



GENDER 101

Developing innovative tools about Gender Diversity
for Parents and Adult Educators

TRAINERS GUIDEBOOK

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to Gender Diversity	01
The important role of the Trainer	02
Gender Definition	03
Process of Coming out for Children and Parents	24
Providing Support to Children and Parents	37
Language and Discrimination	73
Introduction to Training in Gender Diversity	75
Understanding and Supporting Gender Diversity	77





GUIDEBOOK FOR TRAINERS

Introduction

Recognizing gender identities beyond the traditional male-female binary is becoming increasingly important today. To promote inclusivity and fairness, it is essential to value and understand gender diversity. For trainers who want to address gender identity, expression, and related challenges effectively, the "Guidebook for Trainers: Introduction to Gender Diversity" is an excellent resource.

This guide comprehensively covers gender diversity, starting with basic concepts and moving into identity, coming out, and supporting individuals and families. It emphasizes the importance of trainers in promoting understanding, empathy, and open communication. The introduction breaks down gender diversity, dispels myths, and addresses stereotypes, emphasizing a holistic approach to gender education.

The guide combines theory, practical exercises, and discussions, encouraging participants to apply their learning to create inclusive environments. It is essential to recognize that gender diversity training is not a one-stop solution but a journey of learning and growth. This guidebook targets a broad audience, including educators and parents, and offers insights into gender beyond the binary, fostering a more inclusive society. The manual combines theoretical knowledge with practical activities to help trainers handle sensitive topics, confront biases, and cultivate a culture of respect and inclusivity. It guides those committed to advancing gender diversity and inclusivity, aiming to create spaces where everyone feels valued.



GUIDEBOOK FOR TRAINERS

The Important Role of the Trainer

Trainers are not merely transmitters of information; they are catalysts for change, growth, and development. Their role is pivotal in such a project as it's about accepting and containing questions, anxiety, and resistance, and then invite people to listen to another perspective.

Trainers directly influence their trainees' skills, attitudes, and knowledge base. The proper training can open doors of opportunity and growth for individuals.

Building Foundations: In foundational training, the trainer lays the groundwork upon which advanced skills and knowledge are built.

In a professional context, the effectiveness of training can directly impact an organization's performance, productivity, and profitability.

Trainers empower individuals with the tools and knowledge they need to succeed, be it in their careers, personal pursuits, or their roles within a community or organization.

Often, trainers serve as role models. They exemplify the standards, behaviors, and attitudes expected of their trainees. Their demeanor, ethics, and professionalism can inspire trainees to aspire to similar standards in their endeavors.

An effective trainer can foster an environment of curiosity, openness, and respect where trainees feel valued, heard, and motivated to learn. **7. Continuous Improvement:** Trainers are also learners. Their pursuit of better techniques, newer information, and understanding of the diverse needs of trainees makes them instrumental in driving innovation in training methodologies. In essence, the role of a trainer extends beyond mere teaching. It is about influencing, motivating, and leading by example. This guidebook aims to assist trainers in fulfilling this multifaceted role with competence and confidence.



TRAINING 1

GENDER DEFINITION

Video: <https://youtu.be/A8AiHdaQWac?si=s3JVEQSpga6sPVpl>

Introduction

This training is essential for promoting gender equality and creating a more inclusive society. It helps individuals and organizations understand the complex nature of gender and how it intersects with other social identities. This understanding is crucial for challenging gender stereotypes, dismantling gender-based discrimination, and creating equitable policies and practices

Ethos

- To raise awareness of the different ways in which gender is defined, experienced, and expressed.
- To challenge gender stereotypes and assumptions.
- To promote understanding of the intersectionality of gender with other social identities

Objective

- Participants be able to distinguish sex and gender, also understand the spectrum of gender identity, regardless of their sex assigned at birth.
- Understand that gender identity is a person's internal sense of being male, female, neither, both, or somewhere along the gender spectrum.
- Define and differentiate between sexual orientation, sexual attraction, and romantic attraction.

Gender is one of the fundamental elements of identity, defining each individual's relationship both to him/herself and to his/her environment. A person's gender is usually identified at birth and becomes a social and legal fact from that moment.



However, some individuals experience certain problems in relation to their sex at birth. These problems arise because their internal sense of gender does not fully match or is even radically different from their biological sex. Such persons are known as trans, or transgender, persons. The best mode of delivering the training, is by using a variety of teaching methods.

1. Ice breaking activity: Gender Confusion. Which genders are you?

This activity combines an analytical exploration of concepts (terms) used in work around gender equality and how they are understood/used by young people or presented in the media and by the educational authorities. Here is detailed information about this activity, which includes a grid for group work:

<https://rm.coe.int/gender-confusion-chapter-2-activities-to-address-gender-and-gender-bas/16809e16ad>



Grid for group work

You will receive one term used when talking about gender and gender equality. Write in each box how, in your opinion, this term is understood and presented by different people, including you. You will have some 30 minutes to do the task.

Gender Confusion
Term:
1. How do you understand it?
2. How is it generally understood by your peers / other young people?
3. How is it presented / promoted in the media?
4. How is it officially presented / promoted by the educational authorities around you?

2. Lecture.

Educator can talk shortly about what is gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, also what are gender roles and stereotypes.

3. Activity: Good, better, best.

This activity looks at how gender stereotypes affect the lives of young people, and at the value society places on "feminine" and "masculine" qualities. Participants use sets of cards to discuss which qualities are more commonly regarded as masculine or feminine.



Good, Better, Best



Handout | **Good, Better, Best**

Set of cards:

DEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT
EMOTIONAL	RATIONAL
OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE
SUBMISSIVE	DOMINANT
PASSIVE	ACTIVE
GOOD BUSINESS SKILLS	POOR BUSINESS SKILLS
COMPETENT	INCOMPETENT
UNDECISIVE	DECISIVE
AMBITIOUS	UNAMBITIOUS
DIPLOMATIC	UNDIPLOMATIC

Good, Better, Best

Instructions for Group A
Headings: Feminine / Masculine

FEMININE		MASCULINE
----------	--	-----------

Certain characteristics are considered to be more feminine, while others are thought to be more masculine. Place the cards in the column where you think they belong. Work as quickly as you can, without thinking about it too much.

Instruction for Group B
Headings: Positive/Desirable / Negative/Undesirable

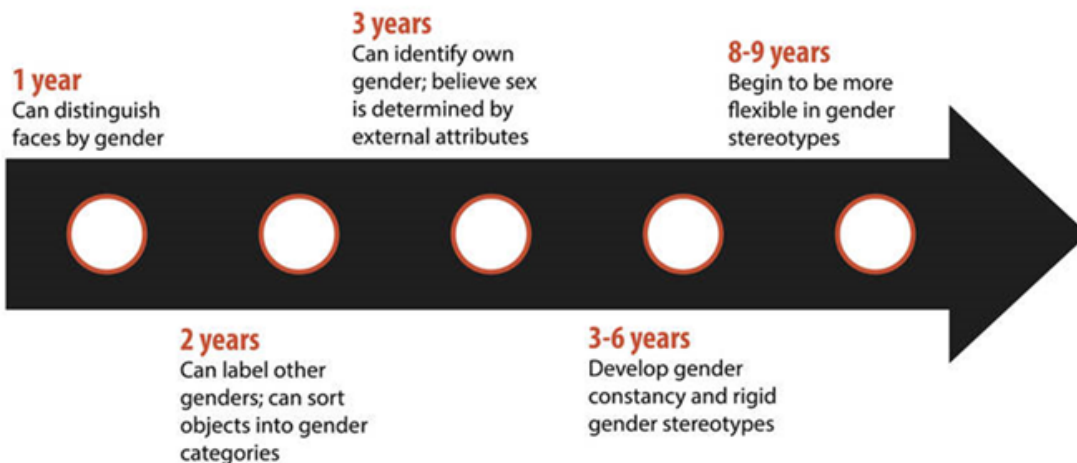
POSITIVE/DESIRABLE		NEGATIVE/UNDESIRABLE
--------------------	--	----------------------

Certain characteristics are considered to be more positive and desirable, while others are thought to be negative and undesirable. Place the cards in the column where you think they belong. Work as quickly as you can, without thinking about it too much.

Here is detailed information about this activity:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/-/good-better-best>

At the end of the masterclass there is an explained table that children develop the ability to classify gender very early in life.





Here are some questions that participants can be asked, to ensure that the content has been understood, if necessary, make a discussion.

1. *What is the difference between sex and gender;*
2. *How do we learn gender stereotypes?*
3. *How do gender stereotypes impact individuals and society, perhaps you know what gender stereotypes are prevalent in your environment?*
4. *What are some of the consequences of gender stereotypes for women, for men, and for non-binary people? Can you give examples from real life?*
5. *Can a 3 year old child identify own gender?*
6. *At what age child can develop gender constancy and rigid gender stereotypes?*

GENDER DEFINITION: TERMS

Ethos

- To facilitate a deeper understanding of various gender identities by offering a comprehensive set of working language and examples.
- Increase awareness about the fluidity and diversity of gender experiences, emphasizing that gender is a spectrum rather than a fixed binary.
- Discuss the evolving vocabulary for gender and the importance of inclusive language.

Objective

To provide participants with a understanding of gender diversity, including key terms, concepts, and the importance of creating an inclusive environment.



Method of Delivery

1. Begin with a comprehensive introduction to the terms provided, explaining each one and offering examples to illustrate their meaning.
2. **Activity.** Use this short **interactive quiz** to help participants self-assess whether they have understood the meaning of these terms:

<https://view.genial.ly/65b9f5b651154b001434373c/interactive-content-genial-quiz>

Here are some case studies about gender diversified youth:

- "I've known that I have attractions to people regardless of their gender since I was about 14 years old, and I didn't think about it before. However, for a while, I thought it couldn't be that I was bisexual, I just couldn't imagine having a relationship with a girl. I thought it was easier to choose someone alone and it seemed logical that it was easier to be heterosexual because a relationship with a guy seemed much more realistic. I could see how things could go, how to get to know each other and so on. Also, I thought that bisexuals should be equally interested in relationships, both with men and with women, and I found it hard to have an open relationship with a girl... So I thought I didn't want it enough. I decided that I probably wasn't bisexual enough.

However, the craving didn't go away, and when I was 15 or 16, I knew I was bisexual, even though I didn't say it. At the time, it didn't interfere with my life and although I dreamed of girls, I couldn't imagine how any close relationship would turn out. Because I had a social and interesting life, I felt good, I didn't feel like I was losing anything. Although now I realise that I was basically restricted, pushed to behave in a more socially acceptable way." Monika 26 years old.



"I have read that people find out about their sexual orientation very early. My experience has been somewhat different. I remember I was about 14 when I noticed that I was attracted to boys. I hadn't heard much about homosexuality before then. I was confused because I didn't understand if what I was feeling was homosexuality or just curiosity. At that time, I started my first relationship with a girl. Everything seemed great and the homosexual thoughts seemed to have gone somewhere. But eventually the doubts returned.

For a while, I secretly corresponded with a guy I met on the internet. One day we decided to meet. I remember how carefully I chose the place so that no acquaintance would notice me during the meeting. We met, had a cup of coffee. I found the guy very relaxed and mannerly. "That's not me", I thought, and immediately put up a wall. I decided that I would live a heterosexual life and just ignore the thought of boys. This went on for a few more years. There were tolerant people in my circle who were not afraid to speak out that sexual orientation is part of a person's identity and should not be shamed. I didn't identify as either homosexual or bisexual, because I just didn't know how. And in the moment, it seemed easier to say so.

I've had relationships with both girls and guys. For a while I tried to analyse and evaluate which gender my attraction was stronger for, because I felt an inner desire to define myself. Today, I look at things much more simply. I am lucky in life because I am surrounded by educated and empathetic people. I am currently friends with a guy. On the other hand, I don't put a label on myself. Yes, I am in a homosexual relationship, but my relationships with girls have not been a sham either. In the long run, I became convinced that the most important thing is to be open with yourself and your surroundings. And a quality relationship requires two people who value and respect each other. For me, a person's personality and feelings are more important than their gender."

Darius 24 years old.



It might be a good message to youth, that being transgender does not necessarily imply a desire or need to change your biological sex, or maybe you just don't accept the imposed norms of gender expression, and so you identify as neither or both sexes. Maybe you see your identity as a set, or you want to be accepted as a person of particular gender that doesn't necessarily match your biological sex. For example, a cross-dresser may choose to wear clothes normally associated with the other gender, which is what the term 'reverse dressing' means. For some this may be an expression of identity, for others it may be for practicality or aesthetic reasons. However, cross-dresser does not necessarily mean trans, it is your own choice.

Transgenderism can be described as the inner conflict between biological and psychological sex, the need to be the other biological sex. This can be a difficult feeling, and many transgender people are plagued by questions and anxieties about how and which gender is better to live. Some choose not to change their biological sex characteristics, others opt for hormone therapy and/or plastic surgery to better reflect their desired gender identity.

Transgender people are in a slightly different situation than gay, lesbian or bisexual people. Transgender young people are in a slightly different situation than gay, lesbian or bisexual people. First of all, not everyone will know what it means to be trans, and some may find it difficult to understand what it means to be friends with someone who does not identify with their biological sex. Confusion can also arise if you already live as a girl, for example, but the object of your affection is unaware that the world may have accepted you as a guy before. When he or she finds out, he or she may feel betrayed and think that you are deceiving the world, which identifies you as a gender other than the one you were born as. Needless to say, what you decide to reveal to the world about yourself is your own business, but the person you want to have a romantic relationship with needs to know that you are trans. Otherwise, you could both be hurt.



However, that doesn't mean you can't have a fulfilling and open relationship. Besides, there are a lot more wide-eyed people in the world who can appreciate what a wonderful person you are than you think. Sometimes your crush will just need some time to get used to the idea of a relationship with a transgender person.

Here is another very interesting story about iO. At the age of 6, iO declared himself a boy in order to play soccer, and his journey as a gender revolutionary is honest, hilarious, brave, and absolutely inspiring. From inexplicably awkward sleepovers as an adolescent to boarding-school romance as a teen, the ease with which iO embraces his transgenderism -- "that physical in-between place" -- has made his compassion limitless and given him a brilliant understanding that each person has their unique process of self-discovery.

Full story: [\(4\) A Boy, A Girl, A Gender Revolutionary: iO Tillett Wright - YouTube](#)

3. Activity: Myth or Fact?

Most of us have had little or no education about gender. So it's important to understand and address some common myths many of us hold about gender, children and youth.

These reflection questions are designed to deepen participants understanding of the key concepts explored in the Myth and Fact activity. Participants can share their thoughts, challenge assumptions, and collectively work towards a more informed and inclusive perspective on gender and sexuality.

In this activity, participants must choose is it Myth or Fact. You can use this fun and interactive test:

<https://view.genial.ly/65b9fe62e2fd2100145ff65c/interactive-content-myth-or-fact>



ADVOCACY COMMUNICATION

You might be interested include advocacy communication tactics:

Advocacy is about influencing and persuading individuals or institutions to change, and advocacy communication is any planned communication that seeks to achieve the communication goals: to inform, to persuade and move to action. For example, we can advocate for change of policies or laws that affect society, but this may not go smoothly if we cannot communicate the ideas and proposals effectively.

First step in advocacy communication should be situation analysis, which means a systematic identification and evaluation of internal and external factors that may influence performance and plans.

More information and steps in developing an advocacy communications strategies:

https://www.pseau.org/outils/ouvrages/aneu_advocacy_communications_a_handbook_for_anew_members_2010.pdf

For advocacy it is important effective communication. Effective communication is the process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, opinions, knowledge, and data so that the message is received and understood with clarity and purpose. When we communicate effectively, both the sender and receiver feel satisfied.

Steps to improve communication skills:

Consider your audience. Make sure you are aware of your audience – those you intent to communicate with may differ from those who actually receive your message.



2. Practice active listening. Active listening is the practice of giving your full attention in a communication exchange. Here are some examples of active listening in practice:

- **If you are an educator**, you might take advantage of end-of-semester feedback forms and act on your student's needs by hosting one-on-one meetings during office hours.
- **If you are a parent**, you might have a disagreement with your child about finishing their homework, but if you probe deeper with open communication, they may confess that their teacher made a discouraging comment that left them unmotivated.

In the link below, you can read more about active listening method:

<https://www.coursera.org/articles/active-listening>

3. Make your message as clear as possible. Once you have successfully identified your audience and listened to their intentions, needs, and desires, you may have something to communicate. To do this effectively, turn to the 5 Cs of communication to ensure your message is:

- Clear;
- Correct;
- Complete;
- Concise;
- Compassionate.

4. Use the right medium or platform. Using the right medium or platform to communicate matters. Effective communication requires you to consider whether you need to meet in person or if Zoom would suffice. Is your message casual enough to use WhatsApp, or would a formal email be more efficient and thorough? Whatever you choose should be intuitive and appropriate for you and your current situation



DIMENSIONS OF GENDER

Objective

To provide educators with a deep understanding of the dimensions of gender, including body, identity, and social gender, and to equip them with the knowledge to create inclusive environment.

1. Introduction to the Dimensions of Gender:

- Present an overview of the three dimensions of gender: body, identity, and social gender.
- Emphasize the complexity of gender beyond a binary perspective.
- Discuss the complexities of female and male bodies, including intersex traits.

The purpose of this training is to provide a comprehensive and inclusive exploration of the dimensions of gender – body, identity, social gender and congruence. This training aims to expand traditional, binary views of gender by emphasizing the complexity and diversity of human experiences. Practically everything is assigned a gender—toys, colours and clothes are some of the more obvious examples. We begin to teach children about gender from the moment they are born; given the prevalence of the gender binary, children face great pressure to express their gender within narrow, stereotypical definitions of “boy” or “girl.” Expectations regarding gender are communicated through every aspect of our lives, including family, culture, peers, schools, community, media, and religion.



2. Activity: GENDER ROLES

This activity raises awareness about gender and addresses problems associated with rigidly defined gender roles. It is based on the analysis of images of men and women in media.

Objectives:

- To understand the socially-constructed nature of gender roles and the mechanisms and agents of gender socialisation.
- To explore and reflect on personal experiences of gender socialisation.
- To discuss the connections between gender socialisation and gender-based violence.

Materials needed:

- Magazines and advertising clippings, which show people in different life situations or electronic devices with Internet access.
- Flipchart with paper, scissors, glue sticks, marker pens (red, blue, green and black).

Here is the link to detailed information about activity (preparation, instructions, evaluation):

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/-/gender-in-a-box>

Questions:

- *What you learnt new is this training?*
- *What is gender identity, and what the different types of gender identity?*
- *How do we develop our gender identities?*
- *What is social gender?*
- *How do gender stereotypes impact individuals and society?*



THE GENDERBREAD PERSON

Objective:

To provide understanding of the Genderbread person model and its components, enabling them to teach about gender identity, gender expression, biological sex and attraction.

Training plan:

1. **Introduction to the Genderbread person as a teaching tool.**
2. **Activity.** Educator should start with activity about The Genderbread person.

The objectives of this activity:

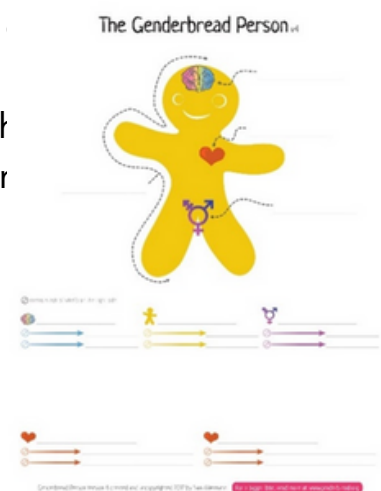
- To distinguish between sex, gender identity, gender attraction.
- Help individuals connect and have time to consider their understandings of their sex, gender identity, gender attraction.

Materials needed:

- Whiteboard/easet
- Blank Genderbread Person V3.3 handout
- Writing utensils.

Instructions:

- Frame the activity.
- Ask participants to fill in empty boxes.
- Open up the space for questions about the models.
- Wrap-up the activity. Have some small discussion.





4. **Wrap-up the activity.** Explanation of its components:

a. Gender identity.

Ask a question, participants don't have to answer it, they can only think about it: *Do you think you fit better into the societal role of "woman" or "man," or does neither ring particularly true for you? That is, do you have aspects of your identity that align with elements from both? Or do you consider your gender to fall outside of the gender norms completely?*

The answer is your gender identity.

b. Gender expression.

Gender expression refers to the way we present our inner sense of gender to the world, such as through appearance or behaviour (Stonewall, 2017). Socially expressing gender identity is a central part of the daily lives of transgender young people, and it is hoped that further exploration of this shared experience will contribute to an increased understanding of how it influences their well-being and sense of self.

c. Biological sex.

d. Sexual orientation.

4. **Conclusion.**

Gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation are independent of one another (i.e., they are not connected). People's sexual orientation doesn't determine their gender expression. And their gender expression isn't determined by their gender identity. And their gender identity isn't determined by their biological sex.



GENDER SPECTRUM

Objective:

To provide educators with comprehensive knowledge and skills to create inclusive and supportive environments for students across the gender spectrum, fostering understanding, respect, and inclusivity.

The **purpose** of training about spectrum:

- Training on the gender spectrum promotes inclusivity by acknowledging and validating the experiences of people with diverse gender identities.
- Gender spectrum training aims to reduce stigma and bias associated with non-binary, genderqueer, and other gender-diverse identities. It helps combat stereotypes and misconceptions, fostering a more tolerant accepting society.
- By raising awareness about the diversity of gender experiences, organizations and communities can work towards eliminating discrimination and fostering a sense of belonging for everyone.
- Understanding and acknowledging gender diversity can positively impact the mental health and well-being of individuals.



Plan for training:

1. Short introduction to Gender spectrum.

Explanation of the gender spectrum concept. Discussing how some individuals reject traditional gender terms. Introduction to gender-neutral language.

2. Lecture about gender diversity.

Definition and exploration of gender diversity. Understanding that gender exist beyond the binary framework.

Educator can represent key points:

- Gender diversity is about acknowledging and respecting that there are many ways to identify outside of the binary of male and female.
- Presenting as gender diverse is not about attention seeking or receiving special treatment, it is about being one's authentic self.
- There is not a need for people to know about every gender identity out there. What is more important is that people respect those who are gender diverse and the choices they make about their life.
- There is no scientific evidence to suggest that homosexuality or bisexuality in itself implies a certain predisposition to psychopathology or maladjustment. The 1957 study, which found no differences between non-clinical samples of heterosexual and homosexual men in their responses to a projective test, was one of the first to challenge historically held assumptions. Subsequent studies have also found no differences between heterosexual and homosexual groups in cognitive ability, psychological well-being and self-esteem. In non-clinical samples of bisexual men and women, no evidence of psychopathology was found.
- Using the correct names and pronouns for gender diverse people, as well as gender neutral language are reasonable expectations that is inclusive to gender diverse people.



- Inclusivity not only benefits gender diverse people – it benefits everyone!

Here is a book that may be useful for young people who are thinking about transition: “Hey, I'm Jamie, a 29-year-old trans guy from the UK. I've been transitioning for 12 years now after realising I was trans (by accident!) at sixteen years old. I knew I was a boy since the age of four, but realised whilst growing up that I was different. It was only in my teens that I found the words to express who I was and what I needed to do. Since then, I've been on testosterone for more than a decade - I know, I can't believe it either - I've also had top and bottom surgery and legally changed my sex, so I know a few things about the transitioning process and being trans!! I want to welcome you to *The T in LGBT* where you can explore and learn about so many topics surrounding gender realising you're trans, starting hormones, considering surgery, and everything in between. Whether you're questioning your own identity and are looking for advice on certain stages of transition, or whether you're wanting to learn about the trans experience to support someone or understand allyship, I hope this book can be your one-stop guide to everything trans related. And don't just take my word for it either - this book is packed full of advice, tips, and the personal stories of a range of trans voices, because no one journey is the same.”

Link to the book: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/62217119-the-t-in-lgbt>

3. Lecture about gender fluidity.

Definition and exploration of gender fluidity. Recognizing changes in gender expression and identity over time.

Discussing the mental and physical health aspects related to gender fluidity in children and teens. Addressing prejudice, discrimination, and minority stress.



Questions:

- *How would you describe the concept of the gender spectrum in your own words?*
- *Why is using inclusive language important when discussing gender diversity?*
- *Do you understand the importance of being respectful of people's gender identities and expressions?*
- *Can you identify potential challenges faced by people who identify outside of the traditional gender binary?*



INTERSEX PEOPLE

Objective:

To equip the knowledge and sensitivity needed to create inclusive and supportive environments for intersex people, fostering understanding, respect, and inclusivity.

The **purpose** of this training:

- To increase awareness, understanding, and sensitivity regarding intersexuality.
- Intersex individuals may face challenges related to identity, body image, and societal expectations. Training equips educators with the tools to offer sensitive and affirming support.
- Many people may not be familiar with intersex variations. Training raises awareness about the existence of intersex individuals and their unique experiences, helping to dispel myths and reduce stigma.
- Intersex training challenges the binary understanding of sex and gender by highlighting that biological sex is not strictly confined to male or female. It encourages a more nuanced perspective that recognizes the diversity of human biology.

Educator can represent these key points about intersex people:

In the world at large, the letter I (intersex) is often not emphasised in LGBT* activism. However, there is a growing number of people who are bringing their experiences out of the underground and seeking to change not only their own lives, but also the crippling public opinion.



- The erasure of intersex is linked to the normative binary gender system. The notion that there are only two biological sexes, male and female, eliminates intersex as an anomaly to be corrected. It follows that not only do biological men and women have to conform to the social roles of men and women, but also biologically intersex people have to conform to one of these roles. There is an attempt to conceal the biological nature of many intersex people during childhood, with operations to supposedly "correct the errors of nature", and socially to assimilate such children into the chosen biological sex. These operations are usually not medically justified, and are therefore only of a social and related aesthetic nature. Strict definitions of the biological and social roles of men and women destroy the space for non-adaptation.
- Biologically and genetically, various combinations of intersex characteristics are possible, e.g. a biological woman can be genetically male (XY), a man can have bi-sexual genitalia, or a man can be biologically of one sex, but produce sex hormones specific to the other sex. Like biological males and females, intersex people are entitled not only to their bodies as they are (or want to be), but also to their social roles. Indeed, any person should be free to define his or her identity as he or she wishes. This should also be legally recognised.



Plan for the training:

1. **Brief introduction** to the training topic. Overview of what it means to be intersex, educator can emphasize that intersex is a natural variation, not a medical problem.
2. **Statistics.** Discuss current research estimates on the prevalence of intersex people, highlight factors contributing to potential underestimation of prevalence.
3. **Medical interventions and decision making.** Explain these questions:
What happens when someone is born intersex?
What is a disorder of sex development?
What Causes DSDs?
4. **Support.** Explore strategies for providing emotional support, highlight the role of parents in decision-making for intersex children.
5. **Reflection.** Discuss ways educators can support parents in understanding and accepting intersexuality. Also facilitate an open discussion for participants to ask questions and share insights. Encourage participants to reflect on the training.

Questions:

- *Were you aware of the variations in intersex traits before this session?*
- *How has participating enhanced your knowledge and skills?*
- *What specific strategies have you learned that you plan to implement in your parenting approach?*
- *How has this masterclass deepened your understanding in the subject matter? What are the most valuable insights you have learned?*
- *Does this lesson inspired you to think differently or approach challenges in a new way?*
- *What aspects were particularly effective?*

What additional resources or further learning opportunities would you seek out to deepen your understanding of the topic?



TRAINING 2

PROCESS OF COMING OUT FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Video: <https://youtu.be/lnwRWtveuco?si=BH9AU4QPIf1dABX4>

Ethos

This section of the guidebook for trainers aims to equip trainers with the guidance needed to deliver the masterclass “Process of Coming Out for Children and Parents”. Addressing the stages involved in the coming out process for both parents and children, this module emphasises empathy, communication skills, and the understanding that each experience is unique. As we delve into the rich content of this masterclass, the guidebook will provide a step-by-step roadmap for trainers to empower parents, foster mutual respect, and cultivate an environment where love, acceptance, and learning thrive.

Objective

The main objectives for this training include:

- **Enhanced Understanding:** Develop a comprehensive understanding of the different stages involved in the process of coming out for both gender-diverse children and their parents.
- **Mutual Respect:** Foster a sense of mutual respect among participants for the diverse experiences and emotions that accompany the coming out process.
- **Effective Communication Skills:** Equip participants with effective communication skills, enabling them to create a safe and confidential space for parents to share their thoughts and experiences.



- **Empathy Development:** Facilitate activities and discussions that promote the development of empathy, encouraging parents to see the world from the perspective of gender-diverse children.
- **Critical Thinking about Gender:** Encourage participants to think critically about gender, challenge stereotypes, and embrace a more open-minded and empathetic attitude towards gender diversity.
- **Openness to Learning:** Instil in participants an attitude of openness to learning about gender identity, recognising that this is an ongoing process with evolving conversations and understandings.
- **Recognition of Individuality:** Emphasise the individual and non-linear nature of the coming out process, helping participants appreciate the uniqueness of each person's journey.
- **Supportive Parenting:** Provide guidance for parents on navigating their emotions, understanding their role in their child's coming out journey, and offering support through the challenges and joys of this process.
- **Navigating Social Challenges:** Equip parents with strategies to navigate social challenges, including addressing concerns about what others may think, fostering acceptance, and managing potential reactions from friends and family.
- **Continued Learning:** Stress the importance of continued learning for both parents and children, encouraging them to seek out reliable resources, support services, and stay informed about developments in the understanding of gender identity.

These objectives aim to guide trainers in delivering a workshop that not only imparts knowledge but also facilitates personal growth, understanding, and effective support for gender-diverse youth and their families.



Method of Delivery

By following the steps outlined in this section, trainers can effectively use the video content focused on this subtopic to engage parents in meaningful discussions, provide valuable insights, and create an inclusive environment for learning and reflection on the process of coming out for parents.

1. Preparation: It is important to familiarise yourself with the content of the masterclass, and prepare additional materials you may need to supplement the training, such as handouts or visual aids.
2. Introduction: The trainer can begin the session by carrying out the icebreaker activity “Two Truths and a Lie” outlined in the video, as a way to create a comfortable environment for open discussions. Encourage participants to share three pieces of information about themselves, with two being true and one being a lie. A practical example of this is shown at the beginning of the masterclass video. This activity fosters a relaxed atmosphere for discussing sensitive topics.
3. Delivering Theory: As outlined in the video, the trainer should ensure to reiterate the following points to parents:
 - Parents are not responsible for a child’s gender identity.
 - Their feelings surrounding their child coming out, are perfectly valid, and that feelings can change, they are not set in stone.
 - Using the right language can be challenging. They’re human, they can make mistakes, but they should ensure to reiterate to their child that they are trying their best.
 - Parents should ask their child for their pronouns, to ensure that they are referring to their child in the way they wish to be referred to.
 - It’s important to let their child know that their parent loves them.



- Parents should educate themselves using respected sources, not sure any online source as there is a lot of misinformation online.
- Repeat throughout the workshop that the parent may never understand what it means to question their gender identity, but they do not have to.

When these aforementioned points are emphasised to parents, it is important to pause regularly, and ask the participants to share their experiences or insights, if they feel comfortable doing so. For example, in the video focused on this part of the workshop, it mentions that for some parents, the coming out of a child can feel like a kind of grief. You could mention this to parents, and then ask, “Does this resonate with any of you? How do you think you could navigate and support each other through these emotions?”.

It is also important to stress to parents, that it is their responsibility to advance their own understanding of gender issues, and become agents of social change in their local communities. Openness and empathy are the most important factors in supporting their child during the coming out process, however, discrimination is still widespread, and parents should act agents of social change to help the world become a safer place for LGBTQ+ people. Here are some key considerations and practices for parents to support gender diversity in various settings and become agents of social change:

- **Educate Yourself:** Take the time to educate yourself on different gender identities and expressions. Familiarise yourself with terminology and be open to learning about the experiences of gender-diverse individuals. This knowledge will help you approach conversations with empathy and understanding.

Create Inclusive Spaces: Foster environments that are inclusive and affirming of all gender identities. This includes using gender-inclusive language, providing gender-neutral facilities when possible, and addressing any instances of discrimination or bias.



- **Listen and Learn:** Actively listen to the experiences and perspectives of gender-diverse young people. Create opportunities for them to share their stories, and be open to learning from their unique journeys. This not only builds empathy but also enriches your understanding of diverse gender experiences.
- **Challenge Stereotypes:** Encourage gender-critical thinking by challenging traditional gender stereotypes and norms. Help young people explore and express their identities without conforming to societal expectations. This involves questioning assumptions about gender roles and encouraging individuality.
- **Advocate for Inclusive Policies:** Whether at home or in educational settings, advocate for policies that support gender diversity. This may include supporting inclusive curriculum development, anti-bullying initiatives, and access to resources that cater to the diverse needs of gender-diverse individuals.
- **Respect Privacy and Autonomy:** Respect the privacy and autonomy of gender-diverse young people. Avoid making assumptions or imposing labels. Instead, let them guide the conversation about their gender identity, expression, and experiences.
- **Engage in Community Dialogue:** Act as an agent of social change by engaging in community dialogue about gender and identity issues. This may involve participating in workshops, town hall meetings, or educational events to promote understanding and challenge misconceptions.
- **Network and Collaborate:** Connect with local organisations and advocacy groups that focus on gender diversity. Collaborate with these entities to organise awareness campaigns, workshops, or events that promote inclusivity and challenge harmful stereotypes.
- **Encourage Inclusive Education:** Advocate for inclusive education that covers diverse perspectives on gender and identity. Support initiatives that integrate these topics into school curricula to foster understanding and acceptance from an early age.



- **Lead by Example:** Model inclusive behaviour and attitudes in your interactions with others. Be vocal in your support for gender diversity and challenge discriminatory remarks or practices when you encounter them.

By prioritising empathy and gender-critical thinking and actively participating in community-level initiatives, you contribute to creating environments where gender-diverse young people feel seen, heard, and supported. Remember, every individual's journey is unique, and your role is to foster an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding while promoting positive change in your community.

4. **Delivering Active Listening Activity:** This subtopic ends with an activity that engages participants in an interactive exercise that promotes empathy, understanding, and effective communication. The trainer should follow these steps:

- Explain the importance of active listening in building stronger relationships, and highlight the key principles of active listening.
- Divide participants into small groups of three to four.
- Distribute sticky notes and pens to each group, and instruct each group to brainstorm and write down common barriers to effective listening between parents and children.
- Collect sticky notes and place them on a flipchart or whiteboard, and facilitate a brief discussion about the identified barriers, emphasising their impact on communication and relationships.
- Instruct participants to pair up with a partner, and set a timer for five minutes, asking each participant to take turns being the speaker and the listener.
- Bring participants back together as a group and facilitate a discussion about their experiences of active listening, and encourage them to reflect on the insights gained, and how these skills can be applied in their interactions with their children.



To further the understanding of the learners, the trainer can present the following example of a parent practice active listening with their child who is struggling with their identity. This can be presented either before, or after the activity.

Scenario: A Parent Actively Listening to Their Child Coming Out as LGBTQ+
Setting: In the living room, parent and child sit down for a conversation. The atmosphere is tense, as the child is preparing to share something significant.

Child: (Nervously) "Mom, there's something important I need to talk to you about. It's been on my mind for a while."

Parent: (Maintaining eye contact, open body language) "Of course, sweetheart. You can talk to me about anything. I'm here for you."

Child: (Taking a deep breath) "I've been trying to find the right time to tell you... Mom, I'm gay."

Parent: (Nodding occasionally, avoiding interruption) "Thank you for trusting me with this, honey. I appreciate your courage in sharing. Take your time, and I'm here to listen."

Child: (Opening up) "It's just been really hard keeping it to myself. I didn't know how you'd react."

Parent: (Maintaining eye contact, open body language) "I want you to know that I love you, no matter what. It must have been tough for you. Can you tell me more about your experiences and feelings?"

Child: (Expressing emotions) "I was worried you might not accept me or that things would change between us."

Parent: (Nodding, showing empathy) "I can understand why you'd feel that way. I want you to know that my love for you is unconditional. How can I support you through this? What do you need from me?"

Child: (Sharing concerns) "I'm also scared about what others might think, and how our family and friends will react."

Parent: (Maintaining eye contact, open body language) "It's natural to have those concerns. We'll navigate this together, and I'm here to support you. Let's discuss how we can handle this as a family."



In this scenario, active listening involves the parent creating a safe space, acknowledging the child's feelings, and responding with empathy and support. The parent's role is not to immediately provide solutions but to actively listen, validate the child's emotions, and convey unconditional love and acceptance. This sets the foundation for a continued open and supportive relationship between the parent and child.

Assessment

Trainers can ask the parents the following questions throughout their delivery of this subtopic:

- How do you envision creating a supportive environment for your child?
- How do you think carefully choosing your words can impact the coming-out process?
- How do you feel about the idea that it's okay to make mistakes, as long as we learn from them and keep moving forward?
- We discussed seeking support services and educating yourselves. How do you think these actions can contribute to the acceptance process?
- How do you think building your active listening skills help enhance your communication and understanding?



Process of Coming Out for the Child

By following the steps outlined in this section, trainers can effectively use the video content focused on this subtopic to engage parents in meaningful discussions, provide valuable insights, and create an inclusive environment for learning and reflection on the process of coming out for the child.

Method of Delivery

1. Preparation: It is important to familiarise yourself with the content of the masterclass, and prepare additional materials you may need to supplement the training, such as handouts or visual aids.
2. Introduction: Begin by acknowledging the sensitivity of the topic and emphasising the importance of creating a safe and confidential space for the parents, and reassure parents that the goal is to provide insights into the unique experiences and challenges faced by gender-diverse youth during their coming out journey.
3. Delivering Theory: The trainer can use the following steps to deliver the theory for this subtopic:
 - Share the key points from the video related to the discovery, acceptance, and embracement stages of the coming-out process.
 - Emphasise that coming out is a diverse and individual experience, and that there is no one-size-fits-all approach.
 - Discuss the significance of the discovery stage, highlighting that it can be a period of self-exploration, questioning, and trying out different aspects of one's identity.

Facilitate a group discussion by encouraging parents to share their thoughts on the discovery stage, any concerns they may have, and how they can support their child during this period.



- Move on to the acceptance stage, and stress the importance of acknowledging and accepting a child's gender identity. Discuss challenges parents might face, and how to navigate them. Facilitate another group discussion to allow parents to share their insights and experiences related to accepting their child's gender identity.
- Conclude with the embracement stage, underlining that it's an ongoing process where a child may continue to explore and define their identity. Encourage parents to discuss their own perspectives on the embracement stage and how they can provide ongoing support.

4. Delivering Empathy Map Activity: The workshop ends with an activity that engages participants in an interactive exercise to foster empathy and understanding towards their child's perspective during the coming-out process. The trainer should follow these steps:

- Emphasise that this is an opportunity for parents to reflect on what their child might see, hear, think, and feel, and say and do during various stages of coming out.
- Divide participants into pairs, and ensure each pair has paper, pens, and sticky notes.
- Briefly explain the four quadrants of the Empathy Map, and emphasise that each quadrant is an opportunity to delve into different aspects of experience.
- Instruct one person from each pair to be the "mapper", and the other the "subject", and ask the subjects to share a story about a time when someone came to them with a problem.
- Instruct the mapper to imagine themselves as the subject and fill in each quadrant based on what they think the subject might:
 - a. See: Visual elements and surroundings during the situation
 - b. Hear: Verbal and non-verbal cues from others
 - c. Think and Feel: The subject's thoughts and emotions
 - d. Say and Do: The subject's likely responses and actions



- After the first round, have the pairs switch roles, and repeat the process.
- Bring the participants back together as a group, and ask a few pairs to share their empathy maps and briefly discuss what insights they gained.
- Provide each participant with a sticky note, and ask them to write down one key insight or realisation they gained about empathy during this activity, and instruct them to stick their notes on a designated board for a collective reflection.
- Conclude the activity by summarising the importance of empathy in understanding and supporting their child's journey. Encourage participants to carry the insights gained from this activity into their interactions with their child.
- Reassure participants that there are no right or wrong answers, and the goal is to foster understanding. Emphasise the importance of active listening during the storytelling phase and maintaining an open mindset throughout the activity.



In order for the learners to understand how this can be transferred to the context of their child, the trainer can use the following real-life scenario of Mark and Lisa, who are struggling with the idea of their child coming out as transgender:

Background:
Mark and Lisa, parents of Emily, a 16-year-old who recently came out as transgender, are struggling to understand and support their daughter through this journey. They decide to engage in an Empathy Map activity to gain insights into Emily's perspective.
Empathy Map Reflection:
See (Visual Elements and Surroundings):
Mark and Lisa imagine how Emily sees herself in the mirror during the early stages of questioning her identity. They visualise Emily's reactions to the changing world around her as she starts expressing her true self.
Hear (Verbal and Non-Verbal Cues):
Mark and Lisa reflect on the conversations they've overheard, considering the tone and emotions in Emily's voice. They think about how Emily might interpret comments from peers and family members during the coming-out process.
Think and Feel (Thoughts and Emotions):
Mark and Lisa try to understand the internal struggles and emotions Emily might be experiencing. They reflect on how societal expectations and potential judgments could impact Emily's self-perception.
Say and Do (Likely Responses and Actions):
Mark and Lisa consider what Emily might say or do in response to their reactions and the reactions of others. They reflect on how their words and actions could influence Emily's confidence and self-esteem.
Discussion:
Mark and Lisa come together to discuss their reflections: Mark realises that he may have overlooked the emotional weight of certain comments, and he commits to being more mindful of his language. Lisa recognises the importance of creating a safe space for Emily to express herself without fear of judgment.
Result:
The Empathy Map reflection allows Mark and Lisa to step into Emily's shoes, enhancing their understanding of her perspective during the coming-out process. This activity prompts a meaningful conversation between parents, fostering a more empathetic and supportive environment for Emily.



Assessment

Trainers can ask the parents the following questions throughout their delivery of this subtopic:

- What emotions did you experience during the discussion of the discovery, acceptance, and embracement stages?
- How comfortable do you feel with the idea of your child going through the discovery phase?
- What are some potential challenges you foresee in accepting your child's gender identity, and how can you overcome them?
- How can you create an environment that supports your child's ongoing exploration of their gender identity during the embracement stage?



TRAINING 3

PROVIDING SUPPORT TO CHILDREN AND PARENTS

This handbook is part of the GENDER 101 project, which helps to solve the obstacles faced by parents of gender-diverse children. This handbook will enable a better understanding of gender diverse individuals and thus enable the development of a better environment that encourages diversity and inclusiveness as key aspects within the learning process.

Through this training module, participants will learn:

- Definition of support and the importance of parental support during the child's "coming-out" process.
- They will be able to identify effective communication strategies with a focus on active listening, in order to create a stimulating and accepting environment for children during their journey.
- By the end of the training, participants will be able to develop practical skills for providing emotional support (with special focus on loving a child) and validate the experiences of children during the coming-out process.

The following topics will be covered in this module:

1. DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUPPORT
2. SUPPORT – BEFORE THE CHILD COMES OUT
3. SUPPORT – WHEN THE CHILD COMES OUT
4. SUPPORT – AFTER THE CHILD COMES OUT



1. DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUPPORT

Objectives

- learn the definition of support
- raise awareness of the importance of parental support during the child's "coming-out" process
- to become aware of listening errors and learn to actively listen to your child

Work methods:

lecture, group discussion, work in pairs, use of designed activities, worksheets

Ethos

Support comes in many shapes and sizes, it takes different forms and it means something different depending on the people and perspective from which they are giving, receiving or witnessing these kind of actions. Support is something that takes its true value from the circumstances in which it's provided but in the end, it will all come down to the same thing. For example, we could be supporting our favorite sports team, we could provide support to the political party, we could provide support to our colleagues at work, we can be supportive to our friends, our family, our significant other, etc. Of course, support can be provided at any given moment, either in „normal“ circumstance in our everyday life, the successes that we achieve or the challenging and difficult periods that we go through in life.

The most important part is that the support is provided with the aim of giving someone that kind word, that helping hand, that extra push to raise their chances of succeeding in life.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment, through the Cambridge Dictionary, defines the support as to agree with and give encouragement to someone or something because you want them to succeed.



Basically, support can be defined as assistance, aid, or help provided to someone or something in order to address their needs, overcome challenges, or achieve a desired outcome. It involves offering resources, encouragement, guidance, or any form of assistance to individuals, groups, or organizations. As a verb in itself, support can mean a lot of different things as we mentioned earlier, but we will focus more on the previous definition, as the definition relevant in this context. Just to make it more clear, Cambridge dictionary also gives us the following examples of the meaning of support:

- to help someone or something in an emotional or practical way
- to provide someone with money or physical things that are needed
- to show or seem to prove something to be true (e.g. when a research supports the theory)
- to hold something firmly or bear its weight, esp. from below, to stop it from falling (in construction for example)
- approval and encouragement given to someone or something
- information or facts that prove something to be true (proof)

Once again, all of the previously stated examples that are used in different contexts, show that support is basically providing someone with encouragement and strength in various situations in life, with the main goal being helping them overcome challenges, stay strong and succeed in life. Overall, support is a fundamental aspect of human interaction and community engagement. It plays a vital role in fostering positive relationships, promoting inclusivity, and creating a supportive environment where individuals can thrive. Its purpose is to empower individuals, enhance their well-being, and facilitate their personal growth, development, and resilience. It aims to alleviate challenges, provide a sense of security, promote self-confidence, and enable individuals to overcome obstacles or achieve their goals.



1.1. WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT WE CAN PROVIDE

Support can take various forms and can be provided in different ways depending on the context and the specific needs of the person or group being supported. It can be informal, such as support from family or friends, or formal, such as support provided by professionals or organizations.

When we're talking about supporting someone or that an individual is supported by other people, by their social network, we are talking about social support and that's the support that we're going to focus on. Under this category also falls the support that is provided by parents to their children as well as the support by educators such as teachers to the children, parents and families altogether.

This type of support is, according to Kendra Cherry, Verywell mind, often identified as a key component of solid relationships and strong physical health.

One of the definitions of social support that is mentioned in the Psychiatry Journal in 2007. is that the social support is "support accessible to an individual through social ties to other individuals, groups, and the larger community."

The National Cancer Institute's Dictionary of Cancer Terms defines social support as "a network of family, friends, neighbors, and community members that is available in times of need to give psychological, physical, and financial help" (www.cancer.gov).

We can see that the financial help is mentioned in the previous definition and you can already see that the types of support, especially within the social support concept, are often overlapping and multiple are present at the same time, rather than just one. When this happens it's rarely a bad thing but rather a reinforcing measure that the support that we are trying to provide or receive is going to yield positive results.



- As you might imagine now already, there are different types of social support as well but the ones recognized and analyzed in most cases are the following (according to verywell mind, in the article by Elizabeth Scott):
- Emotional support - this type of support often involves physical comfort such as hugs or pats on the back, as well as listening and empathizing. With emotional support, a parent might give a child a big hug and listen to their problems, troubles, challenges, while also trying to understand and relate to those, find something to hang onto.
- Esteem support - this type of social support is shown in expressions of confidence or encouragement. When offering offering esteem support, a parent might point out the strengths a child is forgetting they have, or just let them know that they believe in them. This will often lead to children believing in themselves more and that is why it's important to also work on and boost the likes of skills/values such as self-esteem and resilience in children.
- Informational support - those offering informational support do so in the form of advice-giving, or in gathering and sharing information that can help people know of potential next steps that may work well. That's where it's of vast importance for parents to get informed first, to get educated themselves, to fact-check what they think they know so they are able to provide a more valuable and much more effective support for their children. We will talk about this more in detail later on.
- Tangible support - tangible support includes taking on responsibilities for someone else so they can deal with a problem or in other ways taking an active stance to help someone manage a problem they're experiencing. Someone who offers tangible support may bring dinner when sick, help brainstorm solutions (rather than telling somebody what they should do, as with informational support), or in other ways help actively deal with the issue at hand. (Elizabeth Scott, Verywell mind, 2020.) It's very important, especially with children, to provide conditions and give opportunity for independence as this will boost children's self-esteem which is very important throughout their development.



Some of the tips on how to improve the social support for ourselves, but also for the people around us meaning that they will be able to receive the support, advice, tips from us, are the following:

1. Meet new people – even though it's hard work, as it should be, adding people to our circle regularly can boost our chances of having meaningful and longlasting relationship. Of course, this will not happen with all the people from our circle but it can increase the chances of fostering the relationship with at least one, valuable person. It's important to teach parents to be a role model in fostering relationships, being positive and open minded and in that way, being a good example and teaching their children from example.

2. Make the time – the same for making the connections and fostering the old ones, having time for the family, for friends. Effective time management is as valuable in our private life as it is in work, where we always hear about it. It helps stay in touch, stay connected and strengthen the bond with people in our life.

3. Be assertive – described as a value of being able to stand up for oneself and to not let people push us around, not being passive. While it might sometimes be considered aggressive, it's the alternative to aggressiveness, the ability to do all that calmly, self-assured, confident, express one's needs but without expecting that they are met at the expense of other people's needs.

4. Listen – don't forget that more often than not the support is mutual. It's not only about us having a bad day and the need to be heard, but the other person might be in that same need. It's important to be an active listener for our children and to let them know that they are heard, pay attention to what they are saying without, at that moment, the need to think of what we are going to say next, reflect on what they just said, be curious and ask questions when you feel like it and when expected to.



5. Trust your intuition – if you pay attention to your own emotions when you're talking to someone it might help you grow a healthier circle and the same, healthier relationships with people. It's especially important to teach children this skill as well. For example, when we're talking to someone and feel at ease, it would most of the time mean that the person is trustworthy for us, that we feel safe with them. On the other hand, if we feel fear, anxiety, drained talking to someone it might mean that this person's intentions are not the best and that we might reconsider.

6. Let go – as previously stated, sometimes people will not be a match. It's important to know which „fights“ are worth fighting for and to know when it's time to let go and when that might be the best possible choice for us, for (our) children, for the counterparts, etc.

In order to process this topic more easily or to prepare for training more easily, watch the video intended to help you as an introduction to the topic of support.

Video: https://youtu.be/hW_U1RWGqpl?si=0W4XNCwajWOBf-x4



ACTIVITY 1: Active listening

Objectives:

-learn to listen actively

Required materials:

-Instruction sheet for person A
-Person B instruction sheet

Instructions:

-Divide the participants into pairs where there is person A and person B.
-Each of the participants has the task of telling their partner about an event from their life that triggered emotions in them.
-Each person A and person B receive their tasks on a sheet of paper. Person A has the task of listening carefully to his interlocutor, while person B is given the task of interrupting his interlocutor while he is telling his emotional story.

Attachment:

Instruction sheet for person A:

-Listen carefully
-Without prejudice
-Paraphrase if you need clarity
-Pay attention to what are needs of person A

Instruction sheet for person B:

When your partner is talking, interrupt in one of the following ways:

- Giving advice: "I think you should ... " "How come you didn't ... ?"
- Compromise: "It's nothing; just wait until you hear what happened to me."
- Teaching: "This could become a very positive experience for you if you would just . . ."
- Consolation: "It's not your fault, you did the best you could."
- Telling stories: "It reminded me of a time when..."
- Covering up: "Lighten up. Don't feel so bad."
- Pitying: "Oh, you poor..." (<https://www.fino.ioskole.net/>)



Here are some questions that participants can be asked, to ensure that the content has been understood, if necessary, make a discussion.

How did you feel?

What are the elements of active listening?

What is not active listening in an empathic conversation?

Which of the tips for achieving social support do you apply in your life?

Have you ever asked someone for support?

What did you expect from that person?

2. SUPPORT – BEFORE A CHILD COMES OUT

Objectives

- To learn all the ways to express love to a child
- How to express your feelings

Work methods:

lecture, group discussion, work in pairs, use of designed activities

Ethos

Everything that a parent does for their child during their development & growing up process influences also how a child will behave towards a parent, their relationship and mutual trust, and it will also influence a space, environment in which their children feel safe, respected and most importantly – loved, and where they will eventually be relaxed enough to come out on their own.



Starting when children are young, the way parents interact with them helps shape how they respond to their parents and also to other people in their lives later on. By paying attention to their cues and responding, they let their children know they are loved for who they are, help them learn to trust the adults in their lives, teach them skills to manage big emotions and challenges, and encourage them to approach others with compassion (Shauna Tominey, Greater Good Magazine, 2019.).

If a parent has a warm, loving and affectionate relationship with their child it will help them feel safe and secure. This sense of security is known as bonding or attachment. When children feel secure they are more likely to be happy and confident, and be able to handle conflicts and anger. If a child feels secure they are more likely to be curious and start exploring, which will help them develop well (Welsh Government Services and Information - <https://www.gov.wales/>). Most importantly, in this way, the parents can set the environment in which their children feel free to open up, they feel safe to talk to their parents, they feel like they will encounter sufficient amount of support and they will feel like they are loved every step of the way.

According to child psychologist Dr. Robert Myers, children who feel important and worthy have higher self-esteem, a more positive outlook on life and healthier relationships. He also points out that these children tend to have an easier time handling conflict, are more respectful of others and are generally more well-rounded individuals (Care, Stephanie Young, 2021.).



To round things up and to emphasize on the importance and benefits of parental love and also the effects it has on children, we list the following:

- Success in life - The Harvard Grant Study, a first-of-its-kind study, tracked the 70-year trajectory of 268 Harvard students, including John F. Kennedy. The physical and emotional health of each participant was recorded, and their successes, or lack thereof, were analyzed. Researchers reached a clear conclusion: Happy and successful lives are rooted in a good relationship with parents. A feeling of acceptance, nurture, and parental love during childhood is one of the adults' best predictors of future success, happiness, and life satisfaction.
- Physical health – also a subject that is in many cases dependant on parental love. And there is also a Harvard study where researchers found that those who did not experience parent-child love were more than twice as likely to develop some sort of physical illness and/or develop an addiction, such as addiction to alcohol, which can then consequentially lead to a number of physical illnesses.
- Self-esteem and self-adequacy – the higher the love from parents, the higher the self-esteem in children and later on in their life. We also know that self-esteem influences how a person, a child in this particular case values and sees itself and when there is a healthy level of self-esteem and self-acceptance, a child will not be limited by a fear of coming out, but rather feel good in its own body, about itself, feeling that it deserves the respect of others.
- Social competence – one of the more obvious ones. Repeated, familiar interactions lead to positive peer interactions. Also, it means that a child feels a part of society and can build meaningful relationships with others, built on mutual respect, tolerance and love.



- Academic competence – also one of the self-explanatory examples where children, with the support and love from their parents, have a higher chance of living up to their own expectations and desires in the academic world, but also later on in life, private and professional.
- Emotional regulation – here it's important to be a role model, as in almost every case that we're talking or going to talk about in this class. Parents who are able to regulate their emotions, to express their feelings, show their love are more likely to raise children fully capable to do so as well. Emotional regulation is very important for a child, especially a child going through all sorts of changes in their life (either in early years, adolescence or later on when attending college or similar).
- Mental health – with the lack of love and the lack of support from the parents, children can develop depression, anxiety or any other mentally-related issue which can lead also to any kind of unwanted behavior. On the contrary, the positive side to that is that the child enjoying support and love from their parents will develop healthy habits, reach healthy levels of mental health, more open to share and talk about their feelings, changes, processes honestly, etc. (Pamela Li, Parenting for brain, 2023.)

To conclude, it's important to note that parental love and support play a crucial role in affirming and embracing gender-diverse children, fostering their well-being, and creating an environment where they can flourish. Each child's journey is unique, and parents who prioritize love, acceptance, and understanding can make a significant positive impact on their child's sense of self and overall happiness.



Our experts have prepared a video with tips on how to help and support a child or young person before they comes out. They talk about the importance of parental love and influence on children, about the influence on success in life, physical health, self-esteem and self-adequacy, social competence, academic competence, emotional regulation and mental health.

Video: <https://youtu.be/BXW9qizJFlo?si=ulMSr9atyT62DEOZ>

The same video can also be an introduction to the topic of how to show love to children.

2.1. HOW TO SHOW LOVE TO A CHILD

There are many ways how a parent can show love to a child and they can be further examined through additional resources, but here we wanted to go in a bit different direction and challenge the way parents talk to their children, so that children feel loved.

1. A child is loved for who they are and who they will become

When a parent gives children that feeling hardly anything can go wrong. This helps build a trusting relationship and also something that is called a secure attachment (read more ...). Parents should build their relationship with children by spending dedicated time with them doing something they choose, paying attention to their likes and interests, while putting all other distractions aside.

Children who have secure attachments tend to have higher self-esteem and better self-control, stronger critical thinking skills, and better academic performance than children who don't. They're also more likely to have stronger social skills than their peers, as well as greater empathy and compassion (Shauna Tominay, Greater Good Magazine, 2019.).



2. Child's feelings help parents and caregivers know what they need

Everyone prefers it when a child is in a good mood (when they are easy to get along with and fun to be around), but children have unpleasant feelings like sadness, disappointment, frustration, anger, and fear, too. These feelings are often expressed through crying, temper tantrums, and challenging behaviors. It is the parents' feelings that serve a purpose at that exact moment and let them know when a child needs something. By paying attention to a child's feelings, they show them that how they feel matters to them and that they can count on their parents to do their best to address their needs.

When a child's feelings challenge a parent, they should ask themselves:

- Are the expectations I have for my child reasonable and realistic?
- Have I taught my child what to do and not just what not to do? If not, what skills need more practice?
- How are my child's feelings affecting them right now? Even if I think they should know this skill, is my child too upset or tired to think clearly?
- How are my feelings affecting the way I respond to my child? (Shauna Tominay, Greater Good Magazine, 2019.)

3. There are different ways to express feelings

Parents should talk with their children about their family's emotion rules. Ask yourself - How do I want the children and adults in my family to show different emotions when they arise? A good practice is to use storybooks to help a child see that everyone has feelings. Reading together offers a chance to talk about the challenging feelings that different characters have and to practice problem solving outside of emotionally charged moments.

Teaching children how to express their emotions in new ways takes time, practice, role modeling, and lots of repetition. (Shauna Tominay, Greater Good Magazine, 2019.)



4. Everyone is a learner and mistakes are a part of learning

Emphasize that learning something new takes time and that mistakes are a big part of this process. Parents should learn to accept mistakes and in this way, teach their children to accept mistakes as a part of something bigger, becoming a bigger person. Of course, mistakes are a part of the learning process as long as there is something learnt from each mistake and when these mistakes are not repeated.

There is a quote by Billie Joe Armstrong, the frontman of a popular punk rock band Green Day, that states „To do something, that you feel in your heart that's great, you need to make a lot of mistakes“ and there is hardly a better point to make in this part of the class.

5. Parents and/or caregivers are the best they can be

It's essential to get to this stage, to a stage where we satisfy all the previous steps and factors, and where the children believe that their parents and/or caregivers/guardians are the best self they can be at the given moment, at the given situation. It's important that parents' mistakes are also normalized and that children believe that they will take the most out of it, that parents will also value this as their learning moments, all with the best possible outcome in mind and all with and because of the love for their children.

If parents talked with their children about what they are working on, why it is hard, and what they are doing to improve, they can give their children ideas for strategies that they can use themselves. No matter how parents feel about themselves as a role model, they are one of the most important role models in their children's eyes. ((Shauna Tominay, Greater Good Magazine, 2019.)



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ACTIVITY 2: A jar of love

You can introduce the following activity to back up everything you talked about previously and to visualize the experience for the parents, but also to emphasize the perspective of a child.

Objectives:

- To visually demonstrate the significance of love and its impact on children.

Materials Needed:

- A clear jar or container
- Small, colored paper hearts or slips
- Writing utensils
- Online tools if in an online environment

Instructions:

- Begin by explaining the purpose of the exercise: to collectively demonstrate the importance of love in a child's life.
- Distribute the jar/container, colored paper hearts or slips, and writing utensils to each participant.
- Instruct the participants to think about the ways they express love to their children or the ways they have received love from their parents.
- Ask the participants to write down one specific act of love on each paper heart or slip. Encourage them to be creative and specific.
- Once the participants have written their acts of love, instruct them to fold the hearts or slips and place them into the jar/container.
- After everyone has placed their acts of love in the jar, gather the group's attention and hold up the jar.

Discuss the significance of the jar, explaining that each act of love represents a precious moment or memory that contributes to the child's well-being and happiness.



- Reflect on the collective love shared within the jar, emphasizing the impact it can have on a child's life.
- Invite participants to share one act of love they wrote down (if they feel comfortable doing so) and briefly discuss why it is important.
- Conclude the exercise by reminding participants of the lasting impact of their acts of love and encourage them to continue nurturing their relationships with their children.

If in an online environment, you can use any collaborative tool that comes to mind. For example, for more interactive and attractive exercise, you can use Mentimeter, Padlet, Google Jamboard, Miro, etc. If any of the previous are not accessible, you can always use Google Docs or other free Google tools that enable writing and projecting in real time. To be more effective and visually appealing, pay attention to the design beforehand.

It's best when the activity is anonymous but depending on the group, you can also try sharing of the experiences with others. It can be a good starting point for a fruitful discussion.

Here are some questions that participants can be asked, to ensure that the content has been understood, if necessary, make a discussion.

What did you like about this activity?

How did you talk to your own parents? Did you pick up patterns of behavior from them?

How do you show your child that it can feel safe next to you?

How are emotions expressed in your family?

How do you deal with mistakes and what message can children get from you?



3. SUPPORT – BEFORE A CHILD COMES OUT

Objectives

- developing the necessary attitudes of active listeners
- encouraging motivation for change
- encouraging empathy

Work methods:

use of designed activities, lecture, group discussion, reflection

For a change, we'll start this segment with an activity first. The activity 3 will produce more impact if done before you proceed with the content of the presentation. It is used to set the mood in the room (or online environment) so that it motivates the participants to think and follow through the content of the material you are showing them.

You can watch everything on the following video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsWySuR7IkQ&list=PL9aq5d_qOuDjb0LQnUXZMME_Dsc1SAhwz&index=18)

[v=OsWySuR7IkQ&list=PL9aq5d_qOuDjb0LQnUXZMME_Dsc1SAhwz&index=18](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsWySuR7IkQ&list=PL9aq5d_qOuDjb0LQnUXZMME_Dsc1SAhwz&index=18)



ACTIVITY 3: Crumpled Paper

Objective:

-To illustrate the lasting impact of non-acceptance and the importance of practicing acceptance towards children.

Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Writing utensils

NOTE: In an online environment, you can still be the one with the paper and doing the writing, not participants themselves. The participants can write in the chat, share their experiences or you can use Google Docs or similar tool as mentioned in the previous exercise.

Instructions:

- Ask participants to reflect on times when they may not have been as accepting as they intended to be towards their child. This could include moments of criticism, disapproval, or lack of understanding.
- Distribute writing utensils to each participant and then share one piece of paper on which participants will write, one by one.
- Instruct participants to write down a specific situation or instance where they feel they may have fallen short of complete acceptance towards their child. Of course, where now they feel like it might have been more appropriate, helpful to accept, unconditionally. Encourage them to be honest and open in their reflection.
- Once participants have written down their situations, take the paper and fold it multiple times, making it as small and crumpled as possible.
- Ask participants to focus on the crumpled paper and reflect on the visual representation of the situation.



- Facilitate a discussion where participants can share their reflections on the exercise. Encourage them to discuss their feelings and thoughts about the difficulty of undoing the crumpled paper and the impact of non-acceptance on their child.
- This is the moment where you explain that each act of non-acceptive behavior towards a child can have a negative, crumbling effect on them. Then try unfolding a piece of paper and emphasize the importance of teaching parents, teaching themselves from the very beginning these values, this type of behavior and practice it on a daily basis because sometimes, it can be very hard to take it back, to make it better. Mistakes are a part of life but only if we start learning from them.
- Emphasize the importance of acknowledging and learning from past mistakes, as well as actively practicing acceptance towards their child in the present and future.
- Conclude the exercise by highlighting that while the effects of non-acceptance may linger, there is always an opportunity to improve and grow in their acceptance towards their child.
- Continue the session with presenting the strategies and techniques for cultivating acceptance in the parent-child relationship, such as active listening, empathy, open communication, and fostering a safe and non-judgmental environment.

Needs and Benefits of the Exercise:

Reflection: The exercise encourages parents to reflect on moments when they may not have fully accepted their child, fostering self-awareness and insight into their own behaviors and attitudes.

Visual Representation: The crumpled paper serves as a tangible and visual representation of the lasting impact of non-acceptance. It helps parents grasp the significance of their actions and words.



Emotional Connection: The exercise evokes emotions as parents reflect on their own experiences, promoting empathy and understanding of the impact of non-acceptance on their child.

Group Discussion: Sharing reflections and insights within a supportive group setting allows participants to learn from each other's experiences, gain different perspectives, and develop a sense of community.

Motivation for Change: The exercise inspires parents to actively work on cultivating acceptance and provides an opportunity for growth and improvement in their relationship with their child.

Remember to create a safe and non-judgmental environment during the exercise, where participants feel comfortable sharing their reflections. Additionally, provide guidance and resources for parents who may need further support in practicing acceptance towards their child.

Theory:

Everything in this class, in this session, in this process (before, during and after) is connected and somehow intertwined. Why do we say this? Because with all the tips, all the positive things to do, helpful, supportive, loving, you can't go wrong in any stage of the process and it's difficult to think that it won't have any sort of effect on the parties included.

Before a child comes out to a parent, it is important to set an environment as we have seen, a positive, loving environment in which a child is going to feel safe with whatever it is that they are about to say to parents, they are going to feel recognized, they are going to feel accepted. Once parents have set this kind of environment, the thing that is left for them to do when a child comes out is to listen and to accept, unconditionally, unconditionally as they love their child and, if necessary, learn to love again in this change process.



First step on this path is to listen to a child and this means listening actively – doing whatever a parent can to show that they are here, they are present in this moment and they are listening to what they're being told. In this way, a parent will show to a child that they are interested in them, they are involved, that they are listening. This is a great skill that is valuable everyday, throughout the parent-child relationship, not only but especially in this case.

The key two concepts or rather should we say mindsets/habits that are the core of active listening are the following:

- The acceptance is key – we already mentioned it and will go more in detail later on, but when a parent is being an active listener, there is no room for judgement that is addressed towards the speaker, in this example the child. This is not the time to interrupt and especially not a time or an opportunity for a teaching moment. This is a safe space where a child is able to walk a parent through their mind, give them a tour. (The Center for Parenting Education, <https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/healthy-communication/the-skill-of-listening/>)

Practice makes perfect – as in everything. This can be a very difficult skill to learn and it may take time, but that is where practice jumps in. Parents can practice this, of course, by doing it with their children, but also to be better prepared explore different scenarios, learn from examples, etc. This especially goes for someone who didn't grow up in an „active listening environment“ and where they weren't a subject to it, in their childhood or in life in general. (The Center for Parenting Education, <https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/healthy-communication/the-skill-of-listening/>)



Having in mind the previous, it's important for parents to develop necessary attitudes that can help them in becoming an active listener, which is crucial for them and especially for their children. Some of these attitudes are the following:

- Accepting the feelings and perceptions of a child – they are real for them, even if parents don't agree with.
- Being objective and keeping their feelings apart from a child's feelings
- Allowing a child to be responsible for their own feelings
- Having the time – to make time to listen to a child.
- Recognizing that feelings are often transitory – let a child vent their feelings to be able to move on.
- Letting the exchange go only as far as a child would want it to – no pushing them into talking more than they'd like.
- Allowing children to draw their own conclusions – staying patient.

Not having specific results in mind – stay free, open minded to explore results, solutions together, as a team. (The Center for Parenting Education, <https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/healthy-communication/the-skill-of-listening/>)

And, as we already mentioned, active listening takes us to acceptance, and a much easier one after the parents were active listeners, we dare to say.

Over half a century ago, Rogers (1951) postulated from the humanistic perspective that people are inherently good and worthy of love. If people can experience unconditional positive regard, they have the capability to flourish to their full potentials with optimal psychological functioning (Rogers, 1961). Unconditional positive regard refers to the acceptance of a person regardless of what he/she says or does (Rogers, 1959). In a similar vein, Ellis (1962) the founder of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) conceived unconditional acceptance to be fundamental to the resilience and mental health of people (Ellis, 2005). (Kitty Ka Yee Tsang, Shui-fong Lam, Parental unconditional acceptance: An antidote to parental conditional regard, 2023.)



And as almost everything in a person's life, acceptance is also something that can be learned, a value that can be built, a skill that can be developed or strengthened. There are a lot of tips out there, a lot of ways how something can be done and you will see that a lot of them directly relate or intertwine with others and that small thing means that we are on the right track and that everything that we do can be a small step to success, to a healthy communication, relationship, support.

1. Parents should foster a sense of belonging for their children

What does that mean? It means that parents have to accept their kids the way they are and in this way, allowing them to always feel like a part of the family.

2. Accept kids and nurture their interests

Even though they are not similar to the interest of the parents, a parent has to find a way to nurture those and let them feel safe to explore their passion. Parents should take time to understand, to even learn more about an interest, reinforce it, support it and accept it. This is also crucial in a child's development.

3. Take time to understand children's mindset and personality.

A child will have, especially in this context, a unique personality or might even still be exploring themselves, experiencing confusion, entering the unknown. It's a parent's responsibility to take care of a child's well-being no matter how unique. Also, parents should be able to explore themselves, share their thoughts, interests and similar with their children which creates a stronger bond and helps a child open up.



4. Parents should stay realistic and let go of high expectations and dreams. We often paint a perfect, or paint just a picture, a portrait and a portfolio of what our child is going to be, not only when they grow up but throughout life. This is where a lot of mistakes can happen and where the situation can lead in a negative way, for both. Even though we are allowed to dream, we have to keep it together and understand that children have a mind of their own, a personality of their own, dreams and desires of their own. And parents should learn to be okay with that, accept that.

5. Listen to a child's opinions and thoughts.

This is where it gets intertwined and where you should, if unsure, check again the previous part of this class that explained active listening in detail.

6. Look for strengths behind their child's weaknesses

Do you know about SWOT analysis? What about TOWS? SWOT shows us strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in any kind of environment. It's especially used in the business world but it can be just as easily interpreted in this context. Everything has at least one of each category and then, when we use TOWS, it helps us discover strategies to use strengths to overcome weaknesses, as well as opportunities to overcome threats or emphasize on strengths again, and so on. How it's related to this context? Parents should embrace a child's weakness and help children, support them in turning this into a strength. Example time - a parent may try their best to change their child who is stubborn, but an accepting parent will learn to realize that their stubbornness is not necessarily a red flag, as stubbornness can also be a great asset and be of the value to them throughout their life.

7. Let go of parent's own fears

Let go of fears to be able to let a child flourish, let them grow, let them develop and become the person that they were meant to be, that they want to be. Being their support, being their guide, being their safe space is the most important thing a parent can do for their child. (Tan, Eleen, Tutopiya, 2022.)



To further educate yourself and study real-world examples that offer useful insights into the issues and experiences of young people of diverse gender backgrounds, please visit the following site:

<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/lgbt>

Here are some questions that participants can be asked, to ensure that the content has been understood, if necessary, make a discussion.

What are the two key mindset/habit concepts that are at the heart of active listening?

Which of them do you apply and in what way?

In what way do you show patience towards your child? Can it be improved even better?

What are your child's interests? How did you connect with these interests?

Do you have the same expectations for your children as they do for themselves? What can you do in that field?



4. SUPPORT – AFTER A CHILD COMES OUT

Objectives:

- promote awareness of parenting styles and encourage a better understanding of them
- learn to provide support
- make people aware of the importance of noticing other people's needs and harmonizing with their own
- raising awareness of the importance of mental health

Work methods: lecture, use of designed activities, group discussion, introspection

Theory:

Parenting isn't easy. Having a transgender child is far from the hardest thing parents will ever encounter as a parent. Yes, parents may encounter uneducated and transphobic people who may make their life more challenging. But raising a transgender or nonbinary child is a wonderful and unknown area, so here are some guidelines on how to provide support when your child comes out as a transgender or nonbinary person.

Listen and Follow

When somebody tells you they are not the gender they were assigned at birth or are questioning that assignment, **it's really important to listen without judgment.** Even if you have a knee-jerk reaction to resist what they're saying, **check yourself.** Resist the urge to flood person with questions or rationalizations. **Thank them for trusting you with their thoughts and feelings.** Let them know you support them and, while you may not have all of the answers, you will learn.



Person may not have all of the answers yet either, and that's okay too. The way to know if somebody is transgender is if they are persistent, insistent, and consistent about a gender identity that is different from the one they were assigned at birth. It may take some time to put a label on that identity, but **if somebody is telling you something isn't right, then it's critical that you have the patience to follow their lead and help them explore who they are.** Gender diverse books are a great way to do this. If person wants to talk with other youth who are transgender or questioning, see if there are local or online groups for them to join.

Check In

Being a kid is tough sometimes. Being a transgender kid can be really tough. It takes a lot of courage to walk into school or a family gathering as your true self. This is especially true when people only want to see who they thought you were. Bullying, harassment, and an overwhelming number of anti-transgender laws harm the security and well-being of transgender youth. The Trevor Project's 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Mental Health **shows that transgender and nonbinary youth are at a much higher risk of depression, self-harm, and suicide.** But, when the people they live with respect their pronouns, the number of suicide attempts decreased by half compared to kids who were not supported. The number of suicide attempts were also lower for the transgender and nonbinary kids who were able to update legal documents like driver's licenses and birth certificates with their correct name and gender.

Children's mental health needs to be top priority. Check in with them to see if they want to talk to you or someone else about depression, anxiety, or other troubling thoughts they may be having. Children may feel more comfortable confiding in someone who isn't their parent and that's okay. The most important piece is that child has a safe place to talk so that they can get the help they need.



Get Support from Other Parents of Transgender Youth

Children gender identity is not about parents. Yes, so much of who you are revolves around relationship between parents and children. But changing the names, pronouns, and language parents use to refer to their child are acts of love for them. It's not about taking away experience as a parent. Parents will need to make adjustments, and they may mourn the loss of what they thought they had. But it was never really there to begin with. What parents are clinging to are incorrect assumptions. Their child is still the same child they always loved, and their ability to keep their needs in focus rather than their own will be critical in building their child's confidence, happiness, and trust.

That doesn't mean parents should ignore their own needs. Reach out to other parents of transgender kids so they have a place to ask questions and process what they may be feeling. A therapist or family doctor can help too. It's okay to reflect and express their confusion or worry about child's transition, as long as they do it away from their child. Children are not responsible for parents emotions or their ability to understand. Parents are responsible for keeping their child's needs centered while getting support for them somewhere outside of child's bubble.

Educate Yourself

Parents may want to ask their child a million questions about their gender identity so that parents can understand what children are going through. Sometimes this is done out of denial, guilt, or confusion. Parents may also confuse gender with sexual orientation and ask unnecessary questions about sexuality. Trying to get their child to tell them why or how they know they are transgender is like asking parents (a cisgender person) to prove or explain how they know their gender. And demanding to know who they are attracted to likely isn't relevant here either. There are a lot of great books, documentaries, and online resources that can help parents understand what it means to be transgender and why it's so important to respect pronouns and name changes.



Find out what policies exist in child's school to be sure their rights and safety are protected. Dig into state's rules about changing legal documents to be sure child's correct gender and name can be updated when it's time.

Parents will also want to work with affirming pediatricians and therapists who can explain any medical transitions their child may want or need. Hormone blockers and/or hormone therapy may be part of child's transition. And when child is older—late teens and into adulthood—gender affirming surgery may be necessary too.

The more parents can learn now, the better they can prepare for the different ways their child may choose to transition. Parents will also get to know their child and their experience better without putting them through the emotional labor of doing this work for parents.

Practice

As parents work to affirm and support their child, they are going to make mistakes. Parents will need to apologize. But keep trying! When parents practice using new pronouns or a new name, they are showing their child how much they love them. It's not okay to make excuses or continue to misgender their child, but if children see parents practicing and making an effort to get it right in front of them and around other people, they will likely cut you some slack and thank you for being awesome.



Be Their Ally and Advocate for Transgender Youth

Parents are going to have to get comfortable with confrontation. Whether they are correcting strangers or acquaintances when they misgender their child, setting boundaries with family members, demanding an inclusive school district, or fighting against anti-transgender laws, they will get into arguments on behalf of their transgender child. It is critical that transgender youth see the adults in their life going to battle for them. They need to know they aren't alone. This may mean adults (parents) have to cut ties with friends or family members in order for their child to feel safe and protected. When parents create a zero-tolerance policy for bigotry and disrespect, they greatly increase not just their child's chance of survival, but their ability to thrive. Transgender youth who are supported in their gender identity and transition have developmentally equivalent levels of depression to cisgender peers and minimal elevations of anxiety.



ACTIVITY 3: Moving in harmony

Objectives:

- stimulate the skills of focusing attention on the partner and attuning to their movement
- stimulate cognitive development;
- develop autonomy and self-perception in relation to the group;
- recognizing and adjusting to non-verbal cues;
- empower parents to recognize the child's needs and adjust their style to them (collaboration vs. leadership?!)
- develop the learning of the rules of socialization;
- stimulate the relationship with the adult figure;
- stimulate the parent-child relationship;

Materials needed:

NOTE: This exercise can be done by parent and child, but it can be adapted to be done by parent in pairs. If there are just parents, one of them will be parents and another child. For the purposes of this exercise, one participant will be the mother and the other the child and they will follow the following instructions.

Instructions:

Instruction is to move together with as much harmony as possible and follow the moves of each other by standing in front of each other and being very close to each other but without touching. Their hands and legs must almost touch. They can be just a few (5 cm) centimeters away from each other. They get an instruction that this exercise will look as if they are dancing but will not touch.



- Mothers will lead the first round of harmony moving. For example, a mother can lift her hands and open her palms towards the child and a child put her or his palms very close to hers. Mother can then move her one leg forward and a child moves the opposite leg, like watching her in the mirror. Next it is on the mother to choose in which direction she will go through the room but it is important that she moves very slowly, and becomes aware of every small movement so that her child can follow her. The idea is that they move together in harmony, very close together, almost touching and slowly through the room and that the mother leads. These movements can imitate dancing, walking, spinning, slow running, squatting, whatever they can think of.
- It is a child's turn to lead the "dance". They get instruction the same as the mothers: to lead the movement slowly through the room, one step and one move at a time, by almost touching hands, legs and bodies with their mothers.
- It can be difficult to follow someone's gestures, movements and steps like this but it is a challenge and can be a fun activity for mothers and children. After the exercise they talk about what was hard for them or easy and talk about if they can see connections in their everyday lives and situations.

In order to facilitate and modernize your work, you can use the video below:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2AW30UvrLOs&list=PL9aq5d_qOuDjb0LQnUXZMME_Dsc1SAhwz&index=19)

[v=2AW30UvrLOs&list=PL9aq5d_qOuDjb0LQnUXZMME_Dsc1SAhwz&index=](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2AW30UvrLOs&list=PL9aq5d_qOuDjb0LQnUXZMME_Dsc1SAhwz&index=19)

[19](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2AW30UvrLOs&list=PL9aq5d_qOuDjb0LQnUXZMME_Dsc1SAhwz&index=19)



Here are some questions that participants can be asked, to ensure that the content has been understood, if necessary, make a discussion.

How did you feel doing this exercise?

Are there situations where children lead and mothers listen?

Do you let the kids lead more or do you take control? Why is that so? Can it be different and when?

How does the lack of control make you feel? And what do you notice about how children react without being able to have control?

In which situations will you be able to use the new child pronouns most easily?

What else can you do about your education on this topic?

CONCLUSION:

Numerous social changes mark the context in which modern parenting takes place and pose new challenges to parents in fulfilling their parental responsibilities. Thus, the parental role is made more demanding than before by pressures from different sides - from employers, the media, public services, other family members to one's own expectations and beliefs.

Being emotionally supportive means validating child's feelings, rather than shutting them down. By supporting child when they express emotions, parents giving them a foundation for future growth and development. Even though kids aren't fully developed, they are still the best judge of their own feelings, and their emotions are every bit as real and valid as ours. Being emotionally supportive means accepting the fact that kids feel the full range of human emotion just like adults do. It also means acknowledging these emotions is the only way to help children grow into the emotionally supported adults we want them to be.



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TRAINING 4

LANGUAGE & DISCRIMINATION

Video: <https://youtu.be/A8AiHdaQWac?si=s3JVEQSpga6sPVpl>

Ethos

Overall, language and gender play an important role in shaping and reflecting societal attitudes towards gender and gender identity. The emergence of a public interest in language and gender depends on the socio-political background, according to which the local language is used. This training includes a reflection on the relation between language and gender diversity prejudices, and how to become aware of them and contrast them using language to respect genders.

Objective

The focus of this training is on understanding the definition of gender and the importance of language for expressing one's thoughts, thus mitigating any kind of gender conflict.

This training has the purpose to investigate sociolinguistics as one approach for studying how gender determines language use and possible language discrimination.

The training also includes information on education and how to inform parents and grandparents about the importance of their support during the child's coming out process, at all stages, and helping them to avoid unintentionally creating a sexist and homophobic environment at home through language communication.

Real-life situations of people with gender differences are also included, and notions of the differences between stereotyping, stigma and discrimination are provided, highlighting the harmful consequences of hate speech and of all these types of prejudice.



Addressing the question of "what is being taught in this training?" A paragraph explaining the purpose of the training. Addressing the question of "what is being taught in this training?" A paragraph explaining the purpose of the training.

Method of Delivery

The training provides teaching content, methods for using language respectfully in gender contexts, as well as case studies, practical examples and additional teaching materials, such as online materials, TV series and suggested films.

Assessment

Discussions and questions can cover different aspects regarding the language of gender, including the concept of freedom, as well as the concept of inclusion. The new methods learned can be explored to reinforce a wider comprehension that is useful to tackle with and avoid the spectre of gender discrimination through the use of language.



TRAINING 5

INTRODUCTION TO TRAINING IN GENDER DIVERSITY

Video: <https://youtu.be/wE14-091lvY?si=7bpFve-KARwfRVZa>

Ethos

This training guidebook is designed to equip trainers with the knowledge and tools to foster an inclusive environment that respects and supports various gender identities. By challenging stereotypes and promoting understanding, the guidebook aims to prepare trainers to lead impactful sessions on gender diversity, emphasizing empathy, respect, and open-mindedness as foundational values.

Objective

This training aims to educate participants on the importance of gender diversity, including the recognition and support of various gender identities. It seeks to dismantle gender stereotypes and biases, encouraging a comprehensive understanding of gender beyond the binary framework. Through this training, participants will learn how to create inclusive spaces in their workplaces, schools, and communities, ensuring that all individuals feel valued and respected regardless of gender identity. The training covers theoretical knowledge about gender diversity, practical tools for fostering inclusivity, and strategies for promoting positive attitudes and behaviours towards people of all gender identities.



Method of Delivery

The training will be delivered through interactive workshops, engaging discussions, and practical activities. These methods encourage active participation, facilitate personal reflection, and deepen understanding of gender diversity issues. Materials will include multimedia presentations, case studies, and resource guides to support diverse learning styles.

Assessment

To assess understanding, participants will engage in reflective discussions, role-play scenarios, and complete questionnaires focused on key concepts of gender diversity. Assessments will evaluate participants' ability to recognize and challenge gender stereotypes, their understanding of gender identities, and their preparedness to create inclusive environments. Discussions will also explore personal growth and shifts in perspective regarding gender diversity, ensuring the training's objectives are fully met.



TRAINING 6

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING GENDER DIVERSITY

Video: <https://youtu.be/wE14-091lvY?si=7bpFve-KARwfRVZa>

Ethos

To build inclusive and compassionate societies, it is essential to recognize and value gender difference. In order to successfully navigate this terrain, parents must learn how to both address and eliminate the prejudice and gender discrimination that are pervasive in many facets of daily life, as well as how to effectively support their children's distinct identities. It's about giving them the awareness and tact to create a setting where every child, regardless of gender identification, feels respected and understood. To successfully complete this goal, one must be willing to confront their own prejudices and actively participate in discussions that advance tolerance and equality. By adopting these values, parents may strengthen their position as formidable allies in the battle against discrimination based on gender and help create a society that is more equitable and welcoming to all.

Objective

The main objectives for this training include:

Gender diversity training aims to raise knowledge and understanding of gender diversity while fostering inclusivity and respect in a variety of contexts, including the workplace, schools, and communities. Such training aims to give participants the skills they need to build more accepting and supportive environments for all individuals, regardless of gender identity, in addition to educating them about various facets of gender identity and sexual orientation.



Key terms like anatomical and physiological characteristics of the body, "gender expression," which describes how a person expresses their gender identity through behaviour, outfit, and other forms of expression, and "gender identity," which refers to an internal, individual sense of being male, female, or non-binary. The process of disclosing one's sexual orientation or gender identity to others, known as coming out, is a significant yet frequently challenging experience for many individuals.

Reductions in prejudice and discrimination, increased empathy for the experiences of persons with varied gender identities, and the development of more inclusive societies where everyone is valued and accepted are some of the potential outcomes of this kind of training. Upon completion of the program, trainees frequently gain new skills that enable them to assist friends, family, and coworkers more effectively and to help bring about positive changes in their surroundings.

Diversity in gender refers to a wide range of dimensions of human identity and expression. Understanding and embracing diversity is increasingly important as society develops, particularly for parents and educators who want to foster inclusive and encouraging environments for every person, regardless of gender identity or presentation.

The input provided by attendees of the previous gender diversity training sessions is crucial in molding and refining these workshops' upcoming iterations. Through the exchange of ideas, opinions, and suggestions, participants give the consortium important information about what they liked best about the training and what needs to be changed or developed. These comments may address a range of topics related to the training, including the course material, delivery strategies, workshop interaction, general environment, and teaching style.



The training program can be adjusted by the organisers to better meet the requirements and expectations of participants based on the feedback that has been gathered. Future editions could provide more examples and in-depth explanations of ideas and terms if participants, for instance, indicate a need for a deeper comprehension of them. Alternatively, organisers may decide to include more group discussions or hands-on activities in the training program if participants express a desire for more of these.

Feedback may also highlight the need for fresh subjects that haven't been discussed previously but that participants believe are important and useful for comprehending and promoting gender diversity. Trainings can be updated and enhanced with new information in this way, according to the rapidly shifting social and cultural realities.

Positive participant comments and success stories can also act as testimonials to the training's efficacy and inspire others to enroll and take a part in education process. Feedback in this way helps to enhance the value of trainings while also enhancing their reputation and educating the public about gender diversity.



My child's world: rainbow children – rainbow parents

Understanding Gender: Expression, Identity, and Orientation

In today's increasingly diverse and inclusive world, understanding the nuances of gender expression, sexual orientation, and gender identity is crucial. This guide aims to provide basic information, terminology, and definitions to help clarify these concepts and highlight their differences.

Gender:

Traditionally understood as the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. In modern contexts, it is increasingly recognized as a complex interplay of biological, social, and individual factors, rather than a strict binary.

Gender Expression

Gender expression refers to the external manifestation of an individual's gender identity, through their clothing, hairstyle, voice, body language, and behavior. It's how a person presents their gender to the outside world, and it may or may not conform to society's expectations of gender norms. For example, a person may choose to express their gender through their clothing choices, opting for attire that feels most authentic to their personal sense of self, irrespective of traditional "male" or "female" clothing options.

It's important to recognize that gender expression is distinct from gender identity; it's about outward presentation, not internal understanding. People express their gender in various ways, and there's no "right" or "wrong" way to do so. Gender expression is a form of personal autonomy and self-expression, influenced by individual choices, cultural norms, and societal expectations.



Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is about who a person is attracted to emotionally, romantically, or sexually. It's an aspect of personal identity that's independent of gender identity and expression. The most commonly recognized orientations include heterosexual (attraction to a different gender), homosexual (attraction to the same gender, often referred to as gay or lesbian), bisexual (attraction to both similar and different genders), and asexual (little to no sexual attraction to anyone, regardless of gender). It's essential to understand that sexual orientation is not a choice; it's an inherent aspect of who a person is. The concept of sexual fluidity acknowledges that for some individuals, sexual orientation can change over time, which is a natural part of human diversity.

Gender Identity

Gender identity is a deeply felt internal experience of gender, which may or may not align with the sex assigned at birth. It's how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves, which can be male, female, a blend of both, or neither. Gender identity can include a variety of terms such as transgender (identifying with a gender different from the sex assigned at birth), cisgender (identifying with the sex assigned at birth), non-binary (not exclusively identifying as male or female), and more.

Understanding gender identity is crucial because it speaks to the core of an individual's sense of self. It's not visible to others and can only be shared by the individual. Recognizing and respecting a person's affirmed gender identity, including using their chosen name and pronouns, is fundamental to their well-being and mental health.



Key Differences

While gender expression, sexual orientation, and gender identity may intersect in complex ways within an individual's experience, they are fundamentally distinct concepts:

- Gender Expression is about how a person outwardly shows their gender.
- Sexual Orientation is about who a person is attracted to.
- Gender Identity is about how a person internally understands their gender.

Each aspect plays a significant role in forming an individual's complete sense of self but operates independently. Understanding these differences is key to fostering a more inclusive and empathetic society.

Gender Expression

The external display of one's gender, through behaviors, clothing, haircut, voice, and other forms of presentation to the outside world. Gender expression may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

Nonbinarity (Non-binary): A gender identity that does not fit within the traditional binary of male and female. Non-binary individuals may identify as having a gender that blends elements of both male and female, may identify as neither, or may fall outside of these categories altogether.

Pansexuality: A sexual orientation characterized by the potential for emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction towards people regardless of their gender identity or biological sex. Pansexual people may refer to themselves as being gender-blind, indicating that gender and sex are insignificant or irrelevant in determining potential romantic or sexual partners.



Intergender: A term that may be used by individuals who feel that their gender identity is between genders or a mix of male and female. It's important to note that this term, like many related to gender identity, can vary widely in its definition and use, and it may not be universally recognized or used by all individuals who might identify with the concept it intends to describe.

Being aware of a different orientation can be a difficult and time-consuming process for many people, particularly for young individuals who are still forming their own opinions. How can a boy tell his classmates that the class's most attractive girl has no feelings for him? Every year at Christmas Eve dinner, the grandmotherly question "and you already have a bachelor" is posed. How should a girl respond to that? Many parents view their child's years-later admission of being homosexual or lesbian as evidence of mistrust. In the meanwhile, it's a symptom of uncertainty, ultimate acceptance of oneself and one's orientation, and worry about how others will perceive one.

Similar to heterosexuality, homosexuality is not a choice. Did we decide on our own that we find the other sex attractive? No, it is an innate characteristic that we cannot change, despite the fact that researchers are still debating whether orientation is learned through heredity or develops naturally as a child. However, it is incorrect and disrespectful to non-heteronormative individuals to promote the unsettling idea that homosexuality can be healed.

First of all, it takes bravery to admit it without thinking that our society is accepting of us. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure their child feels comfortable before letting them confide in them about their orientation. It is inappropriate to voice one's biases and opinions, but when feasible, now is the time to have a frank conversation, present doubts, concerns and ask questions that bother us. In the home environment, the child should first and foremost feel safe and accepted, so parental support is one of the most crucial issues on which the offspring will build later confidence.



The majority of people are more afraid of how the outside world will respond to their child's announcement of homosexuality than they are of the fact that their child is gay. It turns out that the burden of telling family members this information stresses out parents the most. Since the majority of the family is already aware of the person's different orientation, these anxieties typically have little basis in reality.

The apparent fact is thus made clear, but the child may be himself and enjoy his relationship with his loved one fearlessly by being in an environment where he feels accepted. "Well, she's a lesbian, but why does she have to flaunt it so much?" is a common allegation at this point. Now, let's present the other half of the rest of the family, hugging or catching a hand in the company of another person is the highest act of feeling secure in a given space. Let's ask ourselves - would we be offended by the same actions performed by a standard boyfriend-girlfriend couple? If not, this is another thing we need to slowly get used to on our way to final acceptance.

Parents should look for support if they are unable to deal with their child's orientation. Most of us have at least one non-heterosexual acquaintance, but if not, we can seek the support of a psychologist who will be receptive to our worries. Ultimately, it's important to keep in mind that a lot of information about LGBT individuals is outdated or based on falsehoods. Like the elevated risk of HIV infection, for instance. Therefore, reading trustworthy sources of information about the relevant orientation and discussing it with your son or daughter are crucial. In addition to improving the relationship, this will eliminate bias against other people.



You can look for information and help on the international web-sites. See them below. Try to look as well for projects and NGOs in your country.

1. <https://lgbtqfamilyacceptance.org/about/>

This website is a collaboration between the Family Acceptance Project® (FAP) and the Innovations Institute to increase family and community support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer-identified (LGBTQ) children and youth to decrease health and mental health risks and to promote well-being. LGBTQ youth are at high risk for health and mental health problems related to social stigma. The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly increased isolation and mental health risks which has led national child and adolescent medical groups to call a national emergency for children's and adolescent's mental health that requires a coordinated response.

2. <https://www.strongfamilyalliance.org/about/our-mission/>

Strong Family Alliance is an organization with a simple mission – to save lives and preserve families by helping children come out and parents become informed supporters and allies.

We give parents and LGBTQ people accurate information, insights on this challenging transition for both parents and children, ways to keep LGBTQ children safe and healthy, and encouragement for parents to lead with love and solve problems over time. We provide a non-political, research-based source of information and guidance to help build understanding and strong relationships.

3. <https://www.advancingacceptance.org/>

Many people don't understand what it means to be transgender or gender diverse, so some parents or family members struggle when their child comes out as transgender or gender diverse. It is natural for parents to have questions, and this document, jointly created



Spectrum, and the Movement Advancement Project, highlights resources geared toward answering those questions. These resources also help parents gain deeper understanding and learn how to best support their child in ways that can help them succeed and thrive. Parents and family members will learn why family rejection is so devastating and find practical steps for advancing acceptance.

Engaging in gender and tolerance training allows parents to delve into the complexities of gender identity and expression, moving beyond the binary to appreciate the spectrum of diversity that exists. This understanding fosters an environment of acceptance and support within the family, crucial for the healthy development of children, particularly those who may identify as LGBTQ+ or are exploring their gender identity.

In essence gender and tolerance training for parents is not just about personal enlightenment; it's about giving them tools and laying the foundation for a generation that values diversity, practices empathy, and champions equality. Through this education, parents can lead by example, demonstrating to their children the importance of respect, understanding, and unconditional love in the rich tapestry of human experience.



Activity 1: "Who Am I?" Board

Objective: Allow students to express their identities and interests beyond gender stereotypes.

Materials: Large poster board, magazines, scissors, glue, markers.

Procedure: Ask each student to create a collage on a piece of the poster board that represents their interests, hobbies, and aspects of their identity they are comfortable sharing.

Encourage students to look beyond traditional gender norms when selecting images and words for their collage.

Once completed, allow students to present their collage to the class, explaining the significance of the items they chose.

Display the collages in the classroom as a reminder of the diverse interests and identities within the class.



Activity 2: "Gender-Free Day"

Objective: Create an environment where students can express themselves without the constraints of gender expectations.

Materials: None.

Procedure: Declare a "Gender-Free Day" where students are encouraged to dress and act in ways that feel most authentic to them, without the pressure to conform to gender norms.

Throughout the day, engage students in discussions and activities that explore the concept of gender, emphasizing personal expression and respect for others' choices.

Reflect at the end of the day with a circle time, discussing feelings, experiences, and learnings from the day.



Activity 3: "My Hero" Presentations

Objective: Highlight diverse role models who challenge gender stereotypes.

Materials: Research materials, presentation tools.

Procedure: Assign students to research and prepare a short presentation on a role model of their choice who defies gender norms or has made significant contributions to challenging gender stereotypes.

Presentations can include figures from history, current celebrities, or community leaders.

After each presentation, facilitate a class discussion on how these individuals challenge stereotypes and the importance of diverse role models.



Activity 4: "All Walks of Life" Career Fair

Objective: Expose students to a wide range of careers and hobbies, challenging gendered career stereotypes.

Materials: Career station materials, guest speakers (optional).

Procedure: Set up stations or invite guest speakers from various professions, ensuring a mix that challenges traditional gender roles (e.g., male nurses, female engineers).

Allow students to rotate through stations or listen to guest speakers, engaging with the professionals and learning about their careers.

Encourage students to reflect on how people of all genders can pursue any career or hobby.



Activity 5: "Expression Through Art"

Objective: Use art as a medium for students to explore and express their feelings about gender and identity.

Materials: Art supplies (paint, brushes, canvas/paper, markers, collage materials).

Procedure: Introduce the activity by discussing how art can be a powerful tool for expression and exploration of complex topics like gender.

Encourage students to create a piece of art that reflects their feelings, thoughts, or questions about gender and identity.

After completing their artwork, provide an opportunity for students who wish to share their work and discuss the meaning behind it with the class.



AHow to fight prejudice and gender discrimination in everyday situations

"Some people think that sexual orientation and gender identity are among sensitive issues. I understand that. When I was growing up, no one talked to me about this topic, nor did many people of my generation. However, I have learned to talk about it openly, because human life is at stake. Also because, according to the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is our duty to protect the rights of all people around the world."

- Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General at the Human Rights Council Assembly, March 7, 2012.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people of all ages and in all parts of the world are vulnerable to grave human rights violations due to deeply ingrained homophobic and transphobic attitudes, which are frequently coupled with the absence of sufficient legal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In addition to being abused and avoided by their own families, they experience discrimination at work, in schools, and in medical facilities. They are frequently the targets of physical abuse, including beatings, sexual assaults, torture, and even murder. Discriminatory laws make consensual same-sex relationships illegal in an estimated 76 nations. This puts the parties involved at risk of being arrested, prosecuted, imprisoned, and in at least five of those countries, even executed.



It is not necessary to create new international human rights standards or a new set of rights in order to protect LGBT persons from violence and prejudice. According to international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international human rights treaties, states are required to uphold the human rights of LGBT individuals. Everyone is entitled to the protections of international human rights law, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Everybody has the right to life, personal safety, and private protection, as well as the freedom from discrimination, torture, and arbitrary detention. They also have the right to peaceful assembly, association, and expression.

Unfair treatment of individuals and groups is known as discrimination. However, the reason behind this is more nuanced. Things are categorized by the human brain. For example, young children learn to identify between boys and girls. However, people acquire the values they apply to different categories from other people. They may learn about it from their friends, parents, and observations of others around them.

A common cause of discrimination is mistrust and misunderstanding. Due to its global distribution, it is regarded as a health concern. Discrimination is linked to depression, anxiety, obesity, high blood pressure, and drug addiction. Thus, it is something to consider at this time.

Laws and discrimination are related. Everyday discrimination typically manifests as "sexism." It takes the form of slights, snubs, and false assertions that a person doesn't belong or that their experiences are invalid. However, experts claim that subtler, less obvious manifestations of prejudice—such as getting special treatment at restaurants or shops or being treated less respectfully and civilly—are more prevalent.



Over the past 20 years, homosexuality has become more accepted in many nations, and one in five US citizens knows someone who uses a pronoun other than "he" or "she."

However, advancement is still deeply fragmented and polarized by nation. Social acceptance and familial acceptance of LGBT+ individuals are still being hampered by inflexible conventions and ideas surrounding sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. For instance, they may result in the continuation of so-called "conversion therapy," which tries to repress a person's gender identity or alter their sexual orientation.

Greater acceptance of LGBT+ identities may result from a more inclusive interpretation and depiction of history and cultures. LGBT+ people have been an integral part of our communities and cultures for as long as we can remember. From prehistoric rock paintings in South Africa and early Ottoman literature to mythological figures like the Greek king of Gods Zeus or the transgender Goddess of fertility, Lakapati, to supposedly historical figures like Leonardo da Vinci or Alexander the Great, LGBT+ people have shaped the history of humanity.

Governments and corporations can implement non-discrimination laws and policies as well as repeal existing laws and policies that are intended to discriminate against or by design have a discriminatory impact on LGBT+ people in order to promote positive cultural change and create more inclusive communities and societies.

Wider societal acceptance is facilitated by more visibility and representation of LGBTI individuals in popular culture and leadership, and public opinion is more likely to influence business and governmental equality policy.



In a practical sense, teaching about gender prepares children for the realities of a diverse world. They'll be more capable of positive and respectful interactions in various social settings, equipped with the knowledge to engage with people from all walks of life. Furthermore, inclusive education that addresses gender creates safer and more supportive learning environments, reducing bullying and harassment based on gender nonconformity or identity.

Children who feel accepted and understood in their gender identity are also more likely to succeed academically and personally. Gender education can alleviate the distractions and distress related to gender nonconformity, allowing students to focus more on their education and personal growth. Lastly, by challenging traditional gender roles, this type of education opens up a world of possibilities for children, encouraging them to pursue their interests and careers without being held back by outdated stereotypes. Below are some examples of exercise that might be helpful in every day trainings.

1. Role-Playing Scenarios: "In Someone Else's Shoes"

Objective: To help children understand and empathize with others who experience discrimination or stereotyping.

Activity: Divide the children into small groups and give each group a different scenario depicting a form of gender discrimination or prejudice (e.g., a girl being told she can't play a certain sport because it's for boys, or a boy being teased for enjoying cooking). Have the children act out the scenario and then discuss as a group how the person being discriminated against might feel, why such stereotypes are harmful, and how they could support or stand up for someone in that situation.



2. Storytelling with Discussion: "Tales of Diversity"

Objective: To encourage critical thinking about gender roles and prejudice through storytelling.

Activity: Select a range of children's books that challenge gender stereotypes or discuss themes of equality and diversity (e.g., "And Tango Makes Three" by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell, "The Paper Bag Princess" by Robert Munsch). After reading, ask questions like "What did you think about the character's choices?" and "How would you feel if you were in their place?" Encourage children to draw parallels to their own experiences and discuss alternative endings to the stories that promote inclusivity.

3. Gender Reversal Activities: "Day of Role Reversal"

Objective: To challenge gender norms and stereotypes by having children engage in activities typically associated with the opposite gender.

Activity: Organize a "Day of Role Reversal" where children can choose to participate in workshops or activities traditionally seen as gender-specific. For example, set up stations for makeup and nail art, coding and robotics, cooking, and sports. Encourage all children to try at least one activity that's outside their comfort zone, and discuss afterward how it felt to break the mold.



4. "Walk in Someone Else's Shoes" Exercise: "A Day in Another Life"

Objective: To build empathy by imagining life from a different perspective.

Activity: Ask children to write a short story or diary entry from the perspective of someone of a different gender, race, or cultural background. Provide prompts to guide their writing, such as describing a typical day, a challenge they might face, and how they would feel in various situations. Share these stories in small groups and discuss the insights gained from this exercise.

5. Inclusive Team Projects: "Together We Build"

Objective: To demonstrate the value of diversity and teamwork in achieving common goals.

Activity: Create a project that requires diverse skills and perspectives, such as designing a "dream school" or planning a "community garden." Ensure teams are mixed in terms of gender, abilities, and interests. Assign roles that challenge stereotypes (e.g., girls as construction managers, boys as interior designers). After the project, reflect on how each team member contributed uniquely and how diversity made the project better.



Additional material:

Coming Out – Emerging from Concealment

The journey of coming out, revealing one's sexual orientation or gender identity to others, is a deeply personal and multi-stage process. It often begins with individuals acknowledging their own orientation and identity, followed by sharing this realization with their closest circle. Contrary to a one-time event, coming out is a continuous process that can be accompanied by significant, long-term stress.

The term "coming out" is an acronym that originated from the English phrase "coming out of the closet." The closet serves as a metaphor for the normal state of concealment that homosexuals experience as a result of prejudice and social shame. The phrase can apply not only to sexual orientation but also to other taboo subjects that are difficult to disclose.

The process of coming out can impact individuals of various ages and can be personal, private, or public. These stages might occur consecutively or come to an end at any of the stages.

Given the seriousness of the repercussions, coming out should be a decision that is taken independently and after careful consideration. Identifying as a member of a minority sexual orientation might lead to stigma, marginalization, or misunderstanding.

Depending on the era, the meaning of the phrase "coming out" has evolved. It was a sign of a young lady from the upper classes joining society in the 19th century. It was a traditional indicator of her preparedness for marriage, the turning point from a girl to a lady. During the 19th century, the social season began with a formal debutante ball, where people came out.



Though its meaning had evolved, the phrase "coming out" nevertheless alluded to confession at a formal social gathering at the start of the 20th century. It was in reference to a young gay person joining a group of people who share the same sexual orientation.

However, by the 1970s, the phrase had come to refer to the act of openly acknowledging one's psychosexual orientation as homosexual. Since then, coming out has generally been connected to LGBT issues.

Disclosing one's sexual orientation or other secrets comes with challenging feelings. It is entirely reasonable and natural to be afraid of disclosure. It is hard to know in advance how each individual will respond. When someone learns that someone has a different sexual orientation, common responses include stigmatization, mockery, isolation, and aggressiveness.

Telling the truth may lead to rejection or a break in communication. One needs to be ready for anything and accept the repercussions of coming clean. This is the reason coming out is so challenging and is often accompanied by intense feelings.

The secret to happiness on a personal level is to live in peace with oneself. It is challenging and distressing to have to conceal one's gender identification from close ones. It starts an insincere circle that is destructive to any relationship and causes guilt.

Coming out, then, frees one from having to make up justifications and gives one the opportunity to clear their head. It's indisputable that coming out is a sign of bravery and accepting oneself. The genuine significance of the relationship in question is also demonstrated by revealing the truth. True lovers will come to terms with the new reality. Therefore, coming out is a terrific method to eliminate unhealthy relationships and so-called phony friends.



It is important to think about when to disclose. Everything is dependent on each unique circumstance. Someone can choose to take this action at any time if they feel comfortable and are certain that their loved ones won't retaliate violently if they expose their sexual orientation or any other secret. Nonetheless, it is preferable to hold off on making admissions until after he gains independence if there is no such assurance and he worries for his safety.

For most people, the approval of those closest to them—especially their parents—is vital. Given that discussing sexuality is taboo, one can only image the struggles a young child facing the desire to come out as gay or lesbian would face.

Analyzing the parents' perspectives and speculating on their potential responses to such a revelation should be the first step. It will probably be wiser to wait till they are independent if they have strong conservative views before coming out.

Then weigh the benefits and drawbacks of coming out. When deciding whether or not to come out, an appropriate location and time should be selected. It is preferable to do it face-to-face in a quiet place where the parents' attention won't be distracted by other circumstances or people.

It's important to acknowledge the difficulties associated with being gay and to consider the weight that such a person bears. Expanding your horizons is possible when you can relate to someone else's circumstances. Understanding the significance of such a confession is also a good idea. Making the choice to share such personal details about oneself is a bold move and demonstrates confidence. Just be tolerant; it's not required to agree with disagreement!



Regardless of their sexual orientation, parents should always support and understand their adolescent child. This is especially crucial for teens. The best way to develop understanding between people is to have an open, judgment-free dialogue in a calm and honest manner. If, for a variety of reasons, you are unable to handle your child's or loved one's confession, it is worthwhile to seek professional psychological help.

Many of those who participated in the training courses we prepared indicated that they were valuable, needed and expanded their knowledge. At the same time, we note the comments that there is a need to point out more examples and the time allocated to individual threads should be longer. Hence, in this section, we suggest that you find examples of coming out from your environment or country, or social groups associated, not only associated with the artistic or celebrity community, but also, for example, sports or science. Below we point out some stories that may be suitable for people of different ages.

1. Jakub Jantko. In February, the Czech professional soccer player created history by coming out as homosexual in public. He was the first active international soccer player to do so.

"Like everybody else, I have my strengths, I have my weaknesses, I have my family, I have my friends," he said in a video posted to social media. "Like everybody else, I also want to live my life in freedom. Without fears. Without prejudice. Without violence. But with love. I'm homosexual and I no longer want to hide myself."

Read more: <https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/64622199>



2. Jeff Molina. In the wake of a tragic situation in which an intimate video of Molina with another guy went viral online, the UFC flyweight division athlete came out as bisexual in public in March.

"Welp... this f*cking sucks. TLDR [Too Long; Didn't Read]: I'm bi. Not the way I wanted to do this, but the chance to do it when I was ready was taken from me," he said in a statement on social media following the leak. "I've tried to keep my dating life private from social media. I've dated girls my whole life and suppressed feelings I had throughout high school being on the wrestling team, throughout college pursuing MMA, and even after making part of the dream happen and getting into the UFC. I'm a pretty masculine dude and that bro-y banter and [suspect] sense of humor has always been how I am. The thought of my buddies, teammates, and [people] I look up to looking at me different, let alone treating me different, for something I can't control was something I couldn't fathom. In a sport like this where a majority of the fans being the homophobic c*cksuckers they are, I didn't see myself doing this during this part of my career. I wanted to be known for my skills and what I've dedicated the last 11 years of my life to not and not the 'bi UFC fighter' that I'm sure would just be translated to 'gay UFC fighter.'"

Read more: <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/ufc/jeff-molina-bisexual-ufc-fighter-b2303243.html>



3. Mo'Nique. The stand-up comedian and Oscar-winning actress reportedly made her debut on her April Netflix "Mo'Nique is my name". During the comedy special, Mo'Nique talked about her experiences with her sexuality after sharing the tale of her queer Uncle Tina and the relationships in her family, particularly with her traditional, devout grandmother. She claimed for years that she ignored her gay urges and slept with guys in order to bury them. Mo'Nique told her father that she "didn't want her [grandmother] to love me privately," but she did come out to him.

"I said, 'Daddy, I want to be with another woman sexually.' And he looked at me, so beautifully and so patient and so loving".

Read more: <https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/04/07/monique-sexuality-coming-out-netflix-special/>

4. Michał Głowiński. Polish philologist, literary historian and theoretician specializing in the recent history of Polish literature, professor of humanities, member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, writer, author of textbooks for students of Polish studies, memoir prose and essays; published numerous works on language in the People's Republic of Poland, especially the phenomenon of newspeak.

"As I grew up, sexuality became more and more important, and in my case also - more and more troublesome. I will say this time bluntly, it happened what had to happen, which is a result of the developmental process of a young person: I turned eighteen a few months ago and fell in love with one of my classmates, fell in love extremely intensely. The violence and strength of this feeling surprised me, but also frightened me, I did not expect that it would take me over to such a high degree, how naively I deluded myself that even if something like this appeared in my life, I would be able to control it with more or less effort, or at least minimize it. The colleague in question, who had so



charmed me - let him be called A. - may not have been distinguished by extraordinary external and internal qualities, that's how I perceive it in any case, when I look back on my young years from the perspective of half a century and a half. However, he had quite a harmony of qualities, he was cultured, warm, kind, intelligent, well-mannered, and, moreover, he treated me in a friendly manner, which was particularly impressive, because - a recluse and a loner - I rarely encountered this."

Read more: <https://queer.pl/artykul/186884/odkrycie-michala-glowinskiego>

5. Xavier Espot Zamora. Andorran politician and lawyer, from 2012 to 2019 minister, from 2019 prime minister of Andorra.

"I'm gay and I've never hidden it." His disclosure is intended to encourage other LGBT individuals by demonstrating that being gay need not be a barrier to a successful career in politics. The head of the center-right Democrats for Andorra (DA) party is Xavier Espot Zamora. After taking over the party in 2019, he went on to build a coalition administration and, following election victories, was appointed prime minister of Andorra. The population of this small state, which is sandwiched between France and Spain, is roughly 80,000. It was during the French Revolution that it became independent.

Read more: <https://people.com/andorra-prime-minister-xavier-espote-comes-out-7968670>



6. Kristen Stewart. She has been performing professionally since her early years in Los Angeles, California, even though she is most known for her portrayal of Isabella "Bella" Swan in The Twilight (2008) Saga. Both of her parents, John and Jules Stewart, are employed in the entertainment industry. Three boys make up the family: Dana and Taylor, the two adoptive brothers, and Cameron Stewart, the older brother of Kristen. Kristen is of Ashkenazi Jewish, English, and Scottish ancestry.

"Yeah. The first time I ever dated a girl, I was immediately being asked if I was a lesbian. And it's like: 'God, I'm 21 years old,'" Stewart recalled. "I felt like maybe there were things that have hurt people I've been with. Not because I felt ashamed of being openly gay but because I didn't like giving myself to the public, in a way.

"It felt like such thievery. This was a period of time when I was sort of cagey. Even in my previous relationships, which were straight, we did everything we could to not be photographed doing things - things that would become not ours."

Read more: [charmed me - let him be called A. - may not have been distinguished by](#)

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TIES bitès


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Visit the Gender 101 Website:
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