Supporting Gender Nonconforming Youth

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Learning objectives

- Definitions and understanding of gender identities and "gender non-conforming"

- Understanding the parallel processing of gender identity formation from the perspective of children and their adult supports

- Identify ways to change the culture around the gender binary to provide an inclusive and affirming youth experience at school and at home

Clarifying Terms

Sex Assigned at Birth

- Determination of an infant's sex based on examination of external sex characteristics.

- Male

- Female

- Intersex

Gender Identity

- A person's identification of their own gender, how they perceive themselves, and what they would like to be called. This can be different from sex assigned at birth.

- Man

- Woman

- Genderqueer

- Agender

- Non-binary

- Gender non-conforming

- Transgender

- Two-Spirit
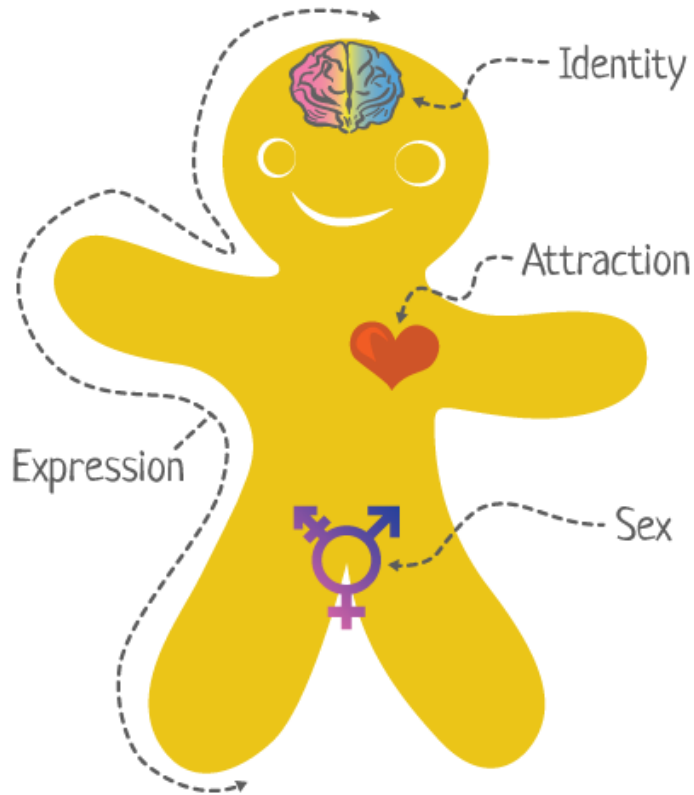
Gender Expression

- The external appearance of a person's gender identity.

- This could include, but is not limited to:
  - Clothing
  - Hair style
  - Mannerisms
  - Gestures
  - Interests
  - Behaviors

Sexual Orientation

- Inherent and immutable emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people.

- Heterosexual

- Gay

- Lesbian

- Bisexual
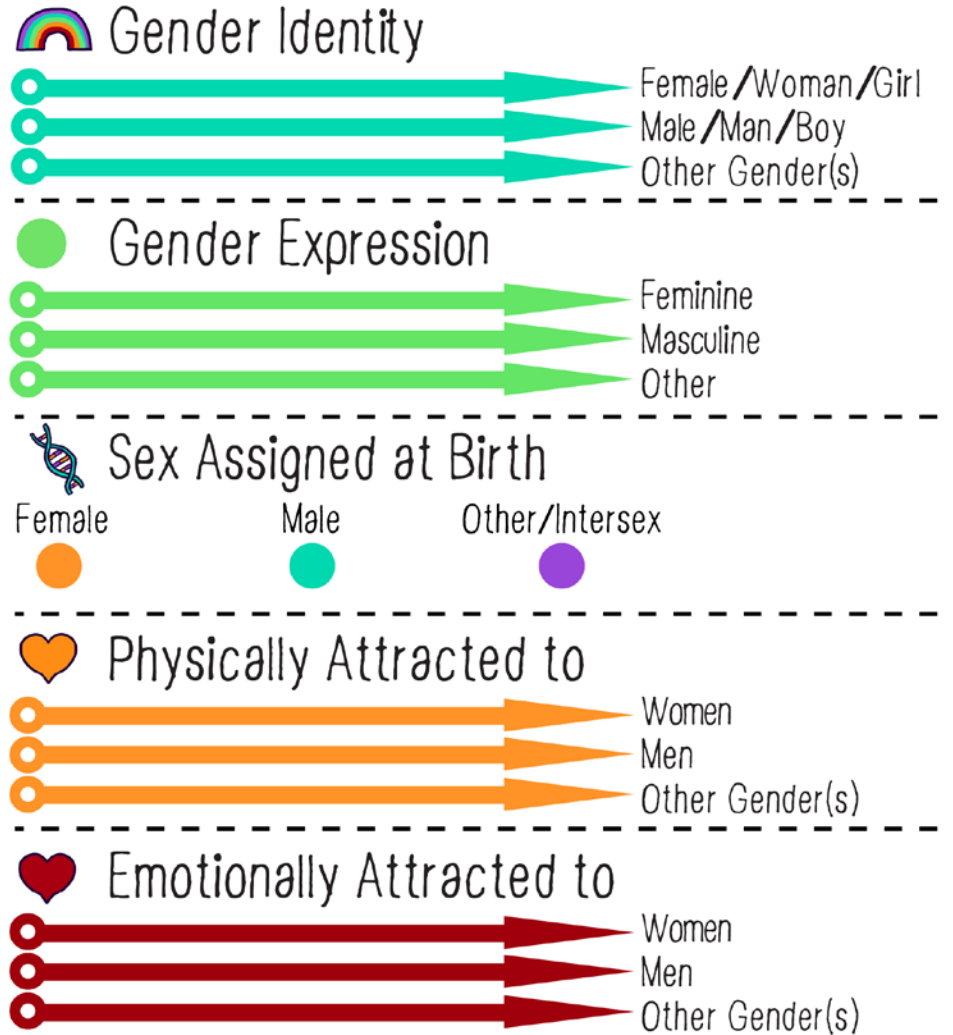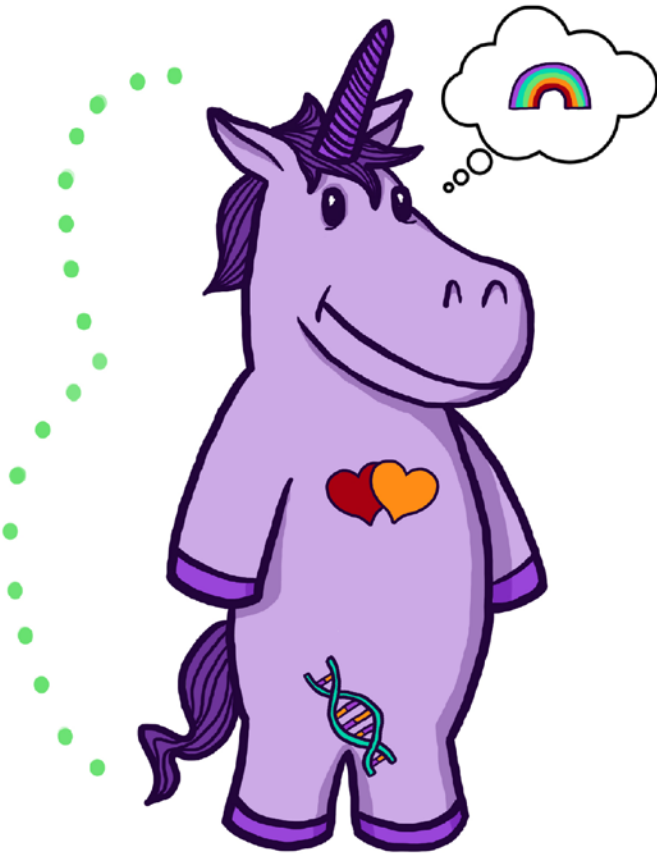
- Asexual

- Pansexual

- Queer

www.hrc.org

Where we started

Genderbread Person by itspronouncedmetrosexual.com

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources

Gender Identity
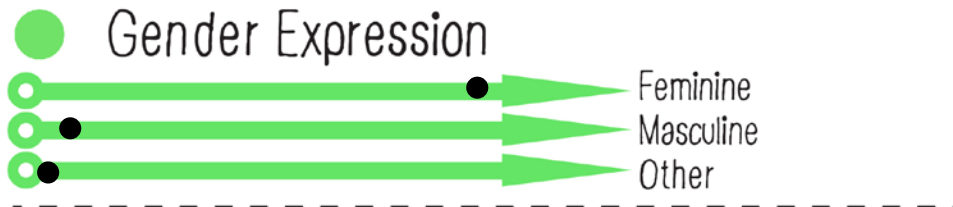- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)
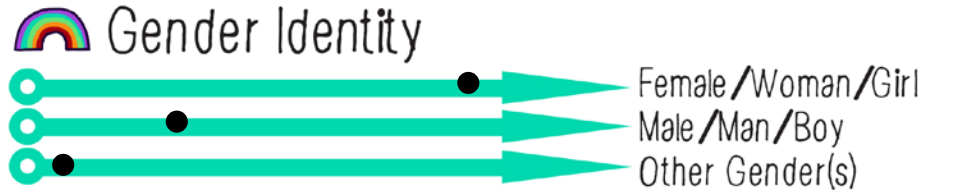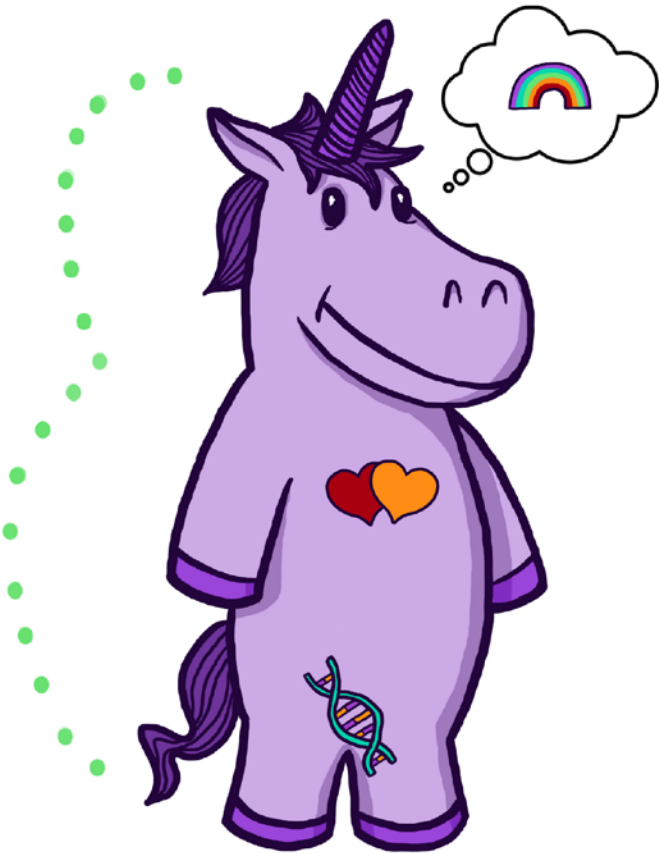
To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

Where we are now

The Gender Unicorn

The Gender Unicorn

The importance of inclusivity and recognition

Late Adolescent and adult Experience

- 39% of respondents had experienced significant psychological distress in the last month

- 40% attempted suicide in their lifetime (4.6% for US population)

- 7% attempted suicide in the past year (0.6% for US population)

- 29% reported illicit drug, marijuana, and/or nonmedical prescription drug use in the last month (10% for US population)
  - Impact of **family rejection** (Klein & Golub, 2016)

- 30% experienced homelessness at some point in their lives

- 10% of respondents who were out to immediate family members reported a family member was violent toward them

2015 US Transgender Survey

K-12 Experiences

- 77% of respondents reported experiencing some form of mistreatment

- 54% reported being verbally harassed

- 24% reported being physically attacked

- 13% reported being sexually assaulted

- 17% faced such severe mistreatment that they left a school

K-12 Experiences (continued)

- GNC youth more likely to receive differential discipline, harsher punishments than others who demonstrate the same behavior

- GNC youth are often blamed for their own victimization (Burdge et al., 2014)

- Individual who are most GNC have had greater odds of missing school and being threatened/injured
  - More pronounced for assigned male youth than female (Gordon et al., 2016)

On the use of Public restrooms

- 59% of respondents avoided using a public restroom in the past year

- 32% reported limiting the amount they ate or drank to avoid having to use the restroom

- 8% reported developing a kidney-related problem (urinary tract infection, kidney infection) as the result of avoiding a using public restrooms in the past year

2015 US Transgender Survey

Adolescent depression symptoms

Greater instances of mild or moderate depression in late adolescence and early adulthood

- More reported depressive symptoms in adolescence and adulthood

- More likely to experience bullying in the past year than gender-conforming peers

  - Frequent bullying victimization elevated for boys (9.7%)

- Greater prevalence of emotional and physical bullying by non-family member adults

- Child abuse and bullying together accounted for half of elevated depressive symptoms for non-conforming individuals

(Roberts et al., 2013)

However…

- 60% of respondents who were out to immediate family members reported their family was supportive of their identity

  - These individuals were significantly less likely to report negative experiences (homelessness, attempted suicide, serious psychological distress)

2015 US Transgender Survey

How we can help support students

Coming out/disclosing

- IMPORTANT: This process looks different for every child/adolescent, and positive outcomes for students are higher when adult supports exhibit confidence without hesitancy or shame.

- Helping prepare youth for questions

- Role playing

- Choosing a name

- Changing pronouns

Erickson-Schroth, 2014

Where we can start

- Find the protective factors for each student (teacher relationship, family connectedness, internal assets, community)
  - Bolster and work from these

- Review school's mission statement or handbook
  - Check for inclusive language and antidiscrimination language

- Staff trainings
  - Gender variance, gender terminology
  - Current research overview
  - Legal concerns and best practices for schools
  - Strategies for allowing safe navigation of classrooms, play areas, bathrooms, lunch, etc.

- Parent education events

- Student education events

Dress Codes

- Recognize students have the right to dress in a way consistent with their gender identity or expression (in compliance with dress codes)

- Specific codes for boys/girls?
  - GNC students allowed to wear clothing corresponding to their gender identity

Orr & Baum, 2017

Gender-separated facilities, programs

- Talk to the student about where they feel they belong

- To determine how kids will respond, look to the adults

- Activities and facilities to consider:
  - Restrooms, locker rooms
  - Health and physical education classes
  - Homecoming, prom, other school traditions
  - Overnight school trips
  - Sports teams

Orr & Baum, 2017

A stance of safety

- Respect for GNC student should be the starting point for decision-making

- Being uncomfortable is NOT the same as being unsafe

- School officials are responsible for ensuring the safety of all students

Orr & Baum, 2017

Further investigation

- Seek out examples of trans-inclusive school guidelines

- Contact youth programs or schools who have navigated trans/GNC youth participation
    - What did they experience? What did they learn?

- Ask successful programs for copies of their policies and procedures

Stages of Acceptance for supports

- Denial and fear

- Grief

- Guilt

- Acceptance and willingness

- Celebration/Gratitude

Erickson-Schroth, 2014

Supports for the supports

- Parent support groups

  - Genderdiversity.org

  - Transformingfamily.org

  - Imatyfa.org

  - Genderspectrum.org

  - Tgrcnm.org (New Mexico)

- Children's play groups

- Connecting with care providers

  - http://www.tgrcnm.org/resource-list/

Questions and clarifications

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