

Junior Gender and Sexual Diversity Education – Safe Zone Facilitator Guide – 1 hour

Facilitator Tips:

FACILITATE – DON'T TEACH	Clarify misperceptions about the film, but allow different perspectives to emerge.
It's just not about you.	Validate, think, inquire – but don't judge.
Give it back to the room.	Let silence have a turn to speak, too.
Model curiosity.	Be present, be in service.

You will be provided with the corresponding PowerPoint Slides. Please reference the notes associated with each slide!

- Watch the film, [The "T" Word](#), by November 7, 2023, as you are scheduled to facilitate small group discussions with students on November 7, 2021 from 6pm – 9pm (the actual discussion will only be an hour, from 8pm – 9pm... there will be a presentation by Nat Duran (They/Them) and students will have an hour to watch the film afterwards).
 - <https://youtu.be/mDyODhfuxfl>
- ▢ Share with students the following (2 min):

LGBTQIA+



A SafeZone or a safe space is where all people can bring their authentic selves and feel safe, welcome and included. It may be a classroom, an office, a person or an entire institution. The LGBTQIA+ SafeZone programs aim to increase the awareness, knowledge, and skills for individuals and address the challenges that exist when one wants to advocate for their LGBTQ+ peers, family members, friends, coworkers and for themselves.

- In an effort to ensure that all students at IMSA feel safe, valued and included, you are going through this gender and sexual orientation diversity education – SafeZone program. IMSA believes that diverse perspectives enrich understanding and value equity and inclusion. As IMSA prepares you to solve problems in the global world, it is important that you have knowledge of and ability to collaborate with diverse communities.



- Review Glen Singleton's Four Agreements to Courageous Conversations and ask students to agree to these (2 Min):

Agreements

- Stay Engaged
- Experience Discomfort
- Speak your Truth
- Expect an Accept Non-Closure



- *Stay Engaged:* Remain morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved in dialogue. Stay present and guard against the learned tendency to disengage. Collectively make the commitment to embrace the conversation/dialogue.
- *Experience Discomfort:* Deal openly and honestly with challenges: open up and examine your own core beliefs, values, perceptions, and behaviors. Engage in the dialogue authentically and be personally responsible for pushing yourself into real dialogue. Recognize that discomfort often leads to real growth.
- *Speak your Truth:* Be willing to take risks. Share honest thoughts, feelings, and opinions. We are experts in defining our own experiences and personal realities.
- *Expect and Accept Non-Closure:* Solutions may be revealed in the process of dialogue itself: There is no "quick fix. Dialogue triggers a moral, intellectual, social, and emotional shift that allows for opportunities. The more one talks, the more one learns; the more one learns, the more appropriate and promising your actions and interventions.

- ▭ Have students respond to the following questions (10-15min):

First Impressions of LGBTQIA+ People...

1. What is your initial reaction to the film, the “T” Word with Laverne Cox?
2. When’s the first time you can remember learning that some people are LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, asexual)?
3. Discuss your initial impressions/understanding of LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, asexual) ...where did that impression come from?
4. When’s the first time you can remember learning that some people are transgender?
5. Discuss your initial impressions/understanding of transgender people...where did that impression come from?
6. How have your impressions/understanding of the LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, asexual) community changed or evolved throughout your life?
7. How can you contribute to creating a safe and inclusive community for LGBTQIA+ students at IMSA?



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- How have your impressions/understanding of the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, asexual) community changed or evolved throughout your life?
- How can you contribute to creating a safe and inclusive community for LGBTQ+ students at IMSA?

- Pass out the LGBTQIA+ Ally Guide Packet to the class. Give students time to write their answers to the questions (5-10 min). After students have had some time to respond let them discuss some of the questions and their responses (if they're comfortable) with their table (5 min). Finally, ask if anyone would be comfortable sharing a summary of what they/their table discussed (5min).

20 Questions to Assess Your Hidden Gender Bias

- As you reflect upon the gender bias questions in your packet, think about your experiences, thoughts, and perspectives related to gender. Then take a deeper dive, reflecting upon whether gender bias exists within you, if not, why not, and if so, what is that bias; how did it develop; are you okay with having that bias, why or why not; has your bias evolved over time, in what way; and what are you going to do to diminish your bias?



1. Think about your childhood: How was I expected to behave because of my gender?
2. How have my parents, family members, colleagues/peers, and romantic interests influenced my beliefs about gender?
3. How did I come to define my gender identity? (Do I remember deciding what gender I related to most?)
4. How do different identity markers such as race, ethnicity, ability/disability (e.g. able-bodied, etc.), body size, socioeconomic status/class, sexual orientation, spirituality/religion, or other identities, influenced my gender identity? (e.g. ethnicity's influence on masculinity/femininity; religion's influence on binary gender norms, etc) *use any or all that may apply
5. How have I benefited from adhering to gender expectations/roles?
6. If I did not behave according to gender expectations/roles, were there any consequences?
7. Do I experience stressors related to my gender identity?
8. Have I experienced fluidity regarding my gender identity? (e.g. someone identifying as female and engaging in male-dominated sports or wearing men's clothing)
9. Has my gender ever been misidentified (e.g. attaching my voice to a different gender; assuming my gender just by learning my name)? How did that feel?
10. How have I contributed to reinforcing binary gender socialization? (e.g. making jokes, participating in gender reveal parties, imposing traditional gender norms on my loved ones, etc.)
11. Do I use he/she, men/women in my writing and verbal communications as a catch-all way to describe "everyone?" Why?
12. What thoughts and feeling arise when I cannot easily determine the gender of a person? Do I find myself trying to determine the sex assigned at birth?

13. When someone calls me out regarding potentially harmful behaviors towards LGBTQ+ or Trans individuals, do I feel compelled to quickly defend myself and my intentions? Why is that? What am I hoping to communicate with this?
14. How do I feel about being asked to use or corrected to use non-binary pronouns (they/them, etc.)?
15. When a person challenges society's binaries in any way (e.g. with appearance, speech, by advocating for non-conforming gender identities, etc.), how do I feel? What automatic reactions does this evoke?
16. When I meet or come across a Trans or gender non-conforming individual, do I treat them as I would treat a cisgender individual (person who identifies with the gender assigned at birth)? If not, what is different for me?
17. What feelings arise when I see non-binary/Trans individuals displaying affectionate behaviors with another person (e.g. kissing)? Expressing sexuality (flirtatious, provocative behavior)?
18. What assumptions do I make about a person's mental health when I learn they completed sex reassignment/gender confirmation surgery? Do I assume they will eventually change their mind?
19. Have I assigned traditional male/female names that match the biological sex of my pets? Why? Do I socialize my pets based on gender (e.g. pink collar for a girl)? Why might it be important to me that a person be able to identify the gender of my pet?
20. Have I assigned traditional male/female names that match the biological sex of my baby/newborn? Why? Do I socialize my baby/newborn based on gender (e.g. tape a pink boy to baby's head)? Why might it be important to me that a person be able to identify the gender of my baby/newborn?

- If you have additional time, share these scenarios with students and have them respond to related questions. Try to get through at least the first two, however it is okay if you don't go over every scenario. They should think about how to promote a diverse and inclusive environment at IMSA. *Please see the next page for recommended responses to each scenario. These are also included in the notes section of the PowerPoint.*

Scenario #1

You've started to become closer friends with someone over the last 3 months. One day you're hanging out and they seem really nervous and uncomfortable. You ask them what's up and they tell you that they're gay and worried you're going to reject them and that everyone is going to reject them. What do you do?

- What are the issues?
- What steps would you take to resolve issue and support student?



Scenario #2

One of your friends recently came out to you as genderqueer. They want you to use they/them/their pronouns and let you know their new name is Jay. You find yourself really struggling with pronouns and find yourself stressed about messing up Jay's name/pronouns with others. You want to be affirming and are really worried you're not doing a good job.

What might you do?



Scenario #3

You're working on a project with some people in class and the first time you meet someone says, "Ugh this project is so gay right? What a stupid project." A few people look at each other awkwardly but don't say anything.

How might you respond?



Scenario #4

You're helping out with a program when someone comes over and says, "Hey this is Alex, Alex is here to help us set-up." And then walks away leaving you with Alex. You've never met before, Alex is androgynous and you're not really sure what pronouns to use with Alex. You're going to be introducing Alex to others helping set up, so you want to know.

What might you do?



Scenario #5

At a Spectrum meeting, a student is sharing their experience on campus as a queer person-of-color. A discussion begins around race and LGBTQIA+ identities. The Spectrum advisor says the conversation is getting off track, intersectionality of identities is not important, only one's primary identity is relevant. The advisor further says that the focus of the group is LGBTQIA+, not race. The student leaves the meeting and never returns.

- *Intersectionality refers to the ways in which race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other locations of social group membership impact lived experiences and social relations.*
- How do we support students and their intersectionality of identities?



Scenario #6

You're part of an LGBTQIA+ and ally group and one day you make the suggestion that the group might want to do an LGBTQIA+ -awareness training. You've noticed a lot of internalized homophobia as well as biphobia/transphobia within the group and you're hoping that the training would be a good way to start getting at those things. There is a lot of discomfort and someone says, "It's straight people who need to be educated not us."

What might you do?



Scenario 1:

- Affirm them and their sharing with you. “I really appreciate you sharing that with me, we’re cool, it doesn’t change anything between us that you’re gay. I’m glad you felt you could tell me.”
- Ask questions. “Who else are you wanting to tell? Are there any people you’ve told already that have reacted badly? Are there other people you know who have your back?”
- Offer to think things through. “If you want to walk through what it might be like to tell other people or how best to do that, we could do that.”
- Let them know you have their back. “You know if anyone reacts badly to you, know I’ve got your back. I’m also down to talk to them and let them know it’s cool with me.”
- If you’re comfortable, let them know that you’re willing to be there with them. “I know coming out can be hard, if you’re worried about someone reacting badly I can be there with you.”

Scenario 2:

- Practice on your own. Grab a friend and ask if you can if you can practiced talking about Jay with their new name and pronouns. Tell a story about you and Jay using their new name/pronouns, or talk about how you first became friends.
- Practice regardless if Jay is around. Sometimes people can get lazy if their friend isn’t around, ensure that you’re using the right name/pronouns at all times.
- Ask others to hold you accountable. Tell your mutual friends, “Hey, I’m really struggling with this. Please remind me when I mess up.”
- When you mess up, apologize and move on. Even if it feels like a really big deal in the moment, apologize, correct yourself, and move on. That will allow things not to become focused on you for messing up.
- Apologize to Jay outside of those moments. If you find yourself messing up a lot, let Jay know, “Hey, I’m sorry I’m struggling so much with this. Please know I really respect you and know this is important, and I’m going to keep working on it and getting better.”

Scenario 3:

- Correct their language without addressing it directly. “Yeah, it is kind of a rough project, but I’m sure we can figure it out.”
- Address it in the moment by assuming best intent. “Hey, I’m sure you didn’t mean anything by it, but if we could not call this assignment gay, I’d appreciate that.”
- Follow up with them after. “Hey, I’m not sure if you realized this but you called the project gay and it just kind of upsets me when people do that, so I wanted to let you know.”
- Connect with someone else to ask if they’d address it. Perhaps they have a friend in the group or someone who is more comfy with confrontation. Ask after if they’d be up for letting the person know it wasn’t an okay thing to say.”

Scenario 4:

- Students may not know what androgynous means, “Having the characteristics or nature associated with both masculinity and femininity, typically regarding gender expression.”
- Introduce yourself including your name and pronouns. “Hey Alex, I’m Max, I use he/him pronouns.”
- Invite Alex to share their pronouns. “What are your pronouns? I ask because I’m sure I’m going to be introducing you to new people and want to make sure I get it right.”
- Use Alex’s name and no pronouns. “Alex is going to be helping us out with this, and I’m happy to have Alex on the team.”

Scenario 5:

- When working with LGBTQIA+ students of color, there are a number of additional concerns that should be taken into consideration. It is crucial to see students through a holistic lens, one that recognizes and tries to understand the complex identities and experiences that shape each individual. The following considerations are meant to help you think more deeply about the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students of color and their needs.
- LGBTQIA+ students of color face multiple forms of oppression in their lives and may feel isolated and/or invisible at school. Challenging all forms of oppression and empowering students and staff begins with recognizing existing issues of bias and facilitating open dialogue about how these biases affect others. Bringing these topics out into the open allows for healthy and productive opportunities for students and colleagues to ask questions, share their own personal feelings and experiences, and learn from each other.
- The Challenge: In a school setting, discussing issues of prejudice, discrimination, and oppression can be intimidating. You may have concerns that by bringing these topics up, especially as they relate to your students, you do more harm than good. It may seem like you are opening a can of worms or that you might lose control, with challenging student responses, potentially angry parents and unsupportive school leadership.
- Try This: Reflect on your school climate and culture with colleagues, paying close attention to the experience of LGBTQIA+ students of color at your school and how institutional oppression and individual acts of bias and prejudice may impact them. • Talk about anti-LGBT bias, racism and other forms of oppression with students in your school. Ask open ended questions, allowing students to share their thoughts and personalize their feelings and experiences.
- Develop discussion groups with faculty, staff and students in your school where you can talk about and work through questions of diversity, challenges regarding bias, and strategies for engagement.

Scenario 6:

- Agree and add more. “I think you’re totally right that straight people often are more ignorant of what it means to be part of the LGBTQ community than this group is. And perhaps learning more about it will help us understand how to explain things better.”
- Call yourself in. “I know I’ve learned a lot from being in this group and I know that there is still a lot more to learn. I think that we all could grow in our abilities to understand and connect with each other, so that’s why I’m interested.”
- One marginalized identity doesn’t give you info on another. “I think that because we have so many identities in this group, I know for me being _____ doesn’t

mean that I know what it's like to be _____. Gay people can have a lack of understanding about trans identity, or what it's like to be pansexual, and vice-versa."

– **Remind Students of IMSA' Bias Incident Process and How to Report**

BIAS Incidents at IMSA

The Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy values a diverse community where all members are able to participate fully in the IMSA experience. Incidents of bias and hate affecting a person or group create a hostile climate and negative impact the quality of the IMSA experience for community members. IMSA takes such incidents seriously and will investigate and respond to reported or observed incidents of bias while under the jurisdiction of the Academy (See Policy JB- Student Expression). At IMSA, a hate or "bias-related" incident is an act that demonstrates prejudice against the victim's actual or perceived race, color, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religion, ability and/or political affiliation.



Report Bias Incidents

<https://bit.ly/2BS2DAP> or www.imsa.edu/bias



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– **Share the array of resources that IMSA has to support our Gender and Sexual Diverse Students**

IMSA Resources

- Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Student Life
- Council for Campus Equity (CCE)
- Spectrum
- Gender Equity Association (GEA)
- Gender Support Plan

