



Mid-America (HHS Region 7)

**MHTTC**

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Supporting the Mental Well-Being of LGBTQIA+ Youth in Schools

## Gender Development and Foundational Terms

Jordan Mix

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The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED  
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCEPTING OF  
DIVERSE CULTURES,  
GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED/  
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH  
OUR ACTIONS,  
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

## Jordan Mix



Jordan Mix (they/them) is the Director of Educational Programming at Iowa Safe Schools. They graduated from Drake University in 2016 with degrees in Law, Politics, and Society; Sociology; and Women and Gender Studies. While at Drake they were the president of Drake's LGBTQ organization, Rainbow Union, helped establish the first all-gender bathroom on campus, and collaborated heavily in writing Drake's Transgender Inclusion Statement. Jordan also completed their graduate studies in Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of North Carolina Charlotte.

In 2019, Jordan was the head curator of a project called *Breathe, Learn, Act* — the first ever virtual care package for parents and loved ones of transgender and non-binary kids. Jordan joined the Iowa Safe Schools team in March of 2020, where they work with K-12 educators to develop LGBTQ-Inclusive curriculum, facilitate an online academy for Iowa's K-12 educators, and lead training sessions for students, educators, and other community members.

When they're not working, you can find Jordan hiking with their wife, cheering on the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team with their cat, and honing their home barista skills.

# Supporting Students. Supporting Safe Schools.

Jordan Mix

They/Them/Theirs

Director of Educational Programming

Iowa Safe Schools

iowa



schools



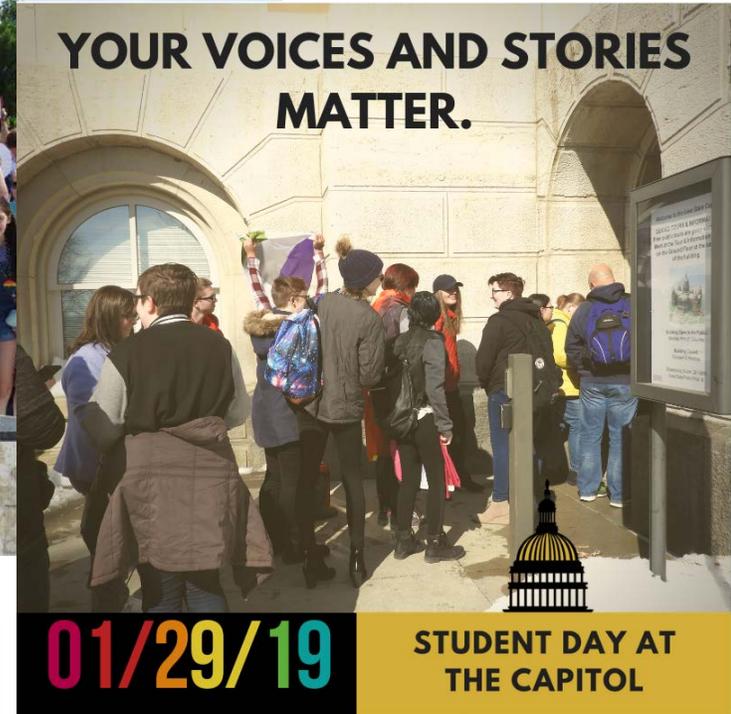
# Before We Start – Ground Rules:

- ▶ Brave Space
- ▶ Participate in the Conversation
- ▶ Ask Questions
- ▶ Be Respectful
- ▶ Use “I” Statements
- ▶ Be Open to New Perspectives

# About Iowa Safe Schools

Midwest's Largest LGBTQ Youth Organization

- ▶ Policy and Advocacy
- ▶ Youth Engagement
- ▶ Education



# LGBTQ 101

- ▶ LGBTQ is an acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning
- ▶ The LGBTQ acronym is also an **umbrella term** that refers to a community of people with a wide array of sexual orientations and gender identities
  - ▶ “LGBTQ Community”, “They are a part of the LGBTQ community”, “Does she identify as LGBTQ?”
- ▶ Though it was once used as a slur, “queer” is also used as an umbrella term and the two can usually be used interchangeably
  - ▶ “He identifies as queer”, “the queer community”. “Do they identify as queer?”



# LGBTQ 101: Understanding Terminology

- ▶ Try breaking a new term down into its prefix and base word to try to understand what it means
  - ▶ E.g.: A = without, Bi = two, Poly = multi, cis – on the side of, trans = on the opposite side of, Inter – between, Pan = all
  - ▶ E.g.: sexual = sexual orientation/physical attraction, romantic = romantic/emotional attraction, gender = gender identity or expression, sex = biological sex/sex assigned at birth
- ▶ For a detailed glossary, visit [www.mykidisgay.com](http://www.mykidisgay.com) and check out the Defining Series

Prefix	Base Word	New Word/ Definition
<b>A (without)</b>	<b>Sexual</b> (physical attraction)	<b>Asexual:</b> A person who does not experience physical attraction  <b>Transgender:</b> A person whose gender identity or expression does not correlate as expected with the sex they were assigned at birth
<b>Trans (on the opposite side of)</b>	<b>Gender</b> (gender identity or expression)	<b>Intersex:</b> A person whose biological sex is not male or female
<b>Inter (between)</b>	<b>Sex</b> (Biological sex assignment)	

# LGBTQ 101: Disclaimers and De-pathologizing

- ▶ According to the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) LGBTQ identities:
  - ▶ Are not a choice or an illness/disorder
  - ▶ Cannot be “fixed” or “repaired” with any kind of “therapy”<sup>1</sup>
  - ▶ Have been documented in many cultures and historical eras<sup>2</sup>
  - ▶ Are normal aspects of human identity<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ “Homosexuality” was removed from the DSM in 1974 and Gender Identity Disorder was removed in 2013<sup>1,2,3</sup>
  - ▶ Both have been replaced with anxiety disorders relating to the stress associated with being LGBTQ as a result of increased barriers to resources, harassment, and lack of understanding and acceptance.

1. American Medical Association. “Caring for the LGBTQ Community”. Access: <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/population-care/advocating-lgbtq-community>

2. American Psychological Association. “Sexual orientation and Homosexuality”. Access: <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/orientation>

3. Homosexual(ity) is a word we generally avoid due to its association with identifying LGBTQ identity as a medical disorder. Alternatives are “LGBTQ,” “Queer,” or the specific identity with which a person identifies.

# Trans 101:

## Cisgender

- ▶ "Cis" is the Latin prefix meaning "on the same side of"
- ▶ A person is *cisgender* if their gender correlates as expected with the sex they were assigned at birth

## Transgender

- ▶ "Trans" is the Latin prefix for "on the opposite side of"
- ▶ A person is *transgender* if their gender does not correlate as expected with the sex they were assigned at birth
- ▶ No physical or social transition is required to identify as trans\*

\* Sometimes physical/social/legal transitions are required to have access to certain gendered spaces

# Gender Dysphoria

- ▶ A sense of anxiety or discomfort relating to one's gender
- ▶ **Body Dysphoria:** A discomfort with the physical body and the gendered characteristics their body may have.
- ▶ **Social Dysphoria:** A discomfort with the ways other people perceive a person's body, and as a result, the way they are treated socially.
- ▶ **Body dysphoria and body dysmorphia are NOT the same thing.**
  - ▶ Dysphoria is a disconnect between the body and your sense of self



# Fostering Allyship Through Understanding

## Gender Identity

- ▶ Someone's understanding of themselves, who they are, their likes, dislikes, and conception of themselves in terms of femininity and masculinity

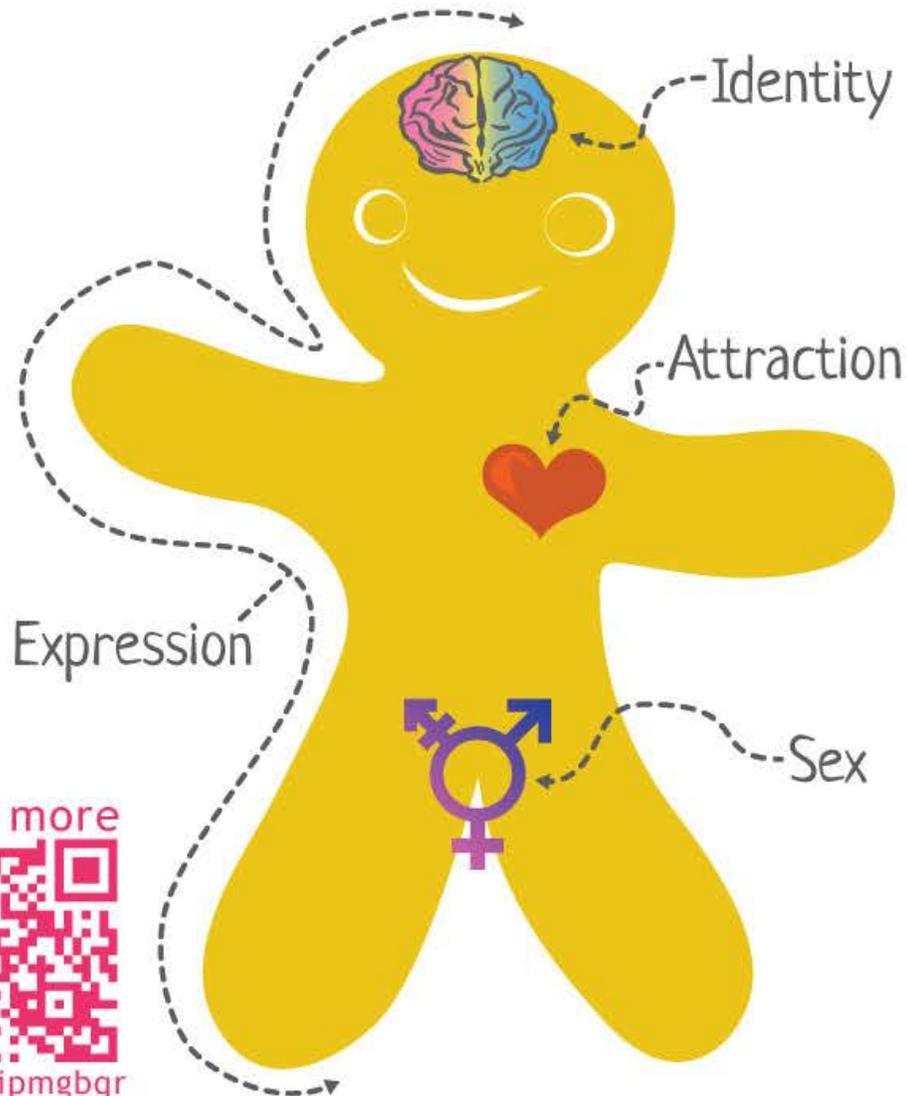
## Gender Expression

- ▶ External appearance of one's gender identity, usually communicated through behavior, clothing, haircut, or voice

# The Genderbread Person v2.0

by its pronounced **METROsexual**.com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more.



read more  
  
[bit.ly/ipmgbqr](http://bit.ly/ipmgbqr)

## Gender Identity

Nongendered {  Woman-ness  
 Man-ness

5 (of infinite) possible plot and label combos  
    

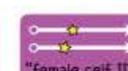
## Gender Expression

Agender {  Masculine  
 Feminine

5 (of infinite) possible plot and label combos  
    

## Biological Sex

Asex {  Female-ness  
 Male-ness

5 (of infinite) possible plot and label combos  
    

## Attracted to

Nobody {  (Men/Males/Masculinity)  
 (Women/Females/Femininity)

5 (of infinite) possible plot and label combos  
    

# LGBTQ Youth Face Adversity...

## At Home

- **67%** of LGBTQ youth report that they've heard family members make negative comments about LGBTQ people<sub>2</sub>
- **Over 60%** of LGBTQ Youth report having wanted health care, but were unable to get it due to concerns about parental permission<sub>1</sub>
- **Over 50%** of trans youth were kicked out or ran away after coming out to their families<sub>4</sub>

## At School

- **86%** of LGBTQ Youth report being harassed or assaulted at school<sub>3</sub>
- **67%** of LGBTQ students report having heard a teacher or staff member making negative remarks about their gender expression or sexual orientation<sub>3</sub>
- **23%** of students report being prevented from using their name/pronouns in class<sub>3</sub>

## In Public

- **1 in 3** LGBTQ youth reported that they had been physically threatened or harmed in their lifetime due to their sexual orientation.<sub>1</sub>
- Nearly 40% of transgender youth report they've been physically threatened or harmed due to their gender identity.<sub>1</sub>
- **91% of** transgender and nonbinary youth reported being prevented or discouraged from using a bathroom that corresponds with their gender identity. <sub>1</sub>

1. The Trevor Project Mental Health Survey. 2022.

2. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/2018-lgbtq-youth-report>

3. GLSEN 2019 School Climate Survey

4. The Trevor Project Mental Health Survey. 2020.

# LGBTQ Youth Are **More** Likely To...

## Not receive healthcare

- ▶ **60%** of LGBTQ youth report they wanted psychological or emotional counseling from a mental health professional but were unable to receive it in the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Concerns around being “outed” to their caregivers is the number 1 reported barrier to accessing healthcare for LGBTQ youth. Affordability is number 4.<sup>1</sup>

## Face housing instability

- ▶ **About 30%** of LGBTQ Youth report consistent housing insecurity <sup>1</sup>
- ▶ **33%** of LGB Youth are kicked out of their home upon coming out <sup>1</sup>
- ▶ **56%** of transgender youth are kicked out of their home upon coming out <sup>1</sup>

# LGBTQ Youth Are **Less** Likely to...

- ▶ Attend school on a regular basis<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Be on time to school/class
- ▶ Graduate high school<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Participate in extracurricular activities due to fear of harassment<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Use the bathroom during the school day and use school locker rooms<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Drink enough water each day<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Eat fruits and veggies<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Eat breakfast<sup>2</sup>

1. The Trevor Project Mental Health Survey. 2022.

2. CDC Youth Risk Behavior Report. 2019.

# Mental Health and Suicidality

- ▶ Each episode of LGBT victimization, such as physical or verbal harassment or abuse, increases the likelihood of self-harming behavior by 2.5 times on average.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ LGBTQ Youth report higher rates of anxiety and depression than their heterosexual and cisgender peers.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ In 2022 45% of LGBTQ Youth seriously considered suicide, with 52% of transgender and non-binary youth considering suicide.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ While there has always been a disparity between LGBTQ youth and their heterosexual and cisgender peers, it appears that the COVID-19 Pandemic has widened these gaps for the first time in the last several years.<sup>1</sup>

1. The Trevor Project Mental Health Survey. 2022.

2. IMPACT. (2010). Mental health disorders, psychological distress, and suicidality in a diverse sample of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youths. *American Journal of Public Health*. 100(12), 2426-32.

# Understanding School's Role

- ▶ Transgender and nonbinary youth who reported having pronouns respected verbally and on documents attempted suicide at lower rates than those who did not <sup>1</sup>
- ▶ LGBTQ youth who had access to spaces that affirmed their sexual orientation and gender identity reported lower rates of attempting suicide than those who did not.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ LGBTQ Youth who went to schools with affirming spaces had lower rates of suicidality than those who did not<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ 1 in 2 LGBTQ Youth report having an affirming school environment. Only 1 in 3 report an affirming home environment.

1. The Trevor Project Mental Health Survey. 2021.

# Starting with Ourselves

- ▶ Remember that we are not neutral participants in spaces we're in[1]
- ▶ We send messages to kids all day, every day. Whether we mean to or not
- ▶ How can we be intentional about the space we create?
  - ▶ Understand how we move through the world in relation to others.
    - ▶ How does the way that we embody space influence us?  
[2]

[1] *Fostering Civil Discourse: A Guide for Classroom Conversations*

[2] <https://everydayfeminism.com/2014/09/what-is-privilege/>

# Starting with Ourselves

1. How does the way I embody space manifest itself in the policies and procedures?
2. How does the way I embody space manifest itself in the resources I select?
3. How does the way I embody space manifest itself in the group discussions I have with youth?
4. How does the way I embody space manifest itself in the individual interactions I have with youth?

# What are Pronouns?

- ▶ **Respect names and pronouns!**
  - ▶ Get comfy talking about pronouns!
  - ▶ Never ask anyone what their “real” name is
  - ▶ Always use the name and pronouns a person tells you to use
  - ▶ Don’t dwell on slip-ups



# Using Inclusive Language Everyday

- ▶ Using Inclusive Language
  - ▶ Avoid using gendered language
    - ▶ Ex: "ladies and gentlemen;" "men and women;" "his or her"
  - ▶ Avoid splitting people into groups by gender
    - ▶ Try dividing the group based on other things, like shirt color or birthday

Instead of		Try
<b>HIS</b> or <b>HERS</b>	→	<b>THEIRS</b>
<b>LADIES</b> and <b>GENTLMAN</b>	→	<b>DISTINGUISHED GUESTS</b>
<b>MEN</b> or <b>WOMEN</b>	→	<b>EVERYONE</b>
<b>LADY/MAN</b> in the red shirt	→	<b>PERSON</b> in the red shirt
<b>GUYS</b>	→	<b>FOLKS</b>

  
**INTERNATIONAL  
NON-BINARY PEOPLE'S DAY**

# Helpful Takeaways

- ▶ Practice respect and empathy
- ▶ Get comfy talking about LGBTQ issues
- ▶ Don't dwell on small oopsie-doopsies
- ▶ Remember that you are not a neutral participant in your space
- ▶ Follow students' lead. Students are always the best monitor of their own safety.



# Questions?

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