

# LGBTQ Health 101

How to be an Ally in the Health Professions



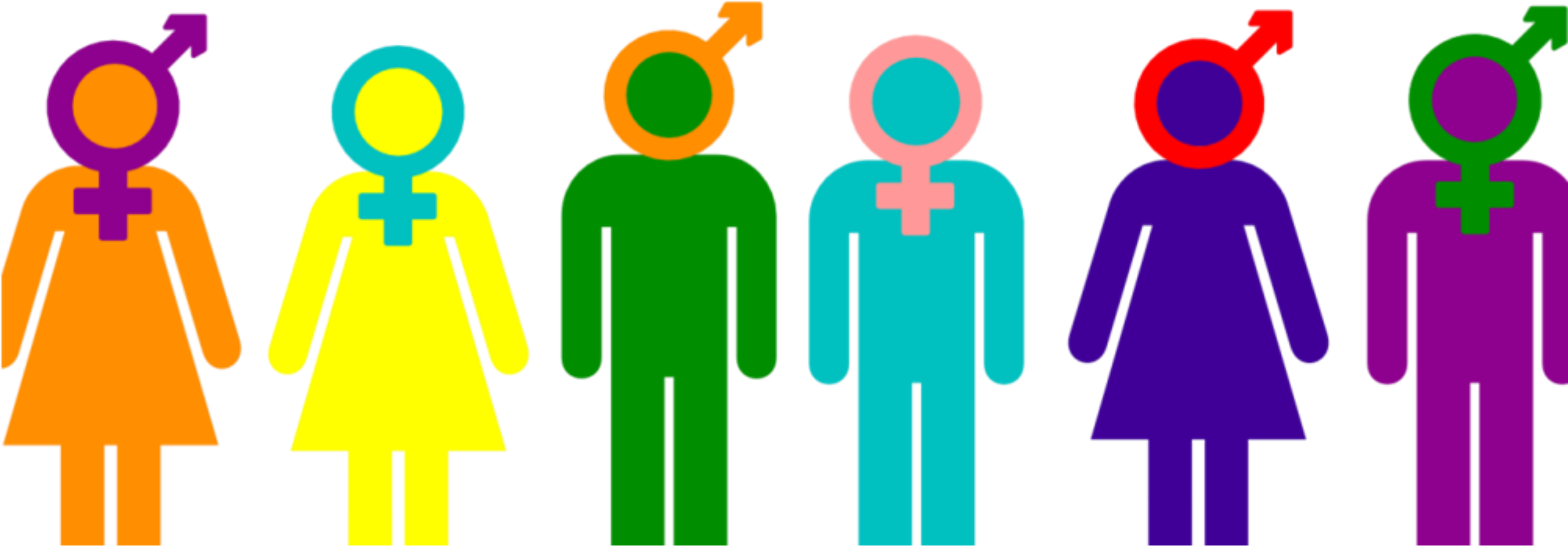
American Medical Student Association - Gender and Sexuality Action Committee

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- Defining “LGBTQ”
- A Brief History of the LGBTQ Movement
- Health Disparities Faced by the LGBTQ Community
- How to be an Ally and an Advocate

# Agenda





# Terminology



LESBIAN



GAY



BISEXUAL



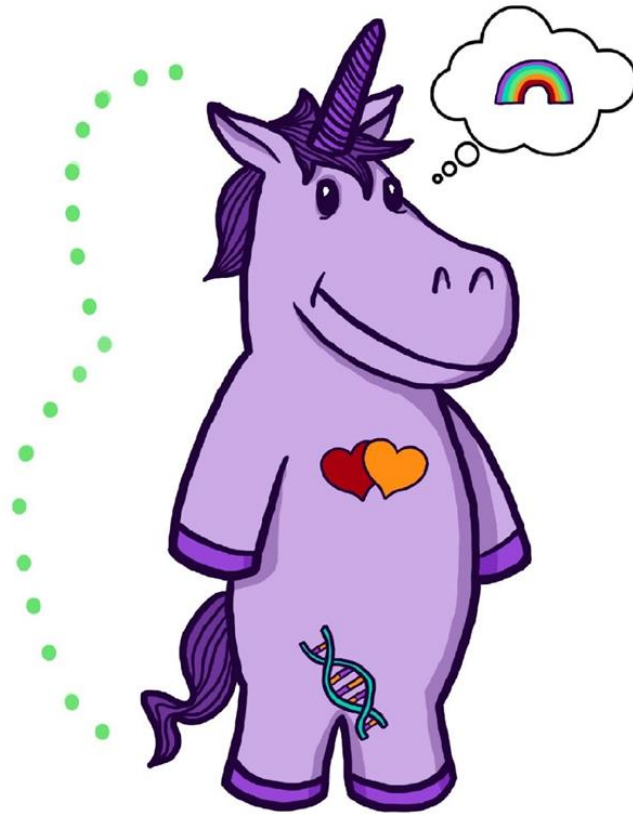
TRANSGENDER



QUEER

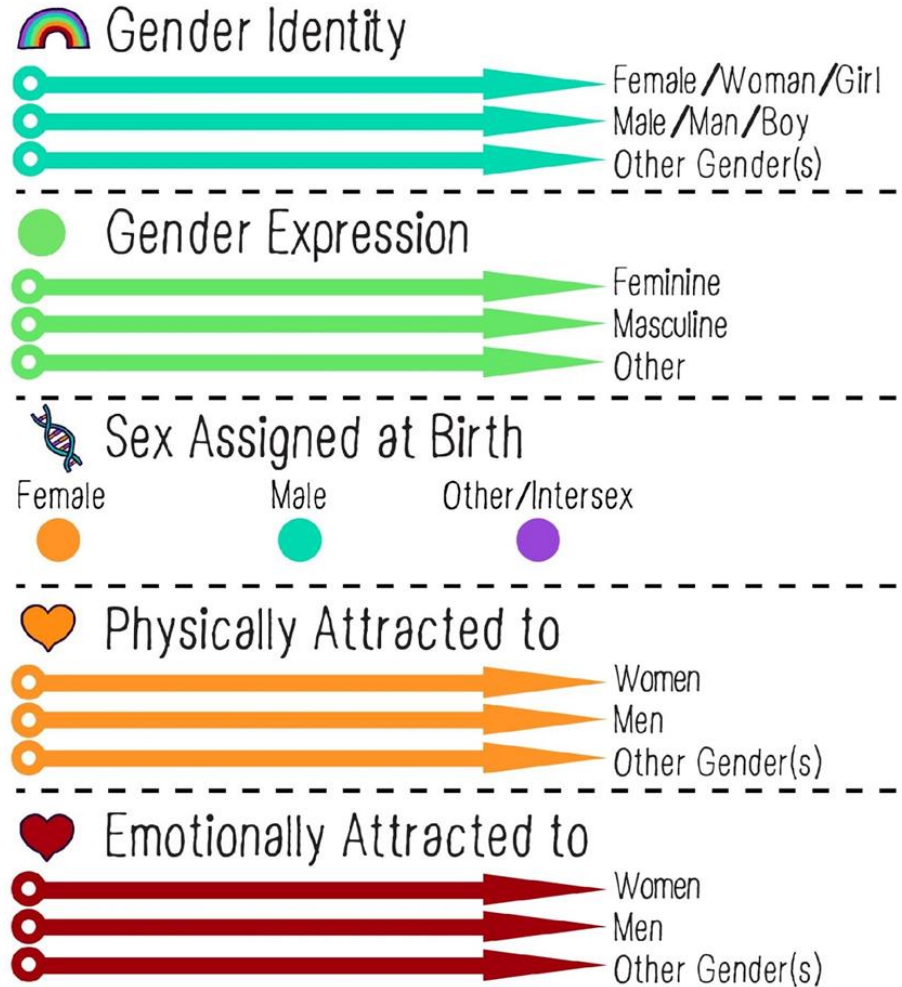
# The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

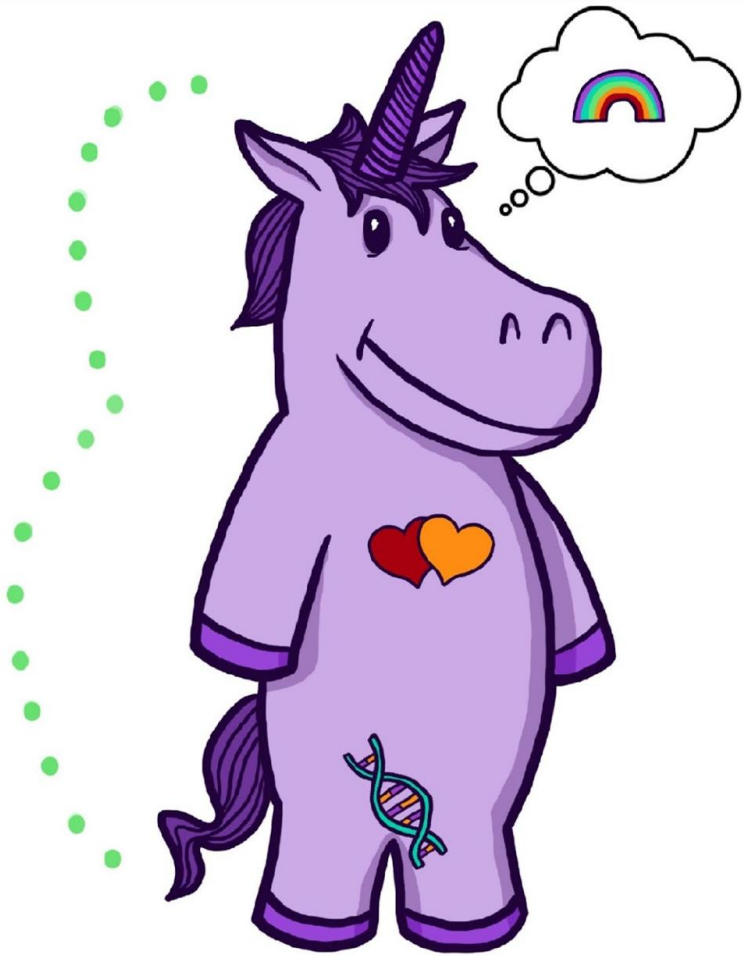
Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore



 Sex Assigned at Birth


Female      Male      Other/Intersex



- Sex assigned at birth is based on:
  - Anatomy
  - Hormones
  - Chromosomes

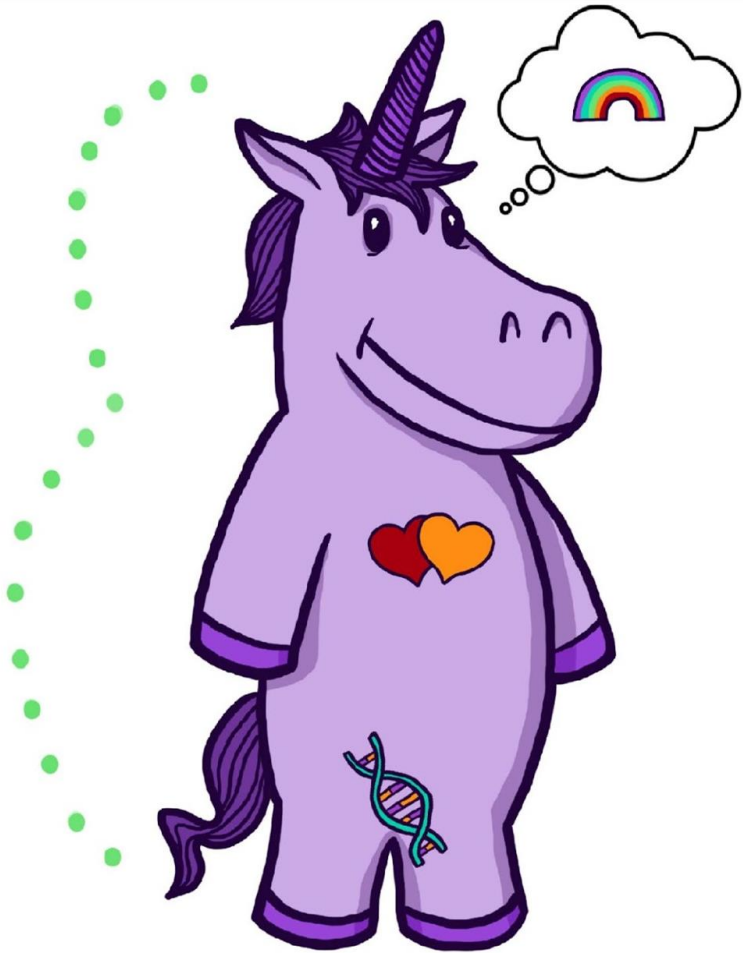
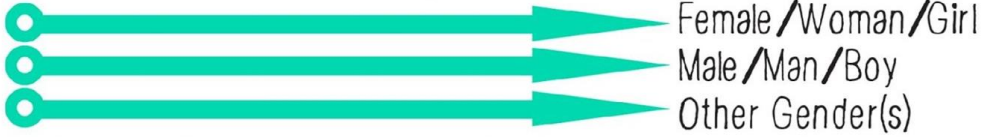




## What does Intersex mean?

- Intersex individuals are **born with anatomy, hormones, or chromosomes that doesn't fit the societal definitions of "male" or "female."**
- Historically, intersex babies have underwent "corrective" surgeries after birth.
  - Currently, there is momentum to end these unnecessary and damaging surgeries.
- The Intersex Society of North America states that at least **1 in 1500 to 1 in 2000 people are born intersex.**

## Gender Identity



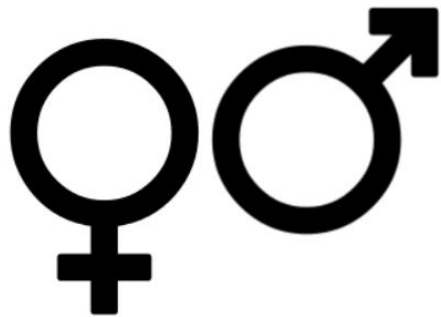
- **Gender Identity:** an internal sense of being male, female, neither, both, or another gender
- For transgender people, gender identity does not match sex assigned at birth.

## Cisgender

Gender Identity

=

Sex Assigned at Birth



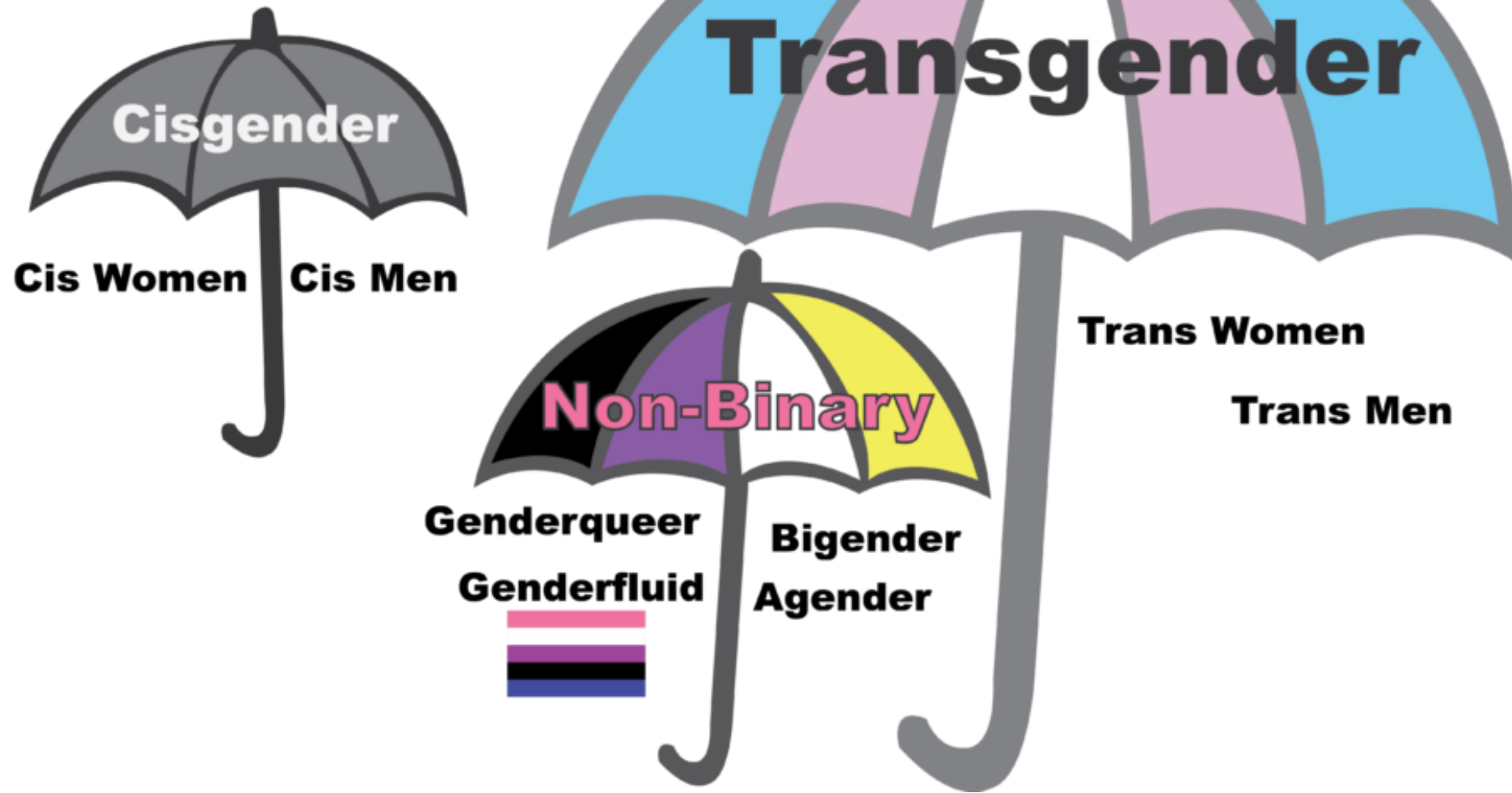
## Transgender

Gender Identity

≠

Sex Assigned at Birth





**Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe those whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth.**

- **Transgender Man:** A person assigned female at birth who identifies as a man
- **Transgender Woman:** A person assigned male at birth who identifies as a woman
- **Non-Binary:** An umbrella identity describing a person who does not identify exclusively in the gender binary
  - Agender
  - Bigender
  - Genderfluid
  - Genderqueer



# Gender Identity Spectrum

**Man**

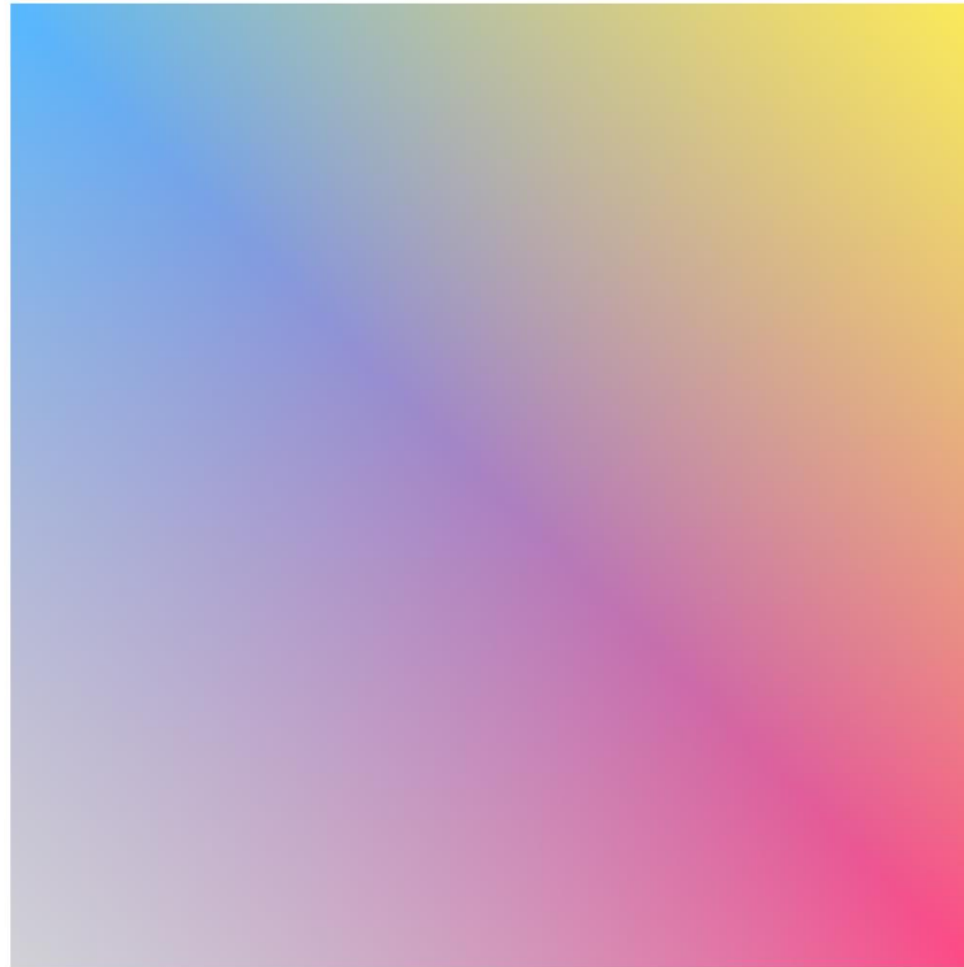
**Genderqueer**

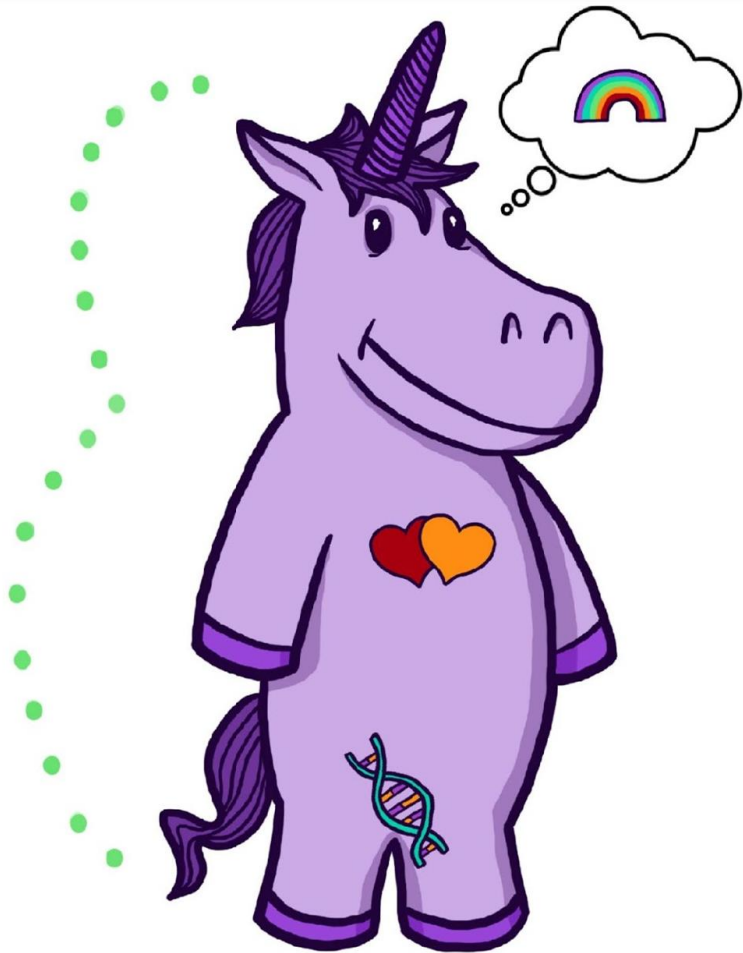
not subscribe to  
conventional gender  
distinctions; identifying  
with neither, both, or a  
combination of genders

**Agender**

not having a particular  
gender

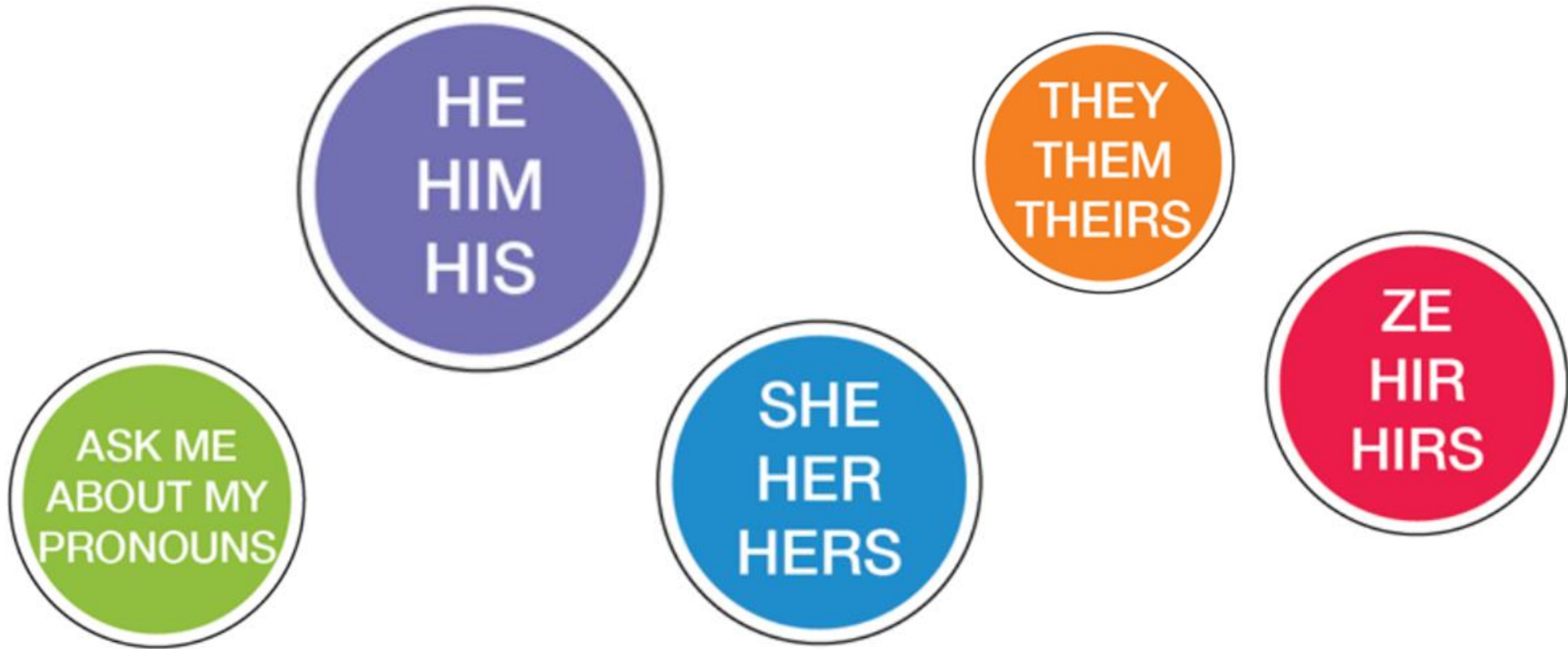
**Woman**





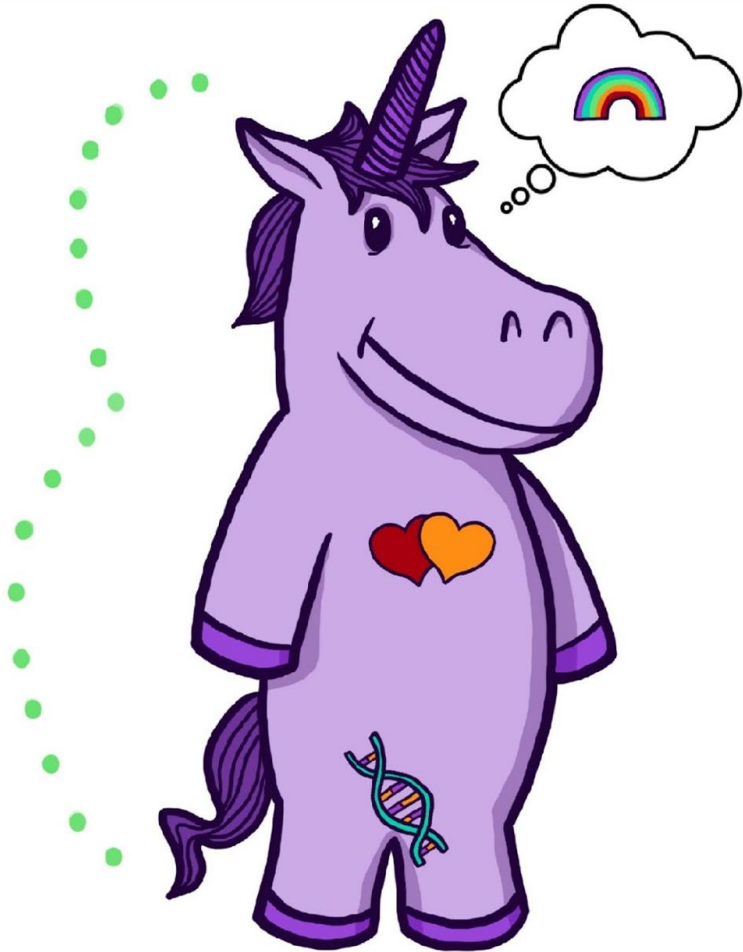
- Gender expression: **the physical manifestation of one's gender identity**
  - Clothing, hairstyle, voice, chosen name, pronouns, and other attributes
- Transgender people seek to make their gender expression match their gender identity, rather than their sex assigned at birth.

**Pronouns align with a person's personal sense of their gender identity and are a form of gender expression.**

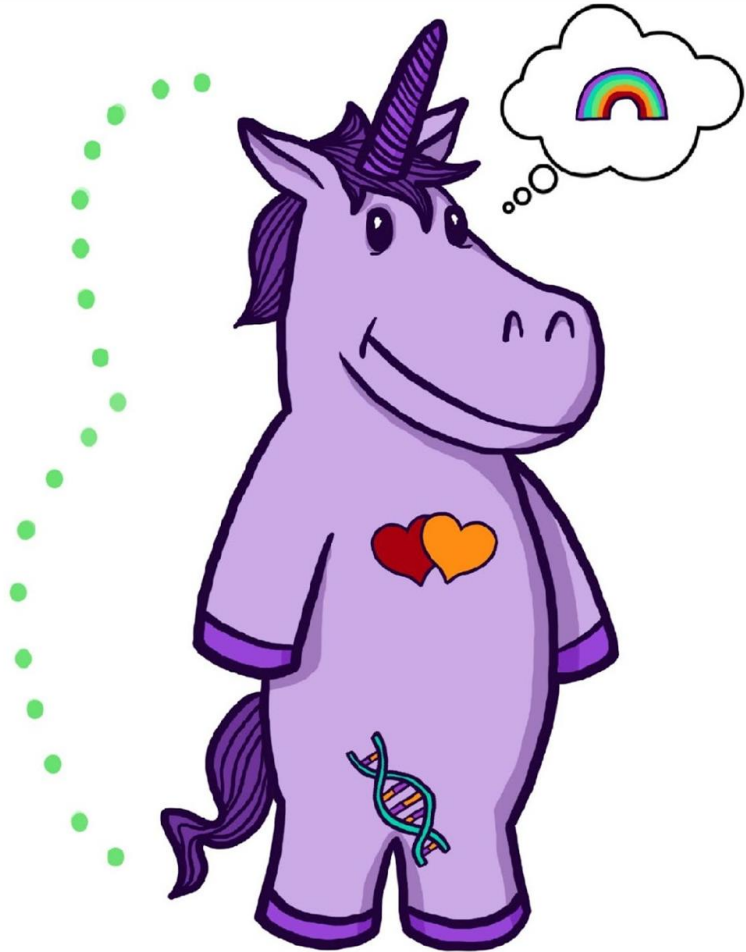


♥ Physically Attracted to

Women  
Men  
Other Gender(s)



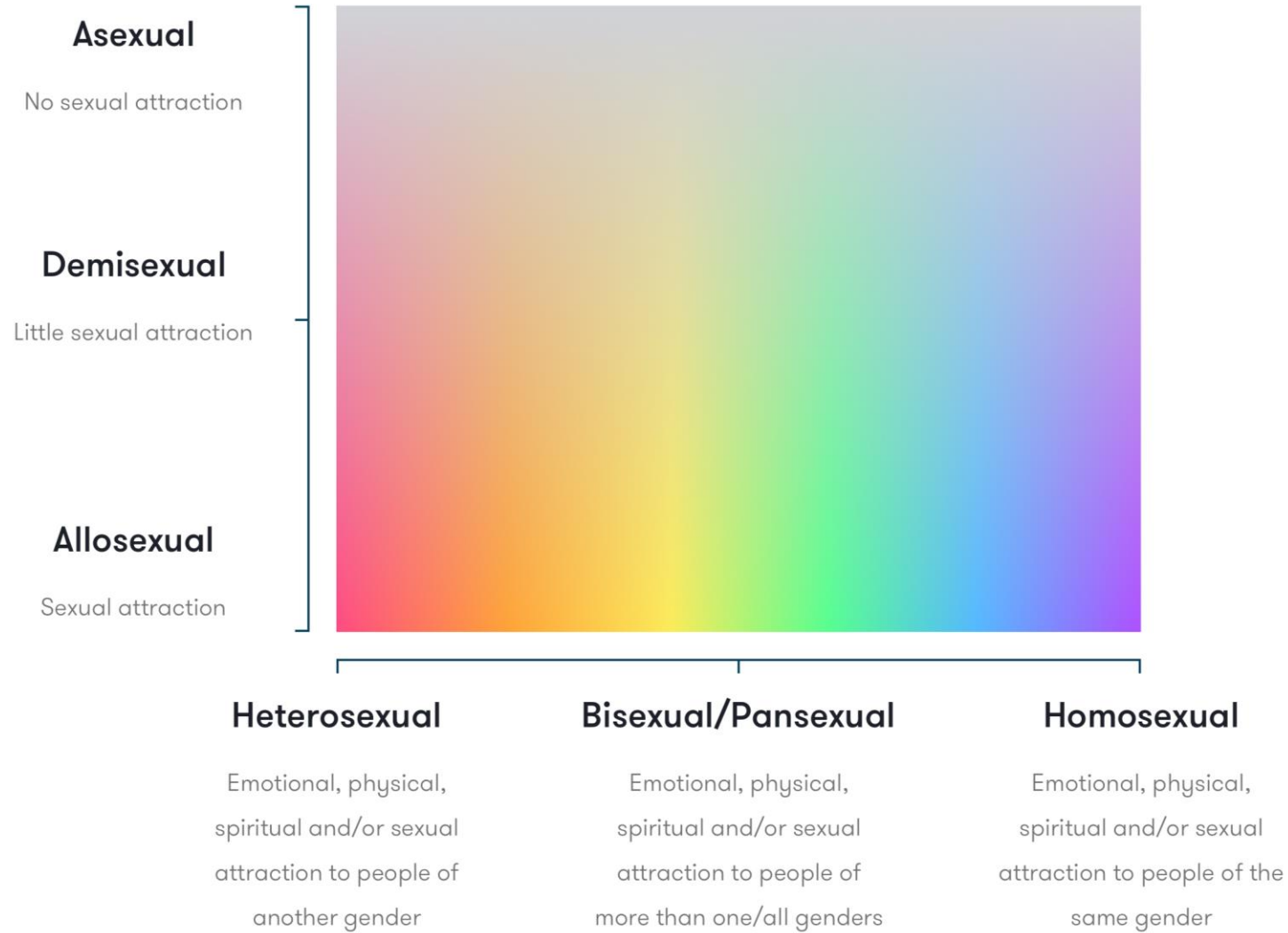
- Physical attraction: who one is attracted to both **sexually and sensually**
- Romantic attraction  $\neq$  physical attraction
- Romantic attraction may or may not involve physical attraction or desire for sexual contact.



- Emotional attraction refers to the **desire to get to know someone** and connect with them emotionally.
  - Often a result of personality instead of physicality
- Romantic attraction is heavily linked to emotional attraction.



# Sexual Orientation Spectrum





# History

## 1950s

- **1950** – 500 “homosexuals and other sex perverts” fired from federal jobs and 438 discharged from military in “Lavender Scare.”
- **1952** – American Psychiatric Association lists homosexuality as a personality disturbance.
- **1953** – Eisenhower signs executive order banning homosexuals from working in government.

## 1960s

- **1961** – Illinois is the first state to decriminalize homosexuality.
- **1969** – Stonewall riots occur at the Stonewall Inn in New York City, beginning the modern LGBTQ civil rights movement in America.

## 1970s

- **1970** – First pride parade held on Stonewall anniversary
- **1973** – Maryland bans same-sex marriage, while the APA removes homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.
- **1978** – Harvey Milk is elected to public office in January and murdered in November. The first rainbow flag is designed by Gilbert Baker inspired by Milk.

## 1980s

- **1981** – The CDC publishes the first official report of AIDS.
- **1987** – Reagan publicly recognizes the AIDS crisis for the first time.



## 1990s

- **1990** – H.W. Bush signs the Ryan White CARE Act, the first federal program to help fund people with AIDS.
- **1993** – Clinton signs “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”
- **1996** – Clinton signs Defense of Marriage Act, defining marriage as a “legal union between one man and one woman.”

## 2000s

- **2000** – Vermont becomes the first state to legalize civil unions between same sex couples.
- **2003** – Supreme Court strikes down “homosexual conduct” law in Texas, decriminalizing same-sex sexual conduct.
- **2008** – California Supreme Court rules that limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples is unconstitutional, white voters in California approve Prop 8, making same-sex marriage illegal.

## 2010s

- **2011** – “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” is repealed.
- **2013** – Supreme Court strikes down Defense of Marriage Act, ruling that legally married same-sex couples are entitled to federal benefits.
- **2015** – Supreme Court strikes down all state bans on same-sex marriage, making it legal in all fifty states.
- **2016** – Secretary of Defense announces Pentagon will lift ban on transgender people serving openly in the military.
- **2017** – Trump announces his ban on transgender individuals serving in any capacity in the military.
- **2019** – Supreme Court allows Trump’s transgender military ban to go into effect.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consisting of six vertical bars of equal height and width, colored in a rainbow sequence from left to right: purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red.

# Health Disparities

# What is a Health Disparity?



- Health disparities are **preventable differences** in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or in opportunities to achieve optimal health.
- Experienced by **socially disadvantaged** racial, ethnic, and other population groups and communities
- The LGBTQ community experiences many health disparities.

- **Minority stress**
  - Prejudice and discrimination experienced by LGBTQ individuals contribute to chronically stressful events that may lead to negative health outcomes.
- **Social determinants of health**
  - LGBTQ individuals face discrimination when seeking employment and safe housing, especially LGBTQ people of color and transgender individuals.
- **Lack of physician competency and training**
  - A 2011 study found that medical students receive a median of only five hours of training on LGBTQ health
  - A 2018 survey of 658 New England medical students found that 80% of students felt they were “not competent” or “somewhat not competent” with medical treatment of gender and sexual minorities.

## What causes LGBTQ Health Disparities?



# Substance Abuse, Depression, and Anxiety



- **LGBTQ individuals face stressors and risks for substance abuse including:**
  - Homophobia, Biphobia, Heterosexism, or Transphobia
  - Social/structural violence and discrimination
- **Influencing factors of depression and anxiety in LGBTQ patients:**
  - Continual concealment of identity
  - Victimization or fear of verbal or physical attack
  - Issues relating to self-acceptance
  - Social isolation and lack of social supports
  - Isolation from the LGBTQ community (in the case of transgender and bisexual individuals)

# Suicide

- LGBTQ individuals are at a higher risk for suicide than non-LGBTQ individuals.
  - **LGBT youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide.**
- Between 38% and 65% of transgender individuals experience suicidal ideation.
- An individual with a non-accepting family is eight times more likely to have attempted suicide than an individual with an accepting family.





## Weight Control and Perception

- Gay and bisexual men are overrepresented in the population of men who are diagnosed with eating disorders.
  - **30% - 60% of gay and bisexual men** report greater odds to diet for weight loss.
- Lesbian and bisexual women are more likely to be obese than heterosexual women.
- A positive association has been found between alcohol intake and depression, leading to weight gain.

- **High rates of healthcare discrimination may influence LGBTQ individuals to underutilize healthcare services for fear of being mistreated.**
- A 2017 survey by the College of American Pathologists stated that of **LGBQ individuals** surveyed:
  - **8%** said a doctor or healthcare provider had turned them away due to sexual orientation.
  - **9%** said a doctor or healthcare provider had used harsh/abusive language when treating them.
  - **7%** said they had experienced unwanted physical contact from a doctor or other healthcare provider.

## Lower Rates of Healthcare Utilization



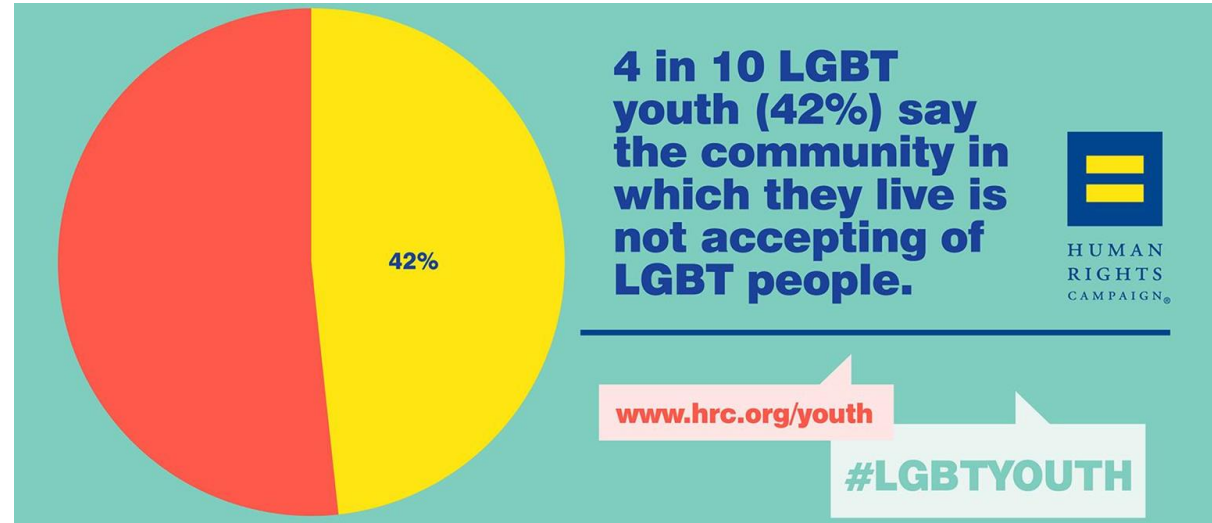
# Lower Rates of Healthcare Utilization

- The same study reported that of **transgender individuals** surveyed:
  - **29%** said a doctor or healthcare provider turned them away due to gender identity.
  - **23%** said a doctor or healthcare provider intentionally misgendered them or used the wrong name.
  - **21%** said a doctor or healthcare provider used harsh/abusive language when treating them.
  - **29%** said that they experienced unwanted physical contact from a doctor or other healthcare provider.



- LGBTQ teens may experience:
  - Bullying and harassment
  - Bathroom bills affecting transgender students
  - Anti-bullying laws excluding bullying based on sexual orientation
  - Struggle with identity throughout puberty
  - Difficulty accessing help resources due to banned books or blocked websites
  - Laws preventing educators from talking about LGBTQ issues

## Teen Issues



Unfortunately, **few students are taught accurate information** about LGBTQ people and topics.

*From history to art to sexual health education, it's necessary for students' health and academic success that they see themselves, and each other, reflected in the curriculum.*

**Only 19.8% of LGBTQ students**

were taught positive representations about LGBTQ people, history, or events in school.



**18.4% had been taught** negative content about LGBTQ topics.



**Less than half (41%) of LGBTQ students** could find information about LGBTQ-related issues in their school library.



**Only 6.7% of LGBTQ students** received LGBTQ-inclusive sex education at school.

**About half of LGBTQ students (49.2%)**

with internet access at school could access LGBTQ-related information online via school computers.



**But it doesn't have to be this way.**

*Research shows that LGBTQ students in schools with an inclusive curriculum feel safer in school and have better mental health and academic outcomes.*

**Less likely to hear homophobic remarks** (42.9% vs. 64.6%)

**and negative remarks about transgender people** (29.9% vs. 46.3%)



**Less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orientation** (41.8% vs. 63.3%)  
**and gender expression** (34.6% vs. 47.0%)

**Higher self-esteem and lower levels of depression**



**Were less likely to miss school** (23.6% vs. 37.7%)

**More likely to have higher GPAs** (3.3 vs. 3.2 GPAs)

# Transgender-specific Issues

- Transition services and care can be difficult to access due to:
  - Stigma
  - Discrimination
  - Legal and socioeconomic barriers
  - Lack of physician competency
  - Insurance company policies
- Trans women of color experience a higher degree of violence than the rest of the LGBTQ population, often resulting in fatalities.
- In 2018, **29 trans people died** because of fatal violence. **The majority were trans women of color.**



# How to be an Ally and an Advocate

- GLAAD, Gays & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, suggests the following steps to becoming a good **ally** to your LGBTQ peers:
  - Listen
  - Be open-minded
  - Be willing to talk
  - Be inclusive and inviting to your LGBTQ friends
  - Don't assume that all your friends, classmates, and coworkers are straight or cisgender
  - Speak up when you hear others making anti-LGBTQ jokes or comments
  - Confront your own internal prejudices and biases, even if it is uncomfortable to do so
  - Help to defend your LGBTQ friends, classmates, and coworkers against discrimination

## Personal Ways to be an Ally to the LGBTQ Community



# Being an Ally Goes Beyond Supporting LGBTQ People

- The LGBTQ population is as **intersectional** as any population. Supporting LGBTQ people means supporting all other minority populations and their struggles in American society.
- LGBTQ people of color, especially **transgender women of color**, are in much more dangerous positions than others in the community.
- Individuals of multiple minorities suffer multiple levels of discrimination.
- Being an ally means listening and learning from others and **using your privilege as a tool** in situations of injustice towards people of color.



# Being an Advocate as a Health Student

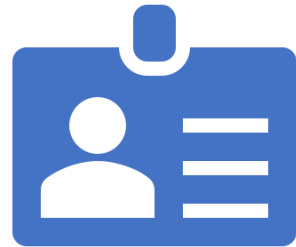


- Medical students receive a minimal amount of education about LGBTQ patients throughout their training, leading to a continued lack of competent care for the LGBTQ community.
- **You have a voice in what you want to learn and what kind of health professional you'd like to become.**
- **Demand culturally diverse education so that you can practice cultural humility in your care**
- Amplify the voices of LGBTQ individuals, students, medical students, and patients in your area
- Engage with the LGBTQ groups on your campus and support their events, fundraising efforts, and causes
- Join professional organizations, such as AMSA, that aid in the advancement of LGBTQ medical education

# Ways to Advocate for LGBTQ Individuals

- Advocate for LGBTQ individuals by volunteering for organizations pushing LGBTQ civil rights forward:
  - AMSA – Gender & Sexuality Action Committee
  - GLSEN – Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network
  - GLAAD – Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation
  - TSER – Trans Student Educational Resources
  - The Trevor Project – LGBTQ Crisis Information
  - Planned Parenthood – LGBTQ Care and Education

## Contact!



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