

Transgender Equity: Beyond the Binary

Keshet works for the full equality

of all LGBTQ+ Jews and our families in Jewish life. We strengthen Jewish communities. We equip Jewish organizations with the skills and knowledge to build LGBTQ+ affirming communities, create spaces in which all queer Jewish youth feel seen and valued, and advance LGBTQ+ rights nationwide.




Goals

By the end of this training, you will be able to:

- Understand some of the barriers impacting equity for transgender and nonbinary people.
- Build awareness of some tools for increasing access.
- Build awareness of some tools for intervening in challenging moments and anti-trans microaggressions.

Kavvanot - Intentions

- Growth and Learning Mindset
 - Take Space/Make Space
 - Take Lessons, Leave Stories
 - Trust Intent, Tend Impact
 - Prepare for Non-closure
 - Stay present (as much as possible!)
 - Have Fun!
- 



שלום בית

Shalom Bayit: Peace in the Home

Our community centers, synagogues, youth groups, and camps are often our second homes. Everyone needs to feel comfortable, safe, and respected at home. Don't ostracize those who seem different. Strive to settle disagreements in peaceful and respectful ways that allow all community members to maintain their dignity.



**B'tzelem Elohim:
In God's Image**

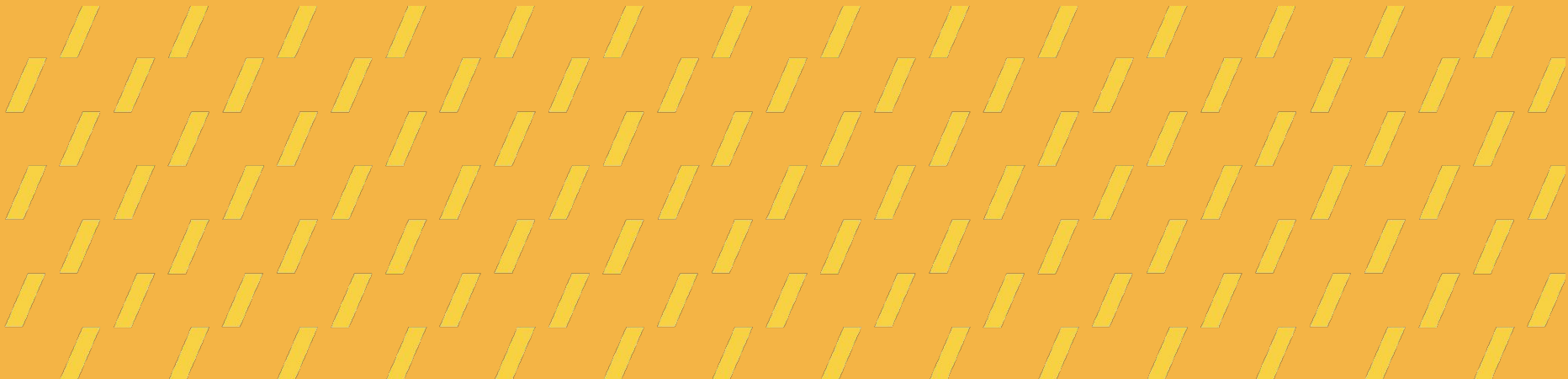
בצלם אלוהים

The Torah tells us that we are all created “b'Tzelem Elohim” (Bereshit 1:26), in the image of God. This is a simple and profound idea that should guide our interactions with all people. If we see each person as created in the image of God, we can see humanity and dignity in all people. True inclusion is built upon this foundation.

Reflect:

- Think of a time when you felt uncomfortable or unwelcome in a Jewish space
- Were there assumptions, norms, or biases at work in that moment?
- What could have been done to mitigate the situation?

Understanding the Current Landscape



Why Support Matters

- Fewer than 40% of LGBTQ young people found their home to be LGBTQ-affirming
- 53% of LGBTQ young people enrolled in school report being verbally harassed because of their identity
- 24% of LGBTQ young people reported that they have been physically threatened or harmed in the past year due to their sexual orientation or gender identity
- 60% of LGBTQ young people reported that they have felt discriminated against in the past year due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

data from the Trevor Project's 2023 survey results

Why Support Matters

National attacks on the LGBTQ+ community

- 500+ anti-trans bills have been introduced across the country so far in 2023
- Nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ young people said their mental health was poor most of the time or always due to anti-LGBTQ policies and legislation.

Mental health disparities

- 67% of LGBTQ young people reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety
- 54% of LGBTQ young people reported experiencing symptoms of depression
- 41% of LGBTQ young people, and 50% of trans and nonbinary young people, **seriously considered attempting suicide** in the past year

data from the Trevor Project's 2023 survey results

We Can Make a Difference

Factors proven to reduce suicide risk

- **respecting pronouns**
- having an **affirming adult** in their lives
- access to **gender-affirming restrooms**
- ability to **express themselves** the way they want to (e.g., clothes)
- access to **gender-affirming medical care**
- **affirming schools**



from the Trevor Project's 2023 survey results

Minority Stress Theory

People of marginalized identities experience discrimination, exclusion, stigma

This environmental stress over a long period of time affects physical & mental health

LGBTQ+ youth are not prone to mental health disparities; this is in response to their environment

And **we have the power to change** the environment!

Nationally in the workplace

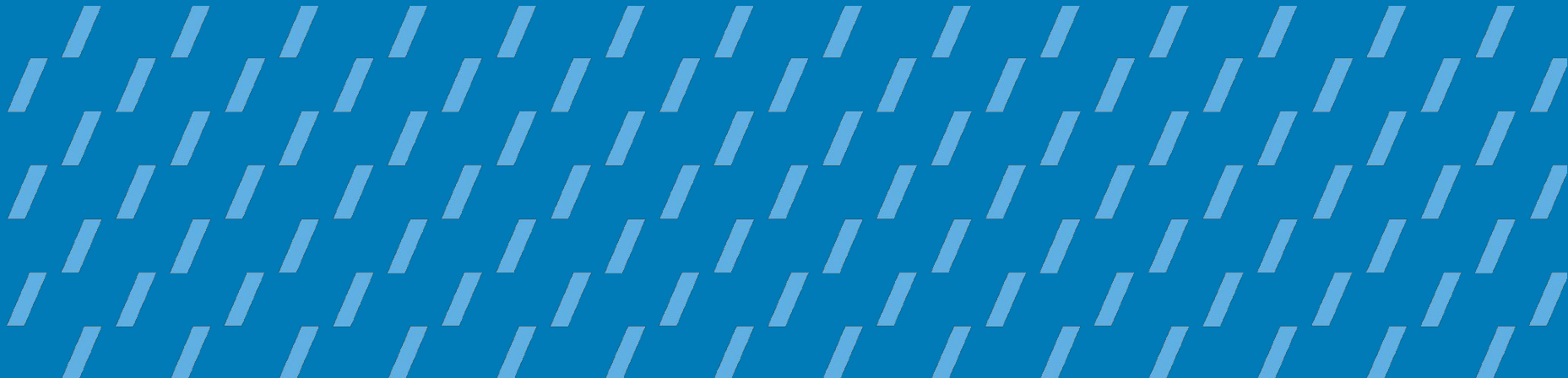
- Transgender and nonbinary adults at least twice as likely to be unemployed as cisgender adults.
- Cisgender employees make 32% more.
- More than half of transgender employees report feeling uncomfortable being out at work. 2/3 remain in the closet for work interactions outside of their company.
- Transgender workers reporting feeling less supported by workplaces and managers, less able to access benefits, and less able to be promoted.
- Persistent reports that supervisors or HR did not respond to stop bullying or harassment.

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/being-transgender-at-work>

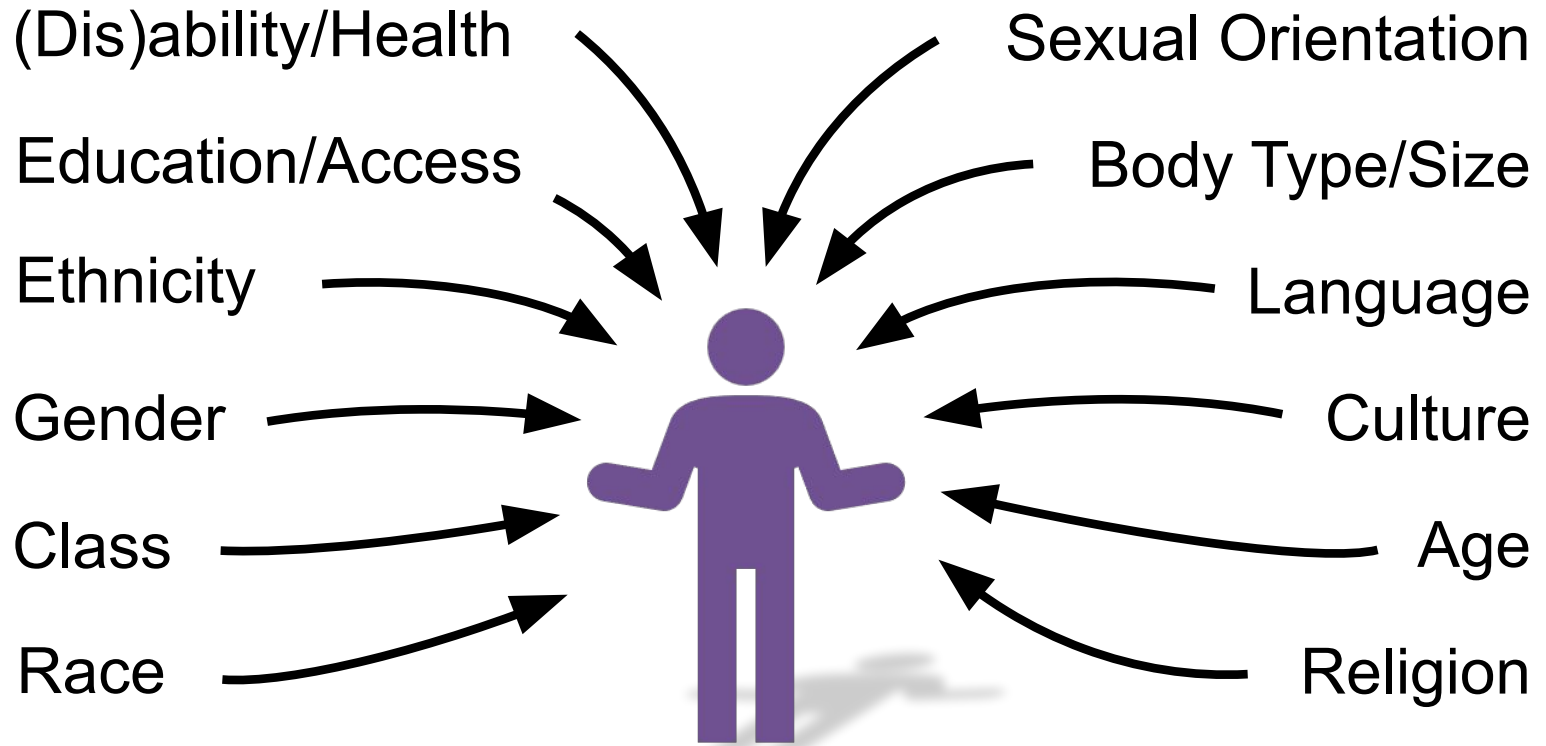
<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Workplace-Discrimination-Sep-2021.pdf>

<https://transequality.org/issues/employment>

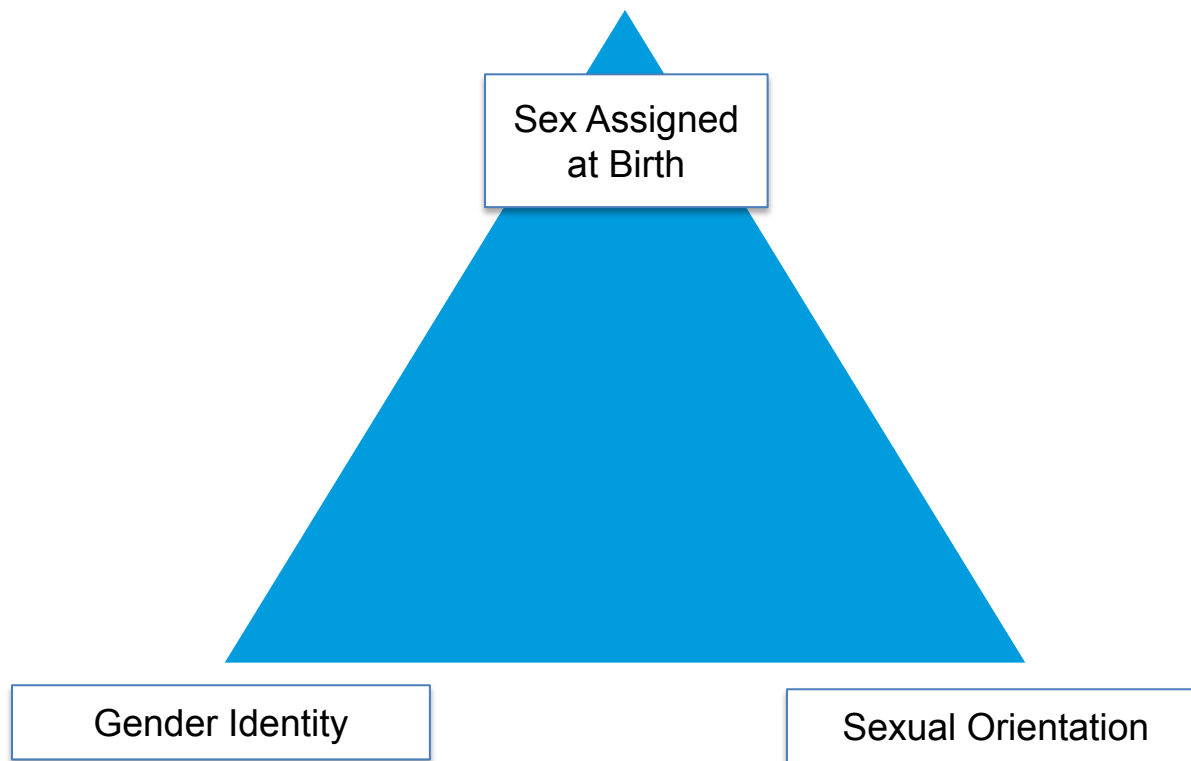
Brief Review: LGBTQ Aleph-Bet



Context Matters

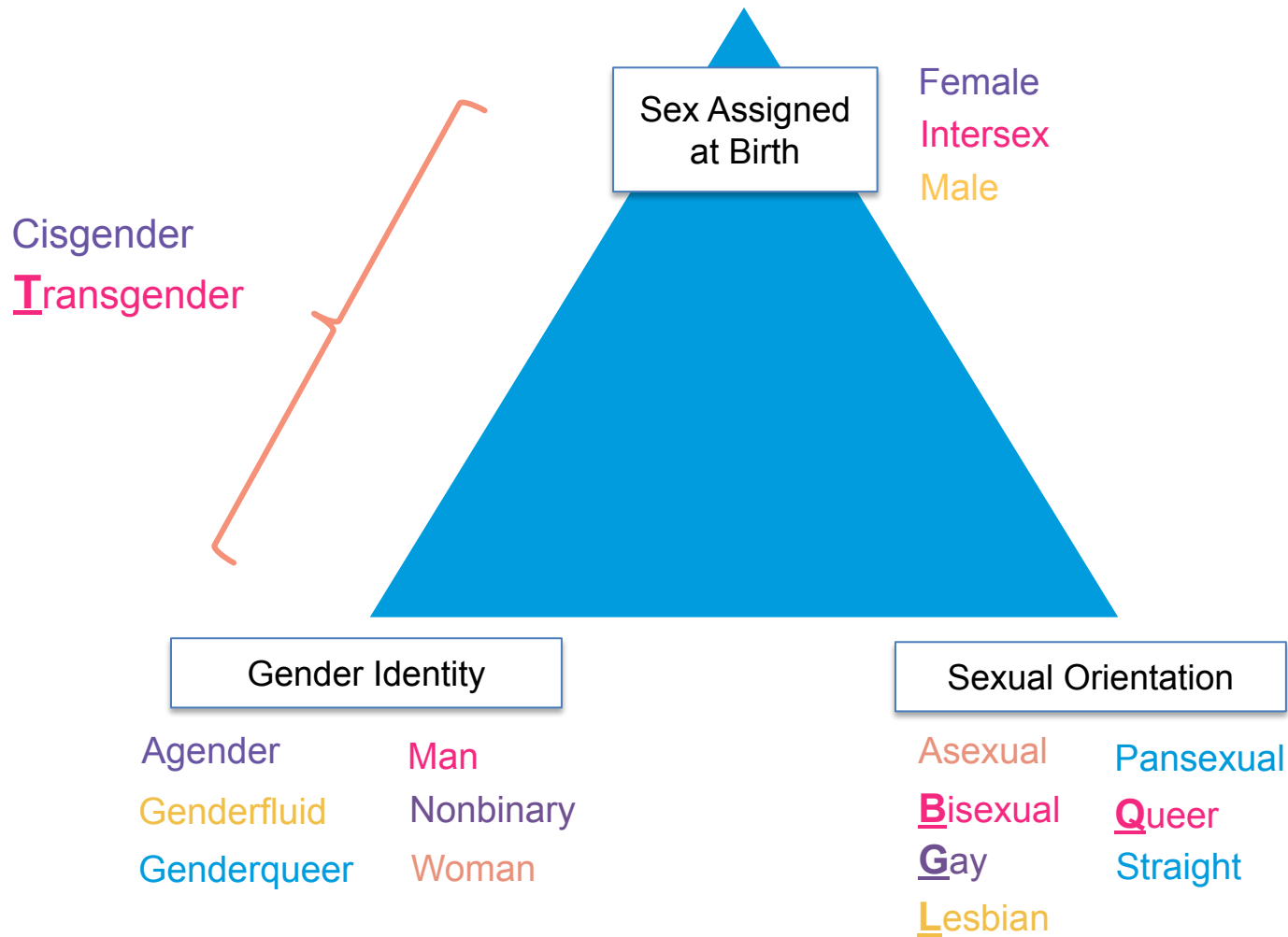


Three Axes



Three Axes

Terms in alphabetical order



And More ...

Some More Gender Terms

Gender Identity

A person's inner self-knowledge and understanding of the gender(s) with which they identify.

Gender Expression

The manner in which one outwardly expresses, signals, or performs their gender. Can encompass appearance (clothing, haircut, makeup, etc), behavior, mannerisms, etc.

Gender Roles and Stereotypes

The culturally-specific expectations, pressures, and assumptions related to gender that are imposed on people in that culture.

Gender Attribution

A process by which one person perceives another and uses their own assumptions, past experiences, and cultural context to “guess” which gender that person holds. Attributions made in this way cannot be assumed to be accurate.

Diversity within the Trans Community



Transition vs Gender Affirming Steps

Some folks don't use the term transition because it implies that they are moving from point A to point B on a set course when instead they are simply taking steps to affirm the gender they've been all along.

Both are valid ways of expressing one's experience.

**There isn't one "correct" way to transition.
The things folks do to affirm their gender
identity varies over time and is individual
per the person.**

**There isn't a "correct" way to look, act, or
be queer and/or trans.**

Medically Transition/Affirm

Hormone Replacement Therapy

Gender Affirmation Surgery

Hormone Blockers

Socially Transition/Affirm

Choosing a name that affirms one's identity

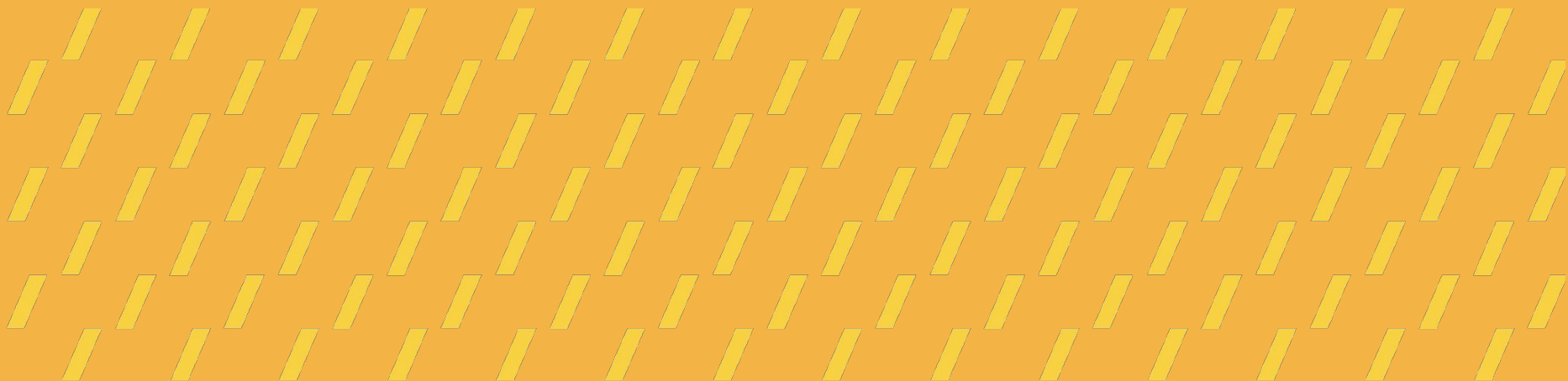
Choosing pronouns that affirm one's identity

Legally Transition/Affirm

Changing one's name on legal documents

Changing the gender marker on legal documents (select states)

Language



Be mindful of language.

Avoid:

ladies gentlemen ma'am girls sir guys etc.

Consider using instead:

Thanks, **friends**.
Have a great
night!

Good morning,
folks!

Hi, **everyone!**

And for **you?**

Can I get you
all
something?

Why?

Shifting to gender-inclusive language respects and acknowledges the gender identities of all people and removes assumption.

Pronouns

Subjective	Objective	Possessive	Reflexive	Example
She	Her	Hers	Herself	The challah is hers. She created the recipe herself. This loaf is for her.
They	Them	Theirs	Themselves / Themselves	This babka is theirs. They created the recipe themselves. This one is for them.
He	Him	His	Himself	The kibbeh is his. He created the recipe himself. This one is for him.
Ze	Hir	Hirs	Hirself	The hamentaschen are hirs. Ze created the recipe hirself. This one is for hir.
Ze	Zir	Zirs	Zirself	The dafina is zirs. Ze created the recipe zirself. This bowl is zirs.

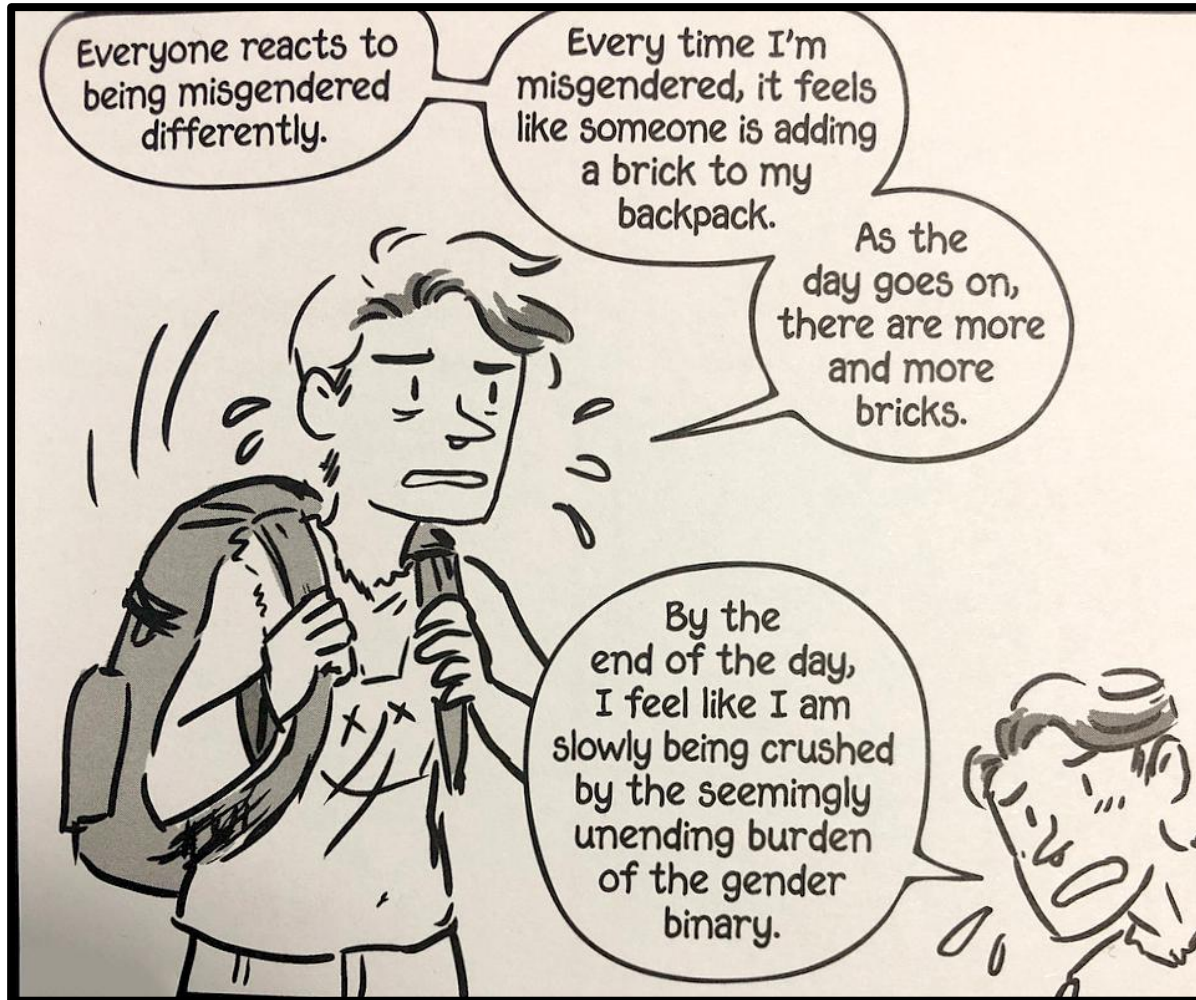


Image borrowed from the book *A Quick & Easy Guide to They/Them Pronouns* by Archie Bongiovanni & Tristan Jimerson

Pronouns:

- Create space for others to tell you what pronouns to use.
- Use those pronouns consistently and respectfully – even when the person is not there!
- If you mess up, correct yourself briefly, then practice & learn
- If someone else messes up, gently correct them.
- If you are a person whose pronouns are regularly respected by others, sharing *your* pronouns takes the burden off of those whose pronouns are regularly disrespected to be the first / only ones sharing.

Unspoken Norms & Systems



Unspoken Norms and Systems

“Every time you go through something, and it’s easy for you, look around and say, “Who is it not easy for? And what can I do to dismantle that system?”

-Ijeoma Oluo, *So You Want To Talk About Race*

Unspoken Norms and Systems

Cisnormativity

The often unspoken assumption that cis identities are the “norm” or default.

Systems that benefit cisgender people and disadvantage transgender people

Heteronormativity

The often unspoken assumption that straight identities are the “norm” or default.

Systems that benefit straight people and disadvantage LGBTQ people

Examples in Synagogues



Overt

Violence against LGBTQ people, Family rejection / Homelessness, Slurs and jokes, Hate crimes, Anti-LGBTQ policies and legislation, Refusal of service / care, Housing and employment discrimination

Covert

Representation in the classroom, Access to trans-competent medical providers and relevant medical information, Refusing to use affirmed names and pronouns, Minimizing identity / "It's just a phase," Dress codes and "professional" clothing expectations, Implicit bias, Not believing experiences of LGBTQ people, Placing intention over impact, Assuming that LGBTQ identities are "sexual" or "inappropriate," Assuming that LGBTQ identities are "controversial," Paperwork and forms, Assuming gender based on appearance / voice, Fetishization / exoticization, Medical / pathological model, Rigid gender norms, Language, "Tone it down," Celebration of milestones, Representation in media, Stereotypes, Expecting LGBTQ people to educate about identities, Not challenging homophobic / transphobic jokes, Microaggressions

Understanding Implicit Bias and Microaggressions



Implicit Bias

The attitudes, stereotypes, and assumptions that we're not even aware of, and often run counter to our consciously held values. These implicit assumptions can impact our everyday choices, particularly when we are already under stress or in a hurry.

What are Microaggressions?

Microaggressions are defined as the everyday, subtle, intentional — and oftentimes unintentional — interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups.

- Kevin Nadal, professor of psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Microaggressions often appear to be a compliment or a joke, but contain a hidden insult about a group of people

– Dr. Derald Wing Sue

Source: https://www.pfizer.com/news/hot-topics/understanding_racial_microaggression_and_its_effect_on_mental_health and <https://www.vox.com/2015/2/16/8031073/what-are-microaggressions>

“Small” Actions, Large Impact

- Cumulative psychological impact, in line with trauma.
- Associated with anger, depression, anxiety, lower productivity.
- Associated with physical symptoms such as headaches, loss of sleep, increased blood pressure.
- Make environments less affirming and validating
- Those who experience microaggressions are often told they are “overreacting,” “too sensitive,” “aggressive,” or are pressured to minimize/deny the incidents.

Source: <https://www.pfizer.com/news/hot-topics/understanding-racial-microaggression-and-its-effect-on-mental-health> and <https://www.vox.com/2015/2/16/8031073/what-are-microaggressions>

Examples

The Action	The Message
“He came out, it’s what all the kids are doing these days.”	Invalidates one’s LGBTQ+ identity and implies that it is a trend or a phase.
“I’m not transphobic, I just think it’s confusing/too difficult to use singular ‘they’ pronouns.”	Implies that one’s own comfort or sense of “correct” grammar is more important than another person’s dignity.
“Adam – who used to be Sarah – came over for dinner the other day.”	At best, expresses disrespect for Adam’s name and identity. At worst, outs Adam as trans and potential danger.
“When you go home to your Mom and Dad....”	Assumes all children in the class have, and live with, their mother and father.
“This is so much work for such a small minority!”	Implies that dignity for LGBTQ people comes at the expense of non-LGBTQ people, implies that it is a burden to treat people with respect.

Acting Against Implicit Bias

- Be aware of your own biases and fears (we all have them! This is not a cause for shame!)
- Seek out interaction with people who differ from you (in terms of race, culture, ethnicity, and other qualities).
- Try not to get defensive.
- Be open to discussing your own attitudes and biases and how they might have hurt others or in some sense revealed bias on your part.
- Be an ally by intervening personally against all forms of bias and discrimination.

Creating Affirming Communities



Programming: What We Do

- Regular Programs on LGBTQ+ Themes
- LGBTQ+ Speakers and Presenters
- Active LGBTQ+ Group

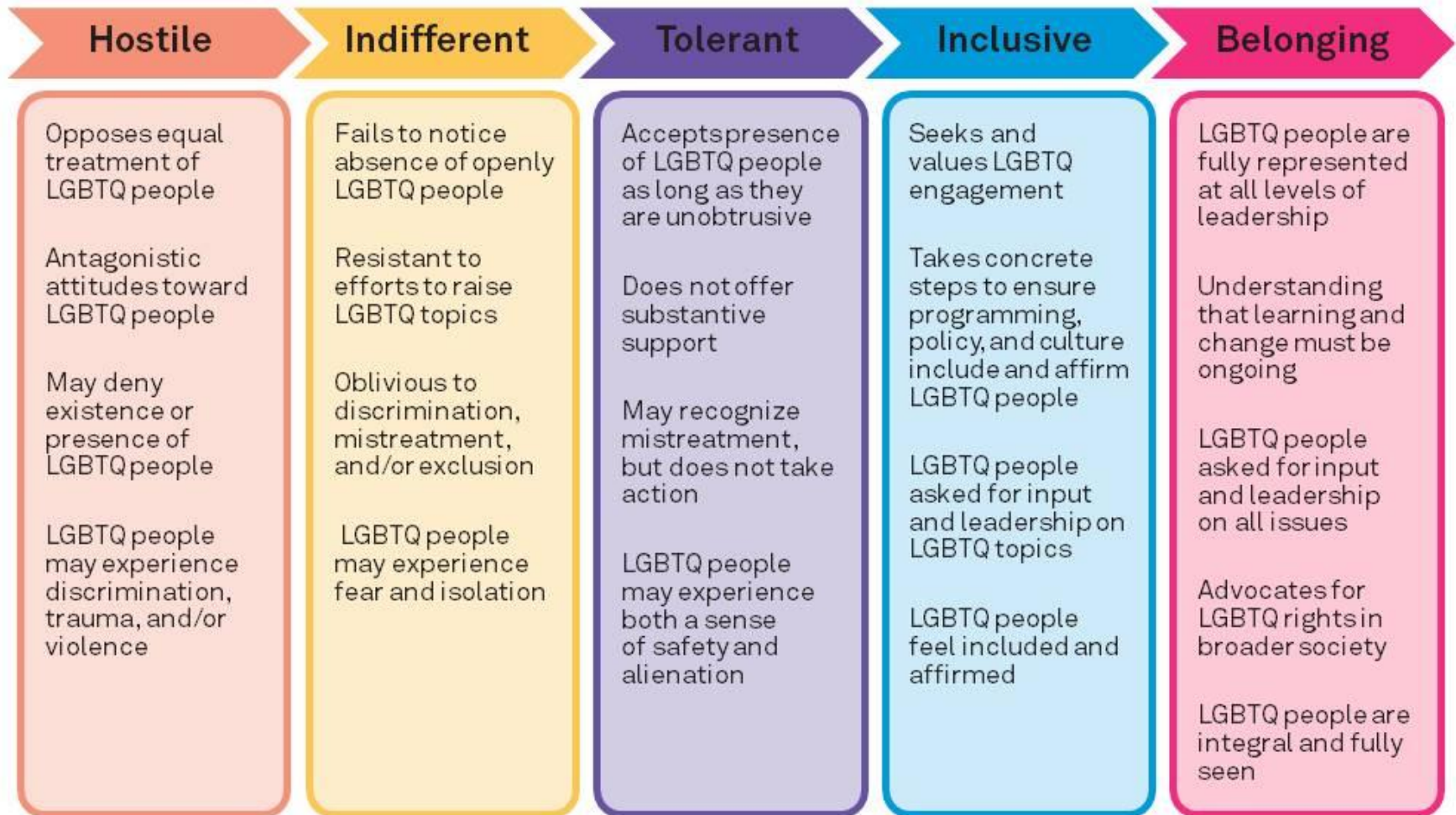
Policy: How We (Say We) Do It

- Training for staff, board, & leadership
- Responsibility and Capacity for DEIB work
- Nondiscrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Anti-Bullying Policies
- Dress Code & Ritual Wear
- Pronouns & Language
- Equitable Access to Programming and Facilities
- Privacy & Confidentiality

Culture: The Environment We Build

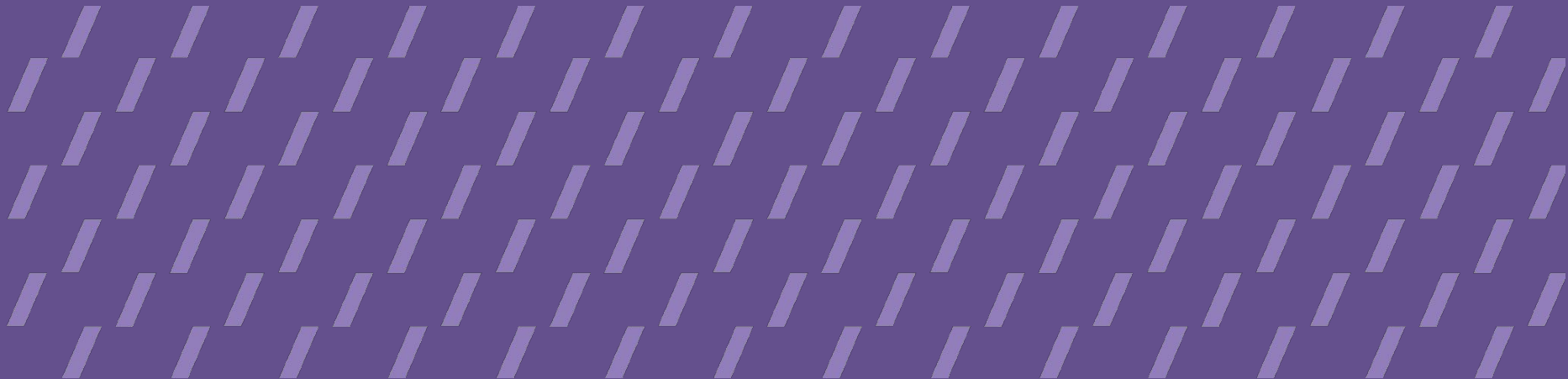
- Representation
- Participation
- Outreach
- Resources
- Language and Communications
- Civil Rights

The Spectrum of Belonging



Adapted from *Teaching for Diversity & Social Justice*, ed. Adams, Bell, & Griffin (2007)

Putting it into Practice



Practice

One of your coworkers has recently transitioned at work. You notice that even as most people in your school have gotten used to their new pronouns, their manager (who is also your manager) seems to consistently use incorrect pronouns.

When your coworker corrects her, the manager often laughs it off or gets flustered, apologizes, and laughs that “it is just so hard” because they/them pronouns are “just are not what she is used to” and involve “relearning grammar.”

You are in a meeting with your coworker, your supervisor, and some new parents. As the meeting begins, your manager introduces your coworker by the wrong pronouns.

Practice

Alex, is a new staff member at your organization and is starting his onboarding process. Alex, is transgender and uses he/him/his pronouns. During one of the onboarding session that you are leading, Alex happens to mention to the group that he is transgender. One of the other new employees, Sam, exclaims "Wow, I never would have guessed you were trans! You look *so good* - when did you transition?"

As the facilitator of the session, you want to hold space both for the ways this comment is hurtful and unwelcoming, and the ways that Sam may be intending to convey excitement and acceptance.

Practice

One of your employees who has been at your organization for about two years is asking about employee benefits surrounding family leave. The employee shares that he will be undergoing In Vitro Fertilization*. Currently the policy states that employees are given eight weeks of maternity leave for mothers who give birth and with the adoption of a new child and fathers are given two weeks of paternity leave. These situations do not apply appropriately to the employee who is a transgender man.

What are your next steps in amending this policy and discussing this with the rest of the Executive Team and your insurance provider?

Further Resources

Resource Library



Community Inclusion Guides

Inclusion 101 guides for synagogues, day schools, summer camps, Hillels, and Jewish youth groups.



Gender Identity

Resources and stories to support transgender and non-binary friends and family members.



Holidays & Lifecycle Events

Resources for Jewish and LGBTQ holidays and days of importance as well as lifecycle events.



Jewish Text and Tradition

How do Jewish text and tradition relate to LGBTQ identity and experience? Check out these resources.



Printable Signs and Stickers

We offer these printable signs and stickers for you to print and use now!



LGBTQ Jews of Color

Resources by and about Queer Jews of Color.

Stay in Touch!

Keshet's Education and Training Team:

education@keshetonline.org

keshetonline.org/resources-and-events

keshetonline.org/youth

לא עליך המלאכה לגמור, ולא
אתה בן חורין ליבטל ממנה.

*Lo aleikha ham'lakha ligmor, velo
atah ben khorin lehibatel mimenah.*

It is not upon you to complete
the work, but you are not free
to desist from it.

- Pirkei Avot 2:16

Thank you for joining us!

Keshet
קשת

For LGBTQ
equality in
Jewish life

www.keshetonline.org
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