

Trans Inclusion

A Step Toward Creating a Friendly and Supportive Campus
for Trans-Identified College Students
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Putting Yourself in Students' Shoes

*"Being able to have
my name changed on
my documents,
without
legally changing it,
helped make me feel
safe on my campus."*

- C.J.

UNDERSTANDING TERMINOLOGY

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represents and how it's
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Trans-identified college students face several stressors that are outside of the typical stress experienced by others on campus. Influencing factors may include: not having a non-discrimination policy for gender identity/expression, not having policies that accommodate trans students in housing, recreation, healthcare, records and documents, programming, and lack of accessible gender neutral/all gender restrooms on campus.

Working toward creating an inclusive environment will help students feel included and connected, instead of displaced or fearful. Imagine being on campus and having a student ID that has a name and gender displayed that is different than how you identify, or being assigned to a residence hall or roommate that makes you feel unsafe, or avoiding recreational activities because you were fearful of the locker rooms.

These stressors can be changed through education, which leads to changes in policy and infrastructure.

To be able to start stepping toward a more inclusive campus, let's begin with terminology. Here are a few terms to be familiar with:

• **Transgender or Trans**

The umbrella term for the transgender community. Be aware that "trans" may mean something different to different people.

• **FTM or Trans man**

A person who was born assigned female but identifies as male.

• **MTF or Trans woman**

A person who was born assigned male but identifies as female.

• **GenderQueer, Gender Fluid**

A person whose gender identity is neither male or female but fluid or outside the binary.

• **Agender**

A person who identifies as being without a gender or gender neutral

Be **AWARE** of Changes in Language

Language is in a constant state of evolution, which means words used to describe a person's identity may have different meanings to different people. Take note of the current language being used by students, and recognize that it may change in the future. To create an inclusive environment, ask students how they want to be addressed, instead of making assumptions based on past experiences.

TRANS INCLUSION CAMPUS CHECKLIST

Our campus has...

- ☐ A nondiscrimination policy that includes gender identity / expression
- ☐ Campus-wide trans speakers and other programming
- ☐ Staff dedicated to working on safety and support
- ☐ Gender-inclusive housing
- ☐ All Gender restrooms
- ☐ Family and individual shower and changing rooms in Recreation Centers
- ☐ Staff trainings on working with trans students:
(check sub-bullets that apply)
 - ☐ Health and Wellness Staff
 - ☐ Residence Life Staff
 - ☐ Student Affairs Staff
 - ☐ Administrative Staff
 - ☐ Faculty and Adjunct Staff
- ☐ Materials advertising being a Trans-friendly campus
- ☐ Trained counselors and healthcare providers on transgender issues
- ☐ Student health insurance policies that cover transition-related care

Stepping Toward Trans Inclusion



The first step you need to take is to ask yourself, *Where is the best place to begin?* This isn't a race, it is a process.

JUST GETTING STARTED:

POLICIES:

Look to see if your campus includes "gender identity / expression" in its nondiscrimination policy. If not, then establish this policy to protect students on campus.

HOUSING:

Establish a knowledgeable contact person in housing that can answer questions and assist trans identified students.

RESTROOMS:

Identify all restrooms on campus that are currently single stall and have these marked in a handout and online for students. Begin to advocate for these restrooms to be changed to all gender and identify other places on campus where gender-neutral restrooms are needed.

PROGRAMMING:

Host an event on campus that relates to transgender identities or days of awareness. For example, hold an event during Transgender Day of Remembrance, Nov 20.

HEALTHCARE:

Assess your current healthcare services, staff knowledge, intake forms, restroom access and insurance coverage policies.

RECORDS / DOCUMENTS:

Identify current campus procedure for changing names on documents.

WE HAVE SOME THINGS IN PLACE:

POLICIES:

Review all campus activities and organization policies and identify/change areas that could exclude or create barriers that prevent trans students from participation.

HOUSING:

Establish a trans inclusion training and require all residence life staff to attend. Develop a housing policy that gives all staff guidance on how to best serve trans identified students.

RESTROOMS:

Move to change all single-stall bathrooms to all gender. All you need are new signs and maybe some locks!

PROGRAMMING:

Create a trans student speaker's bureau. Assess trans inclusion in already established student organizations such as LGBTQ groups on campus.

HEALTHCARE:

Move to change or offer all gender restrooms in your healthcare settings. Change patient intake forms to be trans friendly. Train frontline staff and providers on how to work with trans identified students. Establish a resource list of providers and counselors either on campus or off campus that work with trans clients.

RECORDS / DOCUMENTS:

Have a policy in place that allows trans students to change their name on all records and student ids.

WE ARE PRETTY ESTABLISHED:

POLICIES:

Assess all policies on campus to see if they have added trans inclusion. If not, advocate for updating these documents.

HOUSING:

Provide gender-neutral housing, design new buildings with single stall showers and restrooms that lock. Create learning environments that include gender neutral housing.

RESTROOMS:

Like with housing, identify new construction and buildings that require renovations make sure the blueprints include spaces for all gender restrooms.

PROGRAMMING:

Have an established yearly budget that includes funding for on-going programming/activities related to trans identities.

HEALTHCARE:

Offer trans specific care and have student health insurance policies that include trans-specific care coverage.

RECORDS / DOCUMENTS:

Establish a policy and procedure that allows students to change all documentation, both gender and name, in one-step.

Suggested Resources and Articles:

- Beemyn, B., Curtis, B., Davis, M. & Tubbs, N.J. "Transgender Issues on College Campuses." New Directions for Student Services, 2005 (111), 49-60.
- Beemyn, B., Domingue, A., Pettitt, J., Smith, T. "Suggested Steps to Make Campuses More Trans-Inclusive." Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education, 2005, 3 (2).
- Transgender On-Campus Nondiscrimination Information Project (TONI) - <http://www.transstudents.org/>
- Campus Pride - <http://www.campuspride.org/resources/trans-advocacy/>
- National Consortium of Higher Ed LGBT Resource Professionals - <http://www.lgbtcampus.org/>