

Trans 101 Panel Presentation

1. Panel Introductions

- Thank you for coming
- The need:
 - I know of six school aged gender nonconforming students Lincoln County School District. The youngest could be starting kindergarten this year and the oldest will be a second year senior if she chooses to return to school.
 - Trans people are often incredible private people because of their very real experiences with discrimination and bullying. There are assuredly more that I don't about.
- Each person states their name, pronouns, any organization they are affiliated with

2. Introduce Genderbread info-graphic *(we use the simplest one:*

<http://www.woodhullalliance.org/2012/sex-and-politics/the-genderbread-person/>)

- This info-graphic explains the interrelationship of biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression
- Each one of these is on a continuum, a person may fall on any point in the continuum.
- Each are independent of each other (a man may be very "manly" in his gender expression, and also be gay, for example)

3. Teens explain each piece:

Biological Sex: Definition

- It's kindergarten science to say "boys have penises and girls have vaginas"
- Biological sex is much more complicated
 - External organs (penis, vagina)
 - Internal organs (uterus, ovaries, testicles)
 - Chromosomes (XX, XY)
 - Hormones (estrogen, testosterone)
- Intersex, having characteristics of both sexes
- Ambiguous genitalia (undescended testicles, very small penis, vagina with no opening)
- Different hormonal balances (higher than average productions of estrogen or testosterone)
- Different chromosomes conditions (XXY, XYY)

Gender Expression: Definition

- All of the external characteristics and behaviors that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine
 - Dress
 - Hair
 - Make-up
 - Mannerisms
 - Speech patterns
 - Sports and hobbies
 - Body language
- Gender expression is usually how people get labeled as a sexual minority ("Boys who wear pink are gay")
- Some people whose gender expression does not conform to their biological sex are straight-cisgender, others are not
- Young children who are bullied are usually bullied for their gender expression (rarely does a 6yr old know their sexual orientation)

Gender Identity: Definition

- A person's innate, deeply felt psychological identification as a man, woman, or other gender, which may or may not correspond with to their biological sex
- Gender identity develops between the ages of 2 and 4. Being innate, it is unalterable.
- Gender identity is not a choice
- While gender identity and biological sex are usually in alignment (cisgender), between 1% and 5% of people report experiencing some level of gender dysphoria
- Most people believe in a two gender system (gender binary: masculine on one end, feminine on the other)
- In reality gender is on a spectrum, and there are many other recognized genders, such as agender, bigender, genderqueer, and omnigender, etc. (refer to glossary of terms)

Sexual Orientation: Definition

- Physical and/or emotional attraction to the same and/or opposite gender
- A person can be anywhere on the continuum, between completely straight, and

completely gay (refer to glossary of terms)

- A person's sexual orientation is distinct from a person's gender identity, and gender expression
- Sexual orientation is not a choice
- It is separate from sexual behavior (a man who has sex with a woman, but feels attracted to men is gay, not straight)
- You can change your sexual behavior, but not your sexual orientation

4. Each person identifies where they are on each spectrum of the genderbread person

5. Our trans teen talk about transgender topics:

What Is Transgender?

- Transgender is when an individual's gender identity/psychological sense of self does not match their biological sex
- This is often characterized by phrases like "born into the wrong body"
- Gender dysphoria is the clinical diagnosis that defines varying degrees of emotional and psychological discomfort ranging from manageable to debilitating
- Transgender is also used as an umbrella term encompassing all non-binary gender identities, not just MTF, FTM identities (refer to glossary of terms)

Who Is Transgender?

- Between 1% and 5% of the population reports experiencing some level of gender dysphoria
- Because the trans community faces such extreme prejudice, most individuals do not step up to be counted, thus the actual numbers are likely higher
- Since gender identity forms at 2-4 years old, trans people exist in all age groups, ranging from very young children, to seniors
- Transgender people may be of any sexual/romantic orientation
- Sexual orientation does not change during or after transition

6. Our trans teen tells his story, briefly. Our trans parent talks about his story.

7. Teens take turns talking about the following:

Common Misconceptions

- Transgender is not the same as cross-dressing. Cross-dressing is a behavioral choice that has nothing to do with the gender identity of the individual.
- Transgender people are not "just gay". A trans person may be of any sexual orientation, and their orientation does not inform their gender identity.
- It is not a choice. No one "decides to become a woman." The individual merely makes the decision to make apparent what has always been true for them.
- There is also no way that a person can "turn transgender". Though the cause is not definitively known, it likely lies in embryonic development, and is down to things more complicated than hormonal balances.

Risks Faced By Trans Individuals

- 41% of transgender people in the United States have attempted suicide (the national average is 4.6%)
- 19% of transgender people report having been refused medical care based on the gender identity
- 2% of transgender people report having been violently assaulted in a doctor's office
- 1 in 12 trans women are reported at risk of being murdered in America. Those numbers become 1 in 8 if you are a trans woman of color.
- Transgender youth makes up approximately 18% of homeless people (take into consideration that only between 1% and 5% of people are trans).
- According to National Center for Transgender Equality, of trans/gender non-conforming students, ages K-12:
 - 78% report experiencing harassment
 - 35% report experiencing physical assault
 - 12% report experiencing sexual violence
 - 15% of trans/gender variant students left school due to severe harassment
 - These rates much higher than reported by LGB people, who already have some of the highest rate of bullying and harassment of school aged children.

Trans Etiquette

- Use the person's preferred pronouns. A non-intrusive way to find out what they are is to

introduce yourself, state which pronouns you prefer, and ask everyone else to do the same.

- Use their preferred name. The name assigned at birth is likely not accurate for a trans person. Do not insist on using it, or ask what it is.
- Be patient. People in transition are figuring out a lot of things. They may experiment with different names and/or pronouns as they start to find their place.
- If you slip up with names and/or pronouns, catch and correct yourself. Don't dwell or bring more attention to the slip.
- Do not refer to a trans person as "transgendered"; it is grammatically incorrect, and implies that being transgender is something that "happened" to them.
- There is no right or wrong way to transition. For every trans person there are just as many ways to transition.
- Do not gender police restrooms or locker rooms. Let people use the restroom they feel most comfortable in. It is a health issue.
- Do not "out" trans people. Besides this being hugely disrespectful, it can also be dangerous. Ways one may inadvertently "out" someone is by using their birth name, birth pronouns, or gender assigning activities ("it's a girl thing").
- Asking questions: be respectful of a person's privacy and boundaries. Do not ask uninvited questions about their transition, hormones, surgery, their sexual orientation, their body, etc.
- If you have questions, a good way to ask is "Would it be okay if I asked you about (blank) sometime?"
- Remember that trans people are not walking encyclopedias of transgender knowledge. Each experience is different, each person deals with it differently, and has different experiences.

How You Can Help

- First by being informed. By understanding the needs of a community you can better help support them.
- According to GLSEN's National School Survey, students attending schools that specifically include actual or perceived gender identity and gender expression in their anti-harassment policies are less likely to encounter harassment than schools that do not.

- Schools that create gender inclusive spaces are inherently safer for transgender and gender non-conforming students than schools that do not.
- In addition to anti-harassment policies which deal with abuse after it happens, effective training can prevent abuses from happening at all.
- Include LGBT information in sexual education. Having the knowledge and language to discuss these issues helps spread acceptance.
- Transgender people who face less harassment and have safe, supportive environments to go to are less likely to fall into substance abuse, depression, and have a lower risk of suicide.
- Maintain privacy. If a person has chosen to “go stealth”, respect their decision and make sure they are not inadvertently “outed” by use of their biological name, etc.

8. Hand outs include:

- Genderbread person (<http://www.woodhullalliance.org/2012/sex-and-politics/the-genderbread-person/>)
- Safe Place Stickers (<https://shop.glsen.org/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=1440>)
- Our Trans Loved Ones booklet (<https://community.pflag.org/document.doc?id=9210>)
- A Guide for Trans and Gender Nonconforming Students pamphlet (<http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Trans%20Student%20KYR.pdf>)
- LGBT common terms
- Trans etiquette
- Trans Pronoun Chart