

GLSEN JUMP-START #8

Where's the "T" in GSA?

Making Your Student Club Trans-Inclusive



Notes

We have chosen to use gender-neutral pronouns and language in this resource, in order to show respect for our readers who may not identify with male or female pronouns. The drawback to this choice is questionable grammar, but we hope that you will overlook it in support of everyone's right to gender self-identification.

The GLSEN Jump-Start #8

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For more information, please contact:

GLSEN-Student Organizing

121 West 27th Street, Suite 804

New York, NY 10001

212.727.0135 / 212.727.0254 fax

jumpstart@glsen.org

studentorganizing@glsen.org

www.glsen.org under Students and Library

Register with GLSEN!

Registered student clubs, commonly known as gay-straight alliances (GSAs), get free information and resources from GLSEN's Student Organizing Department. Resources include educational books, videos and trainings; updates, information and free resources about community and school organizing around LGBT issues across the country; networking opportunities with other students and advisors and free subscriptions to Student Organizing's email listserves, which provide students and advisors with a discussion forum for asking questions, sharing ideas and providing feedback.

Register yourself and your student club today!

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Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the GLSEN Jump-Start VIII: Where's the T in GSA? Making Your Student Club Trans-Inclusive. This resource will help students develop a greater understanding of transgender people and related issues, as well as actions that can ensure that transgender and gender non-conforming people are fully included in all that student clubs, commonly known as gay-straight alliances (GSAs), do in schools. Jump-Start VIII is meant to be used as a planning and activity tool within already existing student clubs. If you want to start a student club, take a look at Jump-Start I.

From Merriam-Webster OnLine:

Main Entry: jump-start

Pronunciation: 'j&mp-'start

Function: transitive verb

Date: 1973

1 : to start (an engine or vehicle) by temporary connection to an external power source (as another vehicle's battery)

2 a : to get off to a speedy start
<advertising can jump-start a political campaign> b : to impart fresh or renewed energy to : ENGERGIZE <a plan to jump-start the stagnant economy> - jump-start noun

The activities outlined in the Jump-Starts always involve lots of group work: brainstorming, discussing and writing. If you need additional copies of this Jump-Start or previous and/or future Jump-Starts, all editions are online in the Student Clubs/Student Resources section of the GLSEN web site at www.glsen.org. We welcome feedback. If you have suggestions and requests, or if you'd like to see particular topics addressed in future Jump-Starts, just email us: jumpstart@glSEN.org! We wish you the best in your work towards safer, more respectful and more equitable schools for all.

Tony Alvarado-Rivera, *Student Club & Leadership Specialist*

Martha Cabrera Estévez, *Student Leadership & Training Specialist*

Lynly S. Egyes, *Student Club & Leadership Coordinator*

Christopher Ramírez, *Student Organizing Director*

Kate Shaffer, *Special Projects Intern*

Chris Tuttle, *Student Information Systems & Activism Manager*

Eric Waters, *Student Club Assistant*

Overview

What is transgender?

Transgender, often shortened to "trans," is a term used to describe people whose gender identity and/or expression does not conform with societal expectations of what it means to be female or male, meaning sex assigned at birth. Transgender is often interpreted as an umbrella term to include crossdressers, transsexuals, genderqueers, drag kings and drag queens.

What does it mean to be trans-inclusive?

Being inclusive means that your student club and its members commit to an ongoing process of education, and make an effort that all activities, awareness and advocacy are inclusive of transgender people and issues. Although all student clubs should address these issues, it is even more important when using the acronym "LGBT." All too often the "T" is forgotten or ignored, and when using the language it's better to understand what it means, which requires the student club, including students and allies, include transgender issues as something more than a letter to be rattled off out of habit.

Why is it important for student clubs to work to be trans-inclusive?

Being familiar with transgender issues and working to protect people on the basis of gender identity and/or expression should be important to everyone committed to making schools safer for all students, as well as anyone involved in social justice work. Like other forms of oppression, everyone is impacted by bias, harassment and name-calling based on gender identity/expression.

For people who don't understand the connection between sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression, a simple explanation is as follows. Many people discriminated against "because of their real or perceived sexual orientation" are often targeted because of their gender expression, whether that is as a butch dyke or an effeminate gay man. Obviously, transgender people are also discriminated against on the basis of their gender expressions and identities. In the safer schools movement, gender identity and expression are all the more significant because they are frequently the cause of teasing in the hallways and on the playground. After all, while many youth are not aware of their sexual orientations before middle school, little boys will still get called "faggot" for "acting like a sissy" or girls "acting like boys" are called "tomboys."

When using this resource, please keep in mind that although this resource focuses on being inclusive of transgender people, it is important to recognize the connections that occur between gender issues and other forms of oppression (e.g. race, class). To learn more about creating inclusive environments for all people, check out Jump-Start VI: Understanding Power, Privilege and Oppression.

Through the activities in this Jump-Start, you will become familiar with gender related terminology, learn what is included in "transgender," and identify ways in which your student club can be more trans-inclusive.

Activity 1

Learning the Language

Ready...

Because gender is almost always presented as being a very simple "binary" issue in our society, picking only from one of two options, it is first important to become familiar with relevant terminology and to understand their meanings. It is equally important to recognize that many terms related to gender are constantly shifting, with definitions shifting and evolving and new terms being created and put into use as people challenge themselves with these issues in new ways and attempt to fit language to their lives and experiences. The definitions are intended to provide the basic meanings and are not intended to supply absolute or in any way concrete definitions. It should also be noted that the terminology used in this resource is almost entirely based on terms in English, and other names or words may be used by transgender people and their allies from languages other than English.

Set...

People: The Entire Group

Tools: Colored Index Cards, Markers, enough copies of definitions list for everyone

Time: 20 Minutes

Go!

Copy some of the following words and definitions onto the index cards, have enough words and definitions for each participant to have at least one card, using one color for words and another color for the definitions. Do not create any definition for Man or Woman, and do not include a blank definition-color card for either of them, as the first defeats the purpose of the exercise and the second tends to be confusing.

Shuffle the cards so that the definitions and words are no longer near each other. If you reuse these index cards, it is useful to keep them matched until the activity is about to begin to ensure that none are missing. Hand out index cards to each participant.

Now, give participants about five minutes to find the matching cards and definitions. For words or definitions they do not know, people should ask each other for help, or find their best guess.

Once everyone is collected again and quiet, go around and have each person read the "words" cards (not the definition cards), one at a time. After each "word," the facilitator should read the matched definition from the list. If the person made the correct match, take both cards for future use. If the person incorrectly matched the word and definition, have the person who has the correct definition say so, and then collect only the word and correct definition cards, leaving the incorrect definition to be volunteered when the card with the correct word is read.

If done correctly, with no cards lost, the word cards for "Man" and "Women" should have no matches. Ask participants to think for a moment about how there really is no good word-based definition for either man or woman-and especially not once transgender people are taken into account.

Conclude the activity by providing a list of the words and definitions to everyone for future reference, and answer any lingering questions about the meaning about various words, or how things are different from one another. It's important to note with all of the terminology, that the list is for education and people identify for themselves who they are.

Learning the Language: Gender-related Terminology List

Androgynous: Used to describe a person whose gender expression and/or identity may be neither distinctly female or male, usually based on appearance.

Biological sex or Sex: A medical term referring to genetic, biological, hormonal and/or physical characteristics (including genitalia), which are used to classify an individual as female, male or intersex at birth.

Butch: Used to describe people of all genders and sexes who act and dress in stereotypically masculine ways, and who have somehow positively claimed their own masculinity.

Drag king/Drag queen: Wearing the clothing of another gender, often involving the presentation of exaggerated, stereotypical gender characteristics. Individuals may identify as drag kings (in drag presenting as male) or drag queens (in drag presenting as female) when performing gender as parody, art or entertainment.

Femme: Used to describe people of all genders and sexes who act or dress in stereotypically feminine ways, and who have somehow positively claimed their own femininity.

FTM (female to male): Used to identify a person who was assigned a female gender at birth (or who is female-bodied), and who identifies as male, lives as a man or identifies as masculine.

Gender: A social construct based on a group of emotional, behavioral and psychological characteristics that classify an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous or other. Gender can be understood to have several components, including gender identity, gender expression and gender role.

Gender expression: Any combination of how someone outwardly presents external characteristics and behaviors that are socially defined as masculine or feminine, including dress, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions.

Gender identity: An individual's self-perception or inner sense of being a man, a male, a woman, a female, both, neither, butch, femme, two-spirit, bigender or another configuration of gender. Gender identity often matches with one's physical anatomy but sometimes does not.

Gender Identity Disorder (GID) or gender dysphoria (GD): An intense, continuous discomfort resulting from an individual's sense of the inappropriateness of their assigned gender at birth and resulting gender role expectations. Also, it is a clinical psychological diagnosis, that offends many in transgender communities, and is often required to receive medical supervision of treatments relating to transition like hormones or surgery. Remember, gay and lesbian people were considered mentally ill until 1973.

Genderism: Related to sexism, but is the systematic belief that people need to conform to the gender as assigned at birth in a gender binary system which includes only female and male. This is a form of institutionalized discrimination as well as individually demonstrated prejudice.

Genderqueer: A term used by some people who identify their gender to be somewhere on the continuum in between or outside the binary gender system altogether. May or may not prefer a gender-neutral pronoun.

Gender role: The social expectation of how an individual should act, think and/or feel based upon one's assigned gender based on the current binary gender system.

Intersex: A person born with an anatomy or a physiology that differs from societal ideals of female or male. Intersexuals may be born with "ambiguous genitalia" and/or experience hormone production levels that vary from those of societal "ideal" females and males. Formerly referred to as a hermaphrodite, and while there is some overlap between transgender and intersex communities, intersex is not the same as transgender.

Man: [no definition]

MTF (male to female): Used to identify a person assigned a male gender at birth (or who is male-bodied) and who identifies as a female, lives as a woman or identifies as feminine.

Sexual orientation: One's mental, physical and emotional attraction to people of one or more genders, and subsequent interest in physical relationships or establishing long-term relationships with select people of that/those gender(s).

Transgender (or trans): a term used to describe people who transgress social gender norms; often used as an umbrella term to include transsexual, genderqueer, gender non-conforming or cross-dressers. People must self-identify as transgender in order for the term to be appropriately used to describe them.

Transition: The period during which a transgender person begins to live more fully as their true gender, which may include any combination of the following: alterations to dress, hormone therapy or sex reassignment surgery. After transitioning and surgery, some transsexuals identify only as a man or as a woman.

Transphobia: The irrational fear of those who are perceived to break or blur stereotypical gender roles, often expressed as stereotyping, discrimination, harassment and violence. Frequently directed at those perceived as expressing their gender in a transgressive way, those who defy stereotypical gender norms or those who are perceived to exhibit non-heterosexual characteristics regardless of their actual gender identity or sexual orientation.

Transsexual: Someone who experiences intense, persistent, long-term discomfort with their body and self-image due to the belief that their assigned gender is inappropriate. Transsexuals may be pre-op, post-op or non-op (op=operative, referring to top and/or bottom surgery) depending on medical and financial circumstances.

Woman: [no definition]

Zie & hir: The most common spelling for fairly common gender-neutral pronouns. The first is subjective, replacing she or he, and the second possessive and objective, replacing her or his.

Activity 2

Most Common Questions

Ready...

As people working on LGBT issues, particularly in a school environment, many people have heard questions like, "why did you choose to be [insert identity here]?", "how can you know you are [insert identity here]?", "what do two men/women do in bed?", " why do you have to be out about it?," and other similar questions. The answer for lots of LGBT people and their allies are simply too many. Just as gay, lesbian, and bisexual people are often asked questions that are not normally asked of straight people, transgender people are often asked questions that are either inappropriate for a school situation or just impossible to answer, not being commonly asked to non-transgender people. Transgender people also often receive-and are expected to answer-questions about personal information which is no one's business but theirs.

Set...

People: The entire group

Tools: Sheet of questions, paper for everyone, pens, flip chart paper and markers

Time: 10 Minutes

Go!

After handing out paper and pens for all participants, read through the following questions one at a time, pausing in between each for about two seconds. Either have one person read all questions or have each person go around and read at least one. Before you start, request that if people have actual answers or any responses, that they not voice them aloud for now. Encourage people to write down their reactions and thoughts during the reading on their paper, but also to listen to all the questions so they can understand people's comments in the following discussion. If anyone in the group has any experience with facilitating gender related or transgender workshops, speak to that person beforehand and ask them to add any questions they deem appropriate.

- Aren't you buying into society's gender roles? Why can't you be who you are and just stay a [sex assigned at birth]?
- What's your "[real]" name?
- What do your genitals look like?
- Have you had the surgery? If not, then when are you going to? Doesn't that mean you're really a [sex assigned at birth], then?
- How do you have sex?
- How do you know you are [gender identity]?
- Why do transgender people mutilate themselves just so they'll like their appearance more?
- If you aren't honest with someone about the fact that you're transgender, 'really' a [sex assigned at birth], aren't you asking for trouble? Don't people have a right to know the truth?
- Why would you choose to be transgender [or other gender identity]?

When the statements have been read, let the participants think about them. Then, prompt the discussion with the following questions:

- What were you thinking while the questions were read?
- Were questions read that you think you would have asked or wanted to ask?
- If there were, why did you want to know?
- Were there questions read that you thought would be okay to ask transgender people? If so, which ones?
- Which questions would be inappropriate to ask anyone?
- Which questions were you unable to answer in your own minds?
- What questions do you still want the answers to? Where or how might you be able to find the answers to these? Are there answers to all these questions?
- What other thoughts or responses did you have during this?

At some point in the discussion, the facilitator should point out that some questions (like pronouns) could be posed to everyone in order to be respectful, and others (like what plans people have around transition) aren't necessary to ask at all except out of pure curiosity. Those asked out of curiosity should be reserved for people the person asking already knows fairly well and feels will be okay being asked (certainly not someone the person asking has met for the first time) and for people who have indicated that they're okay with talking about their identities more. Some people are fine with educating others and are pretty skilled at establishing boundaries around appropriate questions, but not everyone is. And remember, lots of general questions around trans stuff (or anti-racist stuff, or class stuff, and lots of other equally important topics) can be learned by doing a little internet or library research!

Another important point to remember-and to stress to everyone-is that while lesbian, gay, and bisexual people come out so that people will see them for who they are (rather than assuming that they are straight), when transgender people come out, it is often much more complicated. For transgender people (especially transsexuals) who successfully pass as their gender, coming out as trans means that too often people will then see them as their assigned sex at birth rather than for who they are or as how they identify. For people who are not interested in passing as one thing or another and for people just coming out or who do not pass, they may not always see the point in coming out. For them, coming out can be uncomfortable because most people will not understand what they are talking about and will most likely not see them as they wish to be seen without education that that person may not have the time or energy to provide.

Activity 3

Level Playing Field

Ready...

People who don't defy gender expectations and norms on a regular basis (and that's most people) normally have little reason to think about how gender non-conforming people are treated on a daily basis and how transgender people have difficulty in making choices about everything from what box to check on forms to which public bathroom might be safer to use. This activity makes all participants think about the privileges people may get or may miss out on depending on their gender identity and expression.

For the purpose of this resource, this activity focuses on privileges related to gender identity and expression but adding statements regarding race, class, ability or other privileges would make it a great icebreaker for other anti-oppression workshops.

Additionally, this activity is not intended to make anyone feel better or worse than anyone else - people should identify according to what feels comfortable to them, and it is just as okay to identify in a gender confirming way as it is to be gender non-conforming.

Set...

People: The entire group

Materials: Sheet of statements, masking tape

Time: 10-15 Minutes

Go!

Move any furniture in a room to the perimeter of the room. Mark the center of the room's floor with masking tape. Now mark six lines on both sides of the center line with tape, making the distance between the tape marks about a foot apart (but realizing that it will depend on the size of the room).

Ask people to be in a line shoulder to shoulder in the center of the room. If there are too many people to do this, either find a larger room or split the group in half and have one group do it at a time or send one group to another room. Ask the group to listen to each statement and follow the instruction at the end if it is true for them (the instructions are either move forward or move backwards). When moving, they should stay in a direct line so as to not get in anyone else's way, and only step back or forward one tape mark with each statement, and if the statement is not true for them, they should not move from their spot.

Read the following statements. If space permits, the person reading the statements can also participate. The list can also be passed from person to person in the line, as long as everyone follows all directions, including the one they read. You also may want to review the vocabulary used before doing the activity.

- If at a meeting, you have ever been asked to make copies or coffee because of your gender, take a step back.
- If you have never had difficulty filling out the gender boxes on legal documents, take one step forward.
- If you have ever been accused of using a fake ID because of the gender listed on it, take a step back.
- If you have ever been told you have a mental disorder because your gender doesn't "match" your sex, take a step back.
- If you have never been afraid to announce your gender, take a step forward.
- If you have never been harassed in a public bathroom for your gender presentation, take a step forward.
- If you are planning on pursuing a career that is dominated by people of your gender (for example, law, medicine, the military, etc are dominated by men while women tend to dominate the teaching field,

- clerical positions, etc), take one step forward.
- If your feelings or opinions have never been disregarded through the statement, "It must be that time of the month," take one step forward.
- If you have never been told something to the effect of "You're not a real woman," or "You're not a real man," take one step forward.
- If you can see representations of your gender identity in the media every day, take one step forward.
- If the pronouns you prefer are written down in the books you've read in class, take one step forward.
- If your gender presentation has ever induced discomfort or confusion in a stranger, take one step back.
- If the pronouns you prefer are not used by the people you interact with, take one step back.

When the activity is done, have people look around at where everyone ended up for a few seconds. Then have people break into groups of three to five people and discuss the following questions for a few minutes.

- What did you feel during the activity?
- What were you thinking as each statement was read?
- Did you look around at where the other people were as more statements were read? Why or why not?
- Have you thought about the issues mentioned in these statements before? If so, why or in what situations?

Activity 4

Exploring Transphobia & Genderism

Ready...

Transphobia and genderism manifest themselves as prejudice perpetuated on the individual level and as a system of oppression operating at an institutional level. Transphobia and genderism have close ties to sexism and homophobia, and affect all people, even those who do not identify as trans, by pressuring everyone to perform and conform to "acceptable" standards for men and women. In going through this exercise as a group, many people are likely to realize ways in which they have or regularly do perpetuate the gender binary system or otherwise act in various transphobic or genderist ways. However, rather than getting defensive or feeling excessively guilty, it is important to remember that these are new issues to most people and to realize that everyone lives in the same culture, which is precisely what supports the gender binary system on a daily basis. The point of going through these activities is to educate ourselves and then use this knowledge to change the system.

Set...

People: The Entire Group
 Tools: Flip Chart Paper, Markers
 Time: 10 Minutes

Go!

In a large group, brainstorm a definition of transphobia and genderism, and either once you have a good working definition or everyone agrees that the group cannot develop an agreed upon definition, read the definition of transphobia and genderism (included in Activity 1). Also read the above explanation to everyone at some point in the activity.

Now it is time to come up with examples of transphobia and genderism, both at the individual and institutional levels. If you need some help with examples, prompt people to think about ways in which the gender binary system is perpetuated (i.e., bathrooms only for Men and Women) and ways people's gender expressions are policed (i.e., little boys being called sissies for not being interested in sports). Some are listed below to provide additional prompts when needed.

Transphobia is:

- People being harassed and/or assaulted for being visibly trans or gender non-conforming.
- Well-meaning groups that exclude transgender people because "they haven't figured out how to approach trans stuff" yet.
- People relying on the only trans people they know to educate them on everything related to gender.
- Gender non-conforming people being questioned/harassed for being in gendered bathrooms, regardless of which ones.
- Media outlets printing, or people sharing, birth names and pronouns of transgender people who have never said that it is okay.
- Having to choose "female" or "male" gender boxes on forms.
- Having one's sex assigned at birth printed on one's driver's license and passport, for anyone requiring ID to see, and having to pay thousands of dollars to change it (if one is even allowed, depending upon one's birth state), and never being able to choose to leave it blank.
- People viewing transgender people as only being trans, and ignoring the fact that they are actually multidimensional human beings with interests and concerns beyond trans issues.
- Confusion or equating of trans and intersex or trans and gay/lesbian/bisexual identities without doing work to see how each are unique and what specific work should be done to address differences.
- The medical establishment acting as a "gatekeeper" which disallows transgender people to decide for themselves what is best for their bodies and minds and provide informed consent as adults.
- Transgender people's gender identities only being considered "valid" depending on how much surgery they have had or how well they "pass" as a non-transgender person.

Activity 5

Gender, Gender, Everywhere!

Ready...

Even as the LGBT movement has encouraged the use of more gender non-specific language, like "partner" and "spouse," around domestic partnership issues, and the feminist movement has encouraged people to use terms like "chairperson" and "police officer" rather than "chairman" or "policeman," there is still much largely untapped gender non-specific terminology.

This terminology is trans friendly because it allows people to refer to themselves and others without categorizing people by gender. Some such terms include: child (rather than son/daughter), siblings (rather than brother/sister), parents (rather than mother/father), and significant other, partner or spouse (rather than girlfriend/boyfriend or wife/husband).

Additionally, if talking about someone or telling a story, most people are in the habit of identifying the people mentioned by gender, either explicitly or by pronoun use. While this has become second nature, practice can help people to reference what is relevant and to not always indicating someone's gender.

Set...

People: The Entire Group
Tools: Magazines
Time: 10 Minutes

Go!

Cut or rip photos of people out of the magazines. They can be any pictures or photos as long as they are of people,

with people they do not know well. Guiding questions, about family, pets, interests or jobs tend to be useful in focusing the activity - you can write these on flipchart paper before the activity.

Before people start talking to each other, review gender-neutral pronouns again and make sure that everyone understands how they should be used. Remember, zie (pronounced "z") is subjective, and is used instead of she or he, and hir (pronounced "here") is both objective and possessive, and used instead of her, him or his. Using "it" to refer to people can be offensive and dehumanizing, so make sure people stick to using gender-neutral pronouns. Writing them down (or having everyone write them down in their own notebooks or on scrap paper) can be a helpful visual cue.

Now, each person should spend about five minutes talking about herself/himself/hirself, addressing whatever topics or questions have been requested. Then the other person in the pair should do the same. Throughout this, all people should try to use gender non-specific terms and pronouns.

After everyone has shared, bring the group back together. Read through the following "rule" as a group.

- Once people are clear on proper pronoun usage, establish that if people mess up on someone else's pronoun, and they don't correct themselves, the most efficient way to deal with it is for anyone else who notices to immediately, and politely, speak up with the correct pronoun and then be quiet. In turn, people who mess up should acknowledge their mistake with a simple 'sorry' or nod and save any discussion for later.

Now, each person will introduce her/his/hir partner to the group (as often happens in getting-to-know-you activities), and tell a little about her/him/hir only using gender-neutral terms or gender non-specific terminology. If people mess up, people should politely respond according to the guidelines provided above. When done, also take a few minutes to go over the rationale for the above guideline listed below, which can be a useful explanation for pronoun etiquette.

Rationale:

- Discussions about preferred gender pronouns (PGPs) can be time consuming and easily derail an agenda, meeting or conversation, so quick and polite is generally the best approach.
- If people don't know the pronoun of someone and arbitrarily pick a pronoun, they could be unknowingly making the person feel disrespected or uncomfortable. Correcting mistakes immediately are quick, respectful to all and treat transgender people like everyone else and additional explanations that are needed can be dealt with later.
- Establishing this as the polite thing to do generally helps not only make sure that people are respectful, but also that people not be offended when others publicly correct them on a pronoun (and so that they don't interpret it as a rude or inappropriate interruption, a challenge to their authority or as disrespectful).
- Ideally, this will also make everyone more comfortable in correcting people if they mess up, rather than leaving it only to the person being referenced or that person's friends being the ones expected to correct any mistakes.

Finally, stress the importance of asking people respectfully what pronouns they prefer, instead of making assumptions. Some transgender people like gender-neutral pronouns, others really don't like them. Make sure everyone tries to limit assumptions about pronouns for transgender people, and also remember that using different pronouns is new to most people and that mistakes will happen. However, practice makes perfect, so keep up the amazing work!

Activity 7

Making It Ours

Coming up with intelligent, coherent answers to questions people are not or do not feel prepared to answer almost always makes for a difficult situation. However, many questions that are new to people learning about trans and gender-related issues can be anticipated. After all, people are fairly predictable and generally tend to ask for similar introductory information.

A large part of making student clubs trans-inclusive is making sure not only that members are educated about trans issues, but also that they are familiar and comfortable enough with the information that they can educate others about it in an articulate and informed way. Although it may initially feel uncomfortable or awkward to educate others about these issues, it is important that anyone working to become a trans ally become familiar with such explanations, so that it really is not solely left to transgender people to educate the rest of the world about such issues. Practice can help to make people comfortable with using new terms and different methods of explaining concepts, making everyone a more effective educator. This activity is designed to help students anticipate questions they might be asked, to provide them with the confidence necessary to answer and to help students brainstorm various ways of explaining concepts that might work for different people.

Set...

People: The entire group

Materials: Pens, Markers, Notebook or scrap paper, Flip Chart Paper

Time: 15-20 Minutes

Go!

Tell the participants to think of two to three questions they think people new to transgender issues might ask them. They can write these questions down on notebook or scrap paper. Once everyone has written their questions down, break into groups of three to four and have one person write them on large flip chart paper. The person writing the group's questions on flip chart paper should avoid duplicate questions from within his/her/hir small groups as much as possible.

When all the questions have been written down, arrange chairs in two lines facing each other. Have the students sit in the chairs (as close to evenly divided as possible) and take turns asking each other the questions and answering. Because generally education around trans issues takes place over more than one question and response, it may be more useful to role-play a "mini Trans 101," with one person answering questions for small breakout groups. It is not necessary for the person answering to pretend to be trans or anything other than who they are, Trans 101's can be led by people of any identity, although people should feel free to incorporate their own experiences or that of their friends if it seems appropriate or helpful.

When all the questions have been asked and answered, have the large group come back together and discuss the following questions:

- What did it feel like to answer questions in this manner?
- Were the answers people gave correct? Coherent? Comprehensive?
- How might they be improved?
- Were questions asked or answers given that requested or provided more information than necessary? If so, which questions/answers were these? Why would the information be unnecessary? What are some polite, concise ways to respond to such questions?
- Did people feel comfortable answering? What questions were less comfortable to answer than others? What are ways of addressing this?
- Discuss any other issues participants wish to raise.

Make sure you write down useful parts of the discussion, such as suggestions for improvement. This way the ideas raised can be incorporated into group materials like "talking points." Additionally, it makes the information accessible and useful to new group members and others. If there are questions that seem like they actually deserve an answer to which no one in the group knows the answer, make sure that someone agrees to research it and bring an answer back to the next meeting.

Activity 8

Getting It Done

Ready...

Now that the student club has the knowledge necessary to successfully be trans-inclusive, it's time to plan what the student club actually wants to do!

Set...

People: The entire group
Tools: Pens and Flip Chart Paper
Time: 20 Minutes

Go!

Brainstorm in a large group the activities or actions the student club could do that would address and raise awareness around trans or gender issues or ways to be inclusive of transgender people in activities the student club already does. Some ideas are listed at the end of this activity.

Have people shout out ideas until everyone has volunteered at least one suggestion. Don't spend too much brainstorming to ensure the list created is not too overwhelming to move forward. Depending on the length of the list, you can then divide everything into "things to change about the student club", "things to change about the school" and "other." Now, have the group discuss which are priorities, keeping in mind how much the student club and members are already doing with other commitments as well as resources which are available.

Creating an action plan is easy, the student club needs to create goals, objectives and tasks for the priorities which also include details of the deadlines and assignments for all of the tasks. The student club can even break up the large group into smaller groups of three to five students with a few students interested in working on specific priorities grouped together. After developing an action plan and assigning themselves tasks to do before the next club meeting in order to get things started, make sure each group writes this information down. Keep these papers for later reference and for checking in on progress at the next meeting. Email reminders or having responsibilities posted somewhere on flipchart paper can be very useful in ensuring work gets done. Stress how much easier it makes it for all involved if all group members agree to do a little, and note that if people know they are already overcommitted and will not be able to get something done, that they should volunteer for the smaller tasks.

Possible actions include:

- Starting each of student club meeting with introductions, having each person in the meeting share her/his/hir name and preferred gender pronoun (PGP).
- Changing forms used by the student club or school to leave a blank line when asking for gender, rather than having only a box for female or male. Also, thinking about why gender is being asked for - is

it medically necessary information or to track demographics and diversity? If there does not appear to be a good reason to have it there, ask to have it removed.

- Campaign to create a gender-neutral, all genders or multi-gendered bathroom at your school. This would probably be a single stall bathroom, like the nurse's room, and could provide a safe space where a student of any sex, gender or gender identity will be able to change for a sport or use the bathroom and feel safe.
- Help parents and teachers learn more about transgender issues.
- Join or create a coalition with transgender advocacy groups in your community.
- Create a poster campaign to advertise a meeting or rally or to raise awareness about transgender issues, like Transgender Day of Remembrance or other gender-related days of action.
- Print up some funky T-shirts and give them away or use them as fundraisers.
- Show a film or documentary about transgender issues, or make one of your own.
- And whatever your group thinks of - remember to have fun!

Conclusion

We hope that this eighth installation of the Jump-Start has provoked reflection, conversation, inspiration and action about transgender and gender-related issues in your student club. Working to be more inclusive can be as exhausting as it is exciting, and it is important to remember what unites the group, even as you remain aware of everyone's unique perspective. Also, we're always interested in how your student club has used the Jump-Start activities or used it to plan other events in your school or community. Let us know about how your student club used Jump-Start #8!

Remember to check www.glsen.org and the Students' section for additional ideas, resources, and activity plans.

As we mentioned in the Introduction, feedback and suggestions for future Jump-Start resources are always welcome. We encourage you to email us at jumpstart@glSEN.org.