
- Never police who uses which restroom. People belong in the restroom that fits their gender, and no one owes you identification or an explanation. Let that same care reach your forms and sign-ins, with chosen-name fields and room to state pronouns or leave them blank.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ACTION

- Include transgender and gender diversity in your workplace and community’s social action, and know that right now the stakes are higher and the local leverage is greater.
- Show up where policy becomes personal: attend and speak at school board, library, and village meetings, where much of today’s legislation on youth and education gets decided.
- Put your support close to home: give time and dollars to trans-led groups and mutual aid, and help neighbors, including those relocating here for safety, reach gender-affirming care and updated documents.t!



OTHER DOS AND DON'TS

DON'T:

- **Ask about anyone's body, genitals, medical procedures, or medical history.** If they want to share that information, they will. If you are concerned about someone's health, it is fine to ask, "How is your health?" as you would for any other community member.
- **Unnecessarily refer to a person's previous gender status or a previous name.** If this information is not known publicly, revealing it could put the person at risk of harm. Regardless of how open a person is about being transgender, referring to their previous status usually makes that person uncomfortable. Some may choose to refer to their previous gender identity, but others do not wish to bring it up.
- **Insist that someone must be either a man or a woman.** Some people identify themselves as neither gender, as both genders, or as a third gender. This may seem confusing, but this is a legitimate choice. Some people are in the process of discovering their identity or deciding how they wish to live. People may be in various stages of a gender transition. If you need clarification on which pronoun to use, ask.
- **Say things like: "But you look like a woman!" or "But I've always known you as a man" or "But you made such a good/attractive woman."** Comments like these are disrespectful and make people feel bad.
- **Be afraid to say, "I don't understand, but I want to be respectful of you."**
Being a good ally to transgender people does not mean that you never get confused or make mistakes. It means that you are doing everything in your power to learn and act respectfully, always – even when you don't understand.

DO:

- **Take other people's identities seriously, even though it may not conform to your own ideas about gender or sex.**
- **Remember to treat other people's identities and choices with the respect that you would want for yourself.**
- **Respect a person's choice of name/gender/pronoun.** If a person expresses that they prefer a specific name or pronoun, take care to use only the name/gender/pronoun that they prefer, and strongly encourage others in the community to do the same. This can take time to get used to, and most people do make mistakes -- don't worry. The person is almost certainly used to errors. The important thing is that the person knows that you respect their preference and are trying.
- **Assume there could be LGBTQ people in every space you're in.** Assuming that everyone around you is straight makes things harder for LGBTQ people.
- **Speak up.** If you notice bullying or oppressive language, say something. Anti-LGBTQ comments and jokes are hurtful. Call out your friends, family, or co-workers and let them know that you find them offensive. If you are young and see another young person being hurt or bullied because of their gender identity or sexual orientation, let an adult know. And speak up when you see anti-LGBTQ comments online.
- **Use your pronouns in your email signature and when you introduce yourself.** "Hi, I'm Julie. I use she/her pronouns. How about you?"

