

# SAFE ZONE

## for K-12 Educators

Made possible by

- The College of Education
- The Dr. Jesse R. Peel LGBTQ Center
- The LGBTQ Priority Fund



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## for K-12 Educators

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# AGENDA

## **Part One**

- History of the program
- Language and terms
- Coming Out Process

## **Part Two**

- Panel discussion

## **Part Three**

- Truisms and Myths
- Prejudice and Discrimination
- Increasing Inclusivity
- Program roles
- Resources

# INTRODUCTIONS

- Name
- Pronouns
- The role you play (such as teacher, parent, counselor)
- Zodiac sign
- LGBTQ person you admire

# LGBTQ TEENS ON FEELING SAFE

From the Human Rights Campaign's 2018 Youth Report



# OBJECTIVES

- To provide a mechanism for easily identifying individuals who are empathetic and informed about LGBTQ issues who are willing and able to provide confidential support and information.
- To illustrate East Carolina University's commitment to address all types of diversity; to provide support specifically for LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff; and to educate and raise awareness about LGBTQ issues within the community.
- To heighten awareness of LGBTQ issues in schools, in communities, and beyond.
- To dispel myths about LGBTQ issues by disseminating facts and research-based information.
- To reduce heterosexism and cissexism in our schools.

# HISTORY

- Safe Zone programs were developed in the 1980's and 1990's on college campuses.
- The first training at ECU occurred because of the efforts of an ad hoc group of staff and faculty in the late 1990's.
- In June of 2014, the Safe Zone Program was moved into the LGBT Resource Office to be coordinated and managed. A team of trainers from throughout campus help to facilitate, innovate, and sustain this important initiative.
- Over 750 faculty and staff have been through the program since it was revived in 2006.




# PIRATE ALLY



Historically at ECU, Safe Zone has been offered to faculty and staff only. In April 2016, Pirate Ally was created as a complementary training program for students.



# FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

- Everyone is present today because they care about increasing understanding of the LGBTQ community
- Discussing differences and diverse experiences is important
- Accurate information reduces prejudice and discrimination
- Heterosexism and cissexism are forms of oppression 
- Homophobia and transphobia create barriers to open conversation
- Oppressive, homophobic and transphobic beliefs are still present in society
- There are multiple paths toward change

# HELPFUL TERMS

- **SEX:** A **medical term** that is often assigned at birth that describes physical, biological, anatomical sexual characteristics (male, female, intersex).
- **GENDER:** A set of **cultural identities, expressions, and roles** that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex. These vary by culture and can be changed.
- **GENDER IDENTITY:** A person's **deeply-felt, inherent sense of being** (boy, man, male; girl, woman, female; or genderqueer, gender nonconforming, gender neutral) that may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, a person's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.
- **SEXUAL ORIENTATION:** An inherent and enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual **attraction to some other people**.

# ORIENTATION VS. IDENTITY

ASEXUAL

BISEXUAL

GAY

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION

HETEROSEXUAL

LESBIAN

PANSEXUAL

WOMAN

GENDER FLUID

TRANSMAN/TRANSWOMAN

## GENDER IDENTIFICATION

MAN

NON-BINARY

TWO SPIRIT

# SEXUAL ORIENTATION DEFINITIONS

- **ASEXUAL:** A person who does not experience sexual attraction, but may experience other forms of attraction (e.g., intellectual, emotional).
- **BISEXUAL:** A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to two genders. For example, a person attracted to some men and some women.
- **GAY:** A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some members of the same gender. Gay most often refers to a person who identifies as a man who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some other men.
- **HETEROSEXUAL:** A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some people of the opposite gender.
- **LESBIAN:** A person who identifies as a woman and who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some other women.
- **PANSEXUAL:** A person whose emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction is to people inclusive of all genders and biological sexes.

# GENDER IDENTITY DEFINITIONS

- **CISGENDER:** A person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
- **TRANSGENDER:** A person whose gender identity and/or expression are not aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender is often used as an umbrella term encompassing a large number of identities related to people who feel that the binary system is an incomplete description of who they are.
- **TWO-SPIRIT:** American Indian/First Nations/Native American persons who have attributes of both genders, have distinct gender and social roles in their tribes, and are often involved with mystical rituals (shamans). Their dress is usually mixture of masculine and feminine articles and they are seen as a separate or third gender.

# GENDER IDENTITY DEFINITIONS

- **NONBINARY:** A person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. An individual whose gender identity is neither masculine or feminine, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders. It is an identity term which some use exclusively, while others may use it interchangeably with terms like:
  - genderqueer
  - gender creative
  - gender nonconforming
  - gender diverse
  - gender expansive
- **GENDERFLUID:** Individuals whose gender varies over time. A gender fluid person may at any time identify as male, female, agender, or any other non-binary identity, or some combination of identities.

# MORE DEFINITIONS

- **QUEER:** An umbrella term to refer to all LGBTQ+ people. It is also a non-binary term used by individuals who see their sexual orientation and/or gender identity as fluid. While it is used as an affirmative term among many LGBTQ people today, historically, queer was used as a derogatory slur.
- **QUESTIONING:** A person who is in the process of understanding and exploring what their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and gender expression might be.
- **INTERSEX:** An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural biological variations of individuals who are born with a chromosomal pattern, a reproductive system, and/or sexual anatomy that does not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies.
- **ALLY:** A person who works to end oppression by recognizing their own privilege and supporting or advocating for the oppressed population.



# COMMENTS/REFLECTIONS/QUESTIONS

In the next three minutes turn and talk with a neighbor to explore:

1. One piece of information that was new to you.
2. One question that you still have.





Rainbow (1978)



Philly Rainbow (2017)



Progress Pride (2018)

# FLAGS



Asexual



Bisexual



Pansexual



Lesbian Pride



Trans



Gender Non-Binary



Intersex



Ally Pride

# COMING OUT

The term “coming out” refers to the lifelong process of the development of a positive LGBTQ identity. Coming out often happens repeatedly as one shares their identity with others within their private, public, and/or professional circles.

Common emotions:

- Fear
  - Rejection
  - Harassment
  - Violence
- Elation
  - Relief
  - Self-Integrity
  - Acceptance
  - Feeling whole

# HELPING WITH COMING OUT

- Listen
- Follow their lead
- Acceptance and inclusion
- Use correct pronouns and name
- Respect confidentiality
- Self reflection and education

# PANEL

- Alison Covington, Pitt County Schools
- Clinton Todd, Pitt County Schools

# FIGHTING THE MYTHS

“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

—Nelson Mandela

# THE TRUTH ABOUT SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- No one thing causes or influences sexual orientation.
- “Homosexuality” is not a type of mental illness and cannot be "cured" by psychotherapy.
- There is no definable gay “lifestyle.”
- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals cannot be identified by certain mannerisms or physical characteristics.
- Sexual experiences are not necessarily indicative of one's sexual orientation.
- Many people accuse lesbian, gay, and bisexual people of "flaunting" their sexuality when they talk about their partner, hold hands, or kiss one another in public.
- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals work in all types of jobs and they live in all types of situations.

# THE TRUTH ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY

- Gender identity is the innermost concept of self—how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves.
- Gender deeply influences every part of one's life.
- Gender identity is fluid—it may change over time.
- Most people's gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth.
- For some, however, their gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth.
- Some individuals choose to socially, hormonally, and/or surgically change their body to more fully match their gender identity.
- There's no such thing as “the surgery.”
- If you've met one trans person, you've met *one* trans person.



# PREJUDICE & DISCRIMINATION

- Prejudice refers to negative attitudes and preconceived opinions that are not based on actual experience or reason.
- Discrimination refers to behavior that denies individuals or groups equality of treatment.
- Oppression refers to the systemic and institutional inequity of power of one group at the expense of others and the use of force to maintain this dynamic.
- Realities of Prejudice and Discrimination
  - Social Issues
  - Health Issues
  - Financial Issues



# EFFECTS OF PREJUDICE & DISCRIMINATION

The minority stress framework asserts that “stigma, prejudice, and discrimination create a stressful social environment that can lead to mental health problems in people who belong to stigmatized minority groups” (Marshal et al., 2008; Meyer, 2003).

The North Carolina state snapshot from GLSEN’s 2019 National School Climate Survey reported:

- Most LGBTQ students in North Carolina experienced anti-LGBTQ victimization at school (verbal harassment, physical harassment, physical assault)
- The vast majority of LGBTQ students in North Carolina regularly (sometimes, often, or frequently) heard anti-LGBTQ remarks
- 63% of LGBTQ students in North Carolina experienced at least one form of anti-LGBTQ discrimination at school during the past year
- In North Carolina, nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ students (31%), and over 2 in 3 transgender students (70%), were unable to use the school bathroom aligned with their gender.
- Additionally, nearly a quarter of LGBTQ students (23%), and half of transgender students (50%), were prevented from using their chosen name or pronouns in school.
- Only 15% were taught positive representations of LGBTQ people, history, or events (“inclusive curriculum”). Only 2% reported receiving LGBTQ-inclusive sex education at school.



# INCREASING INCLUSIVITY

- Make no assumptions about a person's sexuality or gender identity
- Have something LGBTQ-related visible in your office, email signature, or syllabus
- Support, normalize, and validate a person's feelings
- Challenge homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism, and cissexism
- Learn about and refer to campus and community organizations
- Support and advocate for anti-discrimination policies
- Diversify curriculum
- Re-evaluate the power of the language you use

# THE ROLE OF AN ALLY

- **Expectations**
  - Visibility
  - Not an expert
  - Serve as a safe space
- **Continued Development**
  - Awareness
  - Knowledge and education
  - Skills
  - Action

# RESOURCES

## **Gender Spectrum**

Gender Spectrum helps to create gender sensitive and inclusive environments.  
[www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org)

## **GLAAD**

GLAAD, founded in 1985, tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. As a dynamic media force, GLAAD rewrites the script for LGBTQ acceptance. [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)

## **GLSEN**

GLSEN was founded by a group of teachers in 1990, based on the belief that educators play key roles in creating affirming learning environments for LGBTQ youth. [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

# RESOURCES

## **GSA Network**

Founded in San Francisco in 1998, GSA Network emerged as a youth-driven organization that connects LGBTQ+ youth and school-based GSA clubs through peer support, leadership development, and community organizing and advocacy. [www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org)

## **Human Rights Campaign (HRC)**

The Human Rights Campaign represents a force of more than 3 million members and supporters nationwide. As the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer civil rights organization, HRC envisions a world where LGBTQ people are ensured of their basic equal rights, and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community. [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)

## **The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)**

NCTE was founded in 2003 by transgender activists who recognized the urgent need for policy change to advance transgender equality and has become a powerful transgender advocacy presence in Washington, D.C. [www.transequality.org](http://www.transequality.org)

# RESOURCES

## **PFLAG**

Founded in 1973 after the simple act of a mother publicly supporting her gay son, PFLAG is the nation's largest family and ally organization for the LGBTQ+ community. PFLAG is committed to creating a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed. [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

## **The Trevor Project**

Founded in 1998 by the creators of the Academy Award®-winning short film *TREVOR*, The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) young people under 25. [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

## **Welcoming Schools**

HRC Foundation's Welcoming Schools is the nation's premier professional development program providing training and resources to elementary school educators to embrace family diversity, create LGBTQ and gender inclusive schools, prevent bias-based bullying, and support transgender and non-binary students. [www.welcomingschools.org](http://www.welcomingschools.org)

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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