

The Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy

LGBTQIA+ Allyship at IMSA



Safe Zone Participant Guide

WHAT IS A SAFE ZONE?

A SafeZone or a safe space is a confidential place where all people can bring their authentic selves and feel safe, welcome and included. It may be a classroom, an office or an entire institution. Creating safe zones or safe spaces is a proactive step that schools, agencies and corporations can take to create welcoming, inclusive spaces so that all people are empowered to reach their full potential. 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 LGBTQIA+ peers, family members, friends, coworkers and for themselves.



LGBTQIA+ Facts and Stats

According to the CDC 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, of surveyed LGB students:

- Were 140% (12% v. 5%) more likely to not go to school at least one day during the 30 days prior to the survey because of safety concerns, compared with heterosexual students.
- 10% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.
- 34% were bullied on school property.
- 28% were bullied electronically.
- 23% of LGB students who dated/went out with someone during the 12 months before the survey experienced sexual dating violence in the prior year.
- 18% of LGB students had experienced physical dating violence.
- 18% of LGB students had been forced to have sexual intercourse at some point in their lives.
- 95% of LGBTQ youth report they have trouble getting to sleep at night.

LGB youth are at greater risk for depression, suicide, substance use, and sexual behaviors that can place them at increased risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

- Nearly one-third (29%) of LGB youth had attempted suicide at least once in the prior year compared to 6% of heterosexual youth.
- In 2014, young gay and bisexual men accounted for 8 out of 10 HIV diagnoses among youth.



LGBTQIA+ Facts and Stats

Transgender and gender nonconforming students are more likely than other students to have negative experiences at school. They suffer stigma, discrimination, harassment, and violence that adversely affect health and educational outcomes. Transgender students are at an increased risk of missing school due to safety concerns, increased risk of having lower GPAs, and Increased risk of feeling isolated from their community.

The 2015 National School Climate Survey by GLSEN reported that among transgender students in school:

- 75 % felt unsafe at school because of their gender expression.
- 70% avoid bathrooms at school because they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- 56% avoid locker rooms at school because they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- 59% experience verbal harassment based on gender identity.
- 23% experience physical harassment based on gender identity.
- 11% experience physical assault based on gender identity.
- 74% experienced VERBAL HARASSMENT based on gender expression.
- 33 % experienced PHYSICAL HARASSMENT based on gender expression.
- 2 % report frequently or often being CALLED NAMES involving gay slur.
- 40% report frequently or often being EXCLUDED BY THEIR PEERS.
- Only 5% report definitely fitting in their community, compared to nearly 33% of cisgender youth.



First Impressions of **LGBTQIA+** Community...

1. When's the first time you can remember learning that some people are lesbian, gay, bisexual or queer?
2. Discuss your initial impressions/understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people...where did that impression come from?
3. When's the first time you can remember learning that some people are transgender?
4. Discuss your initial impressions/understanding of transgender people...where did that impression come from?
5. How have your impressions/understanding of LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender & queer/questioning, intersex, asexual) people changed or evolved throughout your life?



The Cass Model of Identity Development

Identity Confusion	Individuals in this stage feel "different," but are often unable to identify why. They may begin to wonder if they are LGBTQ. They rely on the reactions of people around them to understand whether being LGBTQ is "right" or "wrong."
Identity Comparison	Individuals in this stage compare themselves to other LGBTQ individuals in their environment and in the media and ask themselves "does this fit for me?"
Identity Tolerance	Individuals in this stage admit to themselves that they are LGBTQ, but view it as no one's business but their own. They may grieve for the loss of privilege and fear potential alienation and loss of family, friends, employment, etc.
Identity Acceptance	Individuals in this stage begin to feel that they will be ok. A more positive sense of identity develops. They may begin to come out to others and seek out the LGBTQ community.
Identity Pride	Individuals in this stage realize their identity is fully legitimate and they are out, proud and visible. Their entire identity may be wrapped up in being LGBTQ. They may feel anger at how society has stifled them in the past. They may have fewer straight/cisgender friends, and have little patience for "closeted" people.
Identity Synthesis	Individuals in this stage feel settled in their identity. They know that they are more than their LGBTQ identity, but they also understand that their LGBTQ identity is an important part of who they are. They may still have a sense of anger and frustration, but it is tempered by a holistic view. They have a sense of pride and self-confidence.



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"COMING OUT" ... "of the closet." is the process by which someone...

1. Accepts and identifies with their gender identity and/or sexual orientation; and
2. Shares their identity willingly with others.

Sometimes We talk about coming out as if it were a one time thing. But for most folks coming out is a **series of decisions** – sometimes daily – that LGBTQ people navigate in every new setting they enter. (Most people aren't like Ellen, where they come out once and then the whole world knows.)

People may be "out" ⇨ in some spaces, and "in" ⇨ in others.

⇨/⇨ to Family ⇨/⇨ to Friends ⇨/⇨ to Classmates/Coworkers ⇨/⇨ to Religious Community

A decision to come out to a person or group is one of safety, comfort, trust, & readiness.

It's dangerous, unhealthy, and unhelpful to force someone to come out, or to "out" someone else (i.e., disclosing someone's gender identity or sexual orientation to others without the person's consent), **regardless of your intentions** (sometimes people think they're being helpful, or acting on the person's behalf to conquer their fears), **but...**

IF SOMEONE COMES OUT TO YOU...

DON'T:

1. Say "I always knew," or downplay the significance of their sharing with you.
2. Go tell everyone, bragging about your "new trans friend."
3. Forget that they are still the person you knew, befriended, or loved before.
4. Ask probing questions, or cross personal barriers you wouldn't have crossed earlier.
5. Assume you know why they came out to you.

DO:

1. Know this is a sign of huge trust! (Yay!)
2. Check-in on how confidential this is (Do other people know? Is this a secret?)
3. Remember that their gender/sexuality is just one dimension (of many) of who they are.
4. Show interest and curiosity about this part of them that they are sharing with you.
5. Ask them how you can best support them.

What Can I Do? Ideas for Allies



1. Refuse to tolerate anti-LGBTQIA+ comments, attitudes, remarks or jokes.
2. Report all harassment or discriminatory behavior to the appropriate officials.
3. Display positive materials in support of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans.
4. Do not assume that everyone you meet is heterosexual.
5. Use inclusive, non-gender specific language that does not assume heterosexuality in others. Use inclusive language in conversation and also in written materials, policies, forms, etc.
6. Educate yourself on issues and concerns for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans. Take the initiative to obtain accurate information.
7. Attend events, meetings, or programs sponsored by or for people who are LGBTIA+ identified. Gain insight by talking to people who are LGBTIA+. Learn from their experiences.
8. Maintain a balanced perspective. Don't assume that the sexual orientation of a person who is LGBTIA+ is the most important aspect of that person.
9. Remember that everyone is a multi-faceted individual whose sexuality is only one part of their total life.
10. Don't assume that being LGBTIA+ is so hard and presents so many problems that you should feel sorry for people who are LGBTIA+. They have the same problems as anyone else. They are just as likely to be well-adjusted, and just as likely to have difficulty coping with stresses in their lives. Because of prejudice and discrimination, however, they have to deal with some unique stressors.
11. Don't assume that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans doesn't matter; for example, thinking that "They're the same as everyone else and I treat all people the same." While everyone deserves to be treated equally, that is different from treating everyone the same. The experience of being lesbian, gay, or bisexual in a largely unaccepting society has a profound effect on how that person views himself or herself and how he or she experiences the world.
12. Respect confidentiality at all times. It is imperative that you can be trusted.
13. Examine your own biases and fears. You must explore your deepest feelings and beliefs concerning homosexuality. If you are uncomfortable with the issue, this will be communicated to others. Be willing to look at the areas with which you are uncomfortable. Be willing to talk about your doubts, fears, and uncertainties with others.
14. Know your own limits. Know when you have reached the extent of your knowledge or patience and be prepared to seek out others with additional knowledge or expertise for assistance.
15. Don't be surprised when someone comes out to you.
16. Deal with feelings first. You can be helpful just by listening and providing someone a chance to talk about their feelings and their experience.
17. Provide positive reinforcement to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans to help counter the messages of shame and guilt about homosexuality that are so prevalent in society.
18. Include LGBTIA+ issues and topics in training seminars, curricula, programming, professional development workshops, etc. when appropriate.
19. If people jump to the conclusion that you are lesbian, gay, or bisexual because you talk about LGBTIA+ topics, because you are friends with lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, because you are reading a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender publication, or because you are being affectionate with someone of the same gender: resist your urge to deny it. Challenge yourself

- to resist seeing such an assumption as an accusation, or as something that must be denied. Challenge yourself not to immediately retreat into the security of your heterosexual identity and heterosexual privilege.
20. Remember that people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender come from widely diverse backgrounds with a wide range of experiences. Treat everyone as a unique individual.
 21. Respect the confidentiality of anyone who comes out to you as intersexed, transsexual, transgendered, or gender questioning. If your sense is that the person is "out" to everyone, ask just to be sure. ("Is there anyone with whom you prefer I not share this information?")
 22. Use the pronouns of the gender they feel themselves to be. For instance, if a person says that she identifies as female, use "she/her" - regardless of what kind of body that person may have been born into. If you are not sure which pronouns a person prefers, ask, "Which pronouns would you like me to use I do you prefer" This is sign of respect and support.
 23. Be patient with a person who is questioning their gender identity. A person may shift back and forth before deciding on what gender expression best matches their identity. A person may ask to be called by one name one day, and another name another day. Do your best to be respectful and call the person by the name they request. Although it can be hard to refer to a person by a new name, a gender questioning person will usually notice and appreciate your concerted effort to respect their wishes.
 24. Never try to tell a person what "category" they fit into. For instance, if a person tells you that they feel they are "trapped in the wrong body," it is inappropriate to respond with "Oh, that means that you are a transsexual." A person has often spent their entire life being told what gender they are, and as a means of empowerment a person should be allowed to choose the identities they feel best suit them.
 25. Just as there is no one way to be male or female, there is no one way to be transgender. Each person will choose a path that they feel is right for them; no one path is better than any other. A way to be supportive of finding this path is to help a person find the best and most appropriate resources and information to be able to make informed decisions.
 26. Be aware that a transgender person who chooses to go through hormone therapy or undergo "sexual reassignment surgery" will have to endure an often times long and frustrating process as they try to seek the mandatory medical approval to receive hormones or surgery.
 27. A person who is transitioning from one gender to another may appear to be overly obsessed with the changes that their body is going through. For many people these changes are a great relief as they start to develop the body they have always wanted, and each change is a cause to celebrate. Be patient as a person explores the changes.
 28. While a person's sexual orientation is not directly connected to a person's gender identity, some who are transitioning may question previous understandings of their own sexual orientation and choose a new orientation label for themselves. Don't assume you know what someone's sexual orientation is or is going to be.
 29. An intersexed person may have undergone painful surgeries without their consent that can have permanent effects on their life (e.g. reduced or absent sexual function, increased susceptibility to infections, etc). This non-consensual violation of bodily integrity can have lasting emotional effects as well. Realize that because of these possibilities, an intersexed person may not want to hear that infant genital surgeries are "for the best" or "necessary," since those judgments may ignore values that they hold.
 30. Remember: above all, transgender and intersex people are individual human beings who deserve respect and understanding.

Core Vocabulary

agender: A person who is without gender or who has a neutral gender identity.

ally /"al-lie"/ – noun : a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. We consider people to be active allies who take action on in support and respect.

asexual – adj. : experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behavior. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions, and many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels.

biological sex – noun : a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply "sex," "physical sex," "anatomical sex," or specifically as "sex assigned at birth."

biphobia – noun : a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, invisibility, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express towards bisexual individuals. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the LGBTQ community as well as straight society. Biphobic – adj. : a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes towards bisexual people.

bisexual – adj. : 1 a person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some males/men and females/women. 2 a person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to people of their gender and another gender. This attraction does not have to be equally split or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders or sexes an individual may be attracted to.

cisgender /"siss-jendur"/ – adj. : a person whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity align (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a man). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. The word cisgender can also be shortened to "cis."

coming out : 1 the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one's own sexuality or gender identity (to "come out" to oneself). 2 The process by which one shares one's sexuality or gender identity with others (to "come out" to friends, etc.).

gay – adj. : 1 individuals who are primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex and/or gender. Can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men, and can be applied to women as well. 2 An umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

gender: the range of characteristics associated with men and women and the masculine and feminine attributes assigned to the by society.

gender expression – noun : the external display of one's gender, through a combination of dress, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as “gender presentation.”

gender identity – noun : the internal perception of an one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Common identity labels include man, woman, genderqueer, trans*, and more. Often confused with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

genderqueer – adj. : 1 a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman; 2 an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming, gender expansive or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).

heteronormativity – noun : the assumption, in individuals and/or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities: when learning a woman is married, asking her what her husband's name is. Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight.

homophobia – noun : an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have towards members of LGBTQ community. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ. Homophobic – adj. : a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes towards gay people.

homosexual – adj. & noun : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. This [medical] term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness, and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead).

intersex – adj. : term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

lesbian – noun & adj. : women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

LGBTQQIAA2SPP; GSM; DSG – abbreviations : shorthand or umbrella terms for all folks who have a non-normative (or queer) gender or sexuality, there are many different initialisms people prefer. LGBTQIAA2SPP is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Ally, Two-spirited, Pansexual, Polyamorous (sometimes people at a + at the end in an effort to be shorten (LGBTQIA+); GSM is Gender and Sexual Minorities; DSG is Diverse Sexualities and Genders. Other options include the initialism GLBT or LGBT and the acronym QUILTBAG (Queer [or Questioning] Undecided Intersex Lesbian Trans* Bisexual Asexual [or Allied] and Gay [or Genderqueer]).

MSM: an abbreviation for men who have sex with men. They may or may not identify as gay, bisexual or pansexual.

pansexual – adj. : a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to “pan.”

passing – adj. & verb : 1 trans* people being accepted as, or able to “pass for,” a member of their self-identified gender identity (regardless of sex assigned at birth) without being identified as trans*. 2 An LGB/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight.

queer – adj. : used as an umbrella term to describe individuals who don’t identify as straight. Also used to describe people who have a non-normative gender identity, or as a political affiliation. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, it is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBTQ community. The term “queer” can often be use interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., “queer folks” instead of “LGBTQ folks”).

questioning – verb, adj. : an individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

romantic attraction – noun : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in romantic intimate behavior (e.g., dating, relationships, marriage), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense).

same-gender loving: a term most frequently used in communities of color that affirms same-sex attraction of individuals. The term may be preferred over lesbian, gey or bisexual.

sexual attraction – noun : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in physically intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with romantic attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

sexual orientation – noun : the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

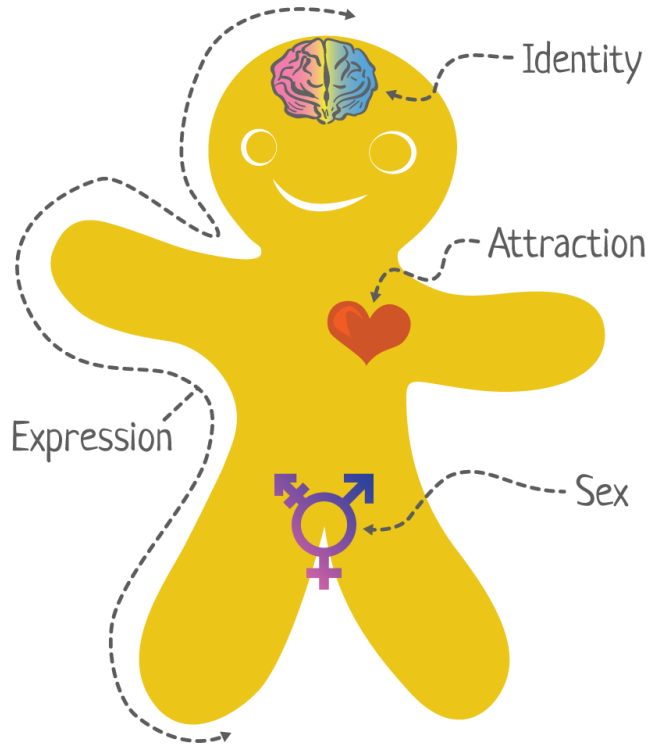
straight – adj. : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.

trans*/transgender – adj. : 1 An umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially defined gender norms. 2 A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that assigned at birth based on anatomical sex.

transphobia – noun : the fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans* people, the trans* community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society. Transphobic – adj. : a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes, thoughts, intents, towards trans* people.

Two-spirit: A Native American term for LGBTQIA+ individual with dual or multiple genders. It can mean having both a masculine and a feminine spirit. It has different meaning in different communities.

The Genderbread Person v4 by its pronounced METROsexual.com



⊖ means a lack of what's on the right side

Gender Identity

- Woman-ness
- Man-ness

Gender Expression

- Femininity
- Masculinity

Anatomical Sex

- Female-ness
- Male-ness

Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex
Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation

Sex Assigned At Birth
 Female Intersex Male

Sexually Attracted to... and/or (a/o)

- Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
- Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

Romantically Attracted to...

- Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
- Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People



Being Respectful to LGBTQ People

People can be intimidated by the LGBTQIAA2SPP+ vocabulary and silenced by the fear of saying something wrong, but in order to create inclusive spaces we must have conversations.

Below are eight respectful communication tips to use when talking with LGBTQIA+ individuals:

1. Start conversations by saying, "I mean to be respectful. Please forgive me if I use the wrong term and feel free to educate me." Our tone is as important as our words. Speak from the heart and your message will be clear, even if you get the words wrong.
2. Mirror the terms that people use for themselves and their loved ones. Do not label people or assume that the next person will prefer the same terms.
3. Try and ungender your language as much as possible. Avoid words like: sir, ma'am, husband, ladies, girlfriend, etc. Instead try: partner, friends, folks, someone special, etc.
4. If you think your question might be too personal try the "flip it" test and yourself if you would ask a non-LGBTQ person the same question.
5. If you need to know someone's name and pronoun, you should create a system where you are asking everyone these questions, not singling people out.
6. Strike these words from your vocabulary: Lifestyle, Hermaphrodite, Homosexual, Transsexual, Transvestite and Sexual Preference. They are dated terms and they may cause offense.
7. Always use the correct name and pronoun for individuals, even if they do not match the person's legal name, including when you are talking about someone's past.
8. Forgive yourself and offer a sincere apology if you make a mistake by using the wrong term, name or pronoun, but do the work to get it right the next time.



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Being Respectful to Transgender People

The term "transgender" or "trans" is an umbrella term that includes lots of gender expansive identities: transsexual people, cross-dressers, genderqueer individuals, agender people, transmen, transwomen, two-spirit people and many more.

Please don't ask about my genitalia, what surgeries I've had, or how I have sex. These are extremely personal questions.

A transwoman is male-to-female. A transman is female-to-male. It is never the other way around.

Don't assume my gender identity defines my sexual orientation. Who I am attracted to is totally separate from my gender. A simple way to think of it is: one is who I sleep with and one is who I sleep as.

Don't expect me to conform to the stereotypes of my gender. I wear clothes I like and I have a variety of interests, just like everyone else.

The words "transsexual," "transgender" and "trans" are adjectives, not nouns. Please say "trans people" or "trans individuals," not "transgenders" or "the transgender."

I am not here to shock anyone or get attention. Being transgender is not a choice. The only choice I have made is whether or not to live authentically as my true self.

Please use language that corresponds to my gender identity, even if my body does not seem to match, and even when talking about my past. Do not use my old name or pronoun when referring to me in the past.

If you are still adjusting to my transition, it is normal to make mistakes with pronouns. Don't draw attention to it. Just correct yourself and carry on.

If you ask everyone what pronouns they use (for example on forms, at the beginning of classes and workshops, etc.) then I am not singled out. It is a very inclusive best practice tip.

Non-binary individuals may use gender neutral pronouns like: they, ze, ne, xe or others.

The changes I make to my body are not cosmetic, but rather reconstructive. Having a body I am comfortable with is vital to my health.

If I am a transman getting top surgery, then I am not "getting my breasts removed." I am having chest reconstruction.

Please don't use my old name or ask what it was. Instead of saying "back when you were Fred", say "before you transitioned".

Please don't ask me to explain my life story or my gender situation to people I've just met.

Please don't ask to see an old, pre-transition picture of me.

If I have trusted you enough to share with you that I am trans, please keep it private. I will tell others if I choose to do so.

Pronoun Usage

What are pronouns?

The most common pronouns used are “she, her, hers”, “he, him, his” and “they, them, theirs”. We use pronouns every day to refer to those around us. Some LGBTQ+ identified individuals may use a pronoun to refer to themselves that doesn't necessarily correspond to the pronoun people may assume they use upon first meeting them.

Simple ways to use pronouns to show LGBTQ+ support:

- Always ask someone's pronouns.
- Don't assume which pronoun someone uses
- If you are unsure of someone's pronouns and don't feel comfortable asking, use they or them to refer to that person, it's always a safe option
- Share your pronouns at meetings, before public speaking and in every day introductions to show you are someone who supports proper pronoun usage and set a universal standard for sharing pronouns
- Wear a pronoun pin. By displaying our pronouns it creates an atmosphere of inclusivity for everyone to be referred to in the way they want to be
- Provide your pronouns in your e-mail signature, on your nametag, business cards, etc.

How do I use pronouns?

- 1) He/Him/His
 - a) He went to the store. I spoke to him.
It was his apple.
- 2) She/Her/Hers
 - a) She went to the store. I spoke to her.
It was her apple.
- 3) They/Them/Theirs
 - a) They went to the store. I spoke to them.
It was their apple.
- 4) Ze/Hir/Hirs
 - a) Ze went to the store. I spoke to hir. It was hirs apple.
- 5) No pronouns, use a person's name
 - a) August went to the store. I spoke to August. It was August's apple.

1	2	3	4	5
(f)ae	(f)aer	(f)aer	(f)aers	(f)aerself
e/ey	em	eir	eirs	eirself
he	him	his	his	himself
per	per	pers	pers	perself
she	her	her	hers	herself
they	them	their	theirs	themself
ve	ver	vis	vis	verself
xe	xem	xyr	xyrs	xemself
ze/zie	hir	hir	hirs	hirsself

Making and Correcting Mistakes

We are all human and will make mistakes. When using the wrong pronoun for someone this is called “misgendering”. Misgendering someone can be very harmful. How we respond to our mistake can make a huge difference. If you misgender someone, try not to make a big deal about it. Often times drawing a lot of attention to the mistake can make the person even more uncomfortable than they already are. If you find yourself using the wrong pronoun and realize mid-sentence, just pause, say “sorry”, correct the pronoun usage and move on.

LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE DOs and DON'Ts

AVOID SAYING...	SAY INSTEAD...	WHY?	EXAMPLE
"Hermaphrodite"	"Intersex"	Hermaphrodite is a stigmatizing, inaccurate word with a negative medical history.	"What are the best practices for the medical care of intersex infants?"
"Homosexual"	"Gay"	"Homosexual" often connotes a medical diagnosis, or a discomfort with gay/lesbian people.	"We want to do a better job of being inclusive of our gay employees."
"Born female" or "Born male"	"Assigned female/male at birth"	"Assigned" language accurately depicts the situation of what happens at birth	"Max was assigned female at birth, then he transitioned in high school."
"Female-bodied" or "Male-bodied"		"-bodied" language is often interpreted as as pressure to medically transition, or invalidation of one's gender identity	
"A gay" or "a transgender"	"A gay/transgender person"	Gay and transgender are adjectives that describe a person/group	"We had a transgender athlete in our league this year. "
"Transgender people and normal people"	"Transgender people and cisgender people"	Saying "normal" implies "abnormal," which is a stigmatizing way to refer to a person.	"This group is open to both transgender and cisgender people."
"Both genders" or "Opposite sexes"	"All genders"	"Both" implies there are only two; "Opposite" reinforces antagonism amongst genders	"Video games aren't just a boy thing -- kids of all genders play them."
"Ladies and gentlemen"	"Everyone," "Folks," "Honored guests," etc	Moving away from binary language is more inclusive of people of all genders	"Good morning everyone, next stop Picadilly Station."
"Mailman," "fireman," "policeman," etc.	"Mail clerk," "Firefighter," "Police officer," etc.	People of all genders do these jobs	"I actually saw a firefighter rescue a cat from a tree."
"It" when referring to someone (e.g., when pronouns are unknown)	"They"	"It" is for referring to things, not people.	"You know, I am not sure how they identify."

IMSA Resources to Support Gender and Sexual Diverse Students

Student Life:

IMSA recognizes that the best practices on working with LGBTQIA+ student needs are rapidly changing and constantly evolving. Protocol is in place to assist students and parents with questions and/or requests regarding transgender housing and name reference requests. For more information, please contact Katie Berger, Executive Director of Student Affairs at kberger@imsa.edu or 630.907.5009.

Counseling:

IMSA offers brief intervention, short-term counseling services assisting students with a wide variety of concerns, including identity-related topics. This is a drop-in service but appointments can be made in advance by contacting one of IMSA's counselors on staff. For more information, please contact Kevin Kusy, at kkusy@imsa.edu or 630.907.5988.

LiveSafe:

LiveSafe is a mobile device tool in which students, faculty and staff are able to communicate suspicious or concerning situations to proper authorities at the Academy. Tips can be sent anonymously, if desired. In addition, important messages can also be transmitted to those with the LiveSafe mobile app in cases of emergency.

Spectrum:

Spectrum is IMSA's own LGBTQ+ club, with a mission to create an inclusive and productive environment in order to hold discussions on LGBTQ+ topics, spread awareness, and to foster a better environment for the whole community.

Identity Advocates:

Identity Advocates are staff members at IMSA who agree to serve as Advocates for students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Ally (LGBTQIA+!). Advocates receive training on the best practice guidelines for affirming gender identity, supporting the identity development of LGBTQIA+ adolescents, and addressing instances where LGBTQIA+ feel they are being treated unfairly due to their identities. Advocates serve as liaisons between LGBTQIA+ students and faculty, staff, and other departments on campus.

Bias Incidents:

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.

For more information, please contact Adrienne Coleman, acoleman@imsa.edu or 630.907.5079.

In a world of ever-increasing gender equality in marriage, employment, and military service, of equitable treatment of and opportunities for gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, and questioning (GLBTQ) persons in these domains, and of understanding multicultural concerns in general, many educational groups are concerned about how best to address the particular needs of students with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. NAGC, which has an organizational policy of non-discrimination, supports respectful and equitable treatment of GLBTQ gifted youth. NAGC recommends that educators demonstrate compassionate understanding of these students and support them in maximizing their potential. Similar to other gifted youth, students with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities may have strengths in one or more areas of giftedness (i.e., intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, academic). They are present across, genders, cultural and ethnic groups, income levels, geographical locations, religions, and abilities/disabilities. However, unlike most other groups of gifted students, they may not only feel different from other youth because of giftedness, but also may feel isolated due to sexual identity and/or gender expression. Related concerns follow:

- Gifted youth with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities have unique needs related to both strengths and social challenges
- Diverse sexual orientation and gender identity complexly affect the experience of social and emotional development.
- Verbal and physical harassment, violence, and bias can foster isolation and underachievement in gifted youth with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
- Fears of violence at school and of parental abandonment can also contribute to *extreme* achievement and involvement, depression and suicidal thoughts, and hiding distress from parents and teachers.
- GLBTQ youth may experience high rates of substance abuse, sexually-transmitted diseases, and differential access to school services, all of these potential by-products of social alienation.
- Educational and other institutional barriers face educators, counselors, and researchers who wish to assist gifted youth with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, yet courageous educators can help to create safe classrooms and schools.

It is critical to note that youth with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities may be known or not known as sexual minorities to educators. Therefore, NAGC recommends these actions by school administrators, teachers, and counselors:

- Ensure that curriculum, including curriculum for gifted youth, includes positive examples of individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
- Ensure that career education avoids stereotypes and encourages GLBTQ students to consider careers that are appropriate for their talents and interests.
- Include positive role models in gifted education programming who have diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
- Work toward safe schools/safe zones to protect and nurture the unique sensitivities of GLBTQ gifted youth.
- Use inclusive language in school correspondence and documentation that respects diverse sexual orientations and gender identities of parents/guardians, educators, and students.
- Help families nurture GLBTQ students' special strengths, healthy social and emotional development, and self-advocacy skills for both in and out of school.
- Accommodate researchers with substantive and credible projects related to gifted youth with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

Resources

Some LGBT youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience negative health and life outcomes. It is important that at-risk LGBT youth have access to resources and support to deal with the questions and challenges they may face as they mature.

- [Advocates for Youth \(AFY\): LGBTQ Resources for Professionals](#)
Lesson plans, tips and strategies, background information, and additional resources to help youth-serving professionals create safe space for young people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.
- American Psychological Association (APA) Resources
 - [Healthy Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students Project](#)
The Safe and Supportive Schools Project promotes safe and supportive environments to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections among adolescents.
 - [Just the Facts: A Primer for Principals, Educators, and School Personnel](#)
Just the Facts provides information and resources for principals, educators and school personnel who confront sensitive issues involving gay, lesbian and bisexual students.
 - [Understanding Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)
Accurate information for those who want to better understand sexual orientation.
- [Campus Pride](#)
- [Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network \(GLSEN\): Educator Resources](#)
GLSEN educator guides and lessons to support your curriculum and practices.
- [Genders and Sexualities Alliance \(GSA\) Network: Transforming Schools](#)
GSA clubs can make schools safer and more welcoming for LGBTQ youth.
- [Human Rights Campaign](#)
A national organization that advocates for the civil rights of GLBT individuals
- [Questions and Answers: LGBTQ Youth Issues](#)
Questions and answers on sexual orientation, gender identity, and risks or challenges some LGBTQ youth may experience.
- [StopBullying.gov: Information for Educators and Other School Professionals](#)
Schools are a place where bullying can happen. Helping to establish a supportive and safe school climate where all students are accepted and knowing how to respond when bullying happens are key to making sure all students are able to learn and grow.