Supporting Transgender Students
An Overview for Secondary School Leaders
Webinar: March 19, 2014; 4PM ET

Anneliese A. Singh, Ph.D., LPC
Dept of Counseling and Human Development Services
The University of Georgia
The Trans Resilience Project
Georgia Safe Schools Coalition
asingh@uga.edu

Maru Gonzalez
Georgia Safe Schools Coalition
marugonzalez83@gmail.com

Being Accountable as a Profession to Trans People
History and Colonization

- Christine Jorgensen
- Transsexual
- DSM
- Counselors and psychologists as gatekeeper and medical model

Trans = body modifications or

Trans = “born in the wrong body”
Trans Student Liberation 101

- Trans people know themselves
- Trans people are in charge of their own mental health
- There is **NO** one way to be trans
- Trans people have healthy and loving relationships
- Counselors as psychologists as advocates and resilience supports
- Adultism is real

Who are Trans People?

**I AM NOT MY GENITALIA**

Be who you are and nobody else.
Trans* Students: Language 101

- Sex and Gender
- Gender Identity and Gender Expression

Transgender, Trans*
- Trans Man, FTM
- Trans Woman, MTF
- Genderqueer, Genderblender
- And many more...

Cisgender Privilege

CIS comes from Latin and means "on this side", for example: CISatlantic. It is used in Chemistry.

By using cisgender to describe the gender of those who are not trans, we break down structures that present cis identifying as 'normal', when neither is more normal than the other.
The Experiences of Trans Students in Schools

- Nearly 90% of trans students have experienced verbal harassment as a result of their gender expression.
- 53% have reported physical harassment
- School personnel seldom intervene when bullying occurs.
- Trans students experience psychological distress and reduced feelings of safety as a result of harassment.

GLSEN, 2009

Professional Statements of Obligation

- American School Counselor Association
- National Association of School Psychologists
- School Social Workers of American
- National Association of School Boards
- National Education Association
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
Stop, Interrupt, Change This Language!

- It
- She-male
- Transvestite
- Transgendered
- Tranny
# Pronouns 101

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>She, her, her</td>
<td>She went to the store. I spoke to her. It was her apple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>He, him, his</td>
<td>He went to the store. I spoke to him. It was his apple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Neutral</td>
<td>They, them, their</td>
<td>They went to the store. I spoke to them. It was their apple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Neutral</td>
<td>Ze, ze/zir, zeirs/zeis</td>
<td>Ze went to the store. I spoke to ze/zir. It was zeir/zeis apple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Neutral</td>
<td>Ze, hir, hirs</td>
<td>Ze went to the store. I spoke to hir. It was hirs apple.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that these are not the only pronouns. There are an infinite number of pronouns as new ones emerge in our language.

For more information, go to [www.transstudent.org/graphics](http://www.transstudent.org/graphics)

---

Trans Students: Counseling and Psychological Practice

**Genderqueer People Are Your Neighbors**
Trans Students and Diagnosis

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders:
- DSM-III-R – Gender Identity Disorder first appears
- DSM-5: Gender Dysphoria

Advantages and Disadvantages: The Debate!
- Diagnosis brings “validity” to trans people’s lives for insurance, needed healthcare, employment support, family understanding
- Diagnosis pathologizes gender non-conformity and labels trans people as “disordered”

What Do People Mean When They Say “Transition”

- Social Transition – work, school, community, family, partner(s), etc.
- Medical Transition – hormones, surgery, etc.
- None of the above or some of the above
Trans People: Multiple Identities & Intersections

Trans, Religion, Race/Ethnicity, Queer, Gay, Ability, Migration Status, Geographic Location, Gender Expression, Lesbian, Social Class, Family Structure, Questioning

Trans Students and Bathroom 101
Trans Students in the Classroom

- Integrate issues related to trans issue and people into the curriculum
  - Access online resources
- Visual displays of support
- Commemorate Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Increase the visibility of trans role models
- Trouble norms related to gender and heteronormativity
- Use inclusive language

Trans Student Athletes

- **ALL students have the right to participate fully in high school athletics.**
- Yet, most high school athletic programs have no policy related to the inclusion of trans student athletes and most coaches lack the training to accommodate trans students.
- **What is needed?**
  - Single national standard for trans student athletes
  - A policy that allows transgender student athletes to play on teams consistent with the student’s gender identity, regardless of medical treatment.
  - Training for coaches
  - Participation in programs such as GLSEN’s Changing the Game
Paperwork – Some Examples

Legal name:

Name I want to be called (if different than above):

What is your gender?

- Girl
- Boy
- Transgender (check one: __ MTF __FTM)
- Write here

Pronouns I use:

- She
- He
- They
- Write here

Making Your Office More Trans-Affirming for Youth

- What in your office and waiting room signals to trans youth that you are affirming?

- What needs to be changed on your marketing materials, intake paperwork, assessment documents, etc. to signal to your trans students that you are trans-affirming?

- Where are the opportunities to advocate for trans clients in your everyday work?
Supporting Trans Self-Determination

Our Role as Trans Advocates

- Bullying
- Violence
- Discrimination
- Access to Health Care

International Transgender Day of Remembrance

My grief lies within, and these external manners of lament are merely shadows to the unseen grief that swells with silence in the tortured soul. - William Shakespeare
Strategies for Effective Advocacy with Trans Students

- Foster a more trans-inclusive Gay-Straight Alliance (e.g., invite a trans speaker, commemorate Transgender Day of Remembrance)
- Educate school personnel
- Integrate issues of gender identity and expression into the curriculum
- Visual displays of support

- Legislative & Community Collaboration
  - Coalition building across issues and identity groups
  - Lobbying for legislative and policy changes

Effective Messaging
(from GLSEN.org)

- Know your audience
- Be respectful
- Find common ground
- Develop a primary message and supporting messages
- Consider opposition framing
Primary Message
(from GLSEN.org)

All students have the right to feel safe at school.

Supporting Messages

• Anti-trans bullying affects all students negatively.
• Schools have a legal obligation to protect all students.
• Supportive educators can make a significant difference and therefore should act.
Creating Systemic Change: A Collaborative Effort

- School Personnel
- Students
- Parents
- Community Members and Organizations
- Elected officials

Other Laws and Policies that Protect Trans Students

- Check your school district’s policies on bullying a nondiscrimination which may include protections based on gender identity and expression – even if your state does not.
- Title IX
- Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment
- Equal Access Act
Web Resources

Georgia Safe Schools Coalition
www.georgiasafeschoolscoalition.org
PFLAG
www.pflag.org
Trans Youth and Family Allies
www.tvfa.org
National Center for Transgender Equality
www.ncte.org
Lambda Legal
www.lambdalegal.org
GLSEN
www.glsen.org

The Trevor Project
www.thetrevorproject.org
ACA Transgender Competency Guidelines
www.algbtic.org/competencies.html
Kognito
www.kognito.com
Step In, Speak Up!
www.kognito.com/products/
stepin/

Q&A

Anneliese A. Singh, Ph.D., LPC
The Trans Resilience Project
Georgia Safe Schools Coalition
asinh@uga.edu

Maru Gonzalez, M.Ed.
Georgia Safe Schools Coalition
marugonzalez83@gmail.com