

RAISE YOUR VOICE

TRANSGENDER EDUCATION & ADVOCACY PROGRAM

For the full toolkit, program information, and resources for trans and gender non-conforming people and allies, join us online.

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PUBLIC

UNDERSTAND HOW RACISM AND ANTI-BLACKNESS IMPACT GENDER.

Black and brown trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people face some of the highest levels of both racial and gender discrimination. This makes even the simplest things in life exponentially more difficult.

Believe people in these communities when they tell you about their experiences. Become well-versed in the layers and realities that BPOC TGNC people of color face.

OFFER PRO BONO FINANCIAL, HEALTHCARE AND LEGAL SUPPORT.

While all trans folks could use this, it's especially important to consider offering pro bono services to BPOC TGNC communities because of the overlapping oppressions they experience.

Because of systemic racial discrimination that manifests in schools with less resources, housing displacement, and the exodus of a middle class and dwindling well-paying jobs, for example, many grow up without access to consistent income. This lower socio-economic status, combined with being trans, often means that many members of these communities end up homeless and/or turn to finding work in the underground economy.

INFUSE RACIAL AWARENESS, CULTURE AND EXPRESSION INTO PLANNING YOUR EVENTS.

Many LGBTQ+-focused organizations don't account for race in their outreach, leaving out Black and POC communities. This is a missed opportunity.

Bringing in diverse speakers, performers, healthcare providers helps ensure there is a range of identities, learning types, needs and cultures represented in your outreach and education efforts.

HONOR EXCLUSIVELY BLACK AND POC TGNC SPACES.

Even within the TGNC community, it's important to be aware of one's racial privilege and how race impacts people's lived experiences. Recognize that sometimes being supportive means not being in the room. Make it a practice to consider giving up space and speaking requests to Black or POC humans.

Be supportive from a distance when there is a call for exclusively Black or people of color space.

Don't deride or interrupt this chance for these communities to heal and grow.

PAY PEOPLE FOR THEIR LABOR.

BPOC Trans and GNC folks often pay a high price for just being themselves. Just as you would consider paying a consultant for their expertise, you should plan ahead to pay BPOC TGNC folks for the expertise they've developed by surviving in the world.

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BLACK & PEOPLE OF COLOR TRANS COMMUNITIES

*BPOC TGNC

DECONSTRUCT AND ELIMINATE GENDER EXPECTATIONS.

Do the internal, personal work to shift your thought process on gender. Loosen the idea that clothing, voice range, mannerisms and overall appearance define a person's gender.

Remember, at all times, a trans or gender non-conforming (TGNC) person is likely planning ahead to ensure their safety. By removing internalized gender stereotypes, we can proactively help to make all spaces safer.

For those whose personal presentation doesn't fit into the gender binary, this simple thoughtfulness can reduce the amount of intense and, at times, violent policing of binary gender expectations enforced upon them in public.

COMMIT TO INTERVENING IN PERSONAL AND PUBLIC SPACES.

Disrupt the conversation when you hear the following terms used around you: "it," "transsexual," "hermaphrodite," "tranny," "transvestite" and "he-she."

If a slur happens and a TGNC person is present, interrupt the transphobia, apologize to the targeted person, and follow their leadership to take actions steps that make them feel safer.

Finally, educate your friends and family on the best terms and practices to use with TGNC people. This way, when they are in public, they are also prepared to be advocates.

MARK RESTROOMS BY WHAT'S AVAILABLE, NOT BY SEX OR GENDER.

Clearly illustrated signs that show what features a restroom contains (rather than marking them by a binary gender sign) help transgender and gender non-conforming people navigate what facilities are available.

Examples of marking a space include designating features such as toilet, ADA accessible, urinal, baby station, single stall, etc. This helps not only transgender and gender non-conforming humans, but also people with disabilities, and those with children.

SEEK OUT AND PATRONIZE PUBLIC SPACES THAT SUPPORT INCLUSION.

Use social media and word of mouth to share your appreciation of inclusive spaces.

This encourages those managing the public space to continue doing their work. It also draws attention to places that are welcoming to LGBTQ+ and trans and gender non-conforming communities, and puts pressure on non-welcoming places to change.

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WORK

BE RESPECTFUL OF YOUR LOVED ONE'S WISHES AND ADVOCATE FOR THEM.

Follow your loved one's lead when it comes to their coming out or transitioning process and timeline. Let them direct this very important time in their life by fully supporting their decisions.

Change your language to follow your loved one's own expression of self. Do not out them without their consent or permission.

Encourage the places you and your family and friends frequent to become more trans affirming by changing their signs to reflect a gender-neutral space and educating their staff to be inclusive of trans and gender non-conforming humans.

FIND COMMUNITY THAT HELPS YOUR (CHILD OR LOVED ONE) CELEBRATE THEIR AUTHENTIC SELF.

Research the growing community of people with trans and gender non-conforming family members and join a group that can help you gain tools to advocate for your loved one.

Read LGBTQ+ news and fiction to better understand how LGBTQ+ relationships are similar to, and different from, heterosexual relationships. Prepare yourself for age-appropriate discussions about safe sex, healthy relationships,

etc. Just because this person has a different sexual orientation or gender identity doesn't mean they don't want support with those important talks as they grow into their gender.

FOSTER INCLUSIVE AND AFFIRMING FAMILY DISCUSSIONS ABOUT DIFFERENCES OF ALL TYPES.

In the way that you model valuing diversity, your family member will know from the beginning that they never have to worry about being loved and accepted for who they are.

Be sure not to let other family members question your loved one's commitment to authenticity and self-determination.

FOR PARENTS: BE UNAPOLOGETIC ABOUT SUPPORTING YOUR CHILDREN.

Share your story. Let other parents know that you feel the same love for your child as they do for theirs.

Make sure to avoid gender stereotyping when it comes to playtime, attire, hobbies and interests. Build a library of books – both at home and at your child's school – that include diverse characters and stories to normalize gender and sexual orientation differences.

Be vocal about your love for your child. Make it clear to others that you could not stand by and watch your child harmed.

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YOUR FAMILY

ACTIVELY RECRUIT, HIRE AND PREPARE FOR TRANS WORKERS.

Take the initiative to welcome people in the trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) community on your team. Craft a clear nondiscrimination policy that will make their time at your organization safe.

Attend job fairs and network with local, national and professional organizations to help you find and hire trans employees. Make it clear throughout the hiring process that you will not tolerate discrimination and expect staff to be welcoming.

USE SIGNS FOR FACILITIES THAT COMMUNICATE INCLUSIVE/SAFE SPACES FOR TRANS FOLKS.

Restroom and/or locker room signage can say a lot about how your organization supports the trans community. Use signage that creatively and explicitly communicates your organization's values. Consider alternative layouts for such spaces such as private shower suites, or large, single-stall bathrooms that include a toilet and allow space for changing and showering.

SHOW THAT DISRESPECTFUL LANGUAGE AND ACTIONS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

Mention your trans-affirming, nondiscrimination policy in your interview process and model it through your in-office practices. Make support for trans and gender non-conforming

employees a part of your organization's culture by making consistent efforts to understand their specific needs and following through on their requests for support.

SUPPORT STAFF THROUGH THEIR LEGAL AND TRANSITION PAPERWORK.

Healthcare issues and the complicated process of updating government identification can impact a staff member's work output, presence, and peace of mind.

Check in with your trans and gender non-conforming employees and make sure you're up to date on any transition-related steps they are going through that may impact their productivity and well-being.

Be open to shifting internal practices that could proactively support them as they go through complex legal issues and what can be jarring social and physical changes.

CREATE A CULTURE OF ADVOCACY.

Use your business's visibility to encourage other organizations to adopt inclusive practices. Point out your success supporting the trans and gender non-conforming community in business and government spaces that are often closed to these folks.

Reach out to TGNC or LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations and let them know that your business supports the TGNC community and is willing to be an example in a push for broader changes.

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HEALTH (CARE)

ADVOCATE FOR TRANSGENDER FOLKS' RIGHTS TO LEAD SAFE, SPIRITUAL LIVES.

The discrimination trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people face deeply impacts their spiritual lives. Use this awareness to speak out to your congregation.

Pledge to find balance between religious freedom and LGBTQ+ equality. Model how that can be done in your own faith space, and then speak from a place of faith when other religious voices fail to do so. You can do this at faith conventions, in remarks during service, at the state legislature, and even in the press.

“Those who believe and do good deeds — the Gracious God will create love in their hearts.”
— Quran, 19:97

ENCOURAGE AND EMPOWER TGNC MEMBER LEADERSHIP.

Encourage transgender members of your congregation to be active within the faith community. Empower them to take on leadership roles. Folks from the TGNC community often have unique gifts that can strengthen congregations.

PROVIDE RESOURCES AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AMONG ALLIES.

Invite people from the transgender community to share their specific needs and expectations of their faith community with the congregation.

Host classes or community study groups such as “Gender Awareness 101” and “Being Gender Allies” that show members of your faith community

how to be non-intrusive, active allies to TGNC people. Make public, verbal commitments to meeting the spiritual needs of TGNC members and working with the transgender and gender non-conforming community at large.

“Do not take revenge, do not bear a grudge against a member of your people, love thy neighbor like yourself.”
— Torah, Leviticus 19:18

INCLUDE TGNC MEMBERS IN CONGREGATION COMMUNICATIONS.

In worship, when telling stories, writing liturgies, and choosing songs or photos, be sure to specifically include transgender and gender non-conforming folks

Also consider how you can best be supportive during rites and rituals such as name change ceremonies, life dedications, or baptisms after a transition. To be seen and heard in worship matters.

LOVE THEM.

At the root of all faith spaces is love. Faith communities show us how to love those in our congregation and in the world. Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Agnostic or otherwise, we encourage all clergy and faith spaces to apply the wisdom from their teachings of inclusion to TGNC communities.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”
— Bible, John 13:34

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FAITH SPACES



TREAT TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE SERVICES LIKE ANY OTHER HEALTHCARE SERVICE.

Engage in shared decision-making about the “full menu” of transgender healthcare services available, such as Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), surgical options, voice training, etc.

Be mindful of excessive barriers to care, such as drawn-out consent processes, waiting periods, psychiatric evaluations, intensive lab monitoring not recommended by current medical guidelines, etc. Recognize that treatments like HRT can be just as important to a patient’s health as treatment for common chronic conditions. Prioritize appropriately.

TRAIN STAFF AND BUILD INTERNAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS.

Train all staff on ways to offer support and services to trans and gender non-conforming patients, including education on the gender spectrum, mistreatment in healthcare settings, and best practices when it comes to being inclusive toward trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) folks.

This focus on education will ensure staff are trained to see patients as a whole person, and not attribute health care issues to gender when it is irrelevant.

Make sure your office is a gender-inclusive space by including things such as gender-neutral bathrooms, intake forms that include multiple options for gender identity, and having an option for the patient to use their preferred name instead of their legal name.

BE PREPARED TO HELP TRANS PATIENTS AVOID POTENTIALLY TRAUMATIZING BARRIERS.

Take steps to make healthcare efficient and potentially lifesaving for your TGNC patients by knowing what gender-affirming treatments and resources are available. If you are not experienced with providing these treatments, having an established referrals system can save lives.

Avoid medically unnecessary psychiatric evaluations that can ultimately traumatize patients and prevent them from seeking medical services in the future. If you know you are geographically isolated and your patient will have trouble traveling, seek out training so you can be a better resource and not force the patient to travel.

COMMIT TO LEARNING AND BE OPEN TO FEEDBACK.

Be transparent about what you know, be open about your commitment to learning, and be comfortable correcting your mistakes. Commit to changing any systems or processes that harm TGNC patients.

USE YOUR AUTHORITY FOR ADVOCACY.

Be vocal about the necessity of the medical care you provide to trans and gender non-conforming individuals. Transition-related care is not elective, it is lifesaving. Commit to being vocal on these issues in professional settings. Offer local advocacy groups your expertise.

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EDUCATION

TALK MORE, NOT LESS.

From the classroom to staff meetings, initiate compassionate conversations around gender diversity.

We are all learners, so don't be afraid to make mistakes. It's more important to have imperfect conversations than to be complacent with silence.

RE-EXAMINE AND TRANSFORM GENDERED RULES AND PROCEDURES.

Notice and act wherever outdated ideas about gender appear in your school.

Does the dress code allow for diverse gender presentation? Are students empowered to resist gender segregation? Does sex education make explicit space for transgender bodies? Do transgender youth have safe, equitable access to restrooms and locker rooms? If the answer to any of these is no, bring up these issues with administration and make the necessary changes to support gender diversity.

ALLOW STUDENTS TO NAME THEMSELVES.

Instead of relying on student records, allow all students to introduce themselves. Have them write down their own name and pronouns on their first day of school.

Make sure your school has a policy that supports this and protects students from discrimination.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES DEPEND ON YOUR ALLYSHIP AND OPENNESS.

Having true allies and advocates for trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) youth decreases their risk for suicide, dropping out of school, substance abuse, and much more.

Hanging up signs that affirm the school is a safe space for trans and gender non-conforming youth goes a long way. Educating and empowering all staff (counselors, teachers, custodial staff, etc.) to support gender diversity may save someone's life.

CISGENDER STUDENTS AND ADULTS BENEFIT, TOO.

Being inclusive of trans and gender non-conforming people on campus helps everyone develop an understanding and appreciation of gender diversity.

Whether students go on to become doctors, entrepreneurs, or mechanics, these future leaders can positively change narratives around gender and create a better, safer world for transgender people.